PATHWAY TO OUR FUTURE
GUILDERLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Comprehensive Plan Update Committee Meeting #5
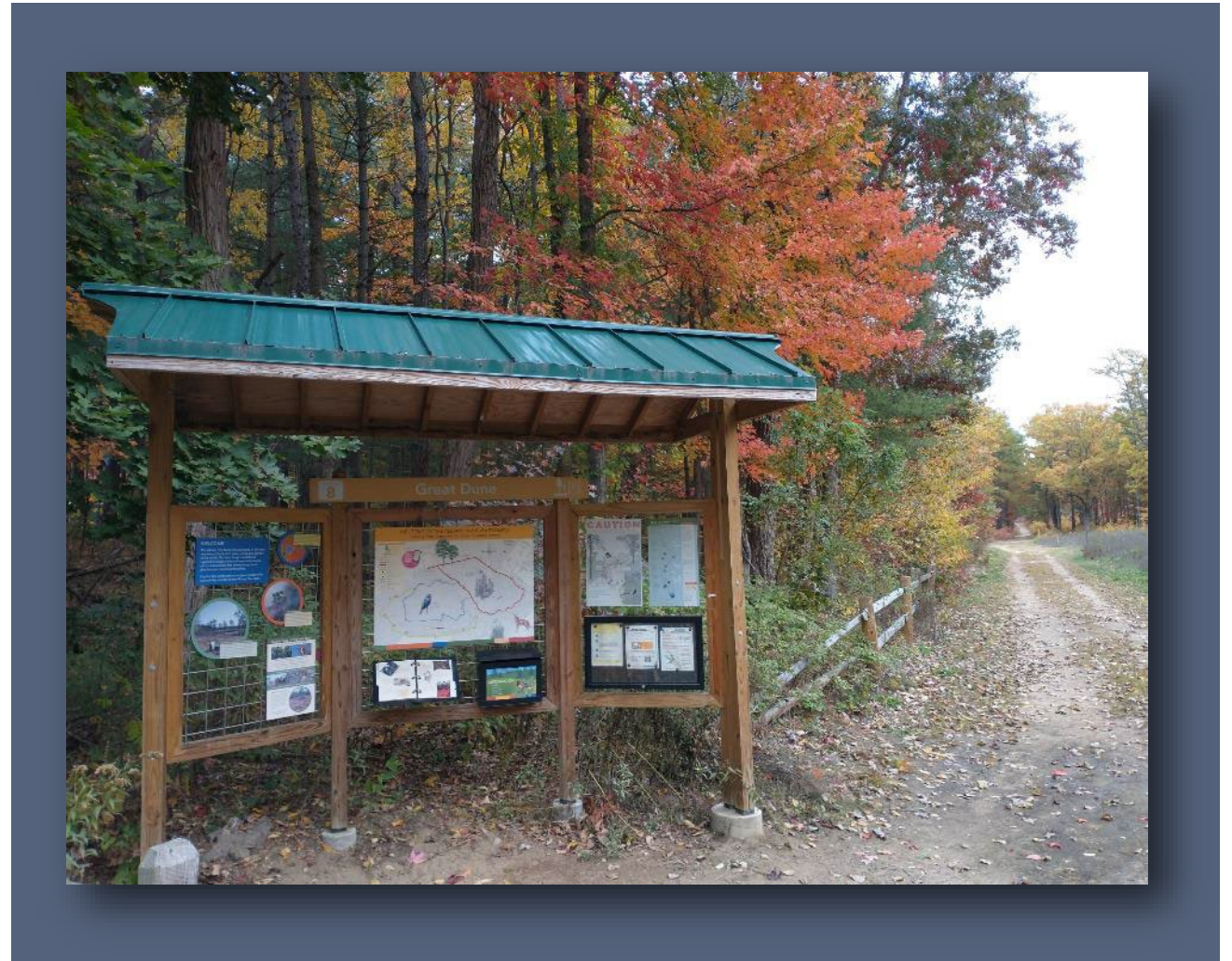
JULY 11, 2023

Guilderland Town Hall

Engineering and Land Surveying, P.C.

AGENDA

- Welcome

- Project Schedule Update

- Public Engagement Update

- Agricultural Resources Overview

- Vision & Goals

- Subcommittee Establishment

- CPUC Open Discussion

- Next Steps

- Public Comment

PROJECT SCHEDULE UPDATE

- *CPUC Kick-off
- Initiate Community Profile & Inventory
- Public Engagement Plan
- Project Website & Branding

Fall 2022

- 1st Round Public Engagement
- Community Profile & Inventory

Winter 2022-23

- 2nd Round Public Engagement
- Draft Vision/Goals

Spring 2023

- 3rd Round Public Engagement
- Draft Recommendations

Summer/Fall 2023

- 4th Round Public Engagement
- Draft Plan

Winter 2023

- Final Comprehensive Plan
- Adoption of Plan

Winter 2023/ Spring 2024

*CPUC Meetings – Every other month

## Public Engagement Activities:

☑ Project Website Comment Portal
☑ Public Open House & Visioning Workshop
☑ Stakeholder Focus Groups
☑ Community Survey
☑ Student Engagement
☑ Public Workshop #2
　 Pop-Up Table
　 Public Workshop #3

Student Engagement:

- May 18th at Guilderland H.S.
- Two classes of 12th grade Public Policy students
- Introduction to Comprehensive Plan's purpose
- Open-ended question prompts to elicit input

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT UPDATE
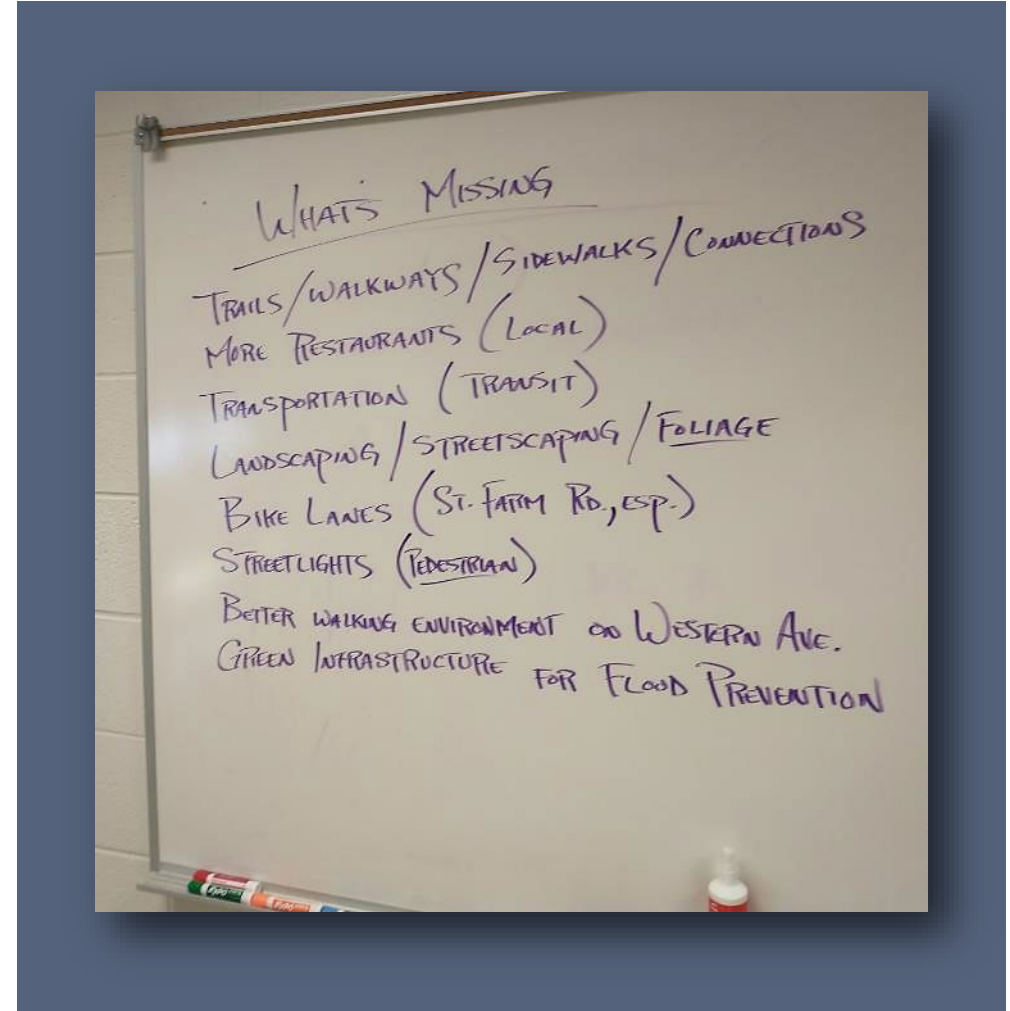
Question Prompts:

- *Your friend or relative is visiting you for the weekend. Where would you take them? What would you do?*

- *From your perspective, what's missing in Guilderland?*

- *What policy issues/ideas have you learned about that might be important to consider when planning for Guilderland's future?*

- *What kinds of new technologies or ways of living do you think might exist in 2030 or 2035?*

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

Prevalent Feedback:

- *Important Places:* Tawasentha, Thatcher, Crossgates, swimming holes (also regional attractions incl. Lake George, June Farms, Jay/Lark St.)

- *What's Missing:* streetscaping/foliage, BMX/skate/ATV areas, landscaping/green infrastructure, attractions/places to gather

- *Policy Ideas:* services/activities for those 65+, policies to make housing more affordable, requirements for more attractive buildings, opportunities for renewable energy generation

- *In 2030-2035:* automation, changes to power grid, AI, EV, climate

Public Workshop #2

- Thursday, June 1, 2023

- In-Person Event at Westmere Fire House

- Publicized via press release, Town website, Project Website, site signage, CPUC

- Facilitated, topic-based "speed round" discussions

- Each table at the workshop featured a specified theme, informed by Committee and Survey input

Public Workshop #2 Topics:

- Parks, Open Space and Recreation

- Transportation and Mobility

- Economic Growth

- Neighborhoods and Housing

- Agriculture and Environment

Workshop Input Summary available on Project Website.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

Guilderland Community Survey

- Online through Survey Monkey or available in hard copy

- Submission window: March 13 – May 15

- 635 Responses

- 94% of respondents live in Guilderland; 6% work/attend school in Guilderland or have other connection to Town

- Survey summary available on Project Website

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT UPDATE
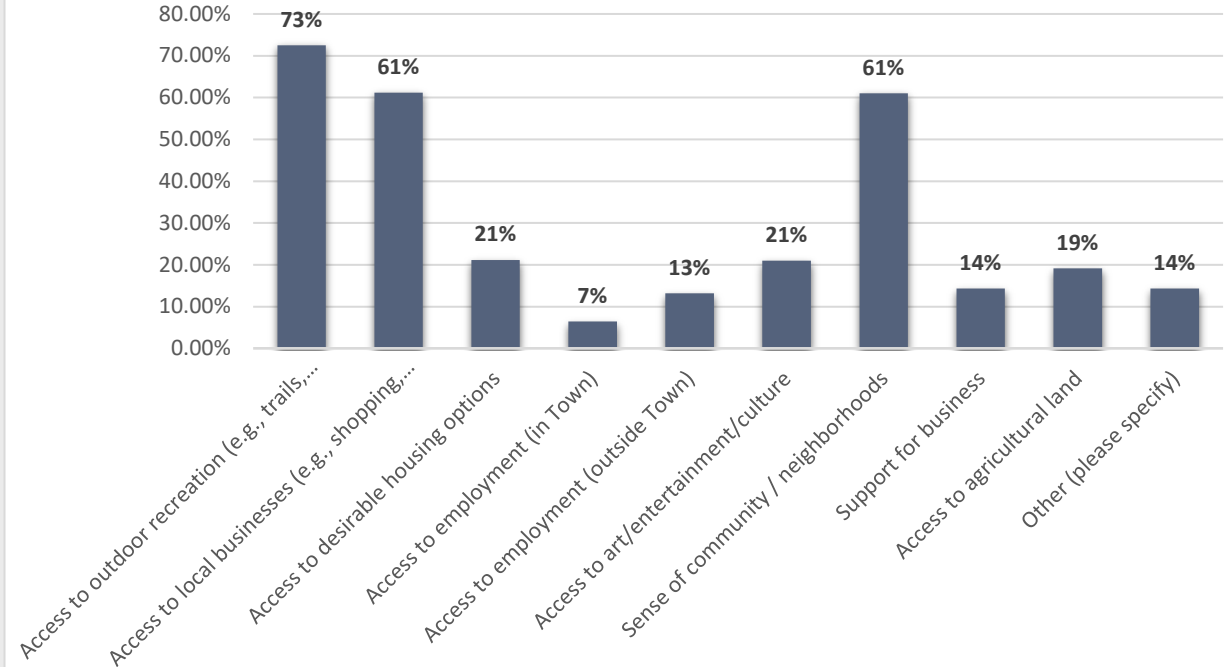
Community Survey Highlights

▪ Most represented zip codes: 12303, 12009, 12203, 12084, 12159

▪ 40% of respondents under age 45; 21% were 65+

▪ Identified assets: Access to outdoor recreation (73%), sense of community (61%), access to local businesses (61%)

▪ Prevalent challenges: preservation of rural character and farmland (53%), neighborhood connectivity and walkability (46%), property taxes (44%)

Q9: Which of the following do you value most about Guilderland? Please select three (3) from the list below.

Category	Percent
Access to outdoor recreation (e.g., trails,...)	73%
Access to local businesses (e.g., shopping,...)	61%
Access to desirable housing options	21%
Access to employment (in Town)	7%
Access to employment (outside Town)	13%
Access to art/entertainment/culture	21%
Sense of community / neighborhoods	61%
Support for business	14%
Access to agricultural land	19%
Other (please specify)	14%

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

Community Survey Highlights

Q15: What type of housing would you prefer to see constructed in Guilderland in the next 20 years?
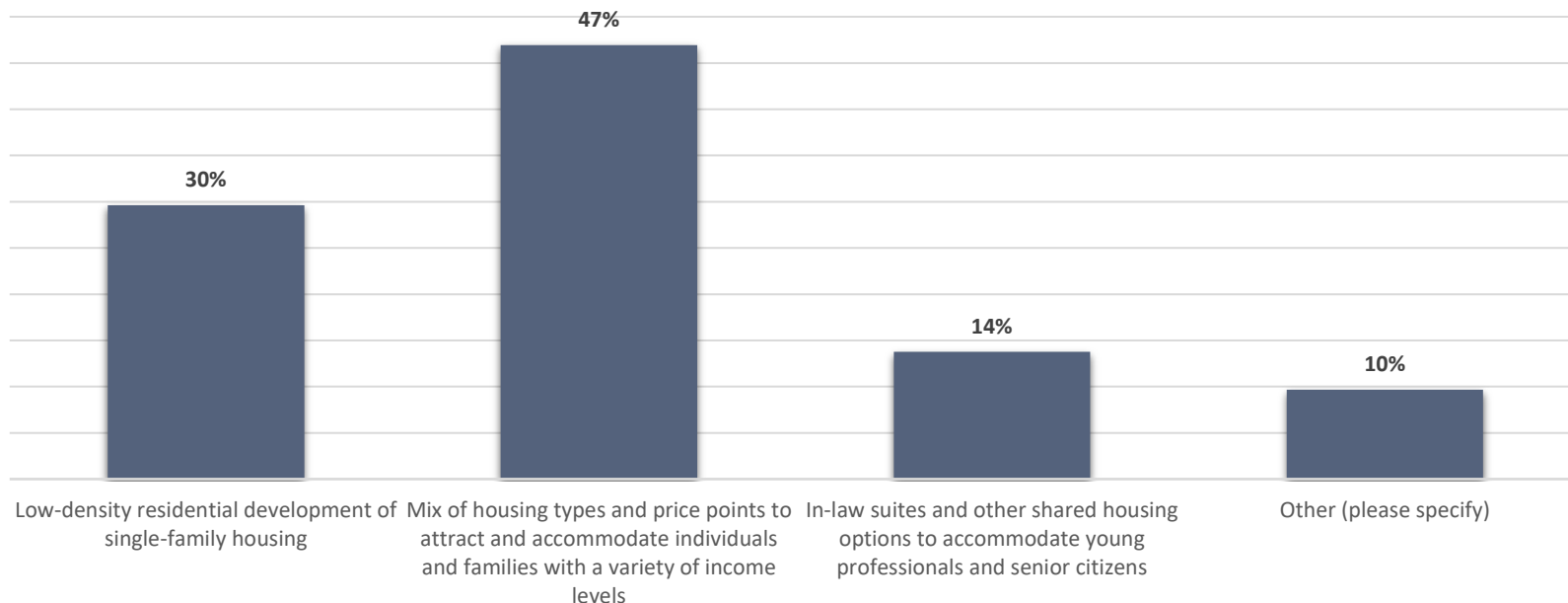
- **47%** *Mix of housing types and price points to attract and accommodate a variety of income levels*
- **30%** *Low-density single-family housing development*
- **14%** *In-law suites and other shared housing to accommodate young professionals and senior citizens*

Chart data:
- Low-density residential development of single-family housing: 30%
- Mix of housing types and price points to attract and accommodate individuals and families with a variety of income levels: 47%
- In-law suites and other shared housing options to accommodate young professionals and senior citizens: 14%
- Other (please specify): 10%

Other (Please specify):
- *"Affordable housing for our aging residents"*
- *"Entry level home ownership, people need to build equity"*
- *"Low to moderate density, single family, town home, in-law suites"*

Community Survey Highlights

Focus for future growth?

- Focus on sustainability (53%)
- Preservation of farmland (53%)
- New mixed-use development (36%)
- New affordable housing (35%)
- New residential single-family homes (33%)
- New residential multi-family (25%)
- Don't want to see growth (18%)

Q16: What type of future growth would you like to see in Guilderland in the next 20 years? (Select all that apply.)
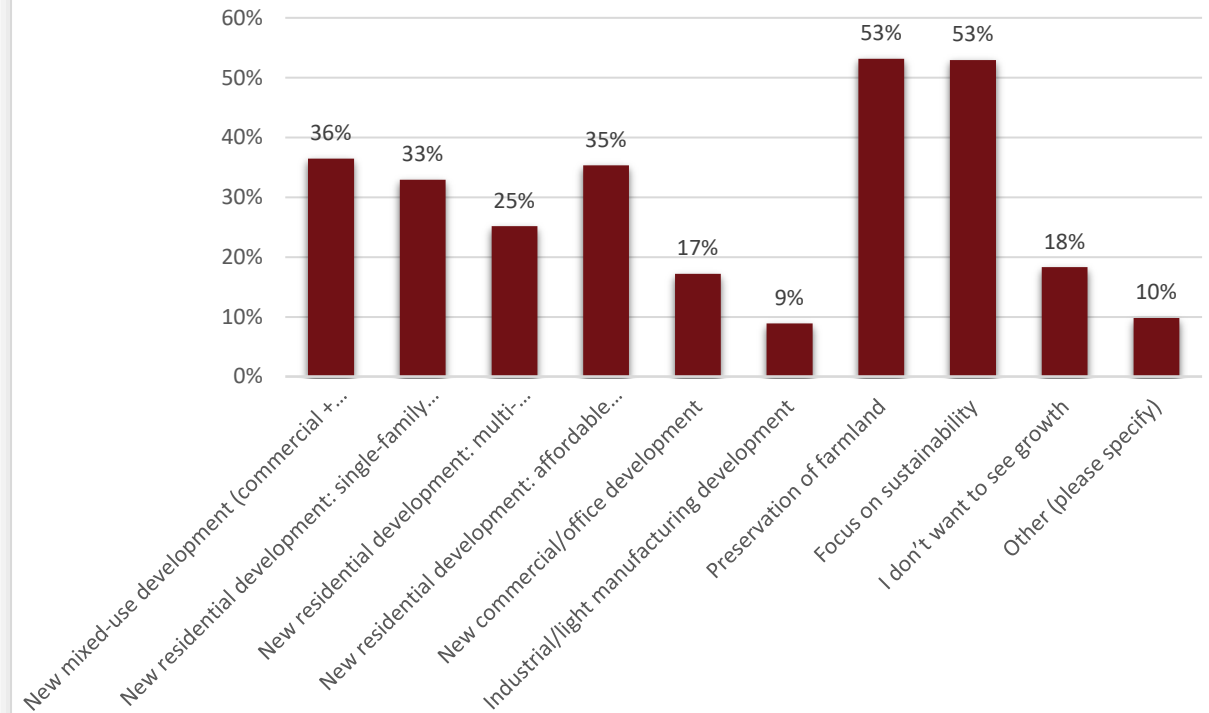
Agricultural Resources in Guilderland

Benefits of Agricultural Land Uses

- Access to locally-produced food and agricultural products
- Contributions to local economy – employment and revenue
- Watershed protection
- Maintenance of scenic viewsheds
- Wildlife habitat for species requiring open space for feeding and breeding

Variety of Agricultural Operations in Guilderland

Property Class	Number of Parcels
Agricultural (productive fields, no barns/bldgs) (105)	23
Livestock and Products	7
Dairy products: milk, butter and cheese	4
Cattle, calves, hogs	12
Sheep and wool	1
Honey and Beeswax	1
Other livestock, donkeys, goats	4
Horse farms	8
Field crops	40
Truck crops, not mucklands	3
Orchard Crops	4
Apples, pears, peaches, cherries	2
Vineyard	2
Nursery and Greenhouse	2
Totals	**114**

Source: 2019 Real Property Data, Town of Guilderland
*These parcels may not be representative of all parcels in farming in the Town, but represent parcels associated with the property class codes identified.

AG RESOURCES OVERVIEW

Existing Protections for Agriculture in Guilderland

Agricultural District

228 parcels (6,720 acres) within Agricultural District as of 2019*

Ag District = land area identified through NY Ag Districts Law (Article 25-aa) to help protect current and future farmland. Farmers and rural landowners enrolled in a state-certified Ag District receive important "right to farm" protections.

Not all land located within an agricultural district is farmland.

Agricultural Tax Assessment

258 parcels (5,750 acres) receive Agricultural Tax Assessment as of 2019**

Special tax assessments established by State (Ag and Markets Law 25-aa) and applied by the Town Assessor. Reduces but does not eliminate a farmland owner's property tax liability. Penalty applied if/when land is converted to non-farm use.
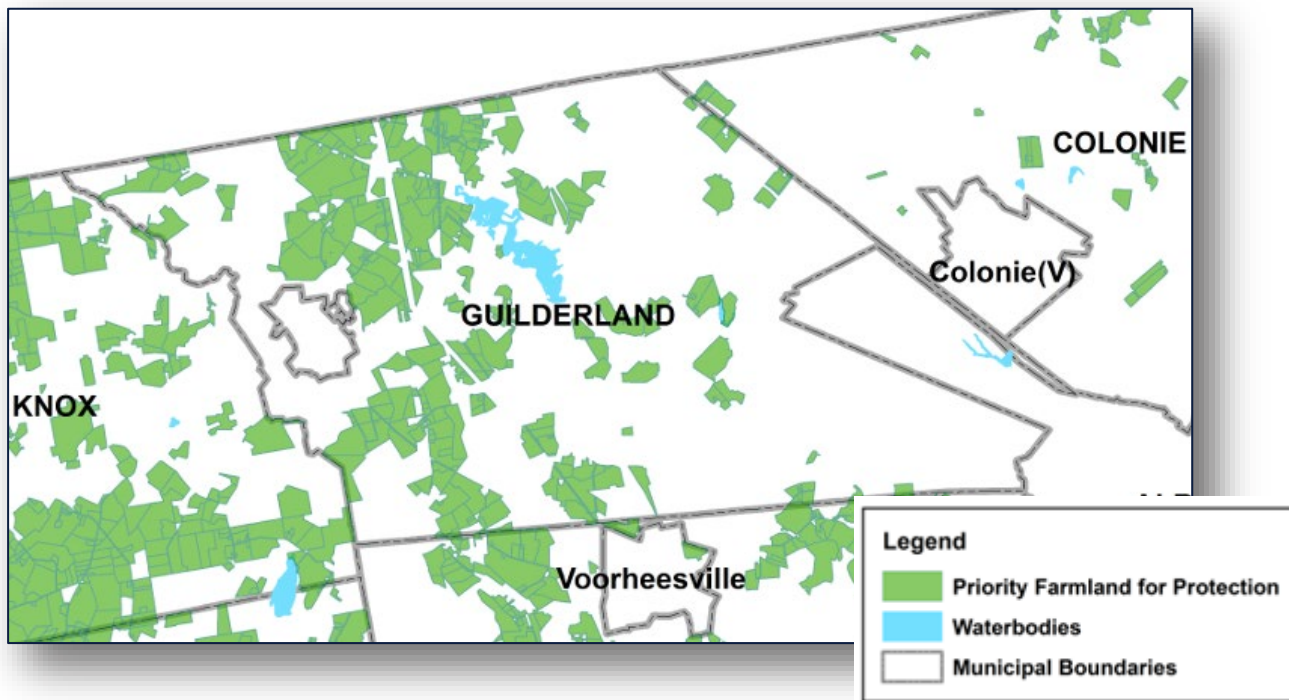
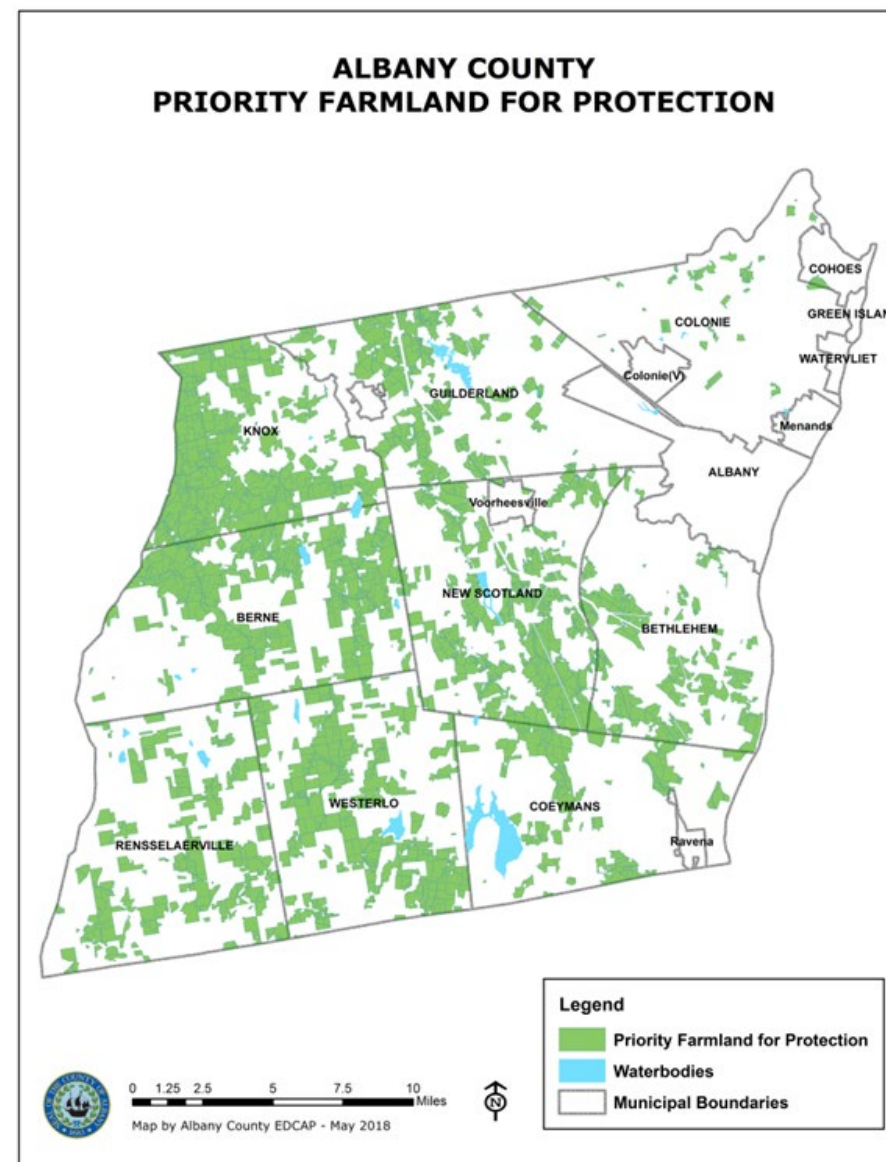**Not all land receiving an agricultural tax assessment is within an agricultural district.*

Farmland Protection

Areas designated as "priority farmland" in the (2018)
Albany County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan

ALBANY COUNTY
PRIORITY FARMLAND FOR PROTECTION

Legend
- Priority Farmland for Protection
- Waterbodies
- Municipal Boundaries

Map by Albany County EDCAP - May 2018

VISION & GOALS STATEMENT

Community Vision – What is a Vision?

- A vision statement establishes the direction of the community over **the next five to ten years**

- It forms the **basis for the Comprehensive Plan**

- All subsequent **recommendations aim to achieve** the established vision

- Use **present tense** (as if you are ten years in the future)

Community Vision – Development Process

- Start with existing Comprehensive Plan (2001) vision

- Considered the following:
  - CPUC input at CPUC Meeting #3
  - CPUC input received following Meeting #3
  - Public feedback
    - Visioning exercise during Public Open House
    - Community Survey
    - Student Engagement

VISION & GOALS STATEMENT

Draft Vision: The Town of Guilderland is made up of distinctive, attractive neighborhoods, with abundant recreation, open space, and scenic resources that serve to connect the community and support a high quality of life for all residents. Varied, productive agricultural operations link the Town to its proud agrarian history, while the architectural legacy of Guilderland's past is honored through preservation and educational initiatives. The Town is home to a balanced array of prosperous and well-loved businesses, whose success generates the economic base necessary to support quality public services. Well-designed transportation corridors maximize safety for all travelers while facilitating efficient movement and incorporating relevant emerging technologies. Residents of all age groups and backgrounds contribute to the vitality of the Town, each proud to call Guilderland home.

VISION & GOALS STATEMENT

Goal Categories:

- Transportation & Mobility

- Neighborhoods & Housing

- Parks, Recreation & Historic Resources

- Agriculture, Open Space & Environment

- Economic Growth

PROSPICE GELRIA

The Town of
GUILDERLAND

Transportation and Mobility:

(2000 Goal) – *"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."*

Additional factors from input received:

- Desire for increased walkability
- Transportation needs of aging population – flexible public transit, etc.
- Support for roundabouts for mitigating traffic and improving safety
- Need for infrastructure to support electric vehicles and other emerging technologies
- Desire to make transportation infrastructure (incl. bridges and culverts) resilient

VISION & GOALS STATEMENT

Neighborhoods and Housing:

(2000 Goal) – *"Provide a balanced blend of quality housing opportunities, including a desirable range of housing types and price ranges, which are affordable and accessible for residents."*

"Preserve and enhance Guilderland's identity, image, and quality of life; and maintain and strengthen the distinction between the Town's developed and rural/natural areas."

Additional factors from input received:
- Recognition that Guilderland consists of areas with distinct neighborhood character
- Desire for housing options that allow older residents to remain in Guilderland
- Recognized need for quality housing for first-time/younger buyers to build equity
- Support for moderate-density residential such as townhomes, duplexes, etc. – "missing middle"
- Support for adaptive reuse of existing structures for housing

Parks, Recreation, and Historic Resources:

(2000 Goal) – *"Provide sufficient, well-located, and affordable active and passive recreation opportunities for all Guilderland residents."*

"Recognize Guilderland's historic resources and preserve and enhance cultural opportunities in the community."

Additional factors from input received:
- Desire to preserve existing resources, esp. Tawasentha Park and the Pine Bush
- Desire for greater (i.e., less car-dependent) access to connectivity between park resources
- Desire for park space in underserved areas of Town (i.e., Westmere)
- Support for the creation of pocket parks or other recreation resources as set asides
- Desire for greater promotion of parks/rec/historic offerings to the public

Agriculture, Open Space, and Environment:

(2000 Goal) – *"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 drainage, water supply, agriculture, aesthetics, recreation, and wildlife habitat."*

Additional factors from input received:
- Concern for water quality (stormwater and invasive species) and quantity (esp. during summer)
- Conservation Easement program in Guilderland as a means to retain open space
- Support for local food production and potentially enhanced farmer's market venue
- Potential for deployment of solar (esp. rooftop) and other renewable energy technologies

Economic Growth:

(2000 Goal) – *"Promote a diverse economic base that provides income, employment and fiscal resources to the community in a manner that is compatible with the future land use plan and character of Guilderland."*

Additional factors from input received:
- Desire for reuse of existing vacant commercial properties
- Desire to support local businesses
- Recognition of changing trends in retail and remote working arrangements and the potential impacts on demand for office/brick-and-mortar commercial space
- Desire for enhancing the aesthetic appeal of commercial corridors/areas in Town
- Recognition of the need for revenue to provide quality public services to Town residents

SUBCOMMITTEE ESTABLISHMENT

Suggested Subcommittees:

- Transportation & Mobility

- Neighborhoods & Housing

- Parks, Recreation & Historic Resources

- Agriculture, Open Space & Environment

- Economic Growth

SUBCOMMITTEE ESTABLISHMENT

Role and Purpose of Subcommittees:

- Small group work sessions (no quorum of CPUC)
- Focus on revising and/or creating 1-3 goals for each topic
- Identify preliminary recommendations/action items to achieve goals

SUBCOMMITTEE ESTABLISHMENT

Schedule of Subcommittee Work:

- CPUC members sign-up for 1-2 subcommittees **by end of this week (7/14)**

- Meet as often as necessary over next few weeks – subcommittee members and Town to coordinate

- Assign notetaker to document key discussion items and consensus

- Each subcommittee to provide draft goals and recommendations **to MJ Team by 8/25**

- MJ Team to consolidate and prepare complete list of draft goals and draft recommendations

- Discussion of Draft Goals and Preliminary Recommendation at CPUC Meeting #6 on 9/12

SUBCOMMITTEE ESTABLISHMENT

Subcommittee Resources:

- 2000 Comprehensive Plan

- Public feedback on project website (Open House, Workshop, Survey input)

- CPUC presentations with key data (information on project website)

- Draft existing conditions mapping on project website

- Summary of CPUC Report Card Exercise

- Draft Community Profile – to be provided to CPUC early next week

- Town Staff

- Other existing documents on project website: **www.pathwaytoguilderlandsfuture.com**

CPUC OPEN DISCUSSION

What additional topics or information would you like to see addressed in future meetings?

NEXT STEPS

- Subcommittee Homework

  - To MJ Team by August 25, 2023

  - Draft Goals & Recommendations

- Next CPUC Meeting – September 12, 2023

  - 7:00 PM at Guilderland Town Hall

- Public Engagement #3 – Fall 2023

Photo submitted by Guilderland Community Survey respondent

Photo submitted by Guilderland Community Survey respondent