

# PATHWAY TO OUR FUTURE

## GUILDERLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



# TOWN OF GUILDERLAND

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

Purpose: Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) Meeting #7  
 Date and Time: November 14, 2023, 7:00 pm  
 Location: Guilderland Town Hall, 5209 Western Turnpike, Guilderland, NY  
 Attendees: See Below

Agenda Item	Discussion	Key Decisions & Outcomes
<p><b>Welcome</b></p>	<p>Chair of the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) Cody Betton welcomed Committee members, Town staff, and members of the public. Chairperson Betton introduced Jesse McCaughey (MJ Engineering), who provided an overview of the meeting agenda, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Schedule Update</li> <li>• Public Engagement Update</li> <li>• Subcommittee Draft Goals &amp; Recommendations Discussion</li> <li>• CPUC Open Discussion</li> <li>• Next Steps</li> <li>• Public Comment</li> </ul>	<p>None.</p>

<p><b>Project Schedule Update</b></p>	<p>Jesse McCaughey (MJ) provided an update on the Comprehensive Plan Update process, highlighting key milestones such as Public Workshops, development of the Community Profile &amp; Inventory, the creation of Vision/Goals/Strategies/Recommendations.</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p><b>Public Engagement Update</b></p>	<p>Jesse McCaughey (MJ) updated the Committee on Public Engagement activities, including completed/ongoing activities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Website Comment Portal</li> <li>• Public Open House/Visioning</li> <li>• Stakeholder Focus Groups</li> <li>• Community Survey</li> <li>• Student Engagement</li> <li>• Public Workshop #2</li> </ul> <p>Mr. McCaughey (MJ) also noted future public engagement activities that have been outlined within the scope of the process, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pop-Up Table</li> <li>• Public Workshop #3</li> </ul> <p>Mr. McCaughey noted that a primary purpose of Public Workshop #3 would be to introduce draft recommendations generated by the CPUC for public input.</p>	
<p><b>Subcommittee Draft Goals &amp; Recommendations Discussion</b></p>	<p>Jesse McCaughey (MJ) introduced the six themed subcommittees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• Economic Growth</li> <li>• Environment, Climate Change &amp; Resiliency</li> <li>• Neighborhoods &amp; Housing</li> <li>• Parks, Recreation, Open Space &amp; Historic Resources</li> <li>• Transportation &amp; Mobility</li> </ul> <p>The subcommittees were responsible for organizing their own meeting times to create a set of draft goals and recommendations.</p>	

<p><b>Subcommittee Draft Goals &amp; Recommendations Discussion (cont.)</b></p>	<p>Mr. McCaughey noted that these recommendations are for the consideration of the CPUC to review, continue to refine, and to possibly include in the draft plan update.</p> <p>Mr. McCaughey then introduced overlapping themes proposed by two or more subcommittees.</p> <p><b>Overlapping Common Themes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater Walkability</li> <li>• Conservation Easement Program</li> <li>• Tree/forest management</li> <li>• Strategic siting of solar panels</li> <li>• Enhance productive partnerships</li> <li>• Connection between density and supportive infrastructure</li> </ul> <p>Mr. McCaughey then listed the goals and recommendations put forth by each subcommittee:</p> <p><b>Agriculture Subcommittee</b></p> <p><b>Goal:</b> <i>Ensure the long-term viability of agriculture as a vocation and economic pursuit within the Town of Guilderland by prioritizing the preservation of suitable farmland and by promoting agriculture as an important component of the Town’s economy and character</i></p> <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote the Town’s conservation easement program, offering flexible, tiered incentives to landowners who dedicate acreage to remain undeveloped</li> <li>2. Prioritize preservation of prime agricultural soils and scenic viewsheds in future siting decisions for solar energy infrastructure in the Town</li> <li>3. Assess and weigh the potential for harmful impacts to existing rural character when evaluating proposed expansion of municipal water/sewer infrastructure in western Guilderland</li> </ol>	
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<p><b>Subcommittee Draft Goals &amp; Recommendations Discussion (cont.)</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Explore the use of flexible zoning options – e.g., cluster subdivisions – to confine development in rural portions of the Town to smaller lots and thereby encourage the preservation of agricultural enterprise/open space in the remaining land area</li> <li>5. Explore options for light retail/farm service business on the western end of US-20 near Princetown to serve rural Guilderland</li> <li>6. Form a standing agricultural committee, with oversight by the Town, to advocate for the productive use of agricultural lands for farming and other agricultural activities</li> <li>7. Prioritize the responsible management of forested areas in Guilderland, which can support syrup production, honey production, and woodlots and which also serve as important wildlife habitat</li> <li>8. In partnership with the City of Watervliet, seek grants and other funding sources to support the clean-up of western areas of Watervliet Reservoir, which are visible from US-20</li> <li>9. Explore the creation of a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program, with flexible terms, to protect existing open spaces and farm lands and incentivize new development in areas with existing supportive infrastructure.</li> </ol> <p>One comment added by a CPUC member is that Town programs, like the conservation easement program, are voluntary and that there is a need to consider landowner property rights.</p> <p><b>Economic Growth Subcommittee</b> <b>Goal:</b> <i>Establish and promote a diverse and strategic economic base that provides income, employment, and fiscal resources to</i></p>	
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<p><b>Subcommittee Draft Goals &amp; Recommendations Discussion (cont.)</b></p>	<p><i>the community in a manner that is compatible with the future land use plan and unique identity of Guilderland.</i></p> <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue and expand relationships and incentives available through federal, state, county and local organizations that support both the existing and future business community and promote Guilderland's economic future.</li> <li>2. Identify existing and potential centers for economic and community development and encourage appropriate development in those locations with marketing efforts, infrastructure investment and economic development incentives.</li> <li>3. Identify and establish the desired mix and scale of businesses in a manner that recognizes, and is sensitive to, the neighborhood setting and cultural diversity of the Town. This includes supporting home-based businesses.</li> <li>4. Promote the growth of local business. In doing so the Town should organize, advertise, and encourage local small businesses to participate in marketing programs, i.e., nationally recognized Small Business Week.</li> <li>5. Support agriculture in Guilderland and identify ways in which the town can make this possible.</li> <li>6. Develop strategies to attract well-paying, job-creating employers who will be able to provide employment opportunities for Guilderland's community and offers high quality of life.</li> <li>7. Encourage partnerships with higher learning institutions including the University at Albany, the Albany Nanotech Complex and related entities to promote economic</li> </ol>	
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<p><b>Subcommittee Draft Goals &amp; Recommendations Discussion (cont.)</b></p>	<p>development opportunities in the town.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Seek relationships with educational schools/institutions as they play a crucial role in the well-being and future success of a community. A skilled and educated workforce can attract businesses to the area, leading to economic development and job opportunities.</li> <li>9. Explore developing a new village-like “planned community,” built from the ground up, in the north-west corner of Guilderland. (Perhaps an all Green Community.)</li> <li>10. Periodically do a formal review of the Comprehensive Plan and report on progress towards its goals.</li> </ol> <p>Mr. Betton elaborated that people of different opinions would find some common ground in the presented goals and recommendations of the economic subcommittee.</p> <p><b>Environment, Climate Change &amp; Resiliency Subcommittee</b></p> <p><b>Goal #1</b> <i>Preserve the quality of life and Town character in Guilderland through strategic hazard mitigation and resiliency measures to address the impacts of a changing climate.</i></p> <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Build on Guilderland’s designation as a registered Climate Smart Community by completing the enumerated criteria for Bronze-level Climate Smart Community Certification by 2030.</li> <li>2. Encourage and incentivize resiliency through town practices, procedures, rules and regulations wherever practicable. Resiliency measures include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Stormwater infrastructure improvements</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	
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<p><b>Subcommittee Draft Goals &amp; Recommendations Discussion (cont.)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wetland protection</li> <li>○ Reducing heat island effects through tree planting and preservation</li> <li>○ Stewardship of Town forests and open space for ecosystem health</li> <li>○ Creation of alert system for extreme weather events</li> <li>○ Preservation of open space</li> <li>○ Improving environmental education and outreach at Town parks</li> </ul> <p><b>Goal #2</b> <i>Reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions through forward-thinking environmental, transportation, and energy planning.</i></p> <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wherever feasible, encourage and incentivize clean energy production, including at Town-owned facilities</li> <li>2. Encourage low- or no-GHG-producing transportation options in Guilderland by supporting infrastructure for electric vehicles, cycling, walking, and public transportation</li> <li>3. Encourage agricultural practices that sequester carbon such as forest pastures and no-till seeding</li> <li>4. Encourage the use of energy-efficient lighting and fixtures such as LED, where such applications can reduce ambient light pollution as well as energy consumption</li> </ol> <p>A cooling station for summer was recommended by a CPUC member.</p>	
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<p><b>Subcommittee Draft Goals &amp; Recommendations Discussion (cont.)</b></p>	<p>The three remaining subcommittee goals and recommendations were presented by Jaclyn Hakes (MJ):</p> <p><b>Neighborhoods &amp; Housing Subcommittee</b></p> <p><b>Goal #1:</b> <i>Provide a balanced blend of quality housing opportunities, including a desirable range of housing types and price ranges, which are affordable and accessible to residents.</i></p> <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Development that prioritizes energy efficiency, water conservation, and the use of sustainable materials</li> <li>2. Support for existing structures as housing resources for the Town and its residents, including possible incentives for renovating smaller, older homes to maintain diversity in the available housing stock</li> <li>3. Create park amenities for residents, prioritizing underserved areas within the Town such as Westmere</li> <li>4. Encourage the development of smaller homes, especially one-story homes that serve the needs of older residents</li> <li>5. Promote age-in-place initiatives such as Guilderland Senior Services</li> <li>6. Encourage developments that designate some portion of the overall housing units as affordable, as determined by a percentage of area median income</li> <li>7. Proactively develop guidelines for Accessory Dwelling Units in the Town</li> </ol>	
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<p><b>Subcommittee Draft Goals &amp; Recommendations Discussion (cont.)</b></p>	<p><b>Goal #2</b> <i>Preserve and enhance Guilderland’s identity, image, and quality of life; and maintain and strengthen the distinction between the Town’s developed and rural areas, as well as the distinction between the town’s neighborhoods and commercial areas.</i></p> <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Look for ways to improve parking regulations to serve the Town better: changing wording to “recommended” rather than “required”, shared parking for adjacent businesses, parking issues associated with ADUs</li> <li>2. Partner with land trusts to achieve the goal of preserving open space in Town</li> <li>3. Encourage and promote use of solar panels on strategic Town property locations</li> <li>4. Encourage and potentially incentivize residential rooftop solar panels</li> <li>5. Retain and strengthen the character of Guilderland’s residential neighborhoods, and develop building, landscaping and signage guidelines for commercial areas to create a cohesive and aesthetically pleasing visual environment and sense of place</li> <li>6. Encourage street tree planting and other aesthetic improvements in residential neighborhoods using native/non-invasive species.</li> <li>7. Hire a town arborist to evaluate trees in town, protect heritage trees from development, and enforce the code provisions regulating the amount of trees that can be cut down for any development project.</li> </ol>	
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<p><b>Subcommittee Draft Goals &amp; Recommendations Discussion (cont.)</b></p>	<p><b>Parks, Recreation, Open Space &amp; Historic Resources Subcommittee</b></p> <p><b>Goal #1</b> <i>Recognize Guilderland’s historic resources and preserve and enhance cultural opportunities in the community.</i></p> <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support the work of interested community residents and organizations who are already working on protecting and enhancing the Town’s historic and cultural heritage. Shall maintain open communication with interested parties.</li> <li>2. Develop land use regulations and incentives to protect historic/archaeologically sensitive areas.</li> <li>3. Enhance the opportunities for residents and visitors to experience the Town’s historic and cultural sites. The Town shall provide the opportunity of local organizations to utilize the historic sites for educational and fundraising purposes.</li> <li>4. Cultivate public awareness of the Town’s historical and cultural resources through the schools, Town website and local newspapers.</li> <li>5. Develop closer ties with the University of Albany and increase community access and awareness of its diverse array of programs and facilities and implement suggestions UAlbany provided in their research.</li> <li>6. Promote educational opportunities, festivals and other community observances. Including at the Mynderse-Frederick House, Schoolcraft House, Ballet Barn, and Town Parks, and any other locations the town may acquire, should be used.</li> </ol>	
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<p><b>Subcommittee Draft Goals &amp; Recommendations Discussion (cont.)</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Evaluate the adequacy of existing facilities to support programs for youth, seniors, small-scale performances, recitals, concerts, and other public events. Such plans must include ADA compliance.</li> <li>8. Create strategies for the sustained financial support of the Town’s historical and cultural sites and programs. Financial support must be part of the Town budget, and also include fundraising events for specific projects; similar to other municipalities which have had fundraising through “buy a brick.”</li> </ol> <p><b>Goal #2</b> <i>Provide sufficient and diverse well-located, and affordable, active and passive recreational opportunities for all Guilderland residents. Efforts to provide a connectivity green space to link various recreational areas to each other wherever feasible shall be deployed.</i></p> <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formalize a community dialogue to continually evaluate the Town’s recreational facilities and programs to ensure responsiveness to the Town’s changing recreational desires.</li> <li>2. Work with other municipalities, the school districts, the YMCA, the University of Albany, Guilderland Public Library and private recreation providers to maximize year-round recreational opportunities for Town residents, especially youth and senior citizens.</li> <li>3. Maintain and upgrade the Town’s existing recreational programs and facilities.</li> <li>4. Identify a network of multi-use trails that link neighborhoods with schools, commercial and entertainment centers, Town service facilities, the public transit system, and open spaces.</li> </ol>	
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<p><b>Subcommittee Draft Goals &amp; Recommendations Discussion (cont.)</b></p>	<p>5. Identify potentially underutilized resources and explore the creation of new recreational opportunities for Town Residents.</p> <p><b>Goal #3</b> <i>Protect important agricultural, natural, and open space resources, which contribute to the diversity, character, aesthetics, economy, and general health and welfare of the Town. Resources such as the Watervliet Reservoir and watershed, viable farmland, ravines, woodlots, streams, aquifers, wetlands, floodplains, the escarpment, viewsheds, and the pine bush are recognized for their role in the drainage, water supply, agriculture, aesthetics, recreation and wildlife habitat.</i></p> <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain and improve water quality.</li> <li>2. Create incentives for property owners to protect important agricultural, natural and open space resources including financial, regulatory, and other tools available for this purpose.</li> <li>3. Encourage community participation in a county-based agriculture and farmland protection program.</li> <li>4. Identify incentives and actions by the community to support farming as an economic activity in Guilderland.</li> <li>5. Discourage impact to sensitive resources such as steep slopes, stream corridors, wetlands, and significant habitat/open spaces and viewsheds.</li> <li>6. Identify ways to help protect and improve water quality in the reservoir, including encouraging cooperative efforts with the City of Watervliet (property owner) and neighboring communities located in the watershed of the Watervliet Reservoir.</li> </ol>	
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<p><b>Subcommittee Draft Goals &amp; Recommendations Discussion (cont.)</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Identify new potential groundwater sources for municipal water supply and protect these areas from incompatible, potentially polluting land uses through a well-head protection plan.</li> <li>8. Create an action plan for the identification, voluntary acquisition and management of properties that comprise a comprehensive open space and natural resource preservation system.</li> <li>9. Establish a green belt area around the hamlets to preserve open spaces.</li> </ol> <p><b>Transportation &amp; Mobility Subcommittee</b></p> <p><b>Goal:</b> <i>Provide safe, convenient, and efficient transportation options for people and goods within, through and around the Town of Guilderland, which are supportive of the Town’s future land use plan, and which minimize the impact of traffic on the Town’s Character and quality of life.</i></p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enhance pedestrian mobility in all areas of Town by expanding sidewalk and the multi-use trail system to better link community centers, recreation, neighborhoods, shopping and employment areas.</li> <li>2. Increase safety for cyclists and pedestrians by adding “Share the Road” signage and by evaluating ways to increase pedestrian visibility and crossing times at key intersections in Town</li> <li>3. Consider the capabilities and characteristics of electric-powered bicycles in the design of bicycle infrastructure within the Town</li> <li>4. Encourage and incentivize the integration of shared bike/pedestrian paths in new housing developments, linking such areas to existing neighborhoods as</li> </ol>	
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<p><b>Subcommittee Draft Goals &amp; Recommendations Discussion (cont.)</b></p>	<p>well as other amenities like parks, community services, and retail</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Install benches, bicycle racks, and other appropriate street furniture in strategic locations to incentivize and support non-motorized transportation options in Guilderland</li> <li>6. Extend and enhance pedestrian walkways and safe crossings westward from Stuyvesant Plaza, facilitating greater foot traffic for businesses along Western Avenue</li> <li>7. Encourage walkable residential nodes, connected to commercial offerings and other amenities</li> <li>8. Promote the use of CDTA Flex service in Guilderland</li> <li>9. Initiate a “Bike Guilderland Week” to promote alternative transportation options in Guilderland</li> <li>10. Partner with the NYS Department of Transportation to facilitate a pedestrian needs study of Guilderland</li> <li>11. Partner with relevant regional organizations to encourage bike share facilities at key locations within the Town</li> <li>12. Partner with the Thruway Authority to evaluate the potential for diverting a higher percentage of local traffic to the Thruway and, thus, reduce the traffic burden on Western Avenue</li> <li>13. Partner with regional employers and the CDTA to increase the use of public transportation for daily commuting, including potential expansion of the Universal Bus Pass system in Guilderland</li> </ol> <p>CPUC members were asked to complete the following over the next month.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review subcommittee input</li> <li>• Identify language edits.</li> <li>• Identify additional recommendations.</li> </ul>	
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<p><b>Subcommittee Draft Goals &amp; Recommendations Discussion (cont.)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide questions or identify issues that were not addressed.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>CPUC Open Discussion</b></p>	<p>One CPUC commented that some recommendations were strategic or operational. Many recommendations varied by scale.</p> <p>MJ noted to those in attendance that it is common for recommendations in comprehensive plans to vary in scale.</p> <p>Another CPUC member mentioned that there was little conflict between the recommendations of the various subcommittees. However, there may be an issue of competing resources.</p>	<p>None.</p>
<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>• CPUC Homework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review Subcommittee Draft Goals &amp; Recommendations</li> <li>○ Written feedback to MJ by December 15</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Next CPUC Meeting – January 9, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. – Guilderland Town Hall</li> <li>• Public Workshop #3 - TBD</li> </ul> <p>Ms. Hakes noted that the consultant team plans to share draft meeting materials with both the CPUC and the public in advance of future meetings, to align with Town practices.</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p><b>Public Comment</b></p>	<p>Committee Chair Betton opened the floor to public comment.</p> <p>The following comments were provided by members of the public present:</p>	<p>None.</p>

<p><b>Public Comment (cont.)</b></p>	<p>The first comment raised was that the term “Complete Streets” was preferred when discussing transportation.</p> <p>The same commentor advocated for the consideration of known wildlife corridors in decisions regarding open space conservation.</p> <p>Another individual spoke in favor of using specific language in plan recommendations.</p> <p>One commenter raised the appropriateness of a moratorium on building apartment complexes.</p> <p>The next commenter recommended the mitigation of impervious surfaces for proposed projects. The same commenter also suggested to evaluate how traffic studies are done in Town and the possibility of improving them.</p> <p>Another commentor was in support of a town arborist. They also suggested that electric vehicle charging stations be installed in places of retail and recreation. This commentor also recommended the update and rehabilitation of existing structures for new homeowners</p> <p>A member of the public advocated for an open space inventory.</p> <p>Committee Chair Betton asked for any further public comment. Hearing none, Chair Betton adjourned the meeting.</p>	<p>None.</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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Richard Brustman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Caitlin Ferrante	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cody Betton	<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
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"/>