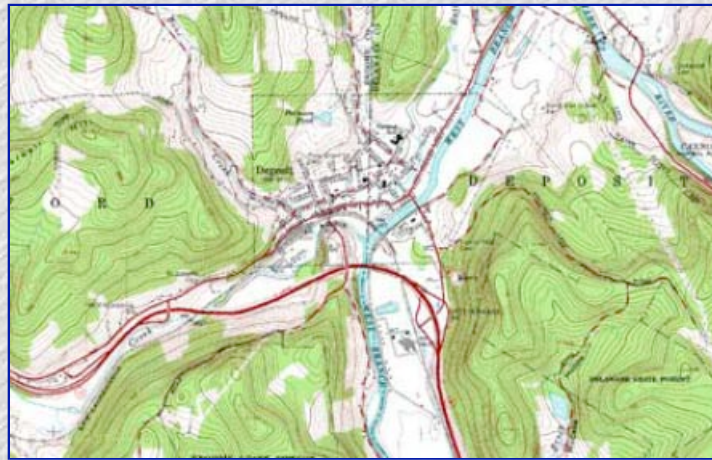


DEPOSIT AREA

Community Services Needs Assessment



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Deposit Area, Broome and Delaware Counties, New York Community Services Needs Assessment

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1.0 Background Brief

Broome and Delaware Counties engaged Fairweather Consulting Group and Shepstone Management Company as consultants to assist the Towns of Deposit and Sanford, and the Village of Deposit, with the preparation of a Community Service Needs Assessment for the greater Deposit area. The Broome and Delaware County Office of Aging and Planning Departments were also directly involved in the needs assessment process.

This process involved a series of three stakeholder meetings held at the Deposit Central School on October 18, November 20 and December 9, 2004. These meetings were designed, respectively, to identify the Deposit Area's key community needs, assign priorities to those needs and make recommendations to local officials on a strategy for addressing them. A special project website for reporting the results of meetings was also established at www.shepstone.net/Deposit.

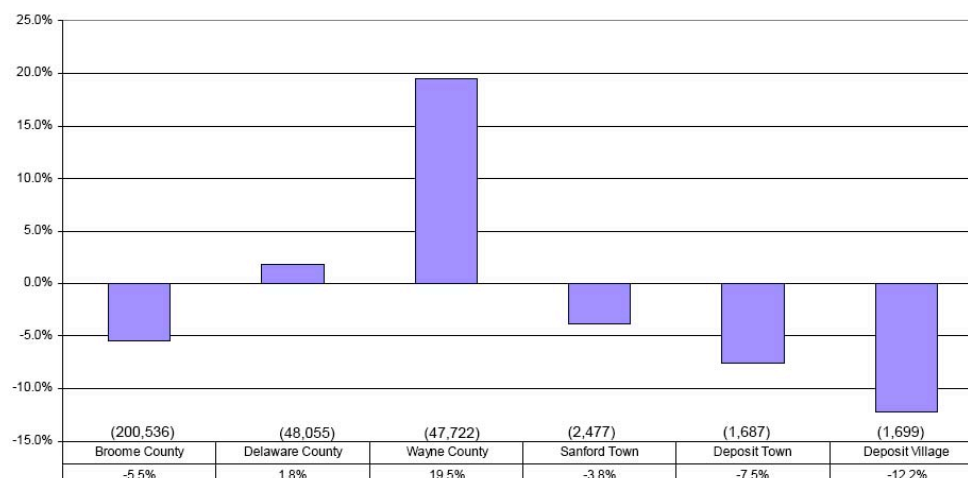
This report summarizes the information presented at each meeting together with the results of stakeholder discussions. A draft version was developed for review at the third meeting. Almost 70 stakeholders were identified with the help of local and county officials. The list included these individuals plus representatives of social service organizations, the business community and various community institutions with a direct interest or involvement in providing community services. Between 40 and 50 of these individuals actively participated in the workshop discussions.

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2.0 Analysis of Existing Trends

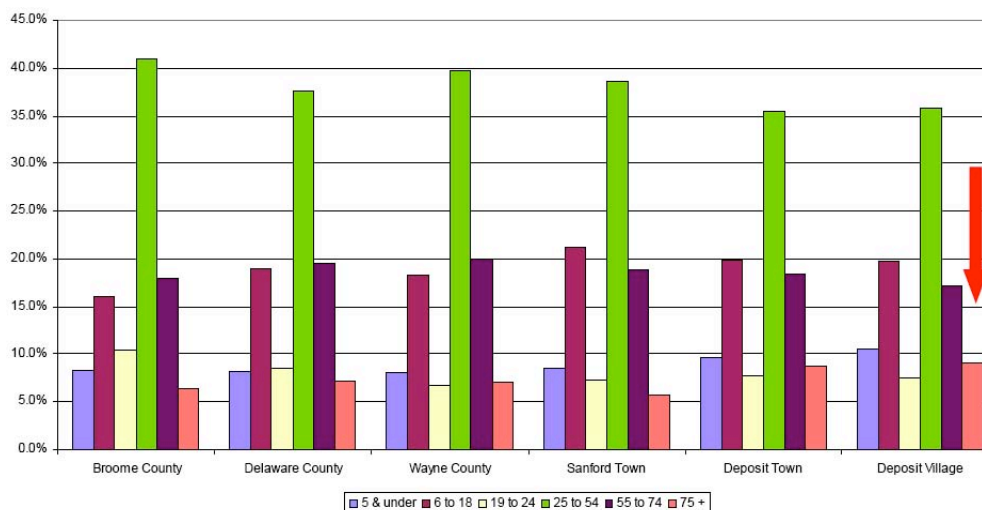
The greater Deposit area has recently been losing population, as the following chart indicates. Only the Pennsylvania portion of the region grew between 1990 and 2000.

Percent Population Change, 1990 - 2000
(2000 Population in Parentheses)



The Town and Village of Deposit both had above average populations of seniors over 75 years of age in 1990. The Town of Sanford, by contrast, was somewhat younger at that point.

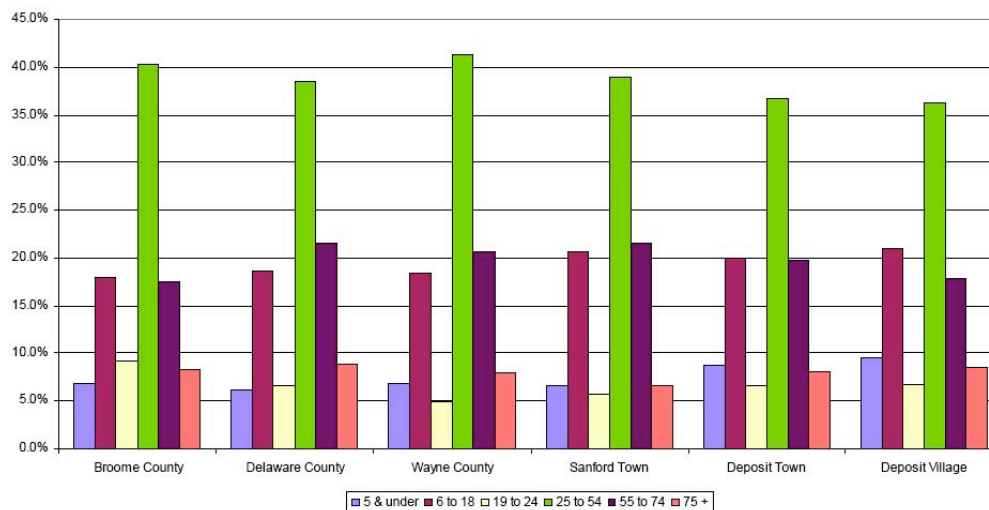
Population by Age, 1990



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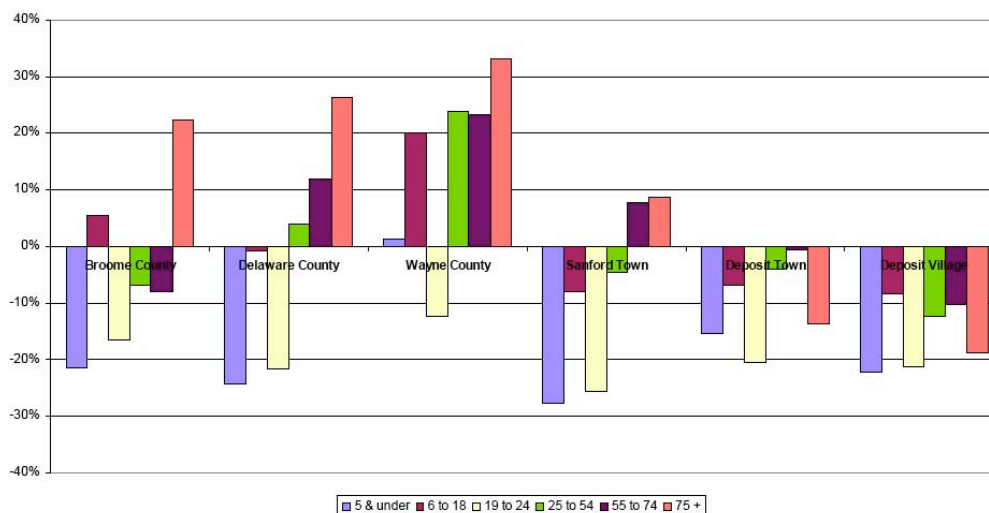
The greater Deposit area experienced a major population shift toward the elderly during the 1990's, with higher numbers of persons age 75 years or more, as the following chart demonstrates:

Population by Age, 2000



The trends are very evident in the chart below, which measures the population shifts by age and percent. The Town and Village of Deposit actually lost population in all age categories, but relatively less among seniors. Sanford gained seniors while losing among all other groups, suggesting it, too, is aging rather rapidly and will be composed of a much older population in the future.

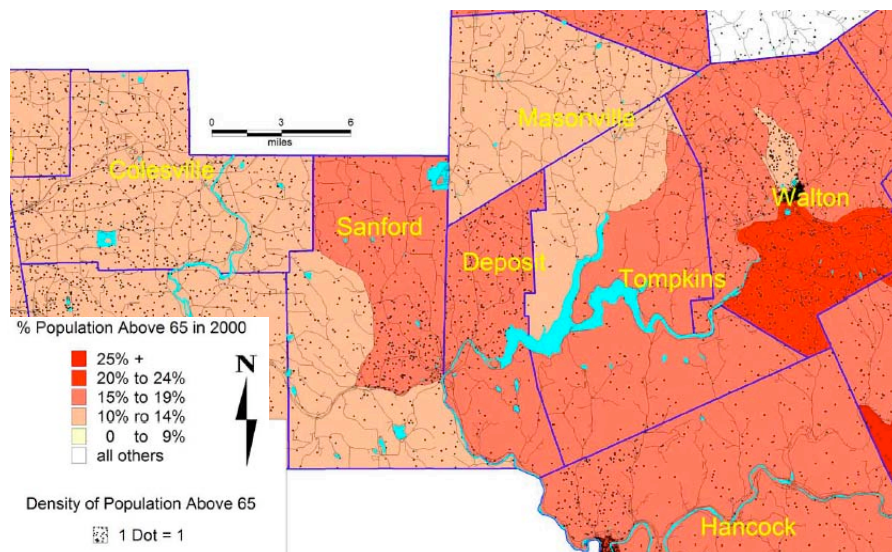
Population Changes by Age, 1990 - 2000



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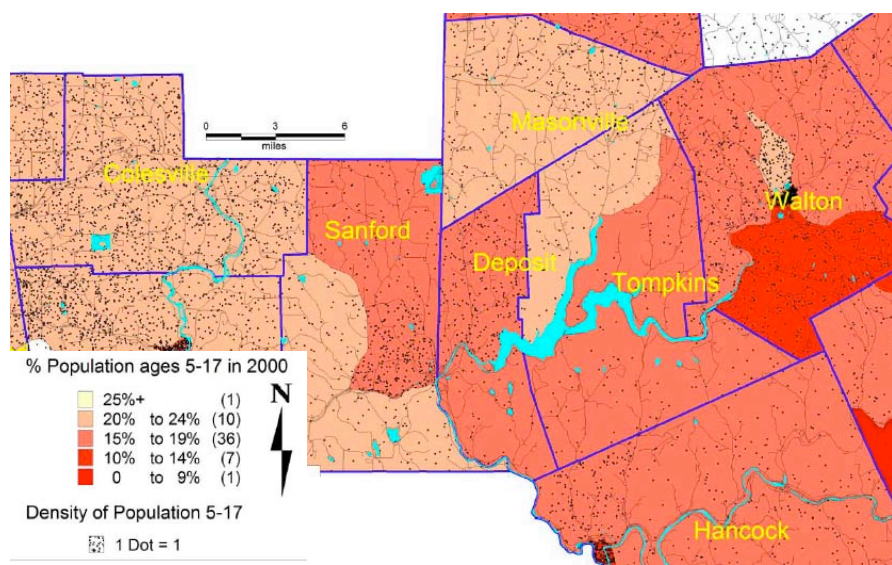
While the senior population of the Deposit area, concentrated around the Village, is increasing and relatively high compared to other parts of Broome County, there are nearby areas of Delaware County with still higher percentages of elderly persons.

Population Age 65+, 2000



Trends among the age 5 - 17 population, unsurprisingly, are directly opposite those among seniors, giving some indication of changing community service needs.

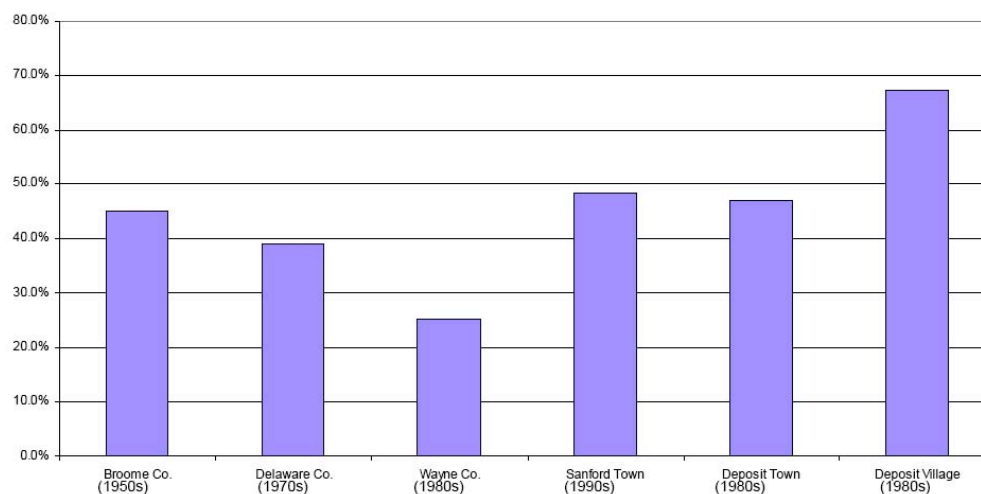
Population Age 5 - 17, 2000



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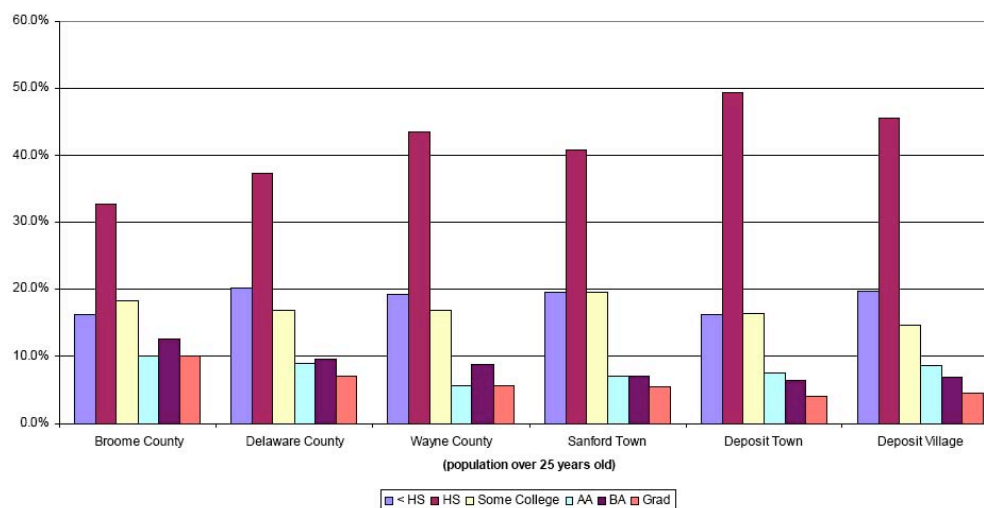
Another indication of community services needs is provided by the age of the housing stock. Both Towns and the Village have above average amounts of older housing. This suggests somewhat greater community development and housing needs. Nonetheless, much of the new construction in all three municipalities has been relatively recent, indicating the Deposit area does have the potential to grow again.

Percent of Housing Stock Built Before 1950 (Peak Post-War Decade for Construction in Parentheses)



Residents of the Deposit area also have relatively less access to higher education but exhibited larger numbers of individuals with high school and some college education.

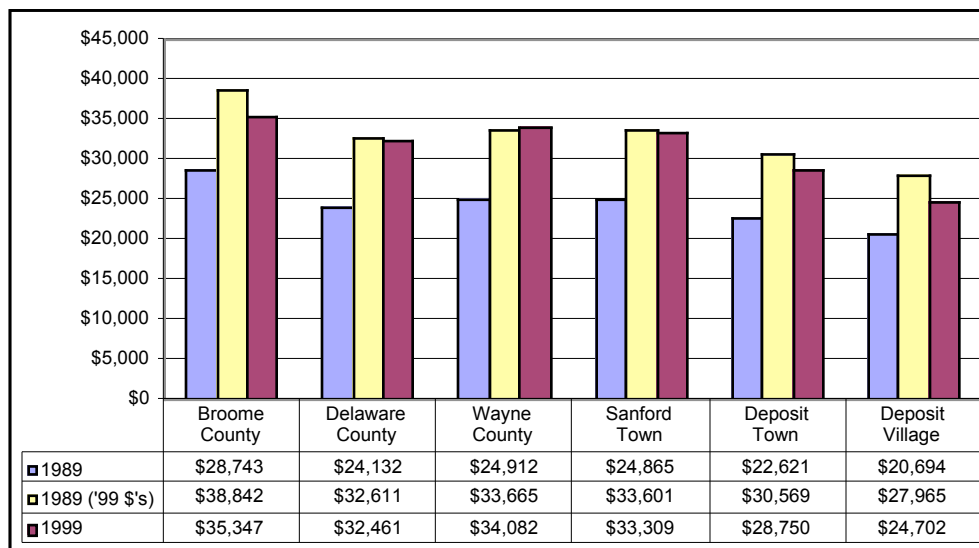
Education Levels, 2000



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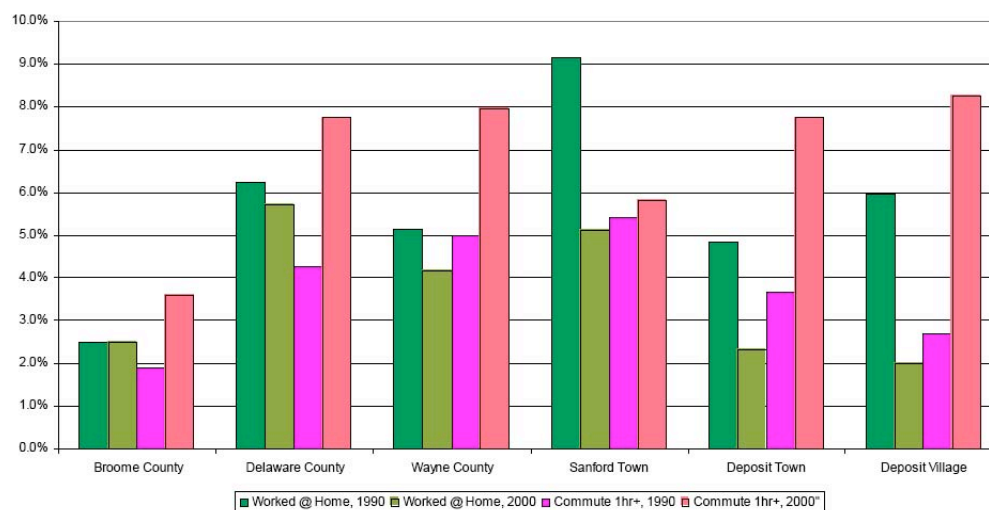
Although incomes grew in absolute terms over the 1989 to 1999 period, as measured by the 2000 Census, they declined everywhere but in Wayne County if inflation adjusted dollars are employed to make the comparison. The Town of Sanford came the closest to holding even, with only a slight decline. These changes are clearly impacted by the aging of the population, which increases the proportion of retirees.

Income Changes, 1989 - 1999



There was, between 1990 and 2000 a sharp decline in percentages of residents working at home, while long commutes (1 hour or more) sharply increased.

Residents Working at Home vs. Commuting 1 Hour+



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Overall, the demographic data suggests that economic opportunities within the Deposit area have weakened in recent years, after a period of some growth, leading to significant outmigration of both jobs and residents, leaving an increasingly dependent and aging population behind. This is the essential challenge facing the area today.

Planning for community services needs by the two Towns and the Village have already recognized much of this. A Village of Deposit community survey conducted in 1999 and 2000, for example, asked residents to evaluate certain community services. The results included the following ratings:

Village of Deposit Survey, 2000

	<u>OK</u>	<u>POOR</u>
Library	181	16
Fire protection	173	15
Garbage collection	159	30
Sewage treatment	158	21
Quality of water	133	43
Water supply	121	24
Programs for the elderly	90	83
Recreation - school age	74	104
Hospital facilities	55	117
Recreation - adults	46	136

A similar survey for the Town of Deposit was completed in 2000. It asked what Town services needed improvement. Results were as follows:

Town of Deposit Survey, 2000

Public Transportation	73%
Recreation	70%
Roads	67%
Fire station	59%
Ambulance	57%
Police protection	52%
Town Hall	43%
Highway Garage	36%
Fire protection	24%
Library	20%
Local history museum	15%

A downtown assessment for the Village was conducted in 2001 and picked up on

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some of these themes. Key observations and recommendations from the Catskill Center study included the following:

Village Downtown Assessment, 2001

- Deposit needs a community image, theme and retail identity
- Deposit has the potential to become a recreation / arts destination
- A destination-oriented gateway to Deposit is needed
- Deposit needs an organization to raise funds for various projects
- More activities to engage youth are needed
- Downtown improvements at pedestrian scale are needed
- The fire hall could be renovated as a community / senior center
- Deposit should consider moving more activities to Front Street
- Additional athletic / youth facilities are needed at Fireman's Park
- Deposit should develop a Visitors Center
- Pedestrian / bicycle facilities are needed from Front St. to the river
- Improved park space behind the Library would be an asset
- Expansion of the Farmers Market is needed
- A weekly youth market should also be considered
- Signage and a kiosk for visitors are needed at a minimum

The Town of Deposit developed a Comprehensive Plan in 2003 that addressed a broad range of issues, including the following recommendations:

Town Comprehensive Plan and Action Plan, 2003

- Development of river accesses
- Improvement of Airport Road
- Water / sewer for Roods Creek and the lakes
- A new Town / Community Hall & Highway Garage
- Exploring of intermunicipal projects
- A municipal solid waste program
- Development of a youth center
- Development of a regional community center
- Development of bicycle and foot trails
- Exploring a municipal park / pavilion / picnic area with recreation fields
- Development of a waterfront park
- Development of a recreation park on NYS 10 in Stilesville
- Creation of a fishing access and possible park on the river
- Development of a Town website
- Establishment of more tourist signage
- Support for development of the historic theater

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The Village is also engaged in a sewer system upgrade, for which an Impact Statement was developed in 2004. Among the findings were the following observations:

Village Sewer Community Impact Statement, 2004

- Heavy Village debt limits the ability to develop new infrastructure
- Sewer bills are now about \$400/year
- Village property taxes were up 59% between 2001-2004
- The Village possesses a deteriorating water system
- Very low per capita incomes prevail in much of the community
- Deposit is viewed as an “adjacent center of employment” for the watershed
- The Village is under a consent order to deal with its sewage problem
- There is an identified need 24 units of senior housing in Deposit
- There is significant potential for community development on I-86

There is a great degree of consistency in these observations and recommendations. The needs of the community are, in many cases, self-evident. What is needed most is a cooperative implementation effort that builds on the strengths of the Deposit area while recognizing its weaknesses and working around them with a practical implementation plan. Those strengths and weaknesses were identified and mapped by stakeholders in the first workshop. The map and a self-explanatory tabulation follow:

Summary of Strengths and Weaknesses from Map Exercise

No.	Category	Strengths
14	Culture	Cultural opportunities
36	Culture	Asset - historical
37	Culture	History of the area
43	Culture	Theater Performing Arts
4	Education	Scholarships available to DCS students
10	Education	Safe, healthy schools
13	Education	School
50	Education	School
76	Industry	Norbord Industries
3	Infrastructure	17/86
47	Natural Resources	Lots of Natural resources
78	Natural Resources	Wood and stone
1	Organizations	Deposit Foundation & RHS
7	Organizations	Food pantry
8	Organizations	Deposit Free Library
38	Organizations	Religious communities working together
44	Organizations	Strong informal supports & volunteer
71	Organizations	Strong volunteer groups
72	Organizations	Churches (not big enough for groups)
85	Organizations	Police Department
89	Organizations	Lots of volunteer organizations
11	Outdoor Recreation	Oquaga Creek State Park
12	Outdoor Recreation	"The great outdoors"
39	Outdoor Recreation	River
42	Outdoor Recreation	Oquaga Creek State Park
49	Outdoor Recreation	Hunting and fishing
74	Outdoor Recreation	State lands provides recreation
75	Outdoor Recreation	River fishing industry
79	Outdoor Recreation	Hunting/trapping
80	Outdoor Recreation	Fishing/wild life
73	Seniors	Active senior citizens in community
N/A	Seniors	North Sanford social activities
15	Youth	Youth of community
5	Youth	Community sports for kids
6	Youth	Community sports for kids
9	Youth	Scouting - Boy & Girl
48	Youth	Childrens' Center
55	Youth	DFRG starting

No.	Category	Weaknesses
39	Attitude	Attitude - Alcoholism/welfare mentality
48	Attitude	Fractured community goals.
36	Economy	Downtown "streetscape"
73	Economy	Not enough businesses.
N/A	Economy	No new industries - needed for growth
N/A	Economy	Commuting distance.
N/A	Economy	No shopping/clothing or goods
44	Emergency needs	Emergency services poor
85	Emergency needs	Emergency response time, members
2	Infrastructure	Sewer/water needs to be updated.
49	Infrastructure	Parking downtown.
50	Infrastructure	Public transportation/taxi service.
10	NYC	NYS should pay fair share of tax
11	Organizations	Lack of involvement by community
13	Organizations	Need more inter-county involvement
43	Organizations	Lack of trust by Village government
45	Organizations	Police Department - lack of trust
71	Outdoor recreation	No reservoir trail for cyclists, hikers
72	Outdoor recreation	Lack of waterfront access.
9	Senior needs	Social isolation for Seniors.
37	Senior needs	Inadequate Senior Center
42	Senior needs	Inadequate Senior Center
51	Senior needs	Inadequate Senior Center
55	Senior needs	Assisted Senior housing.
76	Senior needs	Senior needs in rural area - NorthSanford
N/A	Senior needs	Lack of housing for Seniors
N/A	Senior needs	Senior Center/Community Center lacking
40	Senior/youth	No Community Center
12	Youth needs	No youth non-sports activities

Deposit and Vicinity

Topographic map showing the Deposit and Vicinity area. The map includes a scale bar (0 to 0.5 miles) and a north arrow. Numerous numbered points (1-50) are marked on the map, indicating specific locations of interest. The map also shows the West Branch of the Susquehanna River, the Deposit, and surrounding terrain.

A horizontal number line with three tick marks labeled 0, 0.25, and 0.5. Below the line, the word "miles" is centered.

Map by Fairweather Consulting from USGS data. Accuracy cannot be guaranteed.
For general planning purposes only.



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3.0 Community Services Needs

The first stakeholder meeting also included exercises to identify the full range of the Deposit area's community services needs. This was the list then used at the second meeting to choose priorities. A tabulation of the needs, which are quite consistent with the objective analysis, plans and surveys discussed earlier, follows. It is self-explanatory.

Summary of Community Services Needs Identification Workshops

Category	Need
Communications	Cell towers (now being stalled)
Communications	Cellular phone reception
Communications	Cellular service
Communications	Communications upgrade (DSL, etc.)
Communications	High-speed internet service
Economic development	Advertising of cultural and historical assets
Economic development	Bakery
Economic development	Barber
Economic development	Building on strengths to attract and keep residents
Economic development	Community identity (e.g. "Western Catskills")
Economic development	Coordinated tourism gateways in Village and Towns
Economic development	Coordinating and expanding shopping hours
Economic development	Downtown parking that is signed and suitable for use
Economic development	Extended use of distance learning network
Economic development	Improved gateway (Routes 8, 10 and 17)
Economic development	Job and shopping opportunities
Economic development	Larger restaurant for functions
Economic development	Lowering the cost of living and, especially, taxes
Economic development	Multi-jurisdictional economic development strategy
Economic development	Parking
Economic development	Preservation and restoration of historical buildings
Economic development	Regionally linked visitor center
Economic development	Reinvestment in the community
Economic development	School and business infrastructure (e.g. youth business mentoring)
Economic development	Sharing of distance learning network with private sector & others (e.g. training)
Economic development	Visual experience for tourists
Economic development	Workers
Government needs	Accelerate sharing of municipal services and facilities with County/State help
Government needs	Building political support locally
Government needs	Combine courts, etc. (difficult to cross county lines and isolation a challenge)
Government needs	County and State cooperation
Government needs	Grant writing support
Government needs	Joint municipal planning
Government needs	Mainstreaming of Deposit under county programs to get more attention and \$'s
Government needs	Police Department (lack of trust, but improving)
Government needs	Regulations to receive development
Government needs	Regulations to receive development
Health care	Cardiac rehab services
Health care	Emergency Medical Services
Health care	Emergency Medical Services
Health care	Emergency Medical Services
Health care	Emergency Medical Services (community isolated)
Health care	Home health agency
Health care	Mental health services (no limited)
Health care	Weekend coverage for Health Center
Infrastructure	Sewer and water for industry
Infrastructure	Sewer and water infrastructure
Infrastructure	Sewer and water infrastructure for industrial growth
Infrastructure	Sewer and water system capacity
Infrastructure	Wastewater treatment
Infrastructure	Water and sewer capacity
Other needs	Addressing NYC obligations as "good neighbor" (e.g. fight over assessment)
Other needs	Affordable clothing
Other needs	Arts programming (by non-artists)
Other needs	Community participation

Category	Need
Other needs	Coordination of community groups, service clubs and website development
Other needs	Leadership group to collaborate on programs and sharing of information
Other needs	Leadership regarding consolidation and cooperation and organization training
Other needs	Public education on services available (e.g. better community calendar)
Other needs	Reuse old school site
Other needs	Subsidized housing
Recreation / social needs	Adult fitness center (affordable)
Recreation / social needs	Community center for adults, youth and seniors
Recreation / social needs	Community center for seniors, banquets and meetings
Recreation / social needs	Community center shared by all for multiple needs and management efficiency
Recreation / social needs	Joint community facility for all ages
Recreation / social needs	Multi-use community center (youth, seniors and co-op programs)
Recreation / social needs	Pedestrian link to Fireman's Park
Recreation / social needs	School multi-use programs
Recreation / social needs	Sharing of Deposit School and Village Free Library space
Recreation / social needs	Tennis courts
Recreation / social needs	Tennis courts at School
Recreation / social needs	Track field
Recreation / social needs	Waterfront recreation and hiking trails
Senior needs	Adopt a grandparent and other intergenerational programs
Senior needs	Adult respite care
Senior needs	Assisted living for seniors
Senior needs	Assisted living for seniors
Senior needs	Assisted living for seniors / adult home
Senior needs	Larger and confidential space for seniors
Senior needs	Meals on wheels
Senior needs	Meals on Wheels / satellite senior services
Senior needs	New senior meal site / aging out program support
Senior needs	North Sanford senior programs (isolated with special needs)
Senior needs	Senior center / community center
Senior needs	Senior facility space (now crowded)
Senior needs	Senior services
Transportation	Joint highway maintenance
Transportation	Public transportation (all types)
Transportation	Road maintenance
Transportation	Shared ride program
Transportation	Shared ride program for access to senior programs
Transportation	Shared use of recreational facilities whenever possible
Transportation	Taxi / bus service for seniors
Transportation	Taxi / public transportation
Transportation	Transportation
Transportation	Transportation (all types)
Transportation	Transportation to Village for services/getting services to the homebound
Youth needs	Activities for older teens
Youth needs	After school program coordination
Youth needs	Expand youth programs
Youth needs	Preschool and day care programs integrated with Head Start
Youth needs	School-centered programs
Youth needs	Services for disenfranchised youth
Youth needs	Socialization opportunities for youth
Youth needs	Theater group for children
Youth needs	Youth center and programs beyond sports
Youth needs	Youth center/counseling
Youth needs	Youth employment opportunities
Youth needs	Youth services

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4.0 Community Services Priorities

Stakeholders present at the November 20, 2004 meeting were presented with the foregoing information. They were also offered some additional general observations regarding the importance of the following criteria in assessing community services needs;

- a) maximizing the accessibility of community service programs and facilities,
- b) minimizing the costs of adapting to the needs of new participants, and
- c) maximizing the potential for partnerships.

Using these criteria, other information presented, recommendations of Town and Village plans and the list of community services needs identified at the previous meeting, stakeholders were divided into two discussion groups. Each was requested to identify their top three community service need priorities for the Deposit area. They were also asked to consider the following factors in their decision:

- The degree to which the activity or project would serve Deposit's future population,
- The number of existing residents who would be served and the extent of their needs,
- The secondary benefits or costs of the service,
- The affordability of the service from both a capital and operational perspective and where the money would come from, and
- The extent to which the service would make Deposit a more desirable place to live and do business

Using this list of priority needs, stakeholders were then asked to identify their "top priority community service need" addressing, as specifically as possible, a description of the need, the type of facility (if any), the prospective user population and other factors, including their reasons for their choices. Both groups independently identified economic development as the single most pressing need of the Deposit area, with a multi-use community center facility as a second priority. One of the groups also identified governmental infrastructure such as sewer, water and highway systems as a third priority on the basis that many of these needs were already being addressed. Economic development was selected as the top priority in both instances for the reason that it was viewed as a necessary prerequisite for any other sustained community services initiative.

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5.0 Recommendations

5.1 Community Services Recommendations

The top priority community services need identified by stakeholders was economic development of the Deposit area - a conclusion shared by the project consultants but arrived at independently by stakeholder discussion groups. It was felt that economic development was essential to reversing the financial pinch in which Deposit area communities and residents find themselves, a condition that limits the availability of resources for solving other community services needs.

Economic development is important, also, because it will, by generating increased business activity, benefit the entire community, rather than one interest group. It offers the potential for several spin-off benefits (e.g. increased community attractiveness for other enterprises) with little downside risk. It can be approached on an affordable basis without the necessity of raising large amounts of financial capital.

Several aspects of economic development that will need attention were identified. These included the following:

- Creation of additional career opportunities for youth must be an element of the program. Mentoring of youth and additional education regarding opportunities in natural resource industries, tourism and other self-employment opportunities need to be stressed.
- The Deposit area needs to establish a marketable identity for tourism promotion, business recruitment and building community pride that will reverse the population decline. Elements of such a program should include attractive gateway welcoming signage to the Deposit area, historical designations (and preservation), tour and trail development and a dedicated joint marketing effort by the three municipalities.
- The marketing program must be managed by a qualified paid individual (part-time or consulting) who can afford to dedicate the required time to the effort to make a difference, as opposed to relying upon hit or miss volunteer efforts.
- Tourism promotion and other economic development efforts need to be structured in the context of other regional and countywide programs to avoid waste competing efforts and to leverage as much help as possible from these programs by piggybacking on them.

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- Leadership development and public participation in the economic development program are critical to success. This will require the three municipalities working as a unit. It may also demand additional support from cooperating organizations who can bring staff resources and management capabilities, as well as operating financial support, to the table to achieve results. Cooperating organizations might include service providers, regional universities and entities such as the Greater Binghamton Coalition.
- Planning of the I-86 interchange area development needs to be coordinated with other municipal planning and economic development efforts to ensure these efforts are complementary, as well as to maximize the Deposit area's benefits from the highway upgrade.
- Community leaders need to make a special effort to capitalize on money and talent brought to the area by vacationers, second-home residents and new in-migrating households. These individuals need to be among those targeted in marketing of all events, products and services. Community leaders also need to directly involve these individuals in economic development initiatives whenever possible to take advantage of marketing skills and other resources they offer.

Although more action is needed, several steps have been already been taken in these directions. There is an existing tourist information kiosk, for example. Some walking tours have also been developed but need to be promoted. School-to-work programs are under development including a bluestone program under BOCES. New signage has been discussed and a basic website already exists. County tourism programs serve also to promote the area in a general way. Moreover, the community has come together to develop the “Day on the Delaware” program. These are all excellent initiatives that offer a good foundation on which to build an effective economic development program.

Although a multi-use community center was viewed as the second priority community services need for the Deposit area, stakeholders agreed that such a facility could also be an important feature of the economic development program chosen as the top priority need. If designed and operated as a key attraction or welcoming center, it should help to give Deposit the marketable identity the area requires while serving as a base of operations for the overall program. It should also add to the appeal of the area by improving quality of life within the community. Such a community center might also contribute to economic development by serving as a satellite site for the Small Business Development Center, for example.

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The creation of such a community center will require a substantial investment, raising questions about how to ensure the investment pays off for the taxpayers. Key questions include:

- 1) What is the size and nature of the facility Deposit needs? How can such a facility be "smart-sized" to fit these needs?
- 2) How can the costs of the facility to the community and taxpayers be minimized?

The first question requires an understanding of the nature of demand for facilities and how that demand will evolve over time. There are five principles that should be observed when planning and developing such a facility.

- **Identify the customers.** Where population growth is lacking, it is vitally important to understand the extent of demand for a center. Deposit area local users will be a fixed and, perhaps, declining pool for the foreseeable future. If the community overbuilds the facility, it is not, in the short term, likely to be rescued by population growth generating new demand.

Deposit area population decline generally cuts across all age groups. Therefore, no one type of user or use is likely to absorb the available space and programming associated with a community center. In such circumstances, even facilities that designed for single-use have evolved into multi-use centers. School buildings, for example, that once served only 5 to 17 year olds from 8 AM to 4 PM are now being used in new ways to accommodate the needs of senior citizens and other adult users. This provides some additional revenue for the school and relieves the demand for building facilities for senior citizen organizations or civic groups.

Potential users in the case of the Deposit area include seniors, youth (especially children not involved in organized sports) and visitors. This does not exclude other uses such as adult education, banquet activity, municipal meetings or organizational use. Indeed, they are desirable, but the emphasis from a planning perspective should be on the former, particularly visitors if economic development is the primary objective.

- **Accommodate multiple users.** The second principle of "smart-sizing" follows closely from the first. If the Deposit area cannot anticipate high and growing demand for the facility, it must be prepared to serve as many groups as it can with the one facility it can afford. Multi-use aspects of the facility must be maximized. This factor is implicit in the stakeholder recommendation that a multi-use community center serve, as a first objective, to support economic development through design as a

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community welcoming center and attraction.

- **Maximize accessibility by all users.** A commitment to multiple users, has clear implications for siting the facility. A single-purpose youth center could be located right next to the school. A single-purpose senior center could be placed in or near the senior housing complex. A welcome center for visitors could be located in the interchange area. A facility that serves multiple uses, however, should be accessible by a variety of means; cars, public transportation and, most importantly, walking.

Putting such a facility in a remote area of the community automatically limits the number and types of users. A reasonably prominent but walkable facility, on the other hand, will automatically serve the very young and the very old in nearby areas. Adding adequate parking, convenient highway access and appropriate directional signage to such a site will make it accessible for a variety of other uses as well.

- **Minimize the cost of adapting to new uses.** A facility such as the multi-use center proposed needs to be flexible in design. During the course of a day, the same space could be used for games, dining and exercise with other space for exhibits, for example. As Deposit area population goes through additional transitions, uses may change over the years. The facility should be flexibly designed to respond easily and inexpensively.
- **Maximize the possibilities of partnerships.** One of the great advantages of a multi-use community facility is that its costs can be spread across the budgets of a variety of organizations and agencies. This is a complicated situation to arrange, however. It is particularly difficult if the potential partners realize they are being “retrofitted” into a facility that was designed for another use.

Consequently, if the decision is made to pursue a new multi-use facility for the Deposit area, representatives of seniors, youth groups and regional tourism promotion entities should be brought into the discussion and planning process early. This will serve to set expectations on how the facility will be configured and which group will be responsible for which part of the overall budget.

This is also critical to securing the management capabilities required to plan, finance, develop and operate a multi-purpose community center that can also serve economic development interests. It will be appropriate to consult with potential partners early in the process to identify the most workable arrangements. Such partners might, for example, include the Deposit Area Foundation, a regional YMCA, a Boys and Girls Club or

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similar organizations.

The second of the major questions goes right to the bottom line: “who will pay for this facility?” Indeed, when a community creates a new facility of any kind, whether it is a school, senior center, pool, or even an airport, the public discussion focuses on the costs involved and how they should be controlled. This is an important part of the process. However, there is another dimension to this that Deposit area leaders should not overlook in the case of a community center. The costs involved in developing a facility are also creating a physical asset that has the potential for generating revenue.

A multi-generational center with a conference space and kitchen can function strictly as a community facility, with taxpayers and local groups bearing all of the costs. On the other hand, if such a facility is developed as part of an overall community economic development strategy, that conference space and kitchen can be configured so that, when it isn’t serving community needs, it can be leased out to business and private groups for conferences and functions, turning a “cost problem” into a “revenue opportunity.” If a welcome center is part of the project and coordinated with regional tourism promotion efforts, this, too, may supply a source of some funding.

5.2 Implementation Plan

It is recommended the following steps be taken to implement this plan for meeting Deposit area community services needs:

- 1) **The Towns of Deposit and Sanford and the Village of Deposit should enter into a cooperation agreement for jointly funding an economic development initiative for the Deposit area.** This cooperation agreement should be drafted with the assistance of the Broome and Delaware County Planning Departments and specifically designate how local leadership of the program will be exercised. The Counties cannot provide the long-term leadership required - only the three municipalities can. One of the communities should take the lead in managing the funds or an independent party such as the Chamber of Commerce or Deposit Foundation should be recruited for this purpose.
- 2) **Funding should, at the outset, primarily be used to finance the hiring of a part-time staff person or to cover the expenses of a qualified volunteer who can devote time to developing a Deposit area marketing program.** Such funding and programs should be modest in nature to start (perhaps \$10,000 to \$20,000/year) with achievable objectives. These might include developing a Deposit area brochure, establishing trails and tours, erecting welcoming signage, establishing a an information center and similar

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initiatives. Additional events may also help. Small accomplishments such as these will make the greatest impression at the least cost and create the environment for tackling larger projects.

- 3) **One of the first objectives of the Deposit area marketing program should be the crafting of a marketing theme in the context of other regional economic development and tourism promotion efforts.** The theme should be unique and descriptive, avoiding such overused terms as "Historic Deposit" or "Victorian Deposit" but link to broader promotions. While the area is clearly a gateway to the Western Catskills and should be sold as such, "gateway" may also not work well at this point given that Hancock is starting to sell itself as the gateway to the Delaware.

There are numerous other opportunities, however, and developing a theme that merchants and others can work into their own advertising will be very important. It is suggested that professional marketing help be secured to assist with this task. It might come from retired marketing personnel, local media or others. An enhanced joint website for the three municipalities should be developed to help sell the theme.

- 4) **The economic development program should, in the long-term, also build partnerships with the Deposit Central School and others to foster local career development.** The resources of the School should also be available for training and business development support. This presents an opportunity to make Deposit unique among small communities in the region, creating a marketable competitive advantage for attracting new business.
- 5) **A multi-purpose community center can be an important element in economic development if it is designed to meet visitor as well as resident needs.** It will take considerable planning and lead time to design, finance and plan the management and operation of a such a facility. Therefore, it needs to start soon, even if this is not the top priority and must take second stage to other economic development initiatives at the outset. It is suggested that this report be used as a basis for a combined effort by the three municipalities to solicit potential partners.
- 6) **An essential next step in the development of a multi-purpose community center is the designation of responsible local leadership and the securing of an appropriate development partner.** The initial cooperation agreement should spell out how leadership responsibilities will be assumed and shared among the municipalities. An introductory meeting with potential partners (e.g. a YMCA, a Boys and Girls Club, the Deposit Foundation and others) should also be held in the near future.

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The two County Planning Departments could, with the approval of the two Towns and Village assist in identifying such potential partners. Assuming there are multiple possibilities, formal proposal(s) can be solicited for further evaluation.

Once a partner has been identified, funding could be solicited for design and feasibility studies, followed by a business plan that includes both capital and operational financing plans. The two Counties can assist in identifying initial seed money and providing technical support to get things started but the three municipalities will need to work as a unit, a council of governments of sort, that ensures this project is consistent with the greater Deposit area's needs, does not overburden local budgets and supports economic development. There can be no substitute for designated local leadership if the community center project is to move forward.

- 7) **Decisions regarding the specific location of a community center and the acceptance of prospective land donations should be reserved pending the selection of a development partner and associated feasibility studies and business plans.** The availability of a donated site for such a center is an important asset in attracting a development partner and making the project feasible, but none of the parties should be locked into a preconceived version of the center before all the proper planning has been completed. Indeed, land costs are often the least important factor in development project feasibility. Simply knowing that a site is available is the most important factor at this point .
- 8) **The Deposit area needs to build on its designation as an adjacent center of employment for the watershed.** There is some potential to secure funding assistance from the City of New York for economic development initiatives that support watershed communities by creating business and employment opportunities outside the watershed proper. Deposit is ideally situated for this purpose. The three communities, acting together, can develop some meaningful projects linked to the watershed that will not threaten it and deserve funding support. This needs to be another long-term focus of the economic development program.