

# TOWN OF COLONIE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Town of Colonie, Albany County, New York  
June 13, 2019



The Future of Colonie is in the Planning for Tomorrow

## 2019 Comprehensive Plan



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# Executive Summary

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Situated centrally between the Cities of Albany, Schenectady and Troy, the Town of Colonie (the Town) is one of the Capital Region’s largest and oldest suburban communities. In 2003, the Town decided to take a comprehensive look at issues related to its continued growth and development. The Town’s primary concerns regarding the future included ensuring the community remained a great place to live, work, and visit, attracting new industry and employment opportunities and conserving the area’s natural resources and remaining open spaces. The Town adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in 2005. In 2010, an internal committee conducted a Comprehensive Plan Review to identify progress on the goals identified in the 2005 Plan.

Since the 2005 Comprehensive Plan’s development, the Town has seen the impacts of regional growth within its borders. The Town saw continued residential and commercial growth over the past fourteen years with moderate growth in population. The Town continues to be recognized as a very safe community, providing excellent services and having an extensive parks and recreation system and top-rated public and private schools. The Town’s location and low tax rate make it attractive for homeowners and businesses, alike.

In 2016, the Town Board determined that a Comprehensive Plan update was needed and hired the consulting firm of Barton & Loguidice, D.P.C. to facilitate the process. This involved documenting changes in the Town’s demographics and physical development since 2005, evaluating its progress in achieving the goals of its first comprehensive plan, and soliciting extensive input from Town residents about their concerns. This work shaped the development of an updated vision statement (below) and associated goals for the plan.

### **2019 Town of Colonie Vision Statement**

***In the Year 2030, the Town of Colonie is a well-managed and forward-thinking suburban community in the heart of the Capital District. It has an exceptional quality of life with strong, well-established neighborhoods, excellent schools, and generous amenities such as parks, trails, and conserved open lands. Its central location makes it both convenient and attractive. The Town works with its regional partners to ensure that the impacts of traffic are controlled and that safe and attractive transportation options are available for all. The Town balances fiscal responsibility with long-term infrastructure maintenance and great community services. It protects its natural resources, promotes environmentally-sustainable development practices, and carefully guides development and redevelopment in its existing commercial and industrial areas to support the tax base and create and retain jobs. Colonie’s varied housing stock meets the diverse needs of the community and, in combination with relatively low taxes, the Town has retained its status as a desirable community for living, learning, and doing business.***

This updated plan reports on the accomplishments of the Town since 2005. Some of these accomplishments include the redevelopment of once vibrant commercial sites that became vacant or underutilized. Other accomplishments include the completion of major infrastructure projects and implementation of long-term plans for improving the Town's roads, stormwater management, and water and sewer systems. In 2007, the Town's administration undertook a revision of the Town's zoning codes to be consistent with the 2005 Plan. In 2008, the new administration implemented a Ten Year Strategic Financial Management Plan to address the significant financial needs of the Town. As a result of this Plan, the Town's financial position greatly improved. Its most recent bond rating is A+ with a Positive Outlook.

There are a wide range of issues important to both residents and the business community. The purpose of a comprehensive plan is to guide the municipal decisions of the Town's leaders and staff based on the values expressed by the community. To accommodate all interested parties, the Town's Comprehensive Plan provides a vision for the community's future development, including topics such as transportation and traffic; open space and conservation; infrastructure improvements; parks and recreation facilities and upgrades; library expansion; and continued excellence in public safety.

The Plan's update included convening an Advisory Committee to lead the process, holding numerous community meetings and workshops, and commissioning an independent survey by the Siena College Research Institute (SCRI). Meetings were held across the Town to garner input from residents. The survey, in which there was an impressive response rate, showed that of those surveyed, 95% of the Town's residents believe it is an excellent or good place to live.

The Town's accomplishments included special studies performed since the 2005 Plan adoption. For instance, the Albany Shaker Road Corridor Study investigated how to manage traffic congestion between Wolf Road and Everett Road, and the updated Pathways Plan inventoried accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists throughout the Town. These studies provide a better understanding of existing conditions in order to plan for the future.

Progress was also outlined by revisiting the 2005 Plan goals. The work completed to-date was listed alongside its original goal for comparison. Examples of goal progress include renovations to the William K. Sanford Town Library and the Pruyn House to protect and promote the Town's significant cultural and historical resources. By evaluating the Town's accomplishments thus far, future goals, recommendations, and the Town's goals were refined for the next ten years.

The 2019 Comprehensive Plan goals are a continuation of the 2005 goals, updated with relevant recommendations, and new goals to meet the changing needs of the residents and businesses alike. An example of a new goal in 2019 is to update the existing NY 7/ NY 2 Corridor Study since this area has changed considerably since the study's inception in 2005. Another new goal is to improve communication between the Town Planning and Economic Development Department (PEDD) and Town residents to increase transparency of the planning process and inform neighborhoods of potential changes. A new goal to evaluate renewable energy and encourage energy efficiency and conservation was added to address climate change.

This Plan's goals and recommendations are intended to guide the Town into the future towards meeting its vision for 2030. The Town will periodically revisit the goals and track progress to ensure that it is moving forward with the needs and values of its residents and property owners in mind.

In this Comprehensive Plan, many of the prior goals and recommendations are still very relevant. This document is structured for ease of use by the public and includes an introduction of the planning process utilized to create this update; an overview of the Town's progress from 2005 to present day; a

summary of the 2005 goals and recommendations; 2019 Vision, goals and recommendations that will guide the Town going forward; and an implementation table/matrix that illustrates each goal and its associated timeline for action.

The Plan's appendices include a community profile of the Town and its resources; empirical data and results of the SCRI Survey; summaries of all the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee meetings and workshops; and a copy of the 2010 Town of Colonie Comprehensive Plan Review.

# Section 1 – Introduction

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## 1.1 Accomplishments

The Town has seen continued growth since the first Comprehensive Plan was prepared in 2005; there has been a steady increase in population. Unlike most Upstate communities which have experienced declines in population, the Town has benefited from a moderate growth rate over the past fourteen years.

Another measure of the Town’s growth and success can be found in the increased number of redevelopment projects. Analysis reveals an increase in the redevelopment of old, abandoned, and/or former commercial sites. Examples of this trend include the demolition of the former Latham Circle Mall and the construction of a new multi-tenant commercial plaza – Shoppes at Latham Circle; the redevelopment of the former Starlight Theater site into a new commercial office center; the continued build out of the planned Century Hill Office Park; the redevelopment of new commercial, office and hotel projects along and adjacent to Wolf Road; the revitalization of old or vacant commercial properties along the entire length of Central Avenue from the City of Albany to the Town of Niskayuna line; the commercial development of long-vacant parcels of land in the Troy-Schenectady/Wade Road corridor; the redevelopment of the strip mall at Routes 9 and 155 to Fresh Market Commons; and the addition of new mixed-use residential/commercial developments such as the Village at New Loudon on Route 9.

Over the past decade, the Town has made great strides in adding to and expanding its open space and recreational amenities. Tougher regulations incorporated into the Town’s land use laws have allowed the Town to preserve more sensitive and natural open spaces through the site plan review process. When a new development is proposed, the Town looks for options to set aside land as permanent open space, and sensitive areas like wetlands and habitat are preserved or re-created out of the way of new development.

The Town has also seen improvements in many of its transportation corridors. Central Avenue has undergone an extensive corridor improvement process that has since reshaped and improved how that transit corridor functions. Another significant transportation project has been the upgrades to the Aviation Road corridor adjacent to Wolf Road. Implementation of a long-range linkage plan to create an alternate north/south link in this area to alleviate traffic congestion along Wolf Road is already underway evident by the roundabouts at the intersections of Aviation Road and Sand Creek Road; Aviation Road and Marcus Boulevard; and Albany Shaker Road and Maxwell Road. In 2019, construction began on the \$58M Northway Exit 4 Improvements Project that will create a new Exit 4 off the Adirondack Northway (I-87) to both Wolf Road and the Albany International Airport. The Albany International Airport has also undergone extensive improvements in recent years and is slated for a parking expansion project in Spring 2019.

In addition to the above mentioned physical changes, there have been several administrative changes in the Town. In 2007, the Town Board commissioned a complete overhaul of the Town’s Zoning Codes. These updates were predicated on the goals and recommendations found in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, and have since been codified into law. Several new plans and studies have also taken place by commission of the Town Board to increase awareness of growth and development issues across the Town. For a complete listing and description of these plans and studies, please see Section 2.1.

## 1.2 Purpose

A comprehensive plan is a living document that guides municipal decisions of the community's leaders and staff. The Plan expresses the vision and values of the community to guide its future growth and development. The General Municipal Law's definition of a comprehensive plan is below.

### **Comprehensive Plan (a.k.a. Master Plan)**

A comprehensive plan consists of the materials, written and/or graphic, including but not limited to maps, charts, studies, resolutions, reports, and other descriptive material that identify the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices and instruments for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of a municipality.

***Town Law §272-a, and General Municipal Law §119-u.***

As defined in the state legislation, a comprehensive plan is a document which presents goals, objectives, guidelines, and policies for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth, and development of a community. A comprehensive plan sets forth recommended actions or policies which will make the community a good place to live, work, and visit.

The comprehensive plan serves as a legal basis for local land use regulations. According to New York State law, zoning and other land use regulations must be in accordance with a comprehensive plan. However, the plan itself is not a regulation. Ordinances, regulations, or local laws, along with a variety of non-regulatory tools, are used for implementing and realizing the Plan's goals and recommendations for future growth and development. While it is strongly recommended, New York State does not require communities to have a comprehensive plan.

This document represents the results of research and interviews conducted to develop an updated Comprehensive Plan for the Town. The Plan describes existing conditions, assesses community resources, identifies needs, and discusses key issues, opportunities and challenges currently impacting the Town.

The Community Profile and the SCRI Survey serve as comprehensive sources of information to obtain an adequate understanding of the Town, its residents, and its resources. These references were designed to serve as a basis for developing community goals, objectives, strategies, and policies in the Plan.

The Community Profile, found as Appendix A, is organized into nine primary sections. These sections are as follows: history, demographics, land use and zoning, public safety, infrastructure, natural resources, cultural and historic resources, parks and open space, and education.

## 1.3 Process and Public Involvement

In 2003, the Town began the original comprehensive planning process and adopted the first Comprehensive Plan in 2005. The process continued with a 2010 review of the 2005 plan, and further

still with this 2019 Plan. In 2016, the Town hired Barton & Loguidice, D.P.C. (B&L) to assist in updating the 2005 Comprehensive Plan.

### ***Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee***

The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (the Committee) was established in August 2016 by the Town Board to oversee the update of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. The Committee included a cross section of residents who were involved in community activities as well as Town staff. The role of the committee was to lead the process, communicate with municipal leaders, and help facilitate community involvement in the development of the Plan. The key objectives of the committee are below.

- Review the 2005 Comprehensive Plan and its review memo from 2010 to identify previous goals in comparison to the Town's current status.
- Provide an opportunity for residents to become actively involved in updating and shaping the Town's future.
- Incorporated the recent studies into a comprehensive planning process going forward.
- Focus on the Town's commercial districts, address neighborhood concerns, protect open space, preserve historic resources, build community pride, and identify concrete goals and action items for the Town to pursue into the next decade in response to the public's interest.

At the start of the Committee's work, B&L created an inventory and analysis of existing conditions of the Town. The inventory describes existing land use and regulations, demographic and economic trends, environmental resources, cultural and recreational resources, infrastructure and transportation as well as fiscal conditions. Extensive mapping was also done to illustrate these existing conditions. The inventory and analysis is Appendix A.

### ***Siena College Research Institute (SCRI) Survey***

One of the initial public outreach activities was an independent, town-wide survey conducted by SCRI in March 2017. A random sample of 2000 registered voters living in the Town (excluding the Villages of Colonie and Menands) were contacted by mail, web, and phone. Of that list, 607 residents (approximately 30% of those surveyed) responded between April 3 and June 12, 2017.

The survey consisted of twenty-three (23) questions that addressed issues such as growth, housing, traffic congestion, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, recreation facilities, environmental concerns, open space preservation, business, employment, Town services, and the type of residential development that should be encouraged.

Three (3) of the top positive aspects of Colonie identified by survey respondents include:

1. The Town is an excellent or good place to live (95 percent)
2. Where they live feels like a neighborhood (91 percent)
3. Property taxes are about right considering the services received (86 percent)

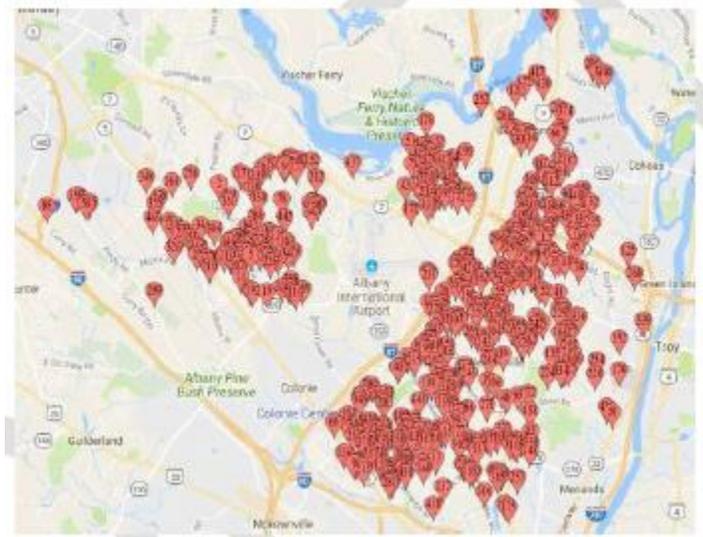
The top three (3) supported initiatives for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan according to the survey include:

1. The construction of new sidewalks along main roads (85 percent)
2. Designing local roads to slow speeds (81 percent)
3. Investing in improvements to the Town's parks (80 percent)

Additionally, the respondents to the survey felt it is either somewhat or very important to protect environmental resources, provide incentives for reuse of old commercial sites, preserve historical sites, strengthen clearing undeveloped land regulations and to actively conserve farmland.

Below is a map indicating the geographic location of those who completed the survey throughout the Town. The full survey results are found on the Town's PEDD website ([www.coloniepedd.org](http://www.coloniepedd.org)) and in Appendix B.

**Figure 1 - SCRI Survey Respondents Map**



*\*Map provided by Siena College, June 2017.*

### **Public Meetings and Workshops**

The Committee held meetings throughout the comprehensive planning process. All committee meetings were open to the public and a portion of the agenda at each meeting was devoted to public comment. Similar to the original process, the committee conducted several neighborhood meetings and workshops. Agendas, sign-in forms, and presentations from all meetings, workshops and focus groups are in Appendix C and on the Town's PEDD website ([www.coloniepedd.org](http://www.coloniepedd.org)).

In addition to the Committee meetings and SCRI survey, an online comment portal was added to the comprehensive plan's webpage to solicit feedback from the community.

Several community workshops were held in neighborhoods as part of the first public outreach during the process. Community Workshops introduced the comprehensive planning process. Participants were asked to work together to define the Town's strengths and identify issues that should be addressed in the plan. The Community Workshops were held at the locations below.

- Forts Ferry Elementary School
- Loudonville Elementary School
- Shaker Junior High School
- Lisha Kill Middle School

A workshop was held at Beltrone Senior Living Center to discuss issues related to seniors. A meeting was also held with North and South Colonie Schools.

In addition to the community workshops, the Committee held focus group meetings to discuss topics that included open space, recreation, transportation, economic development, housing, and development patterns. Other public outreach meetings are listed below.

- Town-wide Meeting 1
- Town-wide Meeting 2
- Committee Public Hearing
- Town Board Public Hearings

### ***Summary***

The information obtained from the public involvement was used as a basis for plan recommendations. The Committee developed specific policies and actions to address the problems and issues defined as part of the inventory and through the public outreach process. Finally, the Committee created a strategy for implementing the recommended policies and actions. The strategy prioritizes actions and identifies resources for implementation.

# Section 2 – Town’s Progress

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## 2.1 Plans and Studies (2005 to Present)

The following plans and studies listed below were commissioned by the Town and/or other related governmental entities since the development of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. These plans and studies directly address community issues such as traffic and transportation, pedestrian and bicycle linkages, and brownfield redevelopment.

### 2010 Comprehensive Plan Review

In 2010 the Town Supervisor commissioned a report to review progress on the 2005 Comprehensive Plan goals and recommendations. A special committee was appointed comprised of Town Officials, residents, business owners and stakeholders. Good planning dictates that a community’s Comprehensive Plan should be revisited every 5 to 10 years. The 2010 Comprehensive Plan Review is included as Appendix D.

### NY 7 / NY 2 Corridor Study (2005)

Within the Town, NY 7 / NY 2 is a highly-traveled corridor which serves a range of functions, from providing mobility between Troy and Schenectady to offering accessibility to the Albany International Airport, the Northway, and various highly-developed retail centers, business parks and neighborhoods. The study of this corridor built upon the land use and transportation findings and recommendations developed as part of the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) for the Airport Area (1991).

The NY 7 / NY 2 Corridor Study provides a framework for future land use, transportation and conservation decisions, where economic growth is balanced with maintaining community character, protecting natural resources, and providing multimodal transportation options. The planning process involved four public workshops and fifteen advisory committee meetings, resulting in consensus amongst agencies, residents and businesses in the area.

The study identifies a Preferred Future Plan which concentrates future development at nodes along the corridor with pedestrian, bicycle and transit linkages to minimize the need for personal vehicle trips. Recommended implementation actions include rezoning to support mixed-use development, using conservation subdivision design in low-density residential neighborhoods, establishing design guidelines to achieve aesthetic improvements, and improving transportation to enhance the safety for all modes.

### Central Avenue Corridor Inventory Study (2010)

The study developed an inventory of parcels within 500 feet of Central Avenue (Route 5) in the Town, excluding Village of Colonie parcels. The inventory was completed to provide recommendations through the use of planning tools and economic development strategies to ensure continued economic success of the corridor while encouraging reuse, infill and redevelopment.

The study identified land uses in the area, parcel size, and vacant buildings based on Real Property System (RPS) data from May 2010. Existing infrastructure and environmental features were also identified and presented in figures. This data was used in developing recommendations on how to attract key portions of development activity to regenerate the area.

## **Pathways Plan (2019)**

During the public involvement portion of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan process, concerns were raised about pedestrian safety. A Pathways Plan was initiated in response, and its scope extended to bicyclist safety. Drafted in 2008 and updated in 2019, the plan is intended to help guide the Town's development of pathways, i.e. accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists, such as sidewalks, bike lanes and off-street paths. The goal of the plan is to offer residents, workers and visitors choices in how they travel, thus contributing to the quality of life in Colonie.

Pathways Plan recommendations include continuing to increase the connectivity between key destinations, such as safe routes to school, providing better access to trails, and working with State, County and other partners to implement projects. The plan also discusses implementation through site plan and subdivision review and through pursuit of potential funding sources.

The plan includes a Town of Colonie Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Network. It was initially developed by mapping the Capital District Transportation Committee's (CDTC's) Priority Pedestrian and Bicycle Networks, utility right-of-ways, and existing trails, and identifying local priority routes to eliminate gaps in connectivity. This network was updated in 2019 to reflect CDTC's most current Pedestrian Districts and Bicycle Network, the Capital District Trails Plan's existing and planned regional trails abutting the Town, and the Town's existing sidewalks and trails.

## **Lincoln Avenue Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Nomination Study (2017- present)**

The Lincoln Avenue Brownfield Opportunity Area is an industrial area of 370 acres of largely vacant and underutilized sites, only 5.5 acres (1.5%) of which are publicly owned. The objective of the nomination study is to build on the strategies within the Town's Comprehensive Plan, the Capital Region Economic Development Council Strategic Plan, the Route 32 Linkage Study (as Route 32 is located less than one-quarter mile from the BOA) and other local and regional plans to revitalize the area. The study will analyze the area's potential to attract new industries, leveraging its easy access to rail and highways, and develop mixed uses at key locations. It will recommend appropriate sustainable practices to incorporate into redevelopment projects. The Lincoln Avenue Revitalization Plan Steering Committee is actively meeting and will develop its final recommendations by 2020.

## **Albany Shaker Road Corridor Study (2018)**

The Town undertook the development of the Albany Shaker Road Corridor Study in collaboration with Albany County and the CDTC. Completed in 2018, the focus of the study was the Albany Shaker Road corridor from Wolf Road to Everett Road. Recognizing Albany Shaker Road's importance as a regional connector, the study's objectives were to enhance the character of the corridor, mitigate traffic concerns, and address safety and quality of life concerns for all modes and adjoining properties.

The study's recommendations call for reducing the speed limit along the corridor, improving pedestrian safety through the addition of pedestrian crossings and sidewalks, adding bicycle lanes along the corridor, calming traffic on side streets, restricting turning vehicles via a raised median, and improving traffic flow through the addition of a center turn lane. The Town, in collaboration with Albany County, is seeking Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funding through CDTC for the pedestrian improvements.

## 2.2 2005 Goals and Status

The 2005 goals were reviewed in 2010 and during the 2019 comprehensive plan update process. Progress for each goal since the 2005 Plan is listed below. The goals are listed in categories that correlate with the SCRI survey results.

### Transportation

#### ***2005 Goal: Improve mobility throughout the Town.***

##### **Pedestrian and Bicycle**

To enhance safety and attractiveness of non-motorized modes of travel, new connector trails and emergency access roads were developed to improve interconnectivity between neighborhoods, existing trails, and cross streets. Examples of trails and access roads installed are below:

- Lake Ridge – to Hudson Preserve
- Canterbury Crossings – Route 9 and Baker Avenue; to Hunters Run through emergency access road
- Colonie East – trails to Utica Avenue
- Meadowdale Estates – Watervliet Shaker Road to Wade Road

Connections made to the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail are listed in the Recreation section.

Upgraded pedestrian crossings at Sand Creek Middle School and Colonie Central High School were installed using funds received from the Safe Routes to School grant. New crosswalks and pedestrian buttons were installed at signalized intersections. Islands were added, providing students safer areas to wait to cross the street. Ramped crosswalks were installed for ADA compliance. New sidewalks were installed, as well as curbed islands in the middle school parking lot to calm traffic. Sand Creek Road was also rehabilitated with new curbing and sidewalks as part of the Sand Creek Road Rehabilitation project.

The Town is in the grant application process for new or improved pedestrian infrastructure on Albany Shaker Road between Wolf and Everett Roads in response to the Albany Shaker Road Corridor Study recommendations. These improvements are as follows:

- New or upgraded striped crosswalks
- New or upgraded pedestrian signal heads and push buttons
- ADA-compliant sidewalk ramps on all legs of the signalized intersections
- Reduce speed limit to 30mph
- New traffic light at Shaker El with signalized pedestrian crosswalks (by Albany County)

##### **Public Transportation**

To improve access to public transportation, the Town continues to collaborate with CDTA as areas are developed. An example of an improvement is the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line, the No. 905 BusPlus, which provides limited stop service on Route 5 (Central Avenue).

##### **Vehicular**

The Town partnered with Albany County on grant applications for improvements to 4.1 miles on New Karner Road between Western Avenue and Watervliet Shaker Road, and on improvements to Watervliet Shaker Road from New Karner to Sand Creek Road.

The Town partnered with NYSDOT for the development of the Exit 6 Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI) and the Exit 4 bridge, both off Route I-87. The Town also partnered with other agencies on the Northway Exit 4 Reconfiguration.

Other projects completed to improve the flow of traffic and reduce congestion include the Maxwell Road Roundabout (Albany County), new connector road at Route 9 and 9R (NYSDOT), and the Winners Circle roundabout (for future Maxwell Road Extension).

## **Open Space, Recreation, and Environment**

The 2005 Goals pertaining to open space, recreation, and the environment are listed below.

- Enhance the Town's Mohawk River waterfront.
- Encourage the conservation of viable farmland and significant open spaces throughout the Town.
- Develop a network of open lands to provide wildlife habitat and potential recreational trail corridors.
- Expand active and passive recreational resources available in the Town to meet the growing and changing demand for these amenities.
- Protect the Town's important natural resources such as stream corridors, steep slopes, floodplains, wetland systems, and unique ecosystems.

Many of the achievements of the Town apply to multiple goals. These achievements are separated by category to eliminate duplicating information.

### ***Open Space***

Open Space is any undeveloped area characterized by natural scenic beauty or, whose existing openness, natural condition or present state of use, if preserved, would enhance the present or potential value of abutting or surrounding development or would establish a desirable pattern of development or would offer substantial conformance with the planning objectives of the municipality or would maintain or enhance the conservation of natural or scenic resources (State of New York Article 12-F, General Municipal Law, Section 239-8.a.). The town-owned recreational and open space in 2016 was approx. 1,155 acres, an addition of 185 acres since 2008. Examples of new land conserved are as follows:

- Purchased 57 acres on Onderdonk Road, including acreage on the waterfront in the deepest section of the Mohawk River, to be conserved as permanent open space.
- In 2013, took ownership of 118 acres of open space along Sand Creek Road adjacent to Stump Pond.
- In 2013, returned 12.3 acres of prime riverside property to residents by creating the Mohawk Riverside Landing Park. This park includes a trail connection to the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail
- In 2016, the Town took ownership of Schuyler Flatts Cultural Park, a 23-acre park. This park was deeded to the Town by the Open Space Institute.
- Received 23 acres of open space and trails as a result of the Northern Pass development; connects to the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail
- 157 Acres dedicated by the Town to Albany Pine Bush Preserve
- Approaching 100 acres of conservation easements, parcels deeded to the Town to exist as undisturbed open space, through 2016. These are separate from green-space requirements and stormwater easements.

- Fox Preserve, 70 acres of protected land donated to the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy in 2015. This area contains over a mile of trails through fields, forests, and along Shaker Creek.

In an effort to continue conserving open space, conservation overlay districts were created in the 2007 update to the land use law. Fees are collected for development outside the three GEIS areas to be used by the Town to purchase farmland, open space, environmentally sensitive areas, and waterfront property for preservation.

An updated Open Space/Recreational Inventory was created in 2018 as part of the Comprehensive Plan process. Additionally, the 2008 Pathways Plan was updated in 2019 to include CDTC's pedestrian districts and bicycle routes (Capital Trails NY Plan), existing Town sidewalks and trails. This plan also displays proposed future connections contingent on the acquisition of new land for open space. The Open Space/Recreational Inventory and Pathways are in Appendix A.

### ***Mohawk River and Recreation***

A \$10,000 grant was provided by NYSDEC to make the connection between the Mohawk Riverside Landing Park and the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail in 2013. This section of trail runs along the Mohawk River. Further access improvements to the Mohawk River include a new public canoe access point that is in progress at the Mohawk Riverfront Apartments.

The Town made improvements to multiple recreational facilities since the 2005 Plan. For example, the Colonie Mohawk River Park saw multiple improvements as listed below.

- In 2016, the Town installed a barrier-free, ADA-compliant playground. This inclusive playground provides children of varying abilities options for recreation.
- Various pool and bath house improvements were made in the last decade:
  - State-of-the-art splash pad
  - New soft pool liners
  - New pool filtration systems
  - ADA-compliant lifts
  - ADA-showers in the pool house

Future work at the Colonie Mohawk River Park includes renovations to the pool house and a new pavilion in the lower park for which the Town received a \$125,000 grant.

Other recreation facility additions and improvements projects are listed below.

- New dog parks were opened at the Town's Golf Course and Colonie Mohawk River Park
- Drainage and facility improvements at the Town Golf Course
- Improvements were made at the 12 pocket parks:
  - New fences
  - New playground equipment
  - Court updates
- Athletic field improvements at the North Colonie soccer field and Colonie Mohawk River Park softball and football complex

The Town is in the grant application process for \$125,000 to install a new playground and parking lot at the Crossings.

The Town installed new connections to existing trails and the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail, developing a safer, more continuous network for pedestrians and bicyclists. These new connections are as follows:

- Northern Pass – trails and connection to Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail
- Shelter Cove - Shelter Cove to the Colonie Mohawk River Park and Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail
- Parkside Estates - Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail to Island View Road
- Winding Creek – to Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail
- Mohawk Riverside Landing Park to Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail

### **Environment**

The Town of Colonie was named a Tree City USA by the National Arbor Day Foundation in 2017, a designation reflecting the Town’s ongoing commitment to the environment and urban forestry.

The Town signed the NYS Climate Smart Communities Pledge in 2018 and is working towards becoming a certified Clean Energy Community. As part of the certification, the Town is finalizing the process of adding unified permits for solar energy installations.

The Town is working with the Municipal Electric and Gas Alliance (MEGA) and Gravity Renewables to invest in hydroelectric power, earning green energy credits that offset a significant portion of energy usage. This will stabilize energy costs over the next 20 years. The Town is also converting 3,982 streetlights to LED lighting, yielding substantial cost and energy savings.

Goals and recommendations that specifically address climate change and sustainability are located in other subsections of the Plan.

### **Development and Redevelopment**

***2005 Goal: Provide opportunities and incentives for the development and redevelopment of a variety of housing options in the Town to meet the needs of its increasingly diverse population.***

Over the past 10 years, the Town saw new housing options added, including carriage houses, townhouses, apartments, condos, and affordable senior housing. Affordable senior housing includes King Thiel, Ashfield, and others in planning process. A new independent, retirement living center, Shaker Pointe, offers a range of housing options including carriage houses and apartments. Canterbury Crossings is an example of a new intergenerational housing development.

***2005 Goals: Encourage the reuse or redevelopment of existing sites and buildings.***

***Improve the development approval process by establishing land use regulations that guide development in a manner that is consistent with the vision, goals, and recommendations contained in this plan.***

The Town amended the Greenspace law in 2011 as an incentive to create opportunities for increasing the value of underutilized commercial areas for redevelopment.

By making the upgrades and improvements to our infrastructure, the Town is seen as an attractive place for business. This will continue to be true as improvements are made through our long-term plans for our roads, sewer, water, and stormwater infrastructure.

Examples of completed redevelopment projects are as follows:

- Former Latham Circle Mall to Shoppes at Latham Circle
- Former strip mall at Route 155 and Route 9 to Fresh Market Commons
- Former Adirondack Steel to Gallivan Nursery
- Former Latham Farms Walmart to Dick's and Field and Stream
- Former Hoffman's Driving Range to Village at New Loudon
- Former Bowler's Club to Plaza 7 Commons
- Former Michael's Banquet House to Albany Medical Center Emergent Care
- Saints Plaza
- Former Handy Andy to small retail plaza
- Former Lennon's Flowers to mixed use development
- Former Ford Motor to Precision Valve Automation
- Former Tri-City Cleaners to small retail plaza
- Former Grand Union Plaza to Grace Fellowship Church
- Former restaurant space on Route 2 to New Comer Funeral Home
- Former Sears site to Whole Foods / BJ's Restaurant
- Former Kirker's to small retail plaza

The former Starlite Theatre redevelopment to AYCO is under construction and is expected to be complete in Fall 2019.

The Town received a grant for \$1M through Restore New York for the demolition of the former Tobin Packing Plant. This funds the initial step in redevelopment, potentially a new mixed use site of retail and residential. This is a joint project with the City of Albany.

The Town received a grant to perform the Lincoln Avenue Brownfield Opportunity Area study. This study will identify ways to revitalize the Al-Tech Steel property. NYSDEC will invest \$16.6M for the clean-up of this site. This area was once a major industrial region, and will remain as such through its zoning and the NYSDEC cleanup requirements.

The Town received a \$175,000 grant from the NYS Attorney General's Office to perform the Zombie Property Project. The Town applied for the second round of zombie grant funding. Accomplishments during the first round of funding are below.

- Developed an inventory of zombie properties (run down or abandoned) street by street
- Established a Vacant Property Coordinator
- Foreclosure prevention program through affordable housing partnership (NFP)
- Developed Vacant Property Committee and implemented tracking system
- Partnered with Albany County Land Bank to return properties back to the tax roll
- Working with Community Development Department through HUD grant funds to repair properties

***2005 Goal: Promote commercial and industrial growth in specifically designated areas, taking advantage of the Town's infrastructure, location, and critical regional assets.***

The Town is maintaining zoning for these locations that allows for appropriate use given the existing infrastructure and land use.

**2005 Goal: Maintain the integrity of residential and mixed-use neighborhoods throughout the Town.**

Vehicle and traffic laws were amended to prevent non-residents from parking on residential streets in impacted areas (i.e. near schools). The Town reduced speed limits to improve the safety of adjacent neighborhoods. Upgrades to all 12 neighborhood pocket parks were also made.

### Services and Resources

**2005 Goal: Maintain the Town’s high level of public safety services; community services for youth, seniors, and the public at large; and public utility infrastructure and services**

#### Public Safety Services

The results of the SCRI survey show that 91 and 96 percent of residents surveyed rate police and firefighter services, respectively, as good or excellent.

The Town was recognized as the #1 Safest Community in the US in 2008 and 2009 in the Crime City Rankings published by CQ Press, a study of 393 communities with populations over 75,000. Colonie Police Department (CPD) received a 100% compliance rating on its most recent accreditation. In 2018, CPD is at the highest staffing level in its history with 115 officers. Community policing was increased and resource officers were placed at Shaker and Colonie High Schools. To improve communications, the Town upgraded to a county-wide public safety radio system that increases efficiency and interoperability with adjacent jurisdictions.

The Town’s Emergency Medical Services (EMS) was named the Regional Agency of the Year in 2018 by the Regional Emergency Medical Organization (REMO). In 2017, EMS received the American Heart Association’s Mission Lifeline Gold Award for excellence in emergency cardiac care. The twelve volunteer fire departments consistently rank as the best in the region.

All public safety personnel in the Town utilize the Municipal Training Center (MTC). In November 2016, the MTB opened a “streetscape” simulating the physical features encountered by emergency responders in the real world – the only one in the Capital Region. The Town is in the grant application process for \$500,000 of renovations and upgrades to the training center. The scope of work includes the following items:

- Paving access roads
- Demolishing existing septic system and connecting to the Town’s sewer trunk line
- Renovating the main classroom building, including ADA compliance

The Town received a \$50,000 DHSES grant to upgrade audio/visual equipment and renovate the upper classroom building at the MTB. Renovations include improving ADA compliance.

Additional work to be performed at the MTB in 2019 includes replacing roofs on two of the training houses and structural repairs to the fire training tower.

#### Youth Services

The Town provides the following youth services:

- Youth Advisory Board
- Youth Court
- Explorers Post 185 (Colonie Police Department)
- Fire Department Explorers

- DARE program (Colonie Police Department)
- William K Sanford Town Library events and programs
- Students in Local Government Day
- Global Youth Service Day
- Summer Programs
- Sports teams

### Senior Services

The Colonie Senior Resources Department (SRD) provides a wide range of senior programming and services. The SRD partners with Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc. to expand services. There are currently six senior clubs. Some programs include:

- The SRD provides a wide range of programs and services to support the independence and enhance the quality of life for Town residents age 60 and older and their caregivers.
- Information, referral and assistance accessing services including, but not limited to: case assistance and care management, in home supportive services, housing options for all levels of housing requirement, home maintenance programs and grants, benefit, entitlement and health insurance counseling, caregiver support services.
- Six Town funded senior clubs located throughout the Town to encourage the continued contribution and participation in community life.
- Collaborative partnership with Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc. (CSSC) to provide a continuum of unduplicated services to Town residents over the age of 60 and their caregivers. Annual Town funding allows CSSC to expand transportation services, provide Umbrella Program membership scholarships to qualified seniors, and congregate meals.
- Expanded In-home Services for the Elderly Program (E.I.S.E.P)
- NYS Farmer’s Market Nutrition Program
- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
- Scholarships for Umbrella Program
- Financial Assistance Programs

### Public At-Large

The Town provides services and activities for residents of all ages. Examples of these activities are below.

- Pruyne House: Concerts in the Barn, Old Fashion Sunday, Open House, Holiday Greens Show, bus trips
- The Crossings: Concerts at the Crossings, Farmer’s Market, Harvest Fest, Halloween at the Crossings and children’s spring event
- Colonie Town Band
- William K Sanford Town Library events and programs
- Free CPR training by Town EMS

### ***2005 Goal: Protect and promote the Town’s significant cultural and historic resources***

#### **Pruyn House**

The Pruyne House site has seen considerable investment for improvements and restoration. The following has been completed thus far:

- Window replacement
- Staircase restoration
- Room refurbishment
- New roof, exterior paint, and repairs to the siding and cupola of the Buhmaster Barn

Further restoration will be completed in 2019 including a new roof, masonry repairs to the exterior and chimneys, storm drain repairs, and paving.

### **William K Sanford Town Library**

In 2018, the William K Sanford Town Library began over \$3M in improvements. The Town received a \$1M grant to assist in the reconfiguration of the lobby and an expanded entryway. Other work includes the following:

- Enhanced technology
- More flexible space for meetings
- Educational services
- Relocated and reconfigured teen and children's rooms
- New bathrooms
- New energy efficient, LED lighting
- New technical training room
- New sprinkler system

The library previously installed an outdoor reading garden with wireless connectivity.

### ***2005 Goal: Expand opportunities for sharing information and for encouraging community involvement. Promote volunteerism and community service.***

The Town utilizes many avenues to keep the public informed. This includes the Town's website (Colonie.org), CPD social media, Chronicle, State of the Town addresses, and live-streamed Town Board meetings. The Town is in the process of upgrading audio equipment for the Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning Board meetings.

Volunteer opportunities are available for youth, through the police department, fire departments, library, and Town sponsored community service events.

### ***2005 Goal: Cooperate with the Villages of Colonie and Menands, and other neighboring and regional municipalities, agencies, and organizations on issues of mutual concern.***

The Town regularly coordinates with neighboring municipalities. This is illustrated by our joint ventures and grant applications for infrastructure projects and public safety. Town has inter-municipal training for the Police Department (PD), EMS, fire and volunteer fire, held at the MTB. This also includes Mutual Aid agreements. Town has a shared application for records management grant with Albany County. The Town is also a member of the Albany County Shared Services Committee and has Municipal Cooperation agreements with neighboring agencies.

### ***2005 Goal: Provide a business-friendly environment that is supportive of local businesses, that encourages entrepreneurship, and that helps assure the provision of quality employment and a diverse economic base in the community.***

The Town has a working partnership with the Capital Region Chamber of Commerce, Colonie Chamber of Commerce, Local, County, and State entities.

## Infrastructure

***2005 Goal: Maintain the Town's high level of public safety services; community services for youth, seniors, and the public at large; and public utility infrastructure and services.***

### Pure Waters

By the end of 2018, the Town invested \$14 million in sanitary sewer infrastructure. Examples of improvements made are below.

- Replaced the emergency generator, screens and grit equipment at the Mohawk View Water Pollution Control Plant
- Overhauled the Lisha Kill Pumping Station
- Rehabilitated the Wolf Road and Fonda Road Pumping Stations
- Upgraded emergency notification systems at all 29 remote pumping stations
- Rehabilitated the sewer system on Metro Park Road, Aviation Road, and Computer Park Drive East
- Rehabilitated the sewer mains on Sand Creek Road and Metro Park Road

In 2019, Pure Waters will begin the rehabilitation of the Albany-Shaker Road Pumping Station and clarifier upgrades at the Mohawk View Water Pollution Control Plant.

### Latham Water

By the end of 2018, the Town invested \$18 million in water infrastructure. Part of the investment included water main replacements. Water main replacements increase the water system reliability, improve pressure and fire flows to residents. They also decrease unplanned shutdowns caused by water main breaks. Example replacement projects are below.

- In 2018, new water mains replaced aging cast iron on Route 9 and Maxwell Road (2,600 and 2,900 feet, respectively)
- Replaced approximately 4,500 feet of water main on Sand Creek Road from Osborne Road to Everett Road
- Examples of other projects performed by Latham Water to maintain and upgrade its facilities are as follows:
  - Rehabilitated the Miller Road Water Tank and the Osborne Road Elevated Water Tank
  - Replaced pumps, motors, and electrical switching gear at the Mohawk View High Lift Pump Station
  - Overhauled the River Road Pump Station

In 2019, approximately 3,800 feet of water main will be replaced on Route 9 from Maxwell Road to Old Loudon Road. Improvements to the Mohawk View Low Lift Pump Station, including pump, motor, and screening equipment improvements, will be made in 2019 as well.

The Town has a joint venture project with the City Albany for a water interconnection. This connection will allow Albany and Colonie to provide each other with more efficient and cost-effective emergency backup water systems. This project will eliminate the need to support the expensive back-up system at Stony Creek Reservoir in Clifton Park. The Town received a \$960,000 NYS Water Infrastructure Improvement grant to perform the work. The anticipated completion date of this project is in 2019.

## Highway

The Highway Division is in the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the paving program, with approximately \$25M invested through 2018 to pave roadways, repair sinkholes, and improve drainage and stormwater flows. By the end of the first 5-year paving program in 2014, the Highway department made improvements to 182 Town roads (approximately 58 percent of the Town's roads), and completed a total of 98 storm sewer repair projects. By the end of 2017, 95 percent of the Town's major feeder roads were characterized as very good or excellent.

Improvements were made to the Russell Road Storm Water Management System to better contain stormwater through the addition of check dams and culverts. The Town-owned dams were inspected in 2018 in compliance with NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) regulations. Engineering, inspection, and emergency documents were updated. Both dams maintained their original classification and were described as being in good condition.

The Town is in the grant application process to repair storm drains on the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail. This project will be constructed in 2019 pending grant approval.

# Section 3 – Planning Approach

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This plan update followed a similar approach that was used in the 2005 Plan. Prior to discussing the plan recommendations in detail in Section 4, it is useful to re-acknowledge the larger themes that guide this plan. In developing the updated plan recommendations, several major concepts were utilized to create a framework for thinking about the immediate and long-term future of the Town.

**Continue to recognize what is working well.** Overall, the Town of Colonie continues to work well in many significant ways. The Siena College Research Institute Survey conducted in conjunction with this plan update concluded that Colonie is recognized as a very safe community, it has excellent public and private schools, and it is a very desirable place to live and work because of its location within the heart of the Capital District. The Town provides excellent services, and has an extensive and growing parks system. Taxes remain low due to the administration’s solid fiscal management and a very diverse and growing tax base. The fact that the Town Board is dedicated to ensuring that the Town continues to be positioned to keep delivering necessary services and amenities in a cost-effective manner now and into the immediate future is a key underlying theme for this plan update.

**Continue to identify areas where improvements are needed.** As noted there are many aspects of the Town that currently work very well and make Colonie a unique and special place to live and work. However in an effort to continuously improve the Town, there are some areas that merit more focus and consideration. These areas were considered when developing new and updated recommendations for this plan. The following areas are high on the Town’s agenda moving forward:

- The Town has made major improvements in infrastructure, but needs to continue this momentum and complete the long-term plans currently in place for the Town Highway Department, the Storm Water Management Department, the Pure Waters Department, and the Latham Water Department. The Highway Department is now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year of a comprehensive paving program; Pure Waters is instituting its 10-year plan; and Latham Water District is continuing to implement its long-term maintenance and upgrade plan. The Town strives to be proactive with all of its infrastructure projects, and as a result it does not experience innumerable infrastructure failures or breaks in service like many neighboring municipalities.
- The Town continues to seek ways to minimize disruption to the residents whenever road maintenance or reconstruction projects are undertaken. The Town is always looking for more efficient maintenance and reconstruction programs for its transportation networks. In this light, the Town continues to interface well with other authorities (County, State, Federal) having jurisdiction over the many non-Town owned roadways.
- The Town invests heavily in its parks. However, it was recognized that there is a need to update the Town’s Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Town needs to continue with updating and improving the parks system, particularly in the area of new and improved sports fields to meet the rising need of its citizens. Standardized wayfinding within and across the parks system in the Town is also an area for improvement and upgrade.
- Since 2005, the Town has recognized the increased use of and demand for bicycle and pedestrian amenities. Accordingly, a recommendation is for the Town to create a Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee that can assist in making short-term and long-term recommendations for areas such as trail development, sidewalk gaps, and proper connections between neighborhoods.

- Redeveloping the older areas of Town is another priority area that continues to be a consideration for future action. One of the community’s “older areas” in the town, the Tobin First Prize site, is now part of a joint initiative with the city of Albany to create a revitalization plan to bring this blighted site back to viable use. Additionally, the old former industrial sites in and around Lincoln Avenue are now part of a new Brownfield Opportunity Area study that will create a vision for redeveloping this area.
- Open space identification and preservation. The Town recognizes the need to further develop an Open Space plan to help guide future development patterns.
- Climate Change and Clean Energy. The Town recognizes climate change and clean energy as significant issues affecting the community. As such, the Town has taken a progressive stance on moving forward with a wide array of initiatives and actions to become a NYSDEC Climate Smart Community and a NYSERDA Clean Energy Community. Recommendations made within this plan update will support this climate smart approach.

**Emphasize Quality of Life.** As quantified by the Siena College Research Institute Survey, Colonie residents enjoy the Town’s provision of essential services such as housing, safety, excellent schools and employment opportunities; amenities such as parks and access to scenic and natural areas; cultural and historical resources; and low taxes, which they feel contribute to a high quality of life. Ensuring that this high quality of life is maintained over the next decade is a major priority of the Town.

Community quality of life continues to be understood as a key element in where people decide to live and work. Just as it was in 2005, quality of life is still recognized as a critical component of a community’s social and economic development strategy. Many corporate businesses and employers cite high quality of life as a primary reason for locating their businesses in Town, and as a major factor for attracting a highly skilled workforce who want to live and work in a community like Colonie.

The Town has also embraced the concepts of smart growth and green infrastructure, and begun to implement policies and programs to support sustainable energy initiatives that can add significantly to quality of life. Many of the goals and recommendations of this plan update subscribe to those underlying principles.

**A Pro-active Economic Development Approach.** As noted in the 2005 Plan, the Town of Colonie is attractive to business development. With its central location, good road network, and solid infrastructure and services, businesses continue to see Colonie as a place to create and locate their business ventures. Since 2005, other communities in the region have become more aggressive in their economic development efforts. Additionally, the development trend in Colonie has now moved from utilizing vacant sites to more redevelopment of older commercial and industrial sites. Utilizing this new trend and momentum, the Town should continue to focus on being more pro-active towards economic development, with a specific eye on continuing to redevelop older, underutilized sites. This should include working to attract and retain target industries like high tech and green companies, preparing suitable sites for development or redevelopment, and addressing obstacles that stand in the way of returning worn out industrial and commercial areas to productive use.

Successful and diverse economic development is an important component in accomplishing the community’s many goals as identified in this planning process. In order for the Town to continue maintaining its extensive public infrastructure and high level of services, and to sustain and improve the quality of life amenities that residents value, such as parks, trails, community and cultural facilities, and more, the Town must continue to have a thriving commercial and industrial tax base. Smart and sustainable economic growth makes it possible to achieve this without placing an undesirable fiscal burden on residential property owners.

**Economic Development Strategy.** As noted above, revitalization of the Town’s older, vacant, abandoned and/or underutilized industrial areas is a priority of the Town. Accomplishing this goal will require coordinated and sustained efforts both short-term and long-term. The Planning and Economic Development Department continues to work on implementing town-wide economic development goals. Among other things, the economic development strategy should further refine the relatable recommendations contained in this Comprehensive Plan for the Industrial Revitalization Areas. In particular, specific target industries for the individual sites should be identified in the context of the Town’s overall strategy.

**Industrial Revitalization Areas.** Expanding upon the economic initiatives noted previously, many opportunities still exist within the Town of Colonie to regenerate and revitalize once vital industrial areas. Locations that are underutilized or even unused today, such as the Tobin First Prize site off Everett Road, and the Fuller Road and Railroad Avenue area could be returned to productive use. Trying to recreate value in these underutilized areas is consistent with the Town’s goal to preserve its remaining undeveloped open land. A prime example of where this is occurring is in the Lincoln Avenue area of Colonie near the City of Watervliet. This former heavy industrial area that has substantial contamination and now stands vacant and abandoned has been the recent recipient of a Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) grant from New York State to create a revitalization plan to bring many of these contaminated, abandoned or underutilized sites back from obscurity and put them back on the tax rolls. Additional studies for other similar areas of Town have taken place since the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, including the Railroad Avenue Corridor Study and the Fuller Road Corridor Study.

The future revitalization of these areas are now recognized as critical economic development opportunities which can allow the Town to grow its industrial base without using up more valuable green fields and open lands. Success with this type of initiative will help the Town maintain its fiscal balance, making it possible to continue funding necessary services and supporting desired quality of life improvements.

**Continue to Conserve and Enhance Natural and Open Space Resources.** As the Town has steadily grown since the 2005 Plan, preserving and enhancing the natural and open space resources has become a priority for the Town. Steep slopes, stream corridors, wetlands, and unique ecological systems have come under some stress as residential and commercial growth has spread into areas that were once considered less suitable or desirable for development. The Town has taken steps to preserve some parcels of open space whether for active recreation, through projects such as ballfield and soccer field development, or passive recreation through the development of the Mohawk Riverside Landing Park. In addition, the Town supports the updated Albany Pine Bush Preserve 2017 Management Plan in an effort to protect this important resource.

The Town recognizes the opportunity to protect the remaining open space. The Town is actively seeking new parcels for inclusion into its open space inventory, and has created a draft open space plan to assist in the long-range preservation of important open space resources. The Town has also updated its local land use codes to include an open space fee structure for all new development that helps fund new open space land acquisitions, as well as creating new conservation overlay zones to help guide development away from sensitive areas.

**Create Connections.** Many early suburban neighborhoods in Colonie, such as West Albany, were developed in a traditional grid-like pattern, giving them a high degree of connectivity and thus, walkability. This contrasts with later suburban developments which emphasized the segregation of land uses and created a disconnected street network which led to growing isolation and an increased reliance

on the automobile. Transportation systems function better when there is greater connectivity. Automobile trips can be distributed more evenly, transit can operate more efficiently, and pedestrians and bicyclists can reach their destinations more directly. Improving connections also has a social equity benefit as people, regardless of age or income, have a greater ability to walk or bike around the community and access transit. Further, greater connectivity has community health benefits. Sedentary life styles have contributed to obesity and associated health problems. Making it easier for people to incorporate walking into their daily routines is a simple way to combat this trend.

Throughout the comprehensive planning process, participants identified the need for more pedestrian connections. The Town's Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee should assist the development of a Town-wide Pedestrian Plan. The Committee could help prioritize locations for future sidewalk and pathway connections both within the Town and to the greater regional trail network.

**Continue to Enhance the Town's Gateways.** Gateways can welcome visitors to the Town and highlight distinctions amongst the Town's many neighborhoods, corridors and hamlets. The following are good candidates for gateway treatments:

- > Route 9 Northern
- > Route 9 Southern
- > Everett Road
- > Fuller Road
- > Central Avenue – multiple locations
- > Route 7
- > Route 2
- > Route 155
- > Menands Road

# Section 4 – Vision, Goals and Recommendations

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The Committee met between Fall 2016 and early 2019 and conducted community outreach, to discuss existing conditions in the Town, identify issues and concerns shared by its residents, and update the Town’s vision and goals.

The Committee updated the vision for how the Town should grow, revised the Comprehensive Plan recommendations, and established priorities for implementing the goals. The updated vision (below) and goals were presented to the public in February 2019. The resulting feedback was discussed by the Committee and incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

## 4.1 Vision

*In the Year 2030, the Town of Colonie is a well-managed and forward-thinking suburban community in the heart of the Capital District. It has an exceptional quality of life with strong, well-established neighborhoods, excellent schools, and generous amenities such as parks, trails, and conserved open lands. Its central location makes it both convenient and attractive. The Town works with its regional partners to ensure that the impacts of traffic are controlled and that safe and attractive transportation options are available for all. The Town balances fiscal responsibility with long-term infrastructure maintenance and great community services. It protects its natural resources, promotes environmentally-sustainable development practices, and carefully guides development and redevelopment in its existing commercial and industrial areas to support the tax base and create and retain jobs. Colonie’s varied housing stock meets the diverse needs of the community and, in combination with relatively low taxes, the Town retains its status as a desirable community for living, learning, and doing business.*

## 4.2 2019 Goals and Recommendations

To achieve the Vision, the Town of Colonie updated the 2005 Comprehensive Plan goals and established new 2019 goals to guide decision making into the next decade. These goals address issues that were raised during the public involvement process and the analysis of existing conditions. A comparison of the 2005 and 2019 goals are in the following table.

**Table 1 – 2005 and 2019 Goal Comparison by Category**

2005 Goal	2019 Goal
<b>Transportation</b>	
Improve mobility throughout the Town	Continue to improve mobility throughout the Town. This includes thoughtful investments in roads and highways to relieve significant impacts of traffic congestion and enhance the safety and attractiveness of active transportation modes (walking and biking). Continue to expand and improve access to public transportation. Continue to coordinate with our partners at Albany County, CDTC, CDTA, and NYSDOT in addressing mobility issues.
N/A	Update the NY 7 / NY 2 Corridor Study (2005) to reflect the area’s changes.
<b>Open Space, Recreation, and Environment</b>	
Enhance the Town’s Mohawk River waterfront.	Conserve a Town-wide network of open lands including, but not limited to, viable farmland, wildlife habitat, special or unique environmental resources and potential trail corridors, river access, and recreation areas.
Encourage the conservation of viable farmland and significant open spaces throughout the Town.	
Develop a network of open lands to provide wildlife habitat and potential recreational trail corridors.	
Expand active and passive recreational resources available in the Town to meet the growing and changing demand for these amenities.	Enhance and expand active and passive recreational resources available throughout the Town to meet the growing and changing demands for these amenities.
Protect the Town’s important natural resources such as stream corridors, steep slopes, floodplains, wetland systems, and unique ecosystems.	Protect the Town’s important natural resources such as stream corridors, steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands, and unique ecosystems. Manage development activity to ensure that necessary clearing and site disturbances are minimized and implemented consistent with approvals.

2005 Goal	2019 Goal
N/A	Continue to evaluate opportunities where renewable energy systems, coupled with energy efficiency measures could be incorporated into Town buildings and facilities to reduce fossil fuel use, reduce the Town’s carbon footprint and stabilize or reduce the Town’s energy costs.
<b>Development and Redevelopment</b>	
Provide opportunities and incentives for the development and redevelopment of a variety of housing options in the Town to meet the needs of its increasingly diverse population.	Continue to accommodate the provision of a range of housing types in appropriate locations to meet the diverse needs of Colonie’s residents. Provide incentives to encourage affordability, mixed-income developments and multi-generational neighborhoods.
Encourage the reuse or redevelopment of existing sites and buildings	Focus commercial and industrial growth in existing areas that are designated for these purposes and where infrastructure already exists. Encourage the reuse or redevelopment of existing commercial sites and buildings. Provide incentives and create opportunities for increasing the value of underutilized commercial areas by permitting high density mixed-use development/redevelopment, and emphasizing pedestrian-friendly, high-quality design in these areas. Facilitate reinvestment in older industrial areas for future industrial and light industrial use, or a wider array of mixed uses if appropriate.
Promote commercial and industrial growth in specifically designated areas, taking advantage of the Town’s infrastructure, location, and critical regional assets.	
Maintain the integrity of residential and mixed-use neighborhoods throughout the Town.	Protect existing neighborhoods from encroaching commercial and higher-density residential development. Work with neighborhood groups to identify and address quality of life concerns.
Improve the development approval process by establishing land use regulations that guide development in a manner that is consistent with the vision, goals, and recommendations contained in this plan.	Ensure an efficient and fair development approval process that is predictable, transparent, and protective of the Town’s environment and the residential character of its neighborhoods.

2005 Goal	2019 Goal
N/A	Establish an identity for the Town that transcends the Town’s size and diversity while maintaining the integrity and distinctiveness of individual neighborhoods. Encourage and support efforts to beautify the Town. Draw upon the data found in the Siena College Research Institute’s survey to help determine how the broader Town community identifies itself (rural/suburban/urban) and then seek ways to integrate the perspective into long-range growth and development plans.
<b>Services and Resources</b>	
Maintain the Town’s high level of public safety services; community services for youth, seniors, and the public at large; and public utility infrastructure and services.	Maintain the Town’s high level of public safety services.
	Maintain the Town’s high level community services for youth, seniors, and the public at large.
	Continue to maintain and enhance the Town’s extensive water, sewer, and local roadway infrastructure. Work with utilities and providers of fiber optic and other communications infrastructure to ensure that high-quality services are available to meet the growing needs of residents and businesses. Consider adaptation strategies to ensure the resiliency of the Town’s infrastructure in response to a changing climate.
Protect and promote the Town’s significant cultural and historic resources.	Protect and promote the Town’s significant cultural and historic resources.
Provide a business-friendly environment that is supportive of local businesses, that encourages entrepreneurship, and that helps assure the provision of quality employment and a diverse economic base in the community.	Provide a business-friendly environment that is supportive of local businesses and that encourages entrepreneurship. Recognizing the Town’s locational advantages, critical regional assets, well-developed infrastructure, and attractive quality of life, target economic development initiatives and incentives to industries that generate quality employment and diversify the community’s economic base.

2005 Goal	2019 Goal
Expand opportunities for sharing information and for encouraging community involvement. Promote volunteerism and community service.	Continue to expand opportunities for sharing information and for encouraging community involvement. Promote volunteerism and community service.
Cooperate with the Villages of Colonie and Menands, and other neighboring and regional municipalities, agencies, and organizations on issues of mutual concern.	Continue to collaborate with the Villages of Colonie and Menands, and other neighboring and regional municipalities, agencies, and organizations on issues of mutual concern. Look for opportunities to share services when appropriate.
<b>Communications</b>	
N/A	Improve communication between the Planning and Economic Development Department (PEDD), the Planning Board, and the public.
N/A	Update the 2019 Comprehensive Plan. As the community changes and grows, its needs and desires change. In order for the Plan to reflect such changes, it should be a flexible and adaptable document.

The 2019 goals and implementation recommendations for each follows. Each goal is grouped by timeframe as follows: Ongoing, Short-Term (1-2 years), Mid-Term (2-5 years), Long-Term (5-10 years).

**Ongoing Goals**

***Maintain the Town’s high level of public safety services.***

- Continue coordination of shared services with surrounding municipalities.
- Locate areas to expand and improve public safety services, as needed.

***Maintain the Town’s high level community services for youth, seniors, and the public at large.***

- Protect public spaces and public green space to maintain use for community services.
- Establish intergenerational programs for seniors and youth.
- Facilitate volunteer opportunities for youth, seniors, and public at large.

***Continue to expand opportunities for sharing information and for encouraging community involvement. Promote volunteerism and community service.***

- Continue updating the Town’s website as well as using social media to keep the public up to date on current events.
- Update online GIS web application a minimum of two (2) times per year.

## Short-Term Goals (1-2 years)

***Continue to accommodate the provision of a range of housing types in appropriate locations to meet the diverse needs of Colonie’s residents. Provide incentives to encourage affordability, mixed-income developments and multigenerational neighborhoods.***

- Continue to support reinvestment in the Town’s older housing stock and neighborhoods where such housing is concentrated through programs in the Town’s Community Development Department.
- Review and expand the inventory of “zombie properties” and continue to work with the Albany County Land Bank to facilitate the reuse and redevelopment of these properties – getting them back on the tax rolls and possibly providing additional opportunities for affordable housing.
- Review incentive provisions in current zoning and ensure that incentives (i.e. density bonuses) are targeted to the provision of community benefits that would otherwise be difficult to obtain in the marketplace. This should include consideration of school projections and possible new services that might be needed.
- Continue to work with the Senior Resources Department to develop strategies for addressing the housing and transportation needs of the Town’s senior population as part of the Town’s planning and zoning approach. Opportunities for mixed-income, multigenerational neighborhoods designed to facilitate independent living may be found in the Town’s mixed-use nodes.

***Protect existing neighborhoods from being encroached upon by commercial and higher-density residential development. Work with neighborhood groups to identify and address quality of life concerns.***

- Review provisions in zoning to better address the transition from commercial, mixed-use, and higher-density residential zones to adjoining residential neighborhoods. Careful attention to building and site design, including the preservation of existing vegetation as appropriate, should be incorporated into the project review process.
- Review and evaluate requirements in the Town’s land use law to protect and maintain the integrity of residential and mixed-use neighborhoods throughout the Town.

***Ensure an efficient and fair development approval process that is predictable, transparent, and protective of the Town’s environment and the residential character of its neighborhoods.***

- The Town’s zoning should be refined following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Update. In addition to subjects discussed elsewhere in this list of preliminary recommendations, some of the specific zoning items that have been identified for further consideration include:
  - Revising parking requirements to reduce the amount of parking required and to encourage shared parking
  - Review the sign regulations to address newer technologies such as LED signs
  - Consider amending the Land Use Law to move the sign review and approval process from the Sign Review Board to the Planning Board for new, major projects.
  - Reevaluate the Planned Development District (PDD) regulations to ensure that the Town is obtaining desired benefits in return for the development flexibility and higher potential densities that PDDs provide. As discussed above, ensure that existing neighborhoods that adjoin proposed PDDs are adequately protected.

***Provide a business-friendly environment that is supportive of local businesses and that encourages entrepreneurship. Recognizing the Town's locational advantages, critical regional assets, well-developed infrastructure, and attractive quality of life, target economic development initiatives and incentives to industries that generate quality employment and diversify the community's economic base.***

- Building off the Industrial Development Agency's (IDA) Economic Assessment Study that is currently underway, develop a current Town-wide Economic Development Strategy. This strategy should include methods to proactively market the Town to attract the kinds of businesses the Town wants and needs.
- Continue to attract a variety of employers to increase jobs across all sectors.
- Continue to monitor Town's three (3) Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) areas to plan for future infrastructure and recreational needs.

***Continue to evaluate opportunities where renewable energy systems, coupled with energy efficiency measures, could be incorporated into Town buildings and facilities to reduce fossil fuel use, reduce the Town's carbon footprint, and stabilize or reduce the Town's energy costs.***

- Incorporate provisions in zoning for the use of green infrastructure / low-impact design techniques to address stormwater management. Incentivize or require the use of these techniques as appropriate.
- Continue participating in the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (NYSDEC's) Climate Smart Communities program and actively seek certification in the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority's (NYSERDA's) Clean Energy Communities program.
- Encourage applicants for new commercial projects to incorporate and follow Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards, and seek LEED certification for all new buildings.
- Implement LED contract to change approximately 4,000 street lights to LED for cost and energy savings.
- Continue to purchase hydroelectric power to reduce utility costs in Town facilities and promote green energy credits.

***Improve communication between the Planning and Economic Development Department (PEDD), the Planning Board, and the public.***

- The Planning Department and the Planning Board should request developers meet with impacted residents of the neighborhood as part of the planning process.
- Increase notification time by the Planning Department of communications for Planning Board agendas.
- Live broadcast of Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings.

***Continue to collaborate with the Villages of Colonie and Menands, and other neighboring and regional municipalities, agencies, and organizations on issues of mutual concern. Look for opportunities to share services when appropriate.***

- Communicate with school districts every six months.
- Continue to identify opportunities for shared services with the villages.

## Mid-Term Goals (3-5 years)

### ***Protect and promote the Town's significant cultural and historic resources.***

- Promote efforts to provide educational programming to the public on historic districts.
- Preserve and protect spaces that are deemed as historically significant to the Town.
- Seek grants which highlight and protect the Town's cultural and historic resources and can attract tourism.
- Collaborate with Albany County and Shaker Heritage Society to promote preservation of open (especially agricultural) space and Shaker structures, and promote compatible uses and content-sensitive design of any new structures or development within the Watervliet Shaker Historic District.

### ***Continue to improve mobility throughout the Town. This includes thoughtful investments in roads and highways to relieve significant impacts of traffic congestion and enhance the safety and attractiveness of active transportation modes (walking and biking). Continue to expand and improve access to public transportation. Continue to coordinate with our partners at Albany County, Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC), Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA), and New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) in addressing mobility issues.***

- Utilizing the Albany Shaker Road Corridor Study as a model, undertake land use / transportation studies for targeted corridors – especially those where neighborhood quality of life and through traffic concerns appear to conflict.
- Continue to work with CDTC to develop and disseminate information about “Complete Streets” and the benefits that this approach provides for all users of the transportation system. As one of the core features of ***New Visions 2040***, the region's long-range transportation plan, Complete Streets will continue to be a focus of the region's transportation investments in the coming years; and therefore, more dialogue about this approach and how it can be applied in Colonie would be beneficial.
- Continue to apply to CDTC for funding to prepare an Active Transportation Plan for the Town of Colonie. An Active Transportation Plan would create a vision and recommendations to guide the development of a network of sidewalks, on-road bicycle facilities, and trails that allow for safe and convenient travel in and around the Town of Colonie.
- PEDD to further explore opportunities and resources for non-motor vehicle transportation access.
- Create a Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee to provide community input on non-vehicular transportation within the Town and perform activities to improve education and access to resources such as trail systems and preserved spaces. For example, adding signage for trails and open spaces.

### ***Protect the Town's important natural resources such as stream corridors, steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands, and unique ecosystems. Manage development activity to ensure that necessary clearing and site disturbances are minimized and implemented consistent with approvals.***

- Strengthen standards regarding the clearing, grading of land, and replanting in anticipation of development to ensure that such activity conforms to an approved plan.

- Continue renewing status as a “Tree City USA” annually and apply for urban forestry grants from Albany County Soil and Water Conservation Department, the Cornell Cooperative Extension and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.

***Conserve a Town-wide network of open lands including, but not limited to, viable farmland, wildlife habitat, special or unique environmental resources and potential trail corridors, river access, and recreation areas.***

- Continue to support the preservation of existing, and the development of new wildlife corridors in Town.
- Update the Open Space Conservation Plan:
  - Planning Department and the Town’s Conservation Advisory Committee (CAC) should take the lead in updating this plan and collaborating with regional conservation partners.
  - Update open space maps on a continual basis.
  - Based on the inventory mapping of existing open space and recreation resources and opportunities initiated during this process, develop a vision for a town-wide network of conservation lands through an open, community-based process.
  - As part of this community-based process, provide information about conservation tools and techniques to large landowners and to interested members of the public.
  - Explore partnerships with neighboring municipalities and grant opportunities to manage invasive species inhibiting recreational use of the Mohawk River.

***Enhance and expand active and passive recreational resources available throughout the Town to meet the growing and changing demands for these amenities.***

- Update the Town’s Parks & Recreation Master Plan that includes a list of targeted parcels that the Town may be interested in acquiring for future active and/or passive recreational uses.

***Continue to maintain and enhance the Town’s extensive water, sewer, and local roadway infrastructure. Work with utilities and providers of fiber optic and other communications infrastructure to ensure that high-quality services are available to meet the growing needs of residents and businesses. Consider adaptation strategies to ensure the resiliency of the Town’s infrastructure in response to a changing climate.***

- Continue to work with Albany County on the Albany County Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Implement the next 5-year paving plan in 2020, and continue long-term plans for Latham Water and Pure Waters.
- Continue to evaluate cell, fiber and communications infrastructure to meet growing needs while ensuring a plan for obsolescence, uniformity, location and other impacting issues. Reevaluate the Wireless Telecommunications Local Law to ensure compliance with FCC regulations and to protect the residents from any negative impact associated with radio emissions.

***Focus commercial and industrial growth in existing areas that are designated for these purposes and where infrastructure already exists. Encourage the reuse or redevelopment of existing commercial sites and buildings. Provide incentives and create opportunities for increasing the value of underutilized commercial areas by permitting higher-density, mixed-use development/redevelopment, and emphasizing pedestrian-friendly, high-quality design in these areas. Facilitate reinvestment in older industrial areas for future industrial and light industrial use, or a wider array of mixed uses if appropriate.***

- Utilize the Railroad Avenue Area Transportation and Revitalization Plan, and the Lincoln Avenue Brownfields Opportunity Area (BOA) Study currently underway, as models for future redevelopment planning in underutilized commercial/industrial areas.
- Reevaluate the manner in which the 2005 Comprehensive Plan’s “mixed-use nodes” were implemented as the Neighborhood Commercial Office Residential (NCOR) and Commercial Office Residential (COR) Zoning Districts in the rezoning that followed adoption of the 2005 plan. Specifically, the plan recommended specific areas for redevelopment as higher-density, mixed-use, and walkable centers of activity. The zoning that followed applied this concept to entire corridors (such as Route 5 and Route 7 – Route 2). The application of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan’s recommendations for mixed-use centers should take into consideration the specific characteristics of each location where this is applied.
- With the changing nature of the nation’s retail sector – particularly the growth of e-commerce and the resulting challenges to brick and mortar retail – the Town of Colonie needs to develop a long-term strategy for addressing potential vacant commercial space. Providing more flexibility in terms of future land use, as described in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan for the “mixed-use nodes”, may provide an incentive for redevelopment in some locations. However, the Town may want to investigate a more direct response to the potential abandonment of large-format retail (big box stores) in particular.

***Establish an identity for the Town that transcends the Town’s size and diversity while maintaining the integrity and distinctiveness of individual neighborhoods. Encourage and support efforts to beautify the Town. Draw upon the data found in the Siena College Research Institute’s survey to help determine how the broader Town community identifies itself (rural/suburban/urban) and then seek ways to integrate the perspective into long-range growth and development plans.***

- Continue to integrate the data found in the Siena College Research Institute’s Survey to help the broader Colonie community identify itself and integrate that perspective into long range growth and development plans.

***Update the NY 7 / NY 2 Corridor Study (2005) to reflect the area’s changes.***

- Partner with CDTC to update the NY 7 / NY 2 Corridor Study.

### **Long-Term Goals (5 – 10 years)**

***Update the 2019 Comprehensive Plan. As the community changes and grows, its needs and desires change. In order for the Plan to reflect such changes, it should be a flexible and adaptable document.***

- Review and update the 2019 Comprehensive Plan within the next five to ten years.
- PEDD to record progress on the 2019 goals. Report progress a minimum of two (2) times a year.

# Section 5 – Implementation Table

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The Implementation Table outlines the 2019 goals and recommendations and provides estimated time frames for their completion. It is the intent of the Town to perform the recommended activities to achieve these goals, pending availability of staff and funding resources. While the plan attempts to consider the Town’s capacity to implement the various recommendations, it is recognized that there may be a need for additional staff or a reallocation of staff responsibilities to fully implement the plan recommendations.

The actions listed are not binding. The goals and recommendations are meant to serve as a guide to assist the Town with its future land use and development decisions. However, any future zoning shall be completed in accordance with this plan.

Town of Colonie - Comprehensive Plan Update			
Goals	Recommendations		Timeframe
Maintain the Town's high level of public safety services.	Continue coordination of shared services with surrounding municipalities.	Locate areas to expand and improve public safety services, as needed.	Ongoing
Maintain the Town's high level community services for youth, seniors, and the public at large.	Protect public spaces and public green space to maintain use for community services.	Establish intergenerational programs for seniors and youth.	Ongoing
	Facilitate volunteer opportunities for youth, seniors, and public at large.		
Continue to expand opportunities for sharing information and for encouraging community involvement. Promote volunteerism and community service.	Continue updating the Town's website as well as using other social media to keep the public up to date on current events.	Update online GIS web application a minimum of two (2) times per year.	Ongoing
Continue to accommodate the provision of a range of housing types in appropriate locations to meet the diverse needs of Colonie's residents. Provide incentives to encourage affordability, mixed-income developments and multigenerational neighborhoods.	Review and expand the inventory of "zombie properties" and continue to work with the Albany County Land Bank to facilitate the reuse and redevelopment of these properties – getting them back on the tax rolls and possibly providing additional opportunities for affordable housing.	Continue to support reinvestment in the Town's older housing stock and neighborhoods where such housing is concentrated through programs in the Town's Community Development Department.	1-2 Years
	Continue to work with the Senior Resources Department to develop strategies for addressing the housing and transportation needs of the Town's senior population as part of the Town's planning and zoning approach. Opportunities for mixed-income, multigenerational neighborhoods designed to facilitate independent living may be found in the Town's mixed-use nodes.	Review incentive provisions in current zoning and ensure that incentives (i.e. density bonuses) are targeted to the provision community benefits that are difficult to obtain in the marketplace. This should include consideration of school projections and possible new services that might be needed.	
Protect existing neighborhoods from encroaching commercial and higher-density residential development. Work with neighborhood groups to identify and address quality of life concerns.	Review provisions in zoning to better address the transition from commercial, mixed-use, and higher-density residential zones to adjoining residential neighborhoods. Careful attention to building and site design, including the preservation of existing vegetation as appropriate, should be incorporated into the project review process.	Review and evaluate requirements in the Town's land use law to protect and maintain the integrity of residential and mixed-use neighborhoods throughout the Town.	1-2 Years
Ensure an efficient and fair development approval process that is predictable, transparent, and protective of the Town's environment and the residential character of its neighborhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Town's zoning should be refined following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Update. In addition to subjects discussed elsewhere in this list of preliminary recommendations, some of the specific zoning items that have been identified for further consideration include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revising parking requirements to reduce the amount of parking required and to encourage shared parking</li> <li>Review the sign regulations to address newer technologies such as LED signs</li> <li>Consider amending the Land Use Law to move the sign review and approval process from the Sign Review Board to the Planning Board for new, major projects.</li> <li>Reevaluate the Planned Development District (PDD) regulations to ensure that the Town is obtaining desired benefits in return for the development flexibility and higher potential densities that PDD's provide. As discussed above, ensure that existing neighborhoods that adjoin proposed PDD's are adequately protected.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		1-2 Years
Provide a business-friendly environment that is supportive of local businesses and that encourages entrepreneurship. Recognizing the Town's locational advantages, critical regional assets, well-developed infrastructure, and attractive quality of life, target economic development initiatives and incentives to industries that generate quality employment and diversify the community's economic base.	Building off the Industrial Development Agency's (IDA) Economic Assessment Study that is currently underway, develop a current Town-wide Economic Development Strategy. This strategy should include methods to proactively market the Town to attract the kinds of businesses the Town wants and needs.		1-2 Years
	Continue to attract a variety of employers to increase jobs across all sectors.	Continue to monitor Town's three (3) GEIS areas to plan for future infrastructure and recreational needs.	
Continue to evaluate opportunities where renewable energy systems, coupled with energy efficiency measures, could be incorporated into Town buildings and facilities to reduce fossil fuel use, reduce the Town's carbon footprint, and stabilize or reduce the Town's energy costs.	Incorporate provisions in the zoning for the use of green infrastructure / low-impact design techniques to address stormwater management. Incentivize or require the use of these techniques as appropriate.		1-2 Years
	Continue participating in the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (NYSDEC's) Climate Smart Communities program and actively seek certification in New York State Energy Research and Development Authority's (NYSERDA's) Clean Energy Communities program.	Encourage applicants for new commercial projects to incorporate and follow Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards, and seek LEED certification for all new buildings.	
	Implement LED contract to change approximately 4,000 street lights to LED for cost and energy savings.	Continue to purchase hydroelectric power to reduce utility costs in Town facilities and promote green energy credits.	

**Town of Colonie - Comprehensive Plan Update**

Goals	Recommendations		Timeframe
<p><b>Improve communication between the Planning and Economic Development Department (PEDD), the Planning Board, and the public.</b></p>	<p><i>The Planning Department and the Planning Board should request developers meet with impacted residents of the neighborhood as part of the planning process.</i></p>	<p><i>Increase notification time by the Planning Department of communications for Planning Board agendas.</i></p>	<p>1-2 Years</p>
	<p align="center"><i>Live broadcast Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings.</i></p>		
<p><b>Continue to collaborate with the Villages of Colonie and Menands, and other neighboring and regional municipalities, agencies, and organizations on issues of mutual concern. Look for opportunities to share services when appropriate.</b></p>	<p><i>Communicate with school districts every six (6) months.</i></p>	<p><i>Continue to identify opportunities for shared services with the Villages.</i></p>	<p>1-3 Years</p>
<p><b>Protect and promote the Town’s significant cultural and historic resources.</b></p>	<p><i>Seek grants which highlight and protect the Town’s cultural and historic resources and can attract tourism.</i></p>	<p><i>Preserve and protect spaces that are deemed as historically significant to the Town.</i></p>	<p>2-5 Years</p>
	<p><i>Promote efforts to provide educational programming to the public on historic districts.</i></p>	<p><i>Collaborate with Albany County and Shaker Heritage Society to promote preservation of open (especially agricultural) space and Shaker Structures, and promote compatible uses and content-sensitive design of any new structures or redevelopment within the Watervliet Shaker Historic District.</i></p>	
<p><b>Continue to improve mobility throughout the Town. This includes thoughtful investments in roads and highways to relieve significant impacts of traffic congestion and enhance the safety and attractiveness of active transportation modes (walking and biking). Continue to expand and improve access to public transportation. Continue to coordinate with our partners at Albany County, CDTC, CDTA, and NYSDOT in addressing mobility issues.</b></p>	<p><i>Create a Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee to provide community input on non-vehicular transportation within the Town and perform activities to improve education and access to resources such as trail systems and preserve spaces. For example, adding signage for trails and open spaces.</i></p>	<p><i>Utilizing the Albany Shaker Road Corridor Study as a model, undertake land use / transportation studies for targeted corridors – especially those where neighborhood quality of life and through traffic concerns appear to conflict.</i></p>	<p>2-5 Years</p>
	<p><i>Continue to work with CDTC to develop and disseminate information about “Complete Streets” and the benefits that this approach provides for all users of the transportation system, including automobiles. As one of the core features of New Visions 2040, the region’s long-range transportation plan, Complete Streets will continue to be a focus of the region’s transportation investments in the coming years; and therefore, more dialogue about this approach and how it can be applied in Colonie would be beneficial.</i></p>	<p><i>Continue to apply to CDTC for funding to prepare an Active Transportation Plan for the Town of Colonie. An Active Transportation Plan would create a vision and recommendations to guide the development of a network of sidewalks, on-road bicycle facilities, and trails that allow for safe and convenient travel in and around the Town of Colonie.</i></p>	
	<p align="center"><i>PEDD to further explore opportunities and resources for non-motor vehicle transportation access.</i></p>		
<p><b>Protect the Town’s important natural resources such as stream corridors, steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands, and unique ecosystems. Manage development activity to ensure that necessary clearing and site disturbances are minimized and implemented consistent with approvals.</b></p>	<p><i>Strengthen standards regarding the clearing, grading of land, and replanting in anticipation of development to ensure that such activity conforms to an approved plan.</i></p>	<p><i>Continue renewing status as a “Tree City USA” annually and apply for urban forestry grants from Albany County Soil and Water Conservation Department, the Cornell Cooperative Extension and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.</i></p>	<p>2-5 Years</p>

Town of Colonie - Comprehensive Plan Update			
Goals	Recommendations		Timeframe
Conserve a Town-wide network of open lands including, but not limited to, viable farmland, wildlife habitat, special or unique environmental resources and potential trail corridors, river access, and recreation areas.	Continue to support the preservation of existing, and the development of new wildlife corridors in Town.	<p>Update the Open Space Conservation Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Planning Department and CAC should take lead in updating this plan and collaborating with regional conservation partners.</li> <li>o Update open space maps on a continual basis.</li> <li>o Based on the inventory mapping of existing open space and recreation resources and opportunities initiated during this process, develop a vision for a town-wide network of conservation lands through an open, community-based process.</li> <li>o As part of this community-based process, provide information about conservation tools and techniques to large landowners and to interested members of the public.</li> <li>o Explore partnerships with neighboring municipalities and grant opportunities to manage invasive species inhibiting recreational use of the Mohawk River.</li> </ul>	2-5 Years
Enhance and expand active and passive recreational resources available throughout the Town to meet the growing and changing demand for these amenities.	Update Town Parks & Recreation Master Plan that includes a list of targeted parcels that the Town may be interested in acquiring for future active and/or passive recreational uses.		2-5 Years
Update the NY 7 / NY 2 Corridor Study (2005) to reflect the area's changes.	Partner with CDTC to update the NY 7 / NY 2 Corridor Study.		2-5 Years
Continue to maintain and enhance the Town's extensive water, sewer, and local roadway infrastructure. Work with utilities and providers of fiber optic and other communications infrastructure to ensure that high-quality services are available to meet the growing needs of residents and businesses. Consider adaptation strategies to ensure the resiliency of the Town's infrastructure in response to a changing climate.	Continue to work with Albany County on the Albany County Hazard Mitigation Plan.		2-5 Years
	Implement the next 5-year paving plan in 2020, and continue long-term plans for Latham Water and Pure Waters.	Continue to evaluate cell, fiber and communications infrastructure to meet growing needs while ensuring a plan for obsolescence, uniformity, location and other impacting issues. Reevaluate the Wireless Telecommunications Local Law to ensure compliance with FCC regulations and to protect the residents from any negative impact associated with radio emissions.	
Focus commercial and industrial growth in existing areas that are designated for these purposes and where infrastructure already exists. Encourage the reuse or redevelopment of existing commercial sites and buildings. Provide incentives and create opportunities for increasing the value of underutilized commercial areas by permitting high-density, mixed-use development/redevelopment, and emphasizing pedestrian-friendly, high-quality design in these areas. Facilitate reinvestment in older industrial areas for future industrial and light industrial use, or a wider array of mixed uses if appropriate.	Reevaluate the manner in which the 2005 Comprehensive Plan's "mixed-use nodes" were implemented as the NCOR and COR Zoning Districts in the rezoning that followed adoption of the 2005 plan. Specifically, the plan recommended specific areas for redevelopment as higher-density, mixed-use, and walkable centers of activity. The zoning that followed applied this concept to entire corridors (such as Route 5 and Route 7 – Route 2). The application of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan's recommendations for mixed-use centers should take into consideration the specific characteristics of each location where this is applied.	With the changing nature of the nation's retail sector – particularly the growth of e-commerce and the resulting challenges to brick and mortar retail – the Town of Colonie needs to develop a long-term strategy for addressing potential vacant commercial space. Providing more flexibility in terms of future land use, as described in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan for the "mixed-use nodes", may provide an incentive for redevelopment in some locations. However, the Town may want to investigate a more direct response to the potential abandonment of large-format retail (big box stores) in particular.	2-5 Years
	Utilize the Railroad Avenue Area Transportation and Revitalization Plan, and the Lincoln Avenue BOA (Brownfield Opportunity Area) Study currently underway, as models for future redevelopment planning in underutilized commercial/industrial areas.		
Establish an identity for the Town that transcends the Town's size and diversity while maintaining the integrity and distinctiveness of individual neighborhoods. Encourage and support efforts to beautify the Town. Draw upon the data found in the Siena College Research Institute's Survey to help determine how the broader Town community identifies itself (rural/suburban/urban) and then seek ways to integrate the perspective into long range growth and development plans.	Continue to integrate the data found in the Siena College Research Institute's Survey to help guide the broader Colonie community identify itself and integrate that perspective into long range growth and development plans.		2-5 Years
Update the 2019 Comprehensive Plan. As the community changes and grows, its needs and desires change. In order for the Plan to reflect such changes, it should be a flexible and adaptable document.	Review and update the 2019 Comprehensive Plan within the next five to ten years.	PEDD to record progress on the 2019 goals. Report progress a minimum of (2) times per year.	5-10 Years

# Appendices

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Appendix A - Community Profile

Appendix B - Siena College Research Institute Survey

Appendix C - Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee - Public Meetings  
and Workshop Summaries

Appendix D - 2010 Town of Colonie Comprehensive Plan Review