

# PATHWAY TO OUR FUTURE

## GUILDERLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



## TOWN OF GUILDERLAND

### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

Purpose: Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) Meeting #3  
Date and Time: April 17, 2023, 7:00 pm  
Location: Guilderland Town Hall, 5209 Western Turnpike, Guilderland, NY  
Attendees: See Below

Agenda Item	Discussion	Key Decisions & Outcomes
<b>Welcome &amp; Agenda</b>	<p>Town Planner Kenneth Kovalchik welcomed Committee members, Town staff, and members of the public. He then introduced Jaclyn Hakes (MJ Engineering), who provided a brief overview of the meeting agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Committee Chair/Co-Chair Discussion</li><li>• Public Engagement Update</li><li>• Visioning Discussion</li><li>• Next Steps</li><li>• Public Comment</li></ul> <p>Ms. Hakes noted that Committee Member Betton was joining the meeting via teleconference.</p>	None.

<p><b>Committee Chair/Co-Chair Discussion</b></p>	<p>Jaclyn Hakes (MJ) noted that the role of a Committee Chair/Co-Chair would be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead CPUC Meetings and the Required Public Hearing, with assistance from the consultant team.</li> <li>• Participate in monthly Coordination Calls with Town Staff and the consultant team</li> </ul> <p>Jaclyn Hakes (MJ) asked the Committee for nominations to the Chair/Co-Chair role. Committee Member Lott nominated Committee Member Betton for the Chair position. Committee Member Wilson nominated Committee Member Abbruzzese for the Vice Chair position. Both nominated Committee Members confirmed willingness to serve in those respective votes. A vote being taken, Committee Member Betton was confirmed as Chair and Committee Member Abbruzzese was confirmed as Vice Chair of the Guilderland Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC). The vote was unanimous.</p>	<p>Committee Member Betton was named CPUC Chair and Committee Member Abbruzzese was named CPUC Vice Chair.</p>
<p><b>Public Engagement Update</b></p>	<p>Jesse McCaughey (MJ) updated the Committee on Public Engagement activities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder Group Discussions</li> <li>• Public Open House</li> <li>• Community Survey</li> <li>• Project Website Comments</li> <li>• Student Engagement</li> <li>• Public Workshop #2</li> </ul> <p>Mr. McCaughey noted that Stakeholder Group Discussions took place via Zoom on March 7 &amp; 8, 2023. A list of individuals with professional expertise in the following stakeholder categories was generated by the CPUC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local &amp; Regional Partners</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Public Engagement Update (Cont'd)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment, Sustainability &amp; Recreation</li> <li>• Business &amp; Economic Development</li> <li>• Arts, History &amp; Education</li> <li>• Neighborhood &amp; Community Organizations</li> <li>• Transportation &amp; Mobility</li> </ul> <p>Stakeholders participated in facilitated discussions touching upon existing conditions, strengths, challenges, and opportunities in the Town of Guilderland. Major themes arising from the six (6) stakeholder discussions included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Layout of Town presents natural and constructed barriers (Normanskill, major roads/rail lines) to connectivity</li> <li>• Beneficial location: proximity to jobs, highways, cultural amenities, etc.</li> <li>• School system is highly regarded: significant draw to and employer for Guilderland</li> <li>• Parks and Open Space: Tawasentha, Pine Bush, trail system are assets</li> <li>• Greater uptake of Conservation Easement program is an opportunity</li> <li>• Route 20/Western Ave is the Town's "Main Street" – presents challenges and opportunities</li> <li>• Walkability is a concern (progress of strategic sidewalk connections recognized)</li> <li>• Public transportation: bus service in Town is uneven</li> <li>• Water quality and invasive species important concerns at Watervliet Reservoir</li> <li>• Affordability of housing a concern, especially for seniors and those on fixed incomes</li> <li>• Changing trends in retail present opportunities and challenges</li> </ul> <p><i>Public Open House &amp; Visioning Workshop #1</i></p>	
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<p><b>Public Engagement Update (Cont'd)</b></p>	<p>The Public Open House &amp; Visioning Workshop #1 was held on March 20, 2023, at Guilderland Town Hall. More than one hundred community members – representing a range of ages – attended the event.</p> <p>Jesse McCaughey (MJ) provided an overview of key themes that emerged from submitted public input at the Open House event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desire for more walkable/bikeable community</li> <li>• Value of open space and agriculture to the community</li> <li>• Concerns about housing type and affordability</li> <li>• Safety and aesthetic concerns on Route 20</li> <li>• Desire for interventions to address traffic</li> <li>• Need for gathering places emphasized</li> <li>• Desire to maintain and/or enhance the attractive character of the Town</li> <li>• Appreciation for library, parks, and education system</li> <li>• Concern for water supply and water quality</li> </ul> <p>Mr. McCaughey (MJ) then provided an update on the Community Survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online via Survey Monkey</li> <li>• Launched on March 13<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• Open for responses through the month of April – 467 received as of April 14<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• Participants can access on mobile devices, computers, or hard copy</li> <li>• Consultant Team prepares summary of survey response highlights</li> </ul> <p>The Community Survey was promoted at the Public Open House &amp; Visioning Workshop #1, where QR-code-linked cards were distributed. Visitors to the Project</p>	<p>An event summary including all public input received at the Open House has been transmitted to the CPUC for review, and will be uploaded to the Project Website (<a href="http://pathwaytoguilderlandsfuture.com">pathwaytoguilderlandsfuture.com</a>) on April 18, 2023.</p>
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<p><b>Public Engagement Update (Cont'd)</b></p>	<p>Website also receive an automatic invitation to complete the Community Survey.</p> <p>Mr. McCaughey (MJ) also noted that public input can be submitted via the Comment portal of the Project Website. The Comment portal is accessible to the public throughout the Comprehensive Plan Update process. Submitted comments are saved and transmitted to CPUC Members on a regular basis for review and consideration.</p> <p>Mr. McCaughey (MJ) provided an update on upcoming public engagement activities, as well. The consultant team has begun coordinating with District and school leadership in Guilderland to gather input from students. The planned student engagement is intended to elicit input about perceived strengths and challenges/needs in Guilderland from younger Town residents. It is anticipated that this student outreach will be completed before the end of the current school year.</p> <p>Mr. McCaughey (MJ) noted that a second Public Workshop event is under development. The Workshop will consist of facilitated, topic-based “speed round” discussions. The specific timing of the event is to be determined.</p>	
<p><b>Introduction to Visioning</b></p>	<p>Jaclyn Hakes (MJ) provided an overview of the purpose and features of a Community Vision, explaining the role that the Vision plays in guiding future components of a Comprehensive Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A vision statement establishes the direction of the community over the next five to ten years</li> <li>• It forms the basis for the Comprehensive Plan</li> <li>• All subsequent recommendations aim to achieve the established vision</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Introduction to Visioning (Cont'd)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use present tense (as if you are ten years in the future)</li> </ul> <p>Subjects typically addressed in a Community Vision include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common values of a community</li> <li>• Qualities, resources and assets that make a community unique or describe its identity</li> <li>• Attributes of the community that people want to preserve or change</li> <li>• Preferred future for each subject area of the community</li> </ul> <p>Ms. Hakes (MJ) displayed and read aloud the Vision from the existing 2001 Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Guilderland:</p> <p><i>The Town of Guilderland envisions itself as a distinctive suburban and rural community within the Capital District. It is a desirable and attainable place for families and individuals of all ages to live and work, with a large assortment of local and regional opportunities for high-quality employment, education, recreation, and cultural activity. These opportunities are easily accessed within the Town and throughout the region by a varied and efficient transportation system that emphasizes mobility and safety for all residents. Guilderland's settlement patterns are focused around attractive and vibrant neighborhoods, and are based on a recognition of – and shared sense of responsibility for – the Town's natural, agricultural, open space, and scenic resources and the value of these resources to the current and future health, culture and economy of the community. It is a community that looks to the future in the belief that through continued community dialogue and action, it can manage and shape change for the better.</i></p> <p>Ms. Hakes (MJ) asked CPUC Members which elements of the existing Vision resonated with them and remained relevant. Input</p>	
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<p><b>Introduction to Visioning (Cont'd)</b></p>	<p>received from Committee members included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing Vision seems “generic” – could apply to any Town in the region</li> <li>• Guilderland has “3 or 4 different flavors” – village, town center, urban, rural</li> <li>• Emphasize differences between neighborhoods</li> <li>• Agreement that town has different “flavors” or components</li> <li>• Desire to express openness and accessibility to people of different physical abilities, ethnicities, and backgrounds – “no boundaries to living here”</li> <li>• Varied transportation system important element – public transportation in Guilderland not as accessible as it could be</li> <li>• Desire to preserve agriculture</li> <li>• A need for balance between preservation and development</li> <li>• Guilderland is a “varied” Town – from urban to rural, with different problems in different areas</li> <li>• Need density to make public transportation viable</li> <li>• Neighborhood approach needed – no “one size fits all” for Guilderland</li> <li>• Limited “Economic diversity” is an issue facing Guilderland</li> <li>• New technologies (e.g., electric vehicles, broadband internet) may be important to factor into planning</li> <li>• It is also important to honor the Town’s history</li> </ul> <p>Ms. Hakes (MJ) encouraged CPUC Members to continue thinking of potential themes and topics for inclusion of the updated Vision.</p>	<p>CPUC Members will submit ideas for Vision topics/themes/language to the Consultant Team prior to the next CPUC Meeting, where the Visioning discussion will be continued.</p>
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<p><b>Next Steps</b></p>	<p>Jaclyn Hakes (MJ) provided an overview of the next steps in the Comprehensive Plan Update process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision Statement (Draft) Preparation</li> <li>• Public Workshop #2 - TBD</li> </ul> <p>Next CPUC Meeting – May 9, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.</p>	
<p><b>Public Comment</b></p>	<p>Jaclyn Hakes (MJ) requested the approval of Committee Chair Betton and Committee Vice-Chair Abbruzzese to conclude the regular business of the meeting and open the floor to public comment. Approval being granted, Ms. Hakes invited members of the public to share comments.</p> <p>The following comments were provided by members of the public present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern was expressed that there is only one access road to the middle school, which may complicate emergency response efforts</li> <li>• Question about what will happen to “old” neighborhood plans that were developed after the existing Comprehensive Plan</li> <li>• Support expressed for newly installed traffic roundabouts</li> <li>• Support expressed for the 2001 Vision Statement, particularly the sentiment about “stewardship of the land”</li> <li>• The Town needs places for children to hang out</li> <li>• Suggestion to extend the closing date of the Community Survey</li> <li>• Suggestion to engage with local/neighborhoods groups to gather input</li> <li>• Question about whether a list of Stakeholder Group Discussion participants would be posted to the Project Website</li> </ul>	<p>Participating organizations/agencies and input received from Stakeholder</p>



<p><b>Public Comment (Cont'd)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question about which part of Guilderland each CPUC Member lives in (CPUC Members provided neighborhood locations in turn)</li> <li>• Suggestion to extend outreach to senior centers, library, schools</li> <li>• Request to limit the number of “ugly metal buildings” in Guilderland</li> <li>• Statement that resident finds new apartments in Town to be unaffordable</li> <li>• Suggestion to increase advertising of events</li> <li>• Request to preserve open space and involve community to a greater extent</li> <li>• Concerns expressed about “overdevelopment”</li> <li>• Desire for Town to say “no” to zoning exceptions</li> <li>• Concerns expressed about tree cutting</li> <li>• Support for getting public input at different locations around Town, at different times, to allow for maximum participation</li> <li>• Further support for extending Community Survey end date expressed</li> </ul> <p>Jaclyn Hakes (MJ) thanked all those in attendance. CPUC Chair Betton made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Vice Chair Abbruzzese. All CPUC Members present voting aye, the meeting was adjourned.</p>	<p>Group Discussions to be posted to Project Website on April 18th</p>
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This meeting summary conveys our understanding of the items discussed and agreements reached at this meeting. Please forward any additions, corrections and/or questions to my attention.

Submitted by:

Jesse McCaughey, MJ Engineering and Land Surveying, P.C.

cc: Consultant Team, Comprehensive Plan Update Committee, Town of Guilderland, File

## Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC)

Name	Present
James Abbruzzese	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Dominic Rigosu	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Tara Cristalli	<input type="checkbox"/>
Richard Brustman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Caitlin Ferrante	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cody Betton (via phone)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Lisa Hart	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Stephen Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Elizabeth Lott	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## Town Representatives & Planning Support

Name	Present
Supervisor Peter Barber	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ken Kovalchik	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## Consultant Team

Name	Affiliation	Present
Jaclyn Hakes, Project Manager	M.J. Engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jesse McCaughey	M.J. Engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>