1

A Comprehensive Plan is both a vision for the future and a blueprint for how to get there. A Comprehensive Plan creates a framework for future decision-making on a range of topics such as land use, economic development, infrastructure, and housing. The Town of Guilderland adopted its current Comprehensive Plan in 2001, and the update process will help guide Guilderland into the future.
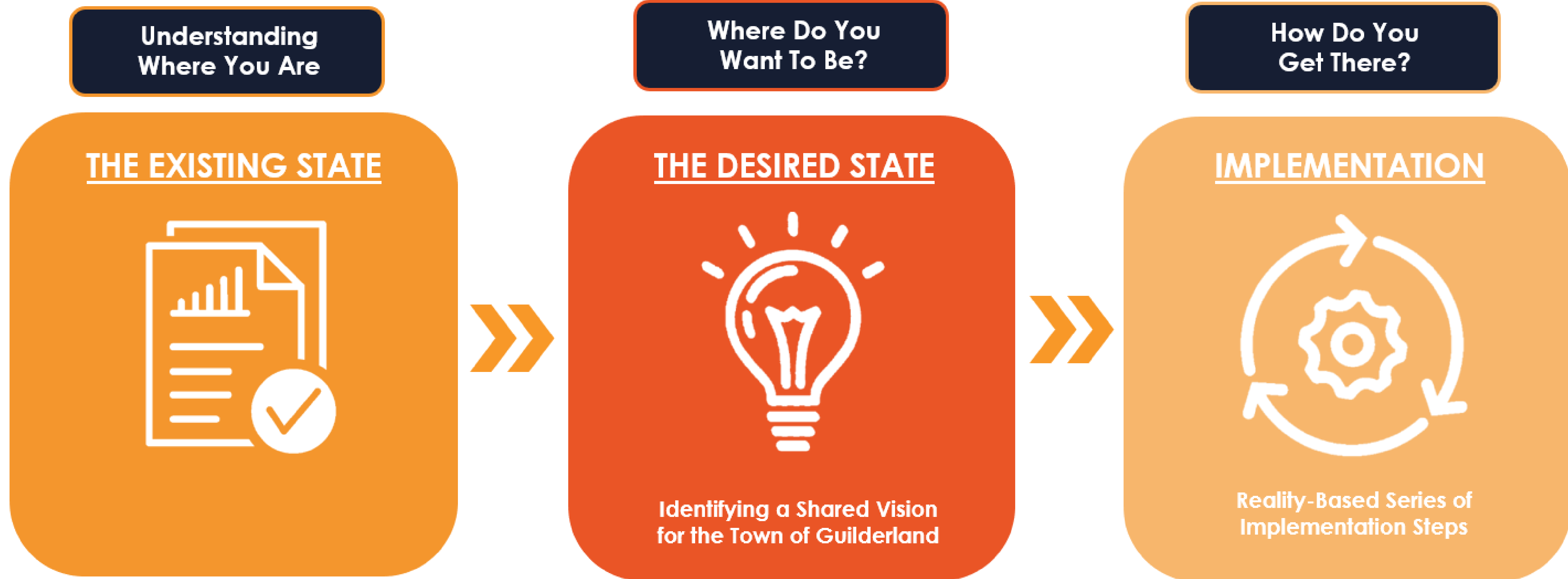
The planning process is being led by the Guilderland Comprehensive Plan Update Committee and facilitated by Town staff and a consultant team led by MJ Engineering and Land Surveying and supported by E.M. Pemrick & Company and Community Planning and Environmental Associates.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE

- ❖ Cody Betton – Chair
- ❖ Jim Abbruzzese – Vice Chair
- ❖ Richard Brustman
- ❖ Tara Cristalli
- ❖ Caitlin Ferrante
- ❖ Lisa Hart
- ❖ Elizabeth Lott
- ❖ Dominic Rigosu
- ❖ Stephen O. Wilson

Understanding Where You Are

THE EXISTING STATE

Where Do You Want To Be?

THE DESIRED STATE

Identifying a Shared Vision for the Town of Guilderland

How Do You Get There?

IMPLEMENTATION

Reality-Based Series of Implementation Steps

Guided by public input, the CPUC developed a draft Vision to express the desired state of Guilderland. Share your thoughts at Station #3.

A series of draft goals and recommendations have been compiled from multiple rounds of input, aimed at supporting the draft Vision. Share input at Stations 4 – 9.

The Town of GUILDERLAND

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The planning process has included a range of engagement activities to gather public input, including a community survey, stakeholder focus group discussions, a Public Open House & Visioning Workshop, student outreach, as well as written and in-person public comment.

Agriculture

One of the most frequently expressed concerns from Guilderland residents is the preservation of rural character and farmland.

More than 80% of Guilderland community survey respondents agree that "Support for agriculture is important."

Environment

More than 90% of community survey respondents agree that "Protecting natural resources and wildlife habitat is important."

Support expressed for conservation easements to preserve open space and natural areas.

Housing

Residents express support for increasing the affordability of housing for young families, older residents, and others.

Nearly two-thirds (61%) of survey respondents agree that "It is important to provide a range of housing options."

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The planning process has included a range of engagement activities to gather public input, including a community survey, stakeholder focus group discussions, a Public Open House & Visioning Workshop, student outreach, as well as written and in-person public comment.

Walkability

Guilderland residents envision the Town as *"more walkable, [with] more sidewalks, [and] more pedestrian friendly infrastructure."* Desire for a "more walkable & bikeable community" was a common theme in input from residents of different ages at the first Public Open House & Visioning Workshop.

Historic Resources

Guilderland residents support of preservation of the Town's historic resources. More than three-quarters (76%) of Guilderland community survey respondents agreed that "Identifying and preserving historic buildings/sites is important."

Outdoor Recreation

When asked what they value most about living in Guilderland, 72.5% of survey respondents listed *"Access to outdoor recreation (e.g., trails, parks, golf courses, etc.),"* the highest response category. Tawasentha Park often noted as a Town asset in Public Open House & Visioning Workshop input.

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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.

Which key words of the draft Vision resonate strongly for you? Are there ideas or words that seem to be missing or should be emphasized more strongly in the Vision?

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GOAL: *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.*

Draft Recommendations for Agriculture	Priorities *(Place sticker in boxes to indicate an important priority for you)*
1. Form a standing Agriculture Committee, with oversight by the Town, to advocate for the productive use of agricultural lands, to serve in an advisory role on agricultural land uses, and function as a liaison between the Town and local farmers.	
2. Increase voluntary participation in the Town's Conservation Easement Program through targeted promotion and potential funding incentives, setting aside areas of land from development.	
3. Consider restricting the extension of public water and sewer infrastructure into rural portions of Guilderland. Focus water and sewer capacity improvements to support traditional population centers in Town.	
4. Regulate the development of solar and wind energy installations in agricultural areas of Town. Consider forming a Solar Overlay District and/or requiring energy infrastructure designs that allow for dual-use/agrivoltaics.	
5. Promote and maintain the scenic resources of rural corridors and roads through the use of rural development design guidelines and conservation subdivision practices that prioritize maintenance of rural character.	
6. Create opportunities for light retail/farm service businesses on US-20 near the Princetown municipal line in a manner that is consistent with rural design guidelines.	

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Draft Recommendations for Agriculture	Priorities *(Place sticker in boxes to indicate an important priority for you)*
7. Promote agriculture's place in Guilderland's economy by supporting farmers markets, farm stands, and other opportunities for residents to connect with local agricultural businesses.	
8. Consider a flexible, voluntary Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program to preserve farmland and open space.	
9. Update zoning code to align with the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan • Update definition of *agriculture* in the Town zoning law to be consistent with NYS Agriculture & Markets Law. • Update the definition of *farm* in the Town of Guilderland to allow for smaller scale agricultural operations such as cut flower farms, organic farms, and greenhouses. • Update the purpose statements for agricultural zoning districts in the Town to better reflect and align with the Comprehensive Plan goals. • Consider decreasing the allowable lot coverage to be consistent with the goals and purpose of zoning districts. • Consider forming an Agriculture Overlay District with specific development standards to protect important farmland soils, require conservation subdivision, increase setbacks and buffers, and to recognize where agriculture is taking place in Guilderland. • Consider replacing the current minimum lot size requirement in the RA3 and RA5 areas with a density measurement – dwellings per acre instead of minimum acres per dwelling – to establish lots that fit better in the landscape.	

In addition to the listed draft recommendations, what other steps/actions might advance the goal for Agriculture? Are there other important factors, in your view?

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GOAL: *Establish and promote a diverse and strategic economic base that provides income, employment, and revenue to the community in a manner compatible with the future land use plan and unique identity of Guilderland.*

Draft Recommendations for Business, Employment & Fiscal Resources	Priorities (Place sticker in boxes to indicate an important priority for you)
1. Develop commercial design guidelines, with illustrative examples, to supplement zoning regulations and to clearly articulate expectations for commercial development in the Town.	
2. Develop design guidelines for signage with illustrative examples.	
3. Develop a use table that lists the land uses permitted in each zoning district in an accessible, easy-to-read format.	
4. Waive the requirement for site plan approval for a change in tenancy in the BNRP, LB, GB, I, and IP districts when it is similar to a prior allowed use, does not involve a change in the scale or intensity of the use, and does not propose a building addition.	
5. Encourage the redevelopment and adaptive reuse of property. • Create and maintain an inventory of vacant and underutilized structures and brownfield sites that can be rehabilitated. • Create an expedited development review process for commercial and mixed-use buildings that fully meet specified design guidelines. • Provide flexibility for office parks and office/professional buildings to accommodate other uses.	

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Draft Recommendations for Business, Employment & Fiscal Resources	Priorities (Place sticker in boxes to indicate an important priority for you)
6. Facilitate recurring business roundtables with the Chamber of Commerce, Industrial Development Agency (IDA), Town and local business leaders to discuss specific issues of interest.	
7. Partner with the Center for Economic Growth, the Advance Albany Alliance, Empire State Development, and other relevant organizations to attract economic development which diversifies, strengthens, and expands Guilderland's tax base.	
8. Provide administrative support to assist small businesses in navigating the development review process.	
9. Maximize Guilderland's proximity to the Albany Nanotech Campus on Fuller Road by enhancing transportation and economic development connections.	
10. 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.	
11. 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.	
12. Identify and establish the desired mix and scale of businesses in a manner that is sensitive to the neighborhood setting and cultural diversity of the Town. This includes supporting home-based businesses.	
13. 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.	
14. Develop strategies to attract well-paying, job-creating employers who will be able to provide employment opportunities for Guilderland's community.	

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Draft Recommendations for Business, Employment & Fiscal Resources	Priorities (Place sticker in boxes to indicate an important priority for you)
15. Encourage partnerships with higher learning institutions including the University at Albany, the Albany Nanotech Complex and related entities to promote economic development opportunities in the town.	
16. Explore developing a new village-like "planned community," built from the ground up, in the north-west corner of Guilderland.	

In addition to the listed draft recommendations, what other steps/actions might advance the goal for Business, Employment & Fiscal Resources? Are there other important factors, in your view?

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GOAL: *Protect the natural resources that support quality of life and Town character in Guilderland through strategic hazard mitigation and resiliency measures to mitigate the impacts of a changing climate.*

Draft Recommendations for Environment, Climate Change & Resiliency	Priorities (Place sticker in boxes to indicate an important priority for you)

1. Build on Guilderland's designation as a registered Climate Smart Community (CSC) in the State of New York by completing the criteria for bronze-level CSC certification by 2030. Criteria include the formation of a CSC Task Force for Guilderland, the designation of a CSC Coordinator, as well as three (3) or more of the following priority actions:
   • Government Operations GHG Inventory
   • Community GHG Inventory
   • Government Operations Climate Action Plan
   • Community Climate Action Plan
   • Government Building Energy Audits
   • Comprehensive Plan with Sustainability Elements
   • Complete Streets Policy
   • Alternative-fuel Infrastructure
   • Natural Resources Inventory
   • Climate Vulnerability Assessment
   • Evaluate Policies for Climate Resilience
   • Climate Adaptation Plan
   • Climate Change Education & Engagement	

2. Maintain and improve water quality in Watervliet Reservoir and its tributaries by partnering with the City of Watervliet and communities within the Reservoir's watershed.
   • Use well-head protection plans to protect potential groundwater sources from incompatible land uses that may contaminate potential public drinking water sources
   • Coordinate with the City of Watervliet to evaluate water quality in the Watervliet Reservoir and put in place an emerging contaminant action plan	

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Draft Recommendations for Environment, Climate Change & Resiliency	Priorities *(Place sticker in boxes to indicate an important priority for you)*
3. Encourage and incentivize climate resiliency through Town practices, procedures, rules, and regulations wherever practicable. Potential resiliency measures include but are not limited to: • Stormwater infrastructure improvements, including green infrastructure • Wetland protection • Tree planting and preservation to reduce urban heat island effects • Stewardship of Town forests and open space for ecosystem health • Creation of a Town alert system (intramunicipal and intermunicipal) for extreme weather events, with the establishment of protocols for effective collaboration in State- and Federal-level disaster response situations. • Preservation of open space • Improving environmental education and outreach at Town parks • Pledge Elements and Certification Actions of the NYS Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program, of which Guilderland is a registered member community.	
4. Reduce Guilderland's collective contribution to climate change by decreasing community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions with forward-thinking environmental, transportation, and energy planning including by not limited to: • Wherever feasible, encourage and incentivize clean energy production, including at Town-owned facilities • Encourage low- or no-GHG-producing transportation options in Guilderland by supporting infrastructure for electric vehicles, cycling, walking, and public transportation • Encourage sustainable agricultural practices that sequester carbon such as forest pastures and no-till seeding • 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	
5. Prioritize the preservation of natural resources and animal habitat in Guilderland to promote healthy and functioning ecosystems that mitigate costly and harmful conditions such as invasive species, flooding, and soil erosion. • Consider limits to development on steep slopes for non-agricultural land disturbances. • Develop an interactive environmental features map for Guilderland, using the existing parks and trails interactive map as a model. • Create a Wetland Overlay District to set development standards to protect important wetland areas and other natural resources. • Update zoning to limit forest cover removal in the riparian area of the Normans Kill and its tributaries. • Continue to partner with land conservancies, trusts, and other organizations whose missions include natural resource preservation.	

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In addition to the listed draft recommendations, what other steps/actions might advance the goal for Environment, Climate Change & Resiliency? Are there other important factors, in your view?

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GOAL: *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.*

Draft Recommendations for Neighborhoods & Housing	Priorities (Place sticker in boxes to indicate an important priority for you)
1. Update building design guidelines to promote sustainable green building practices that advance the goals of energy efficiency, water conservation, and the use of building materials which reduce harmful environmental impacts. Sustainability practices include but are not limited to: • Street tree planting with non-invasive tree varieties • Rooftop solar panels • Xeriscaping or other landscaping that requires minimal watering • Recognized green building construction practices	
2. Proactively develop policies and guidelines for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in the Town – either attached or detached – as an opportunity for alternative housing options in single-family residential neighborhoods while preserving the character of these neighborhoods. New York State Homes and Community Renewal's Plus One ADU Program offers useful policy frameworks and grant-funding assistance for such efforts. The intent of permitting well-regulated ADU construction in the Town is to provide low-cost housing options, slow suburban sprawl, and to allow for more efficient use of existing infrastructure.	
3. Create separate definitions in the zoning code for different types of multi-unit structures, such as duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes, rather than using the term "apartment building."	
4. To maximize the Town's investments in public water and sewer, transportation, and pedestrian connections, expand opportunities for housing types other than single-family in appropriate districts, provided there are design standards to ensure new housing is compatible with existing neighborhoods.	

Draft Recommendations for Neighborhoods & Housing	Priorities (Place sticker in boxes to indicate an important priority for you)
5. Create design guidelines for duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes to ensure that they resemble single-family dwellings and fit seamlessly into existing residential neighborhoods.	
6. Allow two-family dwellings (duplexes) in all single-family districts as long as dimensional standards can be met. • Eliminate the special requirements for two-family dwellings as they relate to the lot size and width, frontage on a state highway, driveways, and sidewalks. • Consider establishing a modified site plan review process to incentivize the development of two-family dwellings.	
7. Determine which zoning districts are appropriate for triplexes and fourplexes. • Consider modified site plan review to incentivize the development of triplexes and fourplexes.	
8. Reduce regulatory obstacles to the development of more affordable housing types by updating setbacks, minimum lot sizes, and minimum widths to accommodate smaller lots. These requirements make it difficult to build smaller homes or on smaller lots and can contribute to a lack of affordability as well as uniform, suburban aesthetics.	
9. Update the definition of manufactured housing units to better reflect state laws and the current state of the manufactured housing industry.	
10. Amend zoning regulations to address if/where the development of tiny homes should be permissible within the Town of Guilderland. Given that other communities in the region are addressing interest in so-called tiny homes, a forward-thinking approach should be taken in Guilderland to consider whether such development should have a place in the Town's range of housing options.	
11. Consider updating zoning regulations to require major subdivisions and large developments to incorporate affordable housing options such as smaller lots, smaller houses, and dwelling units for households earning 80% to 120% of area median income.	
12. Offer a density bonus of additional dwelling units if certain amenities or features, such as affordable housing, senior housing, open space, recreation, and/or public access are included in the development.	

Draft Recommendations for Neighborhoods & Housing	Priorities *(Place sticker in boxes to indicate an important priority for you)*
13. Consider decreasing housing density in the RA3 District to make it an RA5 District but provide density bonuses that incentivize provision of affordable housing types and lots, farmland protection, and other amenities.	
14. Add an inclusionary zoning requirement for affordable residential units in Planned Unit Developments (PUD).	
15. Partner with an appropriate housing agency, such as the Albany County Rural Housing Alliance, to facilitate the rehabilitation of older homes and rental units occupied by low- and moderate-income households.	
16. Work with existing non-profit organizations (e.g., Albany County Rural Housing Alliance, Albany County Land Bank) or establish a town housing trust fund to address critical housing needs and support a variety of affordable housing activities.	

In addition to the listed draft recommendations, what other steps/actions might advance the goal for Neighborhoods & Housing? Are there other important factors, in your view?

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NEIGHBORHOODS & HOUSING

Public feedback throughout the planning process has identified a desire for a variety of housing options and types, in addition to single-family homes, to meet the needs of different age groups and incomes. From the examples below, select which you think is most appealing to expand housing options in the community.

A

Cottage Court

B

Duplex / 2-Family

C

Townhome / 3-Plex

D

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)

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> **GOAL:** *Provide access to a diverse network of well-maintained active and passive recreational facilities for Guilderland residents of all ages and abilities.*

Draft Recommendations for Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Historic Resources	Priorities *(Place sticker in boxes to indicate an important priority for you)*
1. Maintain and upgrade the Town's existing recreational facilities and programs.	
2. Initiate formalized opportunities for residents to provide input on the Town's changing recreational needs, in light of a changing demographic profile in Guilderland and prevailing national trends.	
3. Formalize regular coordination between the Town of Guilderland Parks & Recreation Department and representatives of the University at Albany, Public Library, the YMCA, school districts, and other local organizations in order to provide a well-publicized range of year-round recreational opportunities, especially for youth and older Town residents.	
4. Identify potentially underutilized Town-owned resources and explore the creation of new recreational opportunities for Town residents, particularly in the Westmere area of Guilderland.	
5. Expand the existing network of multi-use trails in Guilderland to link neighborhoods, public transportation nodes, Town park/open space areas, commercial and entertainment centers, and regional trail networks.	
6. Evaluate the need to retain the services of a Town arborist to lead tree planting and maintenance in Town-owned parklands, rights-of-way, and open spaces.	

GOAL: *Preserve Guilderland's historic resources and enhance cultural opportunities in the community*.

Draft Recommendations for Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Historic Resources	Priorities (Place sticker in boxes to indicate an important priority for you)
1. Evaluate the adequacy of existing historic resources in Guilderland to support programming for residents – e.g., recitals, small-scale performances, and other cultural/educational events – considering the needs of youth, older residents, and those with physical disabilities.	
2. Create strategies for the sustained financial support of the Town's historical cultural sites and programs.	
3. Partner with institutions of higher education in the region to foster engagement with historic and/or archaeological sites in Guilderland.	
4. Promote the community use of suitable historic sites for festivals, special observances, and educational opportunities.	
5. Ensure that land use regulations and incentives serve to support and protect historic/archaeologically sensitive areas in the Town.	
6. Cultivate greater public awareness of historic sites through Town Parks & Recreation Department messaging.	

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GOAL: *Prioritize the preservation of open space in the Town of Guilderland, particularly where such areas perform critical ecosystem functions and/or contribute to scenic resources that influence the character, aesthetics, economy, health and welfare of the Town.*

Draft Recommendations for Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Historic Resources	Priorities (Place sticker in boxes to indicate an important priority for you)
1. Update and harmonize the definitions of open space in Town zoning, subdivision regulations, and the Conservation Easement Agreement Exemption (251-68) so that the definitions are consistent and accurately reflect the varieties and purposes of open space.	
2. Update the residential cluster/conservation development and open space/parkland section of the Town code to provide greater detail on site analysis, primary and secondary conservation areas, and open space criteria.	
3. Consider forming a Ridgeline Protection Overlay District to protect steep slopes along the Helderberg Escarpment and the Settles Hill areas of Town from non-farm development.	
4. Incorporate the preservation of Helderberg Escarpment viewsheds into subdivision, site plan, and special use permit reviews.	
5. Create an action plan for the identification, voluntary acquisition, and management of properties that comprise a comprehensive open space and natural resource preservation system.	

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In addition to the listed draft recommendations, what other steps/actions might advance the goals for Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Historic Resources? Are there other important factors, in your view?

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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 negative impacts of traffic on the Town's character and quality of life.*

Draft Recommendations for Transportation & Mobility	Priorities (Place sticker in boxes to indicate an important priority for you)
1. Enhance pedestrian mobility by continuing to expand sidewalk and multi-use trail networks in Town to better link community centers, recreation facilities, neighborhoods, shopping, and employment areas. Explore opportunities to connect Guilderland bike/pedestrian infrastructure to the Albany County Rail Trail.	
2. Develop a Complete Streets Policy for Guilderland in recognition of the community's desire for a broad range of transportation options.	
3. Consider the capabilities and characteristics of electric-powered bicycles as a factor in the design of bicycle infrastructure in Guilderland.	
4. Install benches, bicycle racks/parking, bike share nodes, bus shelters, and other appropriate street furniture in strategic locations to incentivize and support alternative transportation options in Guilderland.	
5. Upgrade road and pathway signage as appropriate to promote safe driving behavior and awareness of pedestrians/cyclists.	
6. Extend and enhance pedestrian walkways and safe crossings westward from Stuyvesant Plaza, facilitating greater foot traffic for businesses along Western Avenue.	

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Draft Recommendations for Transportation & Mobility	Priorities *(Place sticker in boxes to indicate an important priority for you)*
7. Encourage and incentivize the integration of shared bike/pedestrian paths in housing developments, linking residential areas to one another as well as to parks, community services, and retail.	
8. Promote the increased use of mobility services such as CDTA Flex on demand, CDPHP Cycle bike share, and electric car share.	
9. 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 and/or other steps to make public transit more affordable, convenient, and accessible.	
10. Partner with regional transportation agencies including the Capital Region Transportation Council (CRTC), NYSDOT, and the NY Thruway Authority to address the following transportation-related issues in Guilderland: • The potential for installing traffic roundabouts at specific Town intersections. Roundabout intersections can reduce crash rates and ease traffic congestion. • Advanced traffic signal optimization on key Town roadways to make traffic flow more efficiently • Opportunities to reduce vehicle traffic on Western Avenue through development of alternative east-west routes through Guilderland, including toll-free NY Thruway use with an increased number of access points • Pedestrian needs study in Guilderland • Repair or replacement of bridges and/or culverts through CRTC's BridgeNY program	
11. Explore options to improve vehicular traffic flow to Guilderland public schools, including options for a secondary access route to Farnsworth Middle School for buses and/or emergency vehicles.	
12. Review the need to reduce street size standards in the rural zoning districts, coordinating with fire and emergency services officials as necessary to ensure that emergency vehicle access is maintained.	
13. Update cul-de-sac rules to promote grid street patterns in rural areas. Gridded streets are more consistent with rural development patterns, while cul-de-sac patterns are more consistent with suburban development patterns.	

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In addition to the listed draft recommendations, what other steps/actions might advance the goal for Transportation & Mobility? Are there other important factors, in your view?

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*The Comprehensive Plan Update will set a direction for community-wide future land uses to support the Vision. While land uses are NOT zoning, future land uses identified in the Comprehensive Plan will serve as a guide for future zoning and other regulations. **Place stickers on the map to indicate where you think the following future land uses are needed and most suitable.***

Agricultural

Recreation / Parks
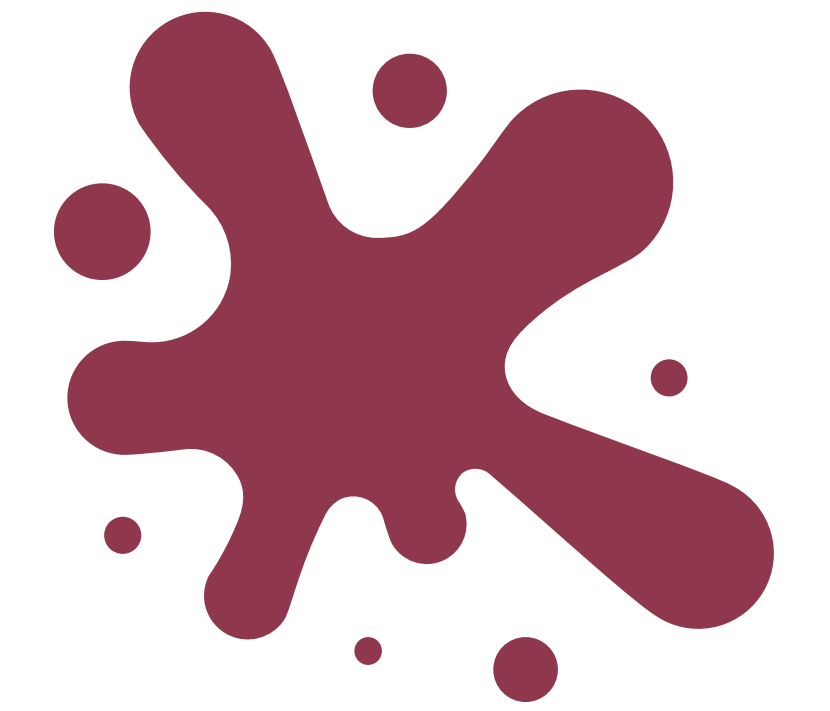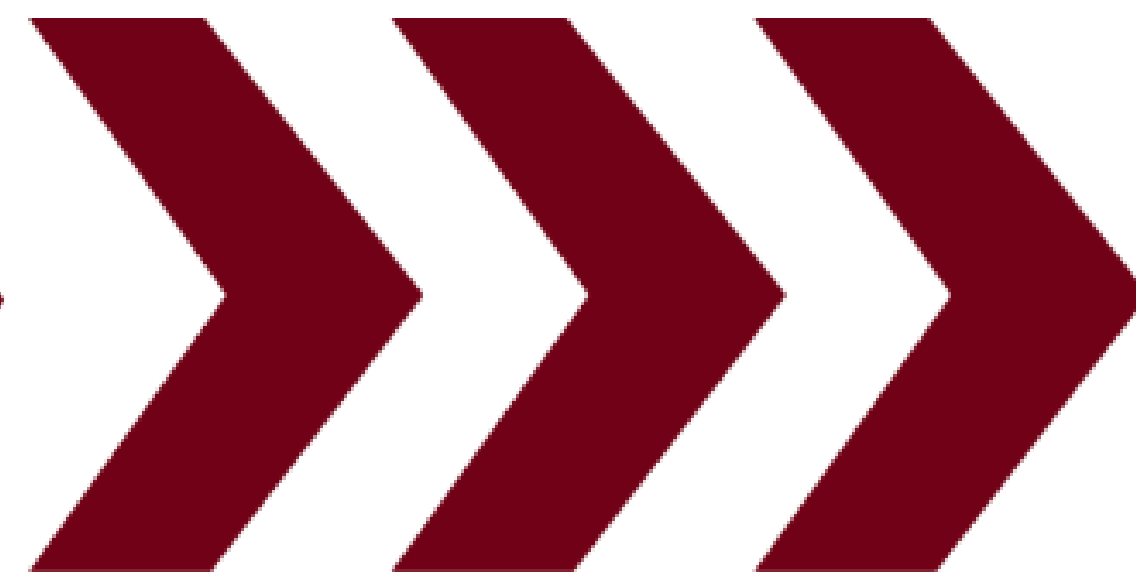
Industrial

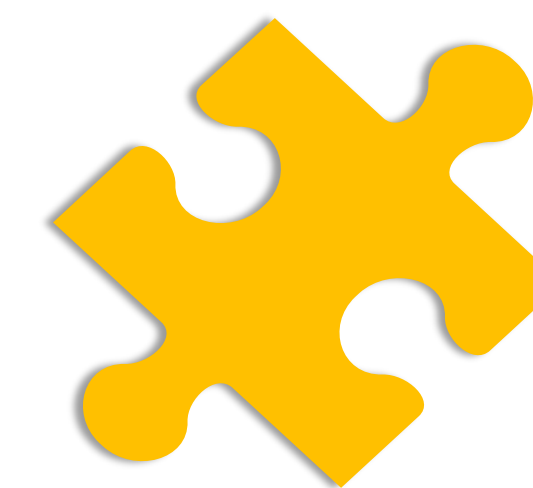**Commercial / Office**

Housing / Residential

Commercial /Retail

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KIDS
TABLE

Share any additional thoughts and ideas you have for Guilderland here!

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