

TOWN OF COLONIE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Town of Colonie, Albany County, New York
February, 2019



The Future of Colonie is in the Planning for Tomorrow

Barton
& **Loguidice**

Town of Colonie
Comprehensive Plan Update

Adopted by the Town Board on February ____, 2019



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Contents

Section 1 – Introduction	5
1.1 History of Colonie’s Development	5
1.2 Changes over the last 10 years – A Snapshot	7
Section 2 – The Comprehensive Plan Update Process	9
2.1 Purpose	9
2.2 Past Plans & Studies	11
2.3 Public Involvement	14
Section 3 - Community Profile & Maps	18
Section 4 – Updated Vision, Goals & Recommendations	57
Vision Statement	57
Goals and Preliminary Recommendations	58
Section 5 – Updated Implementation Table	66
Appendices	
Appendix A Siena College Research Institute Survey	
Appendix B CPUC Meeting & Workshop Summaries	
Appendix C 2010 Town of Colonie Comprehensive Plan Progress Report	

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Section 1 – Introduction

1.1 History of Colonie’s Development – A Primer by Richard Sanders Allen, Town Historian

The stranger is hard-pressed to know, and even to the average Colonie resident the composition of the town is a minor mystery. It is “Colonie” when one crosses the Mohawk River on the north, or emerges from the capital city of Albany on the south. To the east a tiny portion of the town touches the Hudson River at the Menands Bridge leading to Troy, while to the west a long triangular finger of Colonie is practically in Schenectady.

Perhaps the best way to picture Colonie is to see it from the viewpoint of an airline pilot leisurely jockeying his jet to line up with the approaches to Albany Airport. Colonie is the terrain below that is roughly bordered on the north and east by the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers. One can visualize that down there extends everything but the built-up cities; all those one-time farms now dotted with housing developments; all those industries and small business interlaced with busy arterial highways; all that land comprising the northeast corner of Albany County - that is Colonie.

Facing Troy and Albany and Schenectady on three sides, and the recently developed Town of Clifton Park in Saratoga County across the river to the north, Colonie might well be called “The Tri-City Town,” or termed: “The Hub of the Capital District.” Strangely, Colonie is not the name of the post office, and never has been. The name is not, as you might suppose, an affectation of the English word “colony.” Instead it is Dutch, and refers to the original “colonie” required by charter under the ancient Patroon system of land grants.

Roughly triangular, the Town of Colonie got its start as a political entity in 1791, but soon disappeared, gobbled up by its land- and tax-hungry neighbors. Most of the present-day Colonie comprised the old Town of Watervliet for three-quarters of a century.

The Hudson River was always an artery of commerce, dating back to the days of the Dutch traders. But, the Mohawk River proved to be a barrier on the north, and had to be crossed by various fords and ferries. What is now Colonie was part of the “pathway of Empire,” the great north-south war route from New York to Canada, by which armies marched to battle in the French & Indian Wars and the American Revolution. Famous generals struggled to get troops and cannon, horses and baggage across the Mohawk at the sprouts of its delta below the awesome Cohoes Falls and above, at Loudon and Claus Ferries; using inadequate scows, or gingerly traversing the treacherous ice.

Colonie was for many years the breadbasket for Albany. The earliest Dutch farmers took the most fertile lands along the river-courses. Later, the westward-migrating New Englanders acquired the field and woods of central Colonie and by dint of clearing and fertilizing their farms began to supply the city folks in Albany with their daily grain, vegetable and dairy supplies.

Into this pastoral land came the Shakers, a vital presence in Colonie for well over a century. At first persecuted for their religious beliefs and way of life, the Shaker colonies with 3000 acres of farm land, mills and home-craft industries, were eventually accepted and looked upon as perhaps strange, but useful town citizens. In addition to Shaker industry, small shops employing neighborhood labor sprang up in Colonie. They made such things as agricultural implements, textiles, bolts and nuts, carriages, horse whips and brooms. One farmer was to specialize in celery-growing, a horticulturist nurtured new and beautiful plants and flowers, to meet a growing demand.

Along the western border of Colonie was another pathway to empire, the turnpike across the Pine Bush and its parallel "Shunpikes." These connected Albany on the Hudson River with Schenectady on the Mohawk, the jumping-off place for what was long called "The West." The main turnpike cut directly across the town; choked by dust in summer and rutted with mud and ice the rest of the year. It is difficult to imagine today that hundreds of stagecoaches and thousands upon thousands of wagons with droves of livestock passed this way with millions of people headed for new homes in Ohio, Michigan and beyond. Suffice to say that business came to Colonie through the media of closely spaced taverns set up along the route.

Much of this westward migration turned to the waterways when the Erie and Champlain Canals were dug along the borders of Colonie and opened in 1825. The horse-drawn packets came up from the Albany basin and the side-cut opposite Troy, and then began the arduous ascent, lock after lock up the hill past Cohoes. It sometimes took the better part of a day to gain the Mohawk Valley and go gliding over the broad stone aqueduct which arched the river at Crescent. It was a relaxing, leisurely way to travel, watching the straining horses, the labors of the lock tenders, and listening to the boatman's refrain: "Low Bridge! Everybody Down!"

Erie Canal travel may have been idyllic, but it was slow. Though freight boats would ply the waterway through Colonie for ninety years, the travelers, caught up with a lust for speed, turned to the railroad. In 1831 New York State's first railroad, the Mohawk & Hudson, was built across the Pine plains through Colonie. The first trains were stagecoaches on flanged wheels and tugged along by the puffing little "De Witt Clinton" locomotive, rode across Colonie on wooden rails faced with iron strap and mounted on granite blocks. From this primitive beginning came rail travel on the once-mighty New York Central and its "smooth water-level" route to the West, followed by today's Amtrak.

Another form of transportation never envisioned by the Shaker farmers who tilled the land, was arrival and departure of people by means of the skies. Albany Airport, established in 1928, has grown from "that flying field up in Colonie" to a major international air terminal serving the entire

Capital District and beyond. Thrifty Shaker ways and culture in the center of Colonie came to an end just as air transport came into being, and jet travel necessitated the take-over of much of the old carefully-nurtured Shaker farmland.

It might be said that Colonie slumbered for a century or more, content to be a crossroads of transportation and the provider of food for the adjacent capital city. Here and there the joys of country living tempted businessmen or well-to-do retirees to establish estates on the dirt roads and pleasant wooded acres to the north of Albany. It remained for the middle years of the present century to see the phenomenal growth of Colonie. From a population of 22,000 in 1938 it grew to over 60,000 in twenty years. Over 4,000 new homes were built in a single decade. With new residents came the need for ancillary businesses; stores and shopping centers; restaurants and auto services; distribution centers for products sold all over the northeast. The present population is approximately 83,000.

No longer "Albany's breadbasket", Colonie has become one of its most populous suburbs. Recent years have seen continued, but more stable and steady growth and redevelopment in the town, coupled with cultural advantages; new parks and recreational areas; improved schools; new churches and a fine library. With maturity has come a growing realization of the benefits to be derived from living in a self-contained political entity in which one can show some pride.

1.2 Changes over the last 10 years – A Snapshot

As described at the end of Section 1.1 the Town of Colonie has seen continued growth over the past fourteen years since the last Comprehensive Plan was prepared in 2005. Most notable has been the steady increase in population. Unlike most Upstate communities who have experienced declines in population, Colonie has benefited from a moderate growth rate over the past fourteen years with an increase of roughly 2,000 people.

Another measure of Colonie's growth can be found in the increased number of redevelopment projects occurring all across Town. Analysis reveals that despite a dwindling number of new residential subdivision approvals having occurred in Colonie since the "boom" days of the 1980's, an increase in the redevelopment of old, abandoned and/or former commercial sites has occurred. Examples of this redevelopment trend include the demolition of the former Latham Circle Mall and the construction of a new multi-tenant commercial plaza in its place; 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; 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 Niskayuna line; continued commercial development of long vacant parcels of land in the Troy-Schenectady/Wade Road corridor; and the addition of new mixed-use residential/commercial developments such as the Shoppes 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. The Town’s largest public park The Crossings has been expanded to include more play fields, an expanded recreation center, additional parking, and better access for residents and visitors. 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. So that now when a new development is proposed, land is set aside 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 as well. At the time of the writing of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, Central Avenue was undergoing an extensive corridor improvement process that has since reshaped and greatly 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 and can be seen by the new roundabouts at the intersections of Aviation Road and Sand Creek Road; Aviation Road and Marcus Boulevard and Albany Shaker Road and Maxwell Road. Currently construction has just begun on the new \$58Million 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 also slated to undertake a new on-site parking expansion project in the Spring of 2019.

In addition to the afore mentioned physical changes that have occurred, there have been several administrative changes that have occurred in Town. In 2008 the Town Board commissioned a complete overhaul of the Town’s Zoning Codes. These updated codes 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 Colonie. For a complete listing and description of these plans and studies, please see Section 2.2.

A more concise description of the many community changes over the past ten years can be found in the Community Profile of Section 3 of this Plan. For an update of the major goals and recommendations that have been achieved since the 2005 Plan was adopted, please see the Town of Colonie 2010 Comprehensive Plan Progress Report in Appendix C.

Section 2 – The Comprehensive Plan Update Process

2.1 Purpose

This document represents the results of research and interviews conducted to develop an updated Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Colonie. The report describes existing conditions, assesses community resources, identifies needs, and discusses key issues, opportunities and challenges impacting the Town at this time. The Existing Conditions Report and the Siena College Research Institute Survey provide a comprehensive source of information to assist in obtaining an adequate understanding of the Town, their residents, and their resources. They are designed to serve as a basis for developing community goals, objectives, strategies, and policies in future sections of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Community Profile found in Section 3 is organized into ten primary sections. Components include updated data and mapping on demographic characteristics, land use and zoning, the local economy, historic resources, environmental and natural resources, housing, recreational resources, infrastructure and transportation, and local government administration. Much of the information from the 2005 plan has been retained as it is still pertinent to this updated plan.

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.

A Comprehensive Plan Update committee (CPUC) was established in August of 2016 by the Colonie Town Board to oversee the preparation of an updated Town Comprehensive Plan. The 17-member committee was appointed by Town Supervisor Paula Mahan and includes: Planning Board Chair Peter Stuto, Town Planning Director Joseph LaCivita, Town Attorney Michael Maggulli, Craig Shamlian, Bob Dagget, Village of Colonie

Planning Board Chair Chris Dennis, Christine Cary, Ellen Rosano, Gary Rinaldi, Town DPW Commissioner Jack Cunningham, Town Attorney Rebekah Kennedy, Laura Weed, Town Board Member Linda Murphy, Paul Shepard, Town Board Member Melissa Von Dollen, Town Engineer Katelyn Reepmeyer, and Jessica Mahar. The Supervisor and Council Persons Murphy and Von Dollen are ex-officio members. The role of the committee is to guide and lead the planning update process, communicate with municipal leaders, and help facilitate community involvement in the development of the plans.

There were several key objectives of the Town with regard to the preparation of the 2019 Comprehensive Plan. Given that significant time has passed since the 2005 Comprehensive Plan was adopted, the Town Board felt it was time to sunset the older plan and update it to reflect current conditions. Another objective in updating Colonie’s 2005 Town Comprehensive Plan was to provide an opportunity for residents to become actively involved in updating and shaping the Town of Colonie’s future through extensive participation in the planning process. The Town also was interested in making sure that many of the more recent special studies that had been done in Town were incorporated into a comprehensive planning process going forward. As such this Plan update includes information on many of those plans and studies. The Town was additionally interested in addressing specific objectives expressed by members of the public and individual committee members in drafting the updated Comprehensive Plan including focusing on the Town’s commercial districts, addressing neighborhood concerns, protecting open space, preserving historic resources, building community pride, and identifying concrete goals and action items for the Town to pursue into the next decade. Finally the Town wanted to better position itself to take advantage of new funding opportunities to help implement the updated goals and recommendations of this plan.

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. Also known as a “Master Plan” or “Land Use Plan”, a comprehensive plan sets forth a community’s goals and recommended actions or policies which will make the community a good place to live, work, and visit. The plan outlines what needs to be done and how to do it in order to ensure that the community grows in an orderly, well-thought-out fashion and that the needs of the community will be met. The Comprehensive Plan’s goals and strategies also inform the communities zoning codes and land use regulations so that those code promote the consistent, orderly and deliberate growth contemplated by the Plan.

A comprehensive plan is not a static blueprint of how to get to some specific end-point. It is a living document that provides continual guidance for the work of the community’s leaders and staff. As such the Plan needs to be updated every 5-10 years to adjust to changing conditions within a community. Municipal decisions then need to be weighed against the current values and ideas set forth by the community and as expressed within the overall plan to ensure that the community is headed in the right direction.

There is no set formula for the content of a comprehensive plan, but the state statute suggests such elements as a vision statement, goal statements, strategies for improving the local economy, and the consideration of population trends, regional needs, agricultural uses, historic and natural resources, transportation facilities, infrastructure, housing resources and needs, recreational facilities, and the plans of other

agencies and communities. The contents of a comprehensive plan vary considerably and depend on the identified priorities and needs of individual communities. Some municipalities focus primarily on land use and zoning issues, others on economic development, infrastructure, or other issues.

While it is strongly recommended, New York State does not require communities to have a comprehensive plan. However, there are many reasons why a comprehensive plan is important. Among the benefits of having an updated comprehensive plan are to: establish consensus about the community's future; to prepare for future demographic and economic changes; to preserve community character; to protect natural and historic resources; and to provide direction to other government agencies. Having an updated comprehensive plan in place can also help a community secure State or Federal grant funding to assist with projects identified in the plan as important to the community's future.

The comprehensive plan also 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. The plan in itself is not a regulation, however. An updated comprehensive plan states where you have been, what is the current complexion, and where you are going. Ordinances, regulations, or local laws, along with a variety of non-regulatory tools, are the tools used for implementing and realizing the plans goals and recommendations for future growth and development.

2.2 Past Plans & Studies

As noted in Section 1.2, the Town has continued to grow and develop since the 2005 Comprehensive Plan was adopted. The following plans and studies listed below have been commissioned by the Town and/or other related governmental entities since the development of the prior Comprehensive Plan. They are relevant due to the fact that many of these plans and studies directly address important community issues such as traffic and transportation, pedestrian and bicycle linkages, and brownfield redevelopment.

2010 Comprehensive Plan Progress Report

In 2010 the Town Supervisor commissioned a study to check on the progress of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan goals and recommendations. A special committee was appointed comprised of Town Officials, residents, business owners and stakeholders. An assessment of the progress achieved on the implementation actions of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan was in order considering that five years had passed since adoption of the Plan. It was also recognized that good planning dictates that a communities Comprehensive Plan should be revisited and or updated every 5 to 10 years. So the time was right to undertake an assessment of progress made by the 2005 Plan. (See appendix C)

NY 7 / NY 2 Corridor Study (2005)

Within the Town of Colonie, 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 builds upon the land use and transportation findings and recommendations developed as part of the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) for the Albany International Airport area.

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 included 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.

Pathways Plan (2008)

In 2005, the Town of Colonie adopted its first comprehensive plan. During the public involvement portion of the planning process, concerns were raised about pedestrian safety. The Pathways Plan was initiated in response, and its scope extended to bicyclist safety. Drafted in 2008, this plan looks at the Town’s approach to the 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 in the town, thus contributing to the quality of life in Colonie.

Plan recommendations include increasing 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 the pursuit of potential funding sources.

Finally, the plan includes a Town of Colonie Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Network. It was developed by mapping CDTC’s Priority Pedestrian and Bicycle Networks, utility rights-of-way, and existing trails, and identifying local priority routes to fill in the gaps.

As part of the update of the Town’s Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Colonie Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Network was revised to include CDTC’s most current Pedestrian Districts and Bicycle Network and the Town’s existing sidewalks and trails. The Pathways Plan will be adopted as part of the update of the Town’s Comprehensive Plan.

NYS Route 32 Linkage Study (2011)

Route 32 is a vital roadway connecting the Village of Menands, Town of Colonie and City of Watervliet to I-787 and the Capital District. During rush hour, Route 32 is well travelled, often accommodating back up traffic on I-787. For this reason, these three municipalities came together to develop a plan that would allow for mixed-use, mixed-income, transit-oriented and pedestrian-friendly development. The plan recommended a road diet from four to two lanes with center turn lane and bike lanes, upgraded signals for pedestrians, added transit facilities, access management, streetscape improvements, pedestrian crosswalk upgrades, and design standards for redevelopment along Route 32.

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 or 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 to develop mixed uses at key locations, and 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 Linkage Study (2018)

The Town of Colonie undertook the development of the Albany Shaker Road Linkage Study in collaboration with Albany County and the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC). Completed in 2018, the focus of the study was the Albany Shaker Road corridor from Old Maxwell 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 is seeking Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funding for the pedestrian improvements. The Albany Shaker Road Linkage Study will be adopted as part of the update of the Town’s Comprehensive Plan.

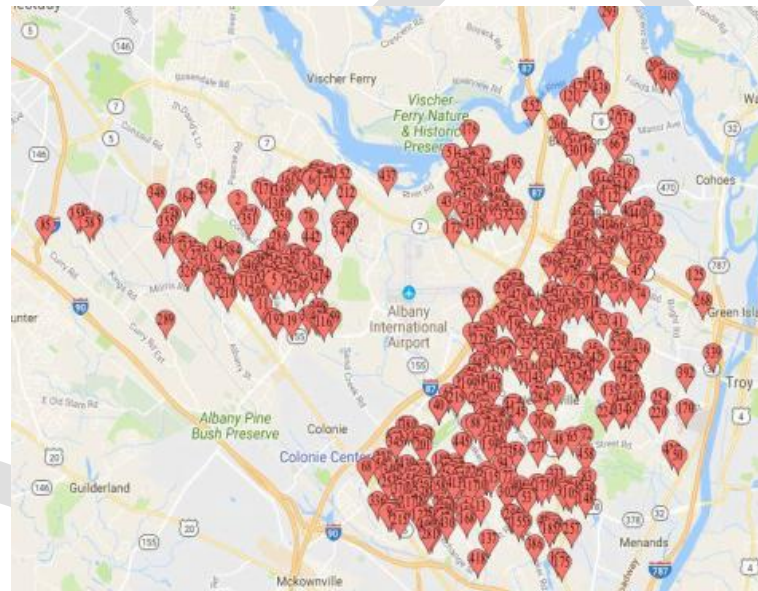
2.3 Public Involvement

The Town of Colonie began the original comprehensive planning process in 2003, culminating in the adoption of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. That process continues with the development of an updated 2019 Comprehensive Plan. In 2016, the Town hired Barton & Loguidice, D.P.C. (B&L) to assist in completing the comprehensive plan, and the Town Board established the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC). The CPAC included a cross section of residents who have been involved in community activities as well as Town staff. The CPAC held over 18 meetings through 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 planning process, several neighborhood meetings and workshops were conducted for this Plan update. In addition a Town-wide survey commissioned by Siena College’s Research Institute (SCRI) were among the first public outreach activities to take place as part of the comprehensive planning process. For the purposes of organizing the neighborhood meetings, the Town was divided into five (5) planning areas: Westside, Colonie North, Latham, Colonie South, and Loudonville. Neighborhood meetings were held in each of these planning areas. A meeting was also held at the Beltrone Senior Living Center to discuss issues related to seniors in the Town and another round table meeting was held with the business community to discuss their specific needs. Results from these meetings, as well as additional public workshops and focus groups, can be found in Appendix A and on the Town’s website (www.colonie.org).

As noted previously, the Siena College Research Institute was commissioned in March 2017 to conduct a Town-wide professional survey. To focus the survey, a random sample of 2000 registered voters living in the town (excluding the villages of Colonie and Menands) were contacted. Of that list, 607 (30+%) responses were received between the dates of April 3 and June 12, 2017. The survey was conducted by mail, web, and phone to obtain the highest possible response rate. Twenty-three (23) questions were asked that addressed a variety of issues such as growth, housing, traffic congestion, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, recreation facilities, environmental concerns, open space preservation, business, employment, Town services, and they type of residential development that should be encouraged. The top three (3) positive aspects of Colonie

identified by survey respondents include, nearly all of the respondents rate the Town as either an excellent or good place to live, convenient location within the capital district, and the Towns schools. The top three (3) concerns regarding the Town according to the survey include the construction of new sidewalks along main roads, designing local roads to slow speeds and investing in improvements to Town Parks. Additionally the respondents to the survey also feel it is 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 Towns website (www.colonie.org) and also in Appendix A.



In addition to the previously mentioned meetings and community survey, the CPAC reached out to the public on several other occasions including:

- Ø Issues Identifications and Visioning Workshops – The purpose of this public workshop was to introduce the community to the comprehensive planning process. In addition, participants were asked to work together to define that Town’s strengths and identify issues that should be addressed in the plan. There were five (5) Issues Identifications and Visioning Workshops held during the course of the comprehensive plan update; Forts Ferry, Lisha Kill, Loudonville, Shaker Junior High, and The Crossings.

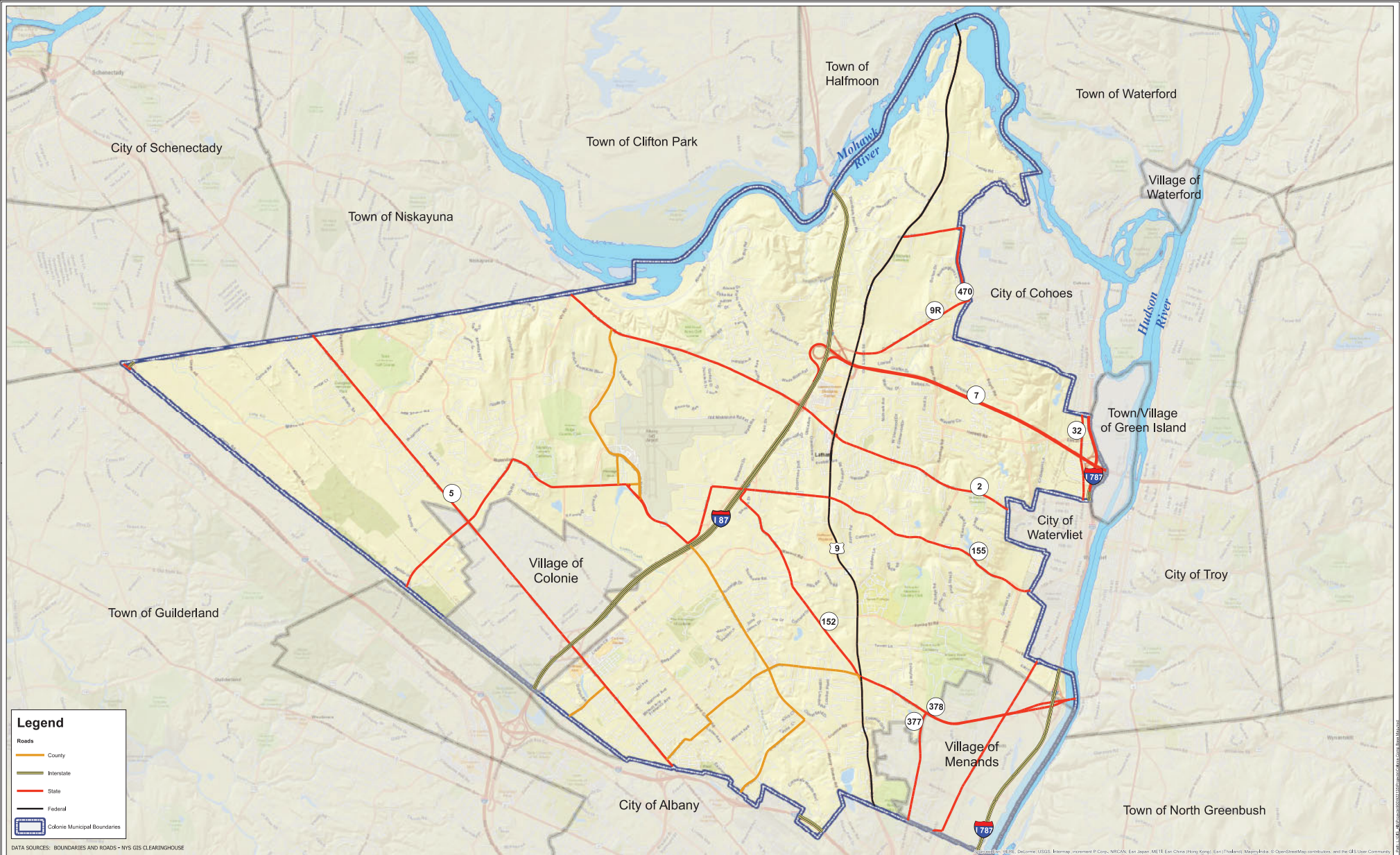
- Ø Focus Group Meetings – There were _____ focus group meetings discussing topics that included open space, recreation, transportation, economic development, housing, and development patterns.
- Ø Business Workshop – A business workshop was held to discuss the future of the Town from the perspective of business owners.
- Ø Townwide Meeting 1 – The purpose of this townwide meeting on _____ was to introduce the plan vision statement and goals, and to present and discuss preliminary plan concepts. Attendees were asked to provide feedback about the direction of the preliminary plan concepts.
- Ø Townwide Meeting 2 – The purpose of this second townwide meeting will be to solicit public input about the draft plan. The draft plan document will be available for public review in advance of this meeting. Feedback from this meeting will be considered in the development of the committee's final draft plan.
- Ø Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) Public Hearing – The purpose of this public hearing was to receive comments about the committee's final draft plan. As required by state law, the CPAC conducted this formal public hearing before voting on a resolution to forward the final draft plan to the Town Board for its consideration.
- Ø Town Board Public Hearing – Once it formally received the Final Draft Comprehensive Plan from the committee, the Town Board held a public hearing. In accordance with state law, it held the public hearing prior to making a decision regarding plan adoption.

At the start of the CPAC's work, while portions of the public involvement process were taking place, the B&L team created an inventory and analysis of existing conditions of the Town. This inventory and analysis is located in Section 3 of this comprehensive plan. The inventory describes existing land use and use 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 information obtained from the neighborhood meetings, public workshops, focus group meetings, community survey and the inventory and analysis was used as a basis for plan recommendations. Specific policies and actions were also developed to address the problems and issues defined as part of the inventory and through the public outreach process. Finally a strategy for implementing the recommended policies and actions was created. The strategy prioritizes actions and identifies resource for implementation.

A comprehensive plan should serve as a guide for future action by public and private entities in the Town. As with any planning document, this plan should be reviewed regularly (every 5-10 years) to determine if the goals and recommendations found within continue to be relevant based on changing circumstances and updated as needed.

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DATA SOURCES: BOUNDARIES AND ROADS - NYS GIS CLEARINGHOUSE



1 inch = 3,500 feet

Town of Colonie Comprehensive Plan Update		Figure
Town of Colonie Base Map		-
Albany County	November 2016	Project No. 922.135
New York		

Section 3 - Community Profile

The Capital District was one of the first areas colonized by the Dutch following Henry Hudson's 1609 discovery of the Hudson River. Development of this area was driven by the strategic location where the navigable Hudson River ended and the Mohawk River began its course to the west. After dams, canals and locks were built, Albany became a hub for Erie Canal/Mohawk River traffic from the west and Champlain Canal traffic from the north. The early success of the Capital District can be attributed to the successes of the river and the connectivity of the canal system throughout Upstate New York.

The Town of Colonie has often been referred to as the "Crossroads of the Capital District". The Town of Colonie contains about 57 square miles of land situated in the north-east corner of Albany County, and bordered on its north by the Mohawk River and on its east by the Hudson River. In the past, Colonie was referred to as "Albany's Breadbasket" because of its strong agricultural history. Many areas within Colonie contain rich tillable soils that were first cultivated by Native Americans and later by Dutch and English colonists. The Town of Colonie's unique location has contributed to its continued growth and prosperity over time which is apparent by the transformation of agricultural lands into residential neighborhoods with a strong retail base.

Demographics

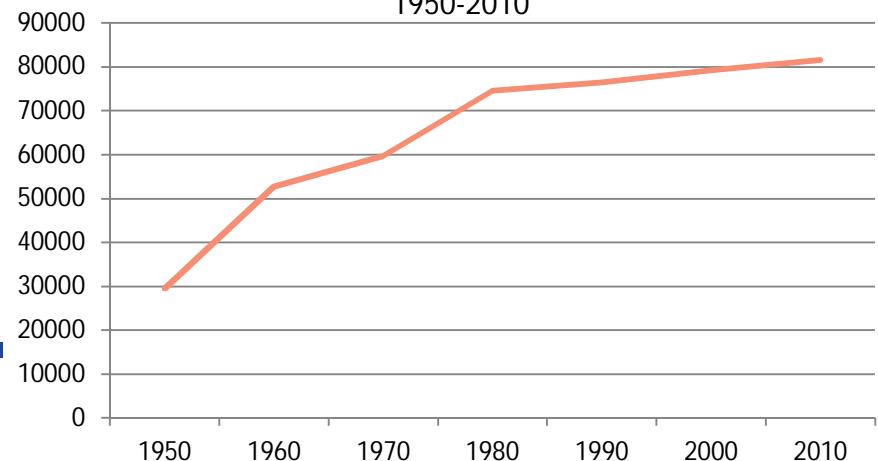
Population

Population Characteristics

The Town of Colonie experienced significant growth from 1950 to 2010 (see Figure 1). In 1950, Colonie had approximately 29,533 residents; by 1980 the Town's population grew to 74,593. The Town's population growth tapered off after 1980, as shown in Figure 1.

With the economic upturn in the 1990's, Colonie's population increased 3.6% from 1990 to 2000. Of Albany County's 18 municipalities, Colonie had the fifth largest percentage of population increase during this time. According to the 2010 census, the Town's

Figure 1
Town of Colonie Population
1950-2010



population increased another 3.42% to its current population of 81,591 residents.

The Town’s growth contributed greatly to an increase in population density. In 1950, the population density was 510 people per square mile. By 1980, that number increased to 1,288 people per square mile; by 2010, the population density increased to 1,409 people per square mile. In comparison, the density is approximately 570 and 415 people per square mile in Albany County and New York State, respectively. As of the 2010 U.S. Census, there were approximately 42,316 females (51.8%) and 39,275 males (48.2%) living in Colonie.

Population Projections

The Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC) made population projections for the Town of Colonie, Albany County, and the Capital District between 2020 and 2050 (see Table 1). These projections show that the Town of Colonie population is expected to increase another 2.21% by 2020, and another 2.61% by 2030. Projections estimate that the Town will likely experience slower population growth in 2040, growing only 1% between 2030 and 2040. Between 2040 and 2050, it is expected that the population will begin to decline by 0.22%. In general, Colonie’s population growth trends mirror those of the county and state. According to Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC), Town of Colonie growth pattern in 2017 was 2.3% the ranking 10th in Capital Region. The most growth was in Saratoga communities.

Table 1 – Projected Population, 2020 - 2050				
	2020	2030	2040	2050
Town of Colonie	83,438	85,678	86,549	86,363
% Increase	+2.21%	+2.61%	+1.00%	-0.22%
Albany County	309,730	316,018	317,709	317,183
% Increase	+1.78%	+1.99%	+0.53%	-0.17%
Capital District	864,426	888,073	896,451	895,012
% Increase	+3.06%	+2.66%	+0.93%	-0.16%

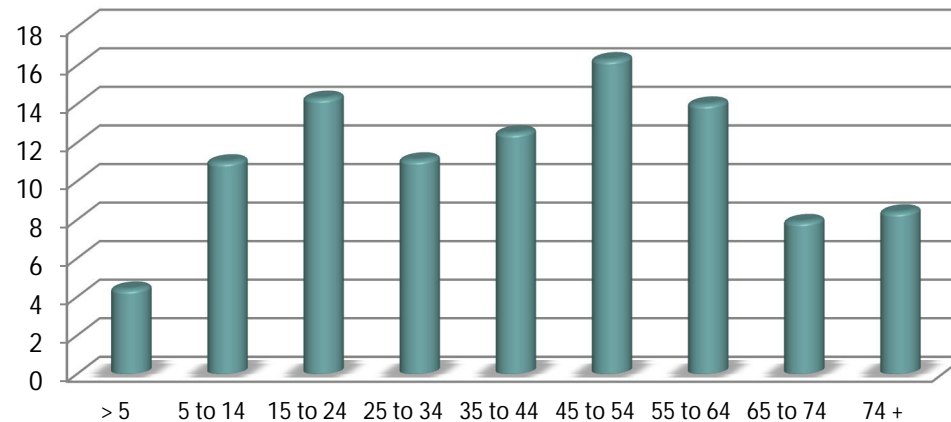
Age Cohorts

While the median age in Colonie is 42.6 years, which is higher than Albany County and New York State median ages of 36.8 and 35.9 years, respectively. Of Colonie’s total population 29.7% is under the age of 25 and 53.9% is between 25 and 64 years old. In comparison, 33% of Albany County residents are under 25, while 53% are between 25 and 64 years of age.

While the Town’s population grew from 79,258 residents in 2000 to 81,591 residents in 2010, the growth was not evenly distributed throughout the various age cohorts. Figure 2 shows the changes in the size of age cohorts in the Town between the 2000 and 2010 census. The most significant change occurred in the 35 to 44 and 55 to 64 age brackets. The 35 to 44 age bracket underwent a decrease of 23.3% from 2000 to 2010, while the 55 to 64 age bracket underwent an increase of 32.1% from 2000 to 2010.

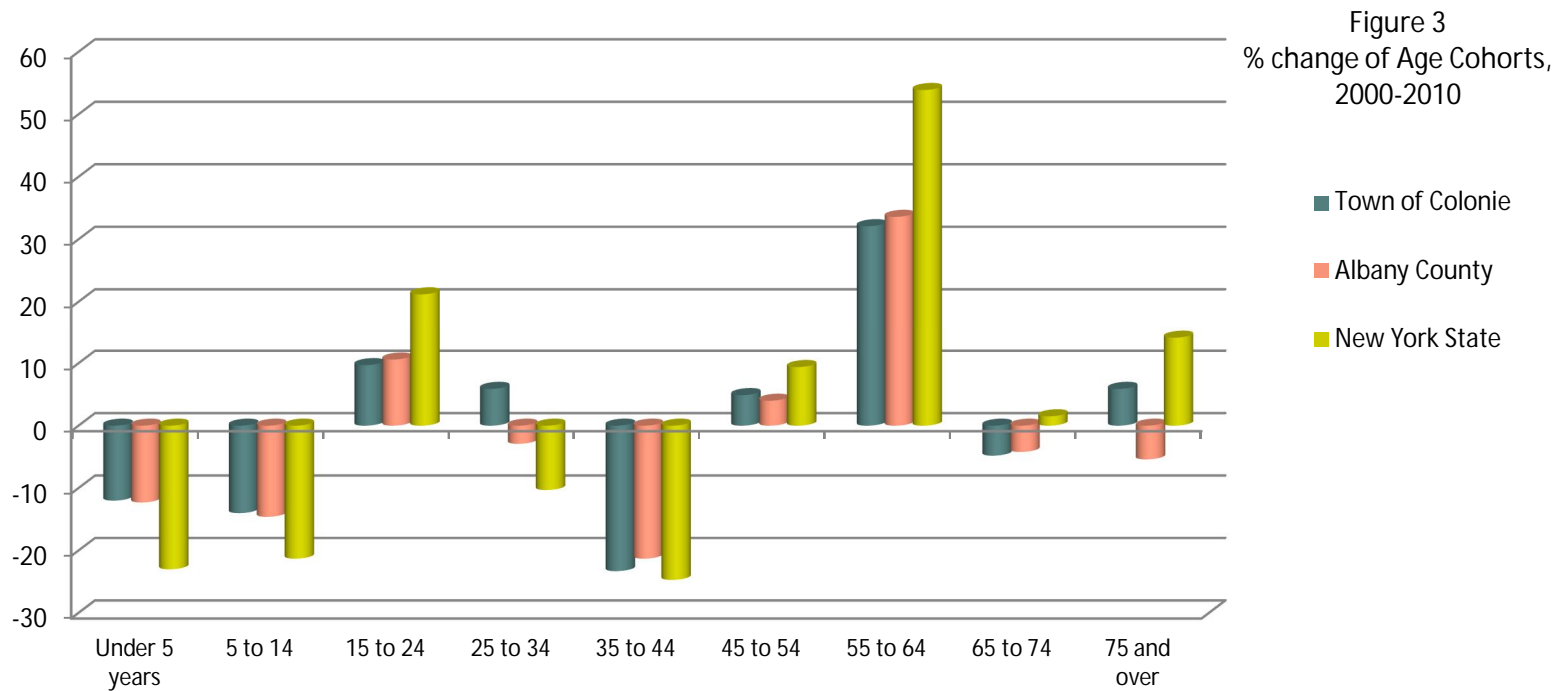
Figure 3 also shows the gains and losses that occurred between 2000 and 2010 for each age cohort on the Town, County, and State level. This figure demonstrates that the age cohort that experienced the greatest amount of loss in Colonie was the 35 to 44 years age bracket with a loss of 23.3%. This trend was mirrored on both the County and State level. The age bracket that experienced the greatest gains in the Town was the 55 to 64 years age bracket with a growth of 32.1%. This upward trend was mirrored on the County and State level. One explanation for this may be Colonie’s status as an inner ring suburb, allowing many senior citizens to age in place.

Figure 2
Age Cohorts, 2010 Census



The Town’s gains in the 25-34 age brackets were significant compared to the County and State levels. The Town experienced an increase of 5.9% in this age cohort, while the County and State experienced a decrease of 2.9% and 10.3%, respectively. Other notable divergence of the Town’s statistics from the County and State’s figures can be found in the 65 to 74 age bracket.

From 2000 until 2010, the Town and County lost 4.8% and 4.2% respectively; while the State experienced a 1.5% increase in this age bracket. The 75 years and older age group increased by 5.9% and 14.1% in the Town and State respectively, while the County experienced a 5.4% loss of population in this age group. This trend may be influenced by the Town’s commitment to provide seniors with suitable housing options and accommodations.



These statistics show that the average age of residents in the Town of Colonie has increased and is projected to trend upward. If this trend continues into the future, the Town can expect a continuing demand for services for their senior population. This demand will have further implications on the local housing market, as many seniors age out of their homes. In order to adequately prepare for the aging population precautions must be taken to make sure that the neighborhoods where there are higher concentrations of older persons living are protected to maintain their high rates of owner-occupancy.

Household Makeup

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there were a total of 33,088 households in Colonie in the year 2010, an increase of 6.37% from the 2000 census. The average number of persons per household decreased 3.92%, from 2.43 in 2000 to 2.35 in 2010.

Of all the households in the Town of Colonie 63.48% are defined as “family households”, while 36.52% of households are defined as “nonfamily households” (see Table 2). This trend closely follows that of Albany County. In Albany County there are 56.53% households that are defined as “family households”, while 43.47% of households are defined as “nonfamily households”.

A large majority of households, 63.48%, are family households. Most family households, 30.14%, are comprised of married couples, yet of these only 19.15% have children under 18 years old. Nonfamily households account for 36.52% of all households. Of these, 30.04% are singles living alone. 12.34% of these singles are seniors, age 65 and over.

Households by Type	Total	% Total of Households
Total Households	33,088	100%
Family Households	21,003	63.48%
Husband-Wife family	9,974	30.14%
With Children under 18 years	6,337	19.15%
Male householder, no wife present	727	2.20%
With own children under 18 years	561	1.70%
Female householder, no husband present	1,797	5.43%
With own children under 18 years	1,607	4.86%
Nonfamily Households	12,085	36.52%
Householder living alone	9,940	30.04%
65 years and over	4,082	12.34%
Other Non-Family Household (2 or more people)	2,145	6.48%

Economics

Educational Attainment

Figure 4 (below) shows the change in the educational attainment of residents age 25 or over in 1990, 2000, and 2010. In 2010, more residents achieved higher levels of education than 1990 and 2000. In 1990 and 2010, approximately 33.75 and 26.5% of residents received a High School diploma as their highest level of education, respectively. The Town began to see a shift towards higher educational attainment at the Bachelor’s degree and the Graduate or Professional degree levels beginning in 2000. In 1990 only 28.75% of residents received a Bachelor’s or higher degree. In 2000, 33% of residents achieved this level of education. By 2010, the percentage of residents with a Bachelor’s degree or higher was 38.6%.

Figure 4
Education Attainment, 1990 - 2010

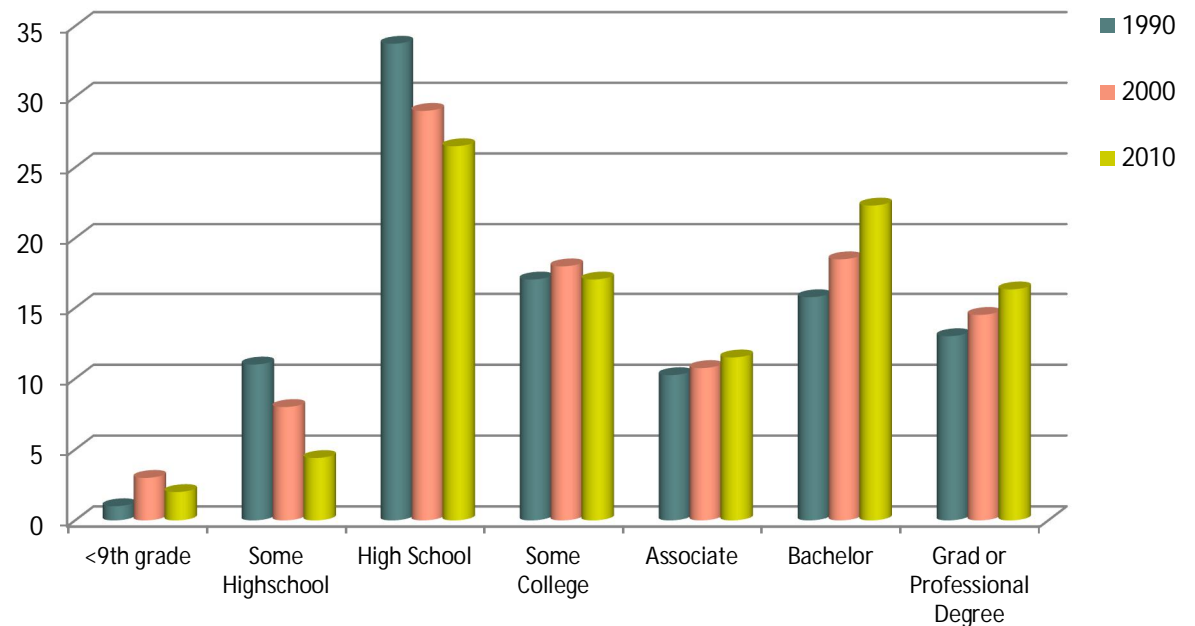
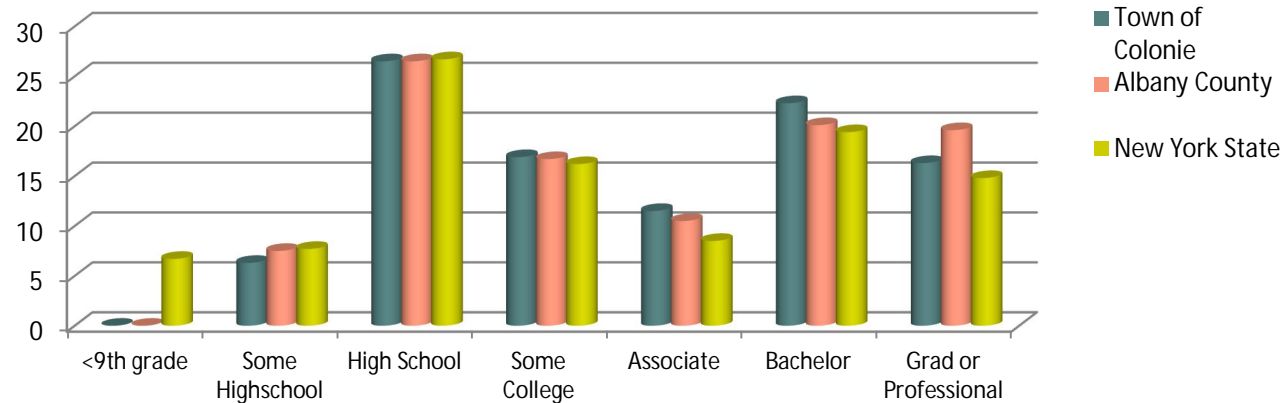


Figure 5 (following page) depicts the educational attainment of the Town of Colonie, Albany County, and New York State in 2010. Overall, the Town’s attainment percentages are closely related to County and State’s. The Town has lower rates of the highest level of educational attainment being High School Diploma or less compared to the County and State. The Town has higher rates of the highest level of education attainment being Some College, Associate’s Degree, or Bachelor’s Degree. This indicates that the Town’s residents are pursuing higher levels of

education after high school. However, Albany County as a whole is outperforming both the Town of Colonie and the State of New York in obtaining graduate or professional degrees.

Figure 5
Educational Attainment, 2010



Employment

According to the 2010 census, the top three industries employing Colonie residents are the Education, Health and Social Services industry (24.5%), Wholesale and Retail Trade industry (13.3%), and Public Administration industry (13.0%) (See Table 3). The top three employment sectors are unchanged from 2010, and the percentage of workers in the sectors has not changed significantly. In 2000, the Educational, Health and Social Services industry employed 21.5% of residents (change of +3.0%), Wholesale and Retail Trade industry employed 13.4% of residents (change of -0.1%), and Public Administration industry employed 15.7% (change of -2.7%).

The Town closely followed the employment trends of the County and State, with the exception of the Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services industry. 11.0% of residents in the Town of Colonie are employed in this industry and it employs the fourth highest amount of residents in the Town; whereas it is the third most employer in the State.

Table 3 - Employment by Industry			
	Town of Colonie	Albany County	New York State
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting and, mining	0.30%	0.40%	0.60%
Construction	4.60%	4.70%	5.60%
Manufacturing	5.40%	5.00%	6.50%
Wholesale and Retail Trade	13.30%	13.00%	13.30%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	3.60%	3.90%	5.10%
Information	2.50%	2.20%	2.90%
Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing	7.90%	6.90%	8.00%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services	11.00%	10.60%	11.40%
Educational, health and social services	24.50%	27.40%	27.50%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services	8.80%	8.80%	9.50%
Other Services	5.10%	4.40%	5.00%
Public Administration	13.00%	12.70%	4.60%

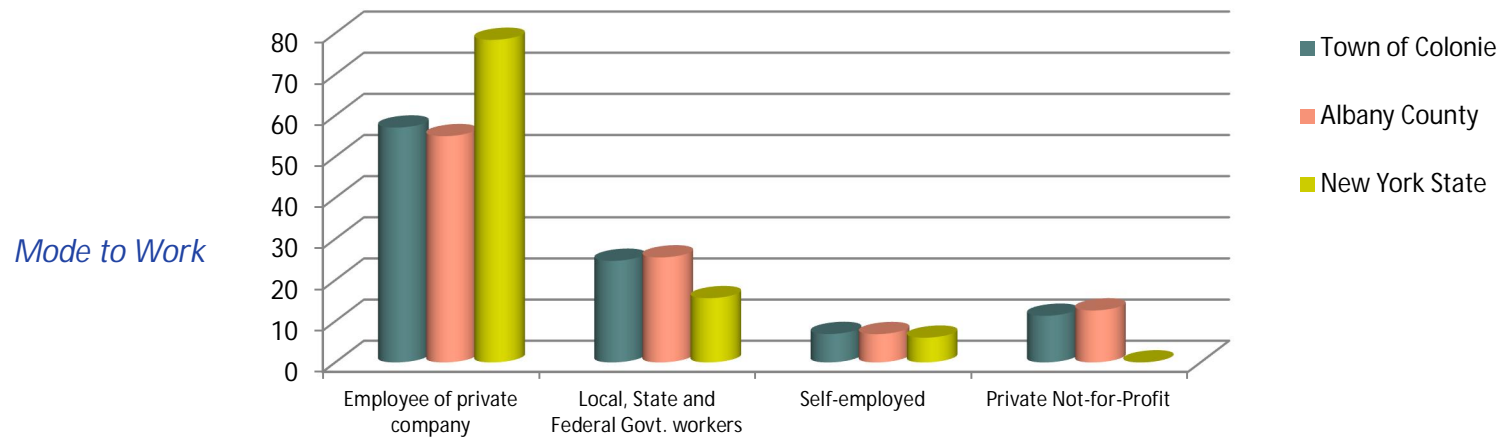
According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics the unemployment rate in the

Town of Colonie in 2015 was 3.8%. This figure is lower than the County, State, and National rates of unemployment of 4.9%, 5.7%, and 5.4%, respectively.

The majority of employees in the Town of Colonie (57.08%) are employed by private companies; this trend is representative of both the County (54.98%) and State (78.4%). The Town also has a high percentage of residents who are employed by local, state, and federal governments (24.69%). This is likely due to the Town’s close proximity to the City of Albany, which is not only that State’s capital, but also serves as the County seat for Albany County.

Economic development patterns do not mirror municipal boundaries; therefore, it is important to examine employment from a regional perspective. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 79.1% of residents stay within the Albany-Schenectady-Troy Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) when traveling to their place of employment, and 43.7% of these workers work in the City of Albany, Schenectady, or Troy. Approximately 66% of employed Colonie residents (28,376 people) leave Colonie to work somewhere else.

Figure 6
Employment by Type, 2010



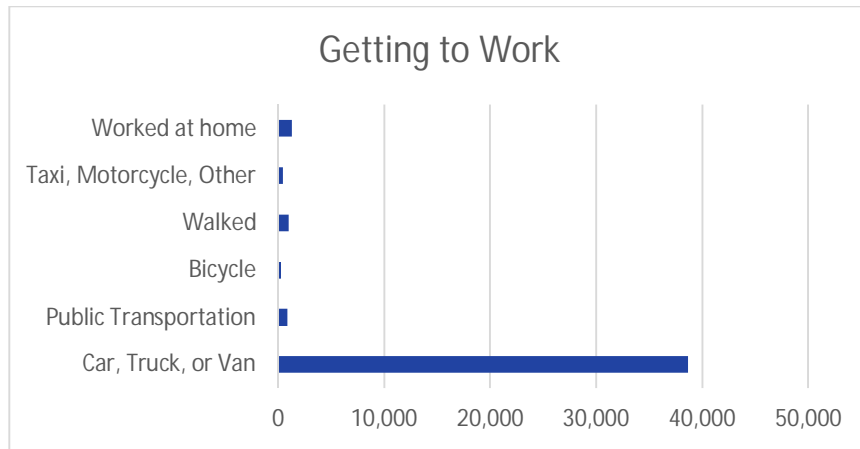
A 91%, Colonie residents overwhelming rely on their car, truck or van to get to work. Working at home (3%), walking to work (2%), taking the bus (2%), and biking (less than 1%) do not appear to be viable options for many.

Table X: Mode to Work

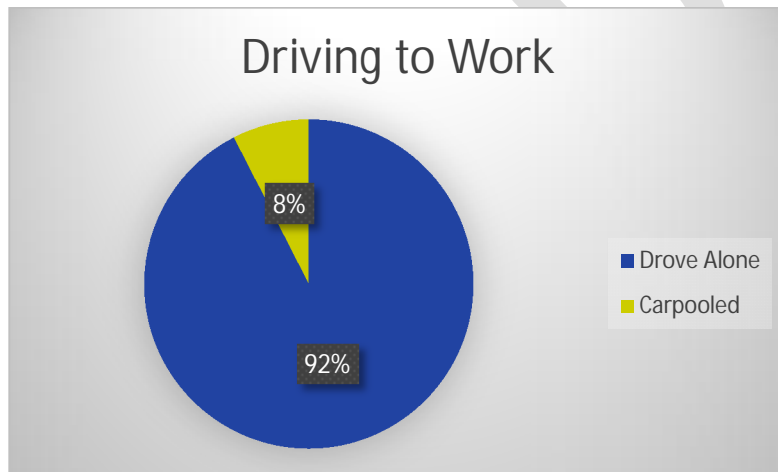
Mode	Total	Percentage
Car, Truck, or Van	38,654	90.9%
Carpool		7.8%
Public Transportation	886	2.1%
Bicycle	243	0.6%
Walked	1,002	2.4%
Taxi, Motorcycle, Other	440	1.0%
Worked at home	1,302	3.1%
Total:	42,527	100.0%

Source: US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2012-16 American Community Survey.

DRAFT



Of the people who drive to work, 7.5% carpool. This is slightly less compared to carpooling rates in Albany County (9.0%) and in the Capital Region (8.9%).



Vehicle Availability

Based on data from 2012 to 2016, 93.8% of occupied housing units have one or more vehicles available. This correlates with the high percentage of people driving to work. No vehicles are available in 2.8% of owner-occupied housing units and 13.9% of renter-occupied units.

Table X: Vehicle Availability per Occupied Housing Units

Vehicles Available	Occupied housing units	Owner-occupied	Renter-occupied
No vehicle available	6.2%	2.8%	13.9%
1 vehicle available	34.5%	26.6%	52.8%
2 vehicles available	42.6%	49.3%	27.2%
3 or more vehicles available	16.7%	21.3%	6.1%

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Income and Poverty

The Town, County, and State MHI’s have steadily increased since 2000. According to the American Community Survey (ACS), in 2015 the Town of Colonie’s median household income (MHI) was \$71,658, 16 and 17% and higher than the Albany County and State MHI’s of \$59,887 and \$59,269, respectively.

According to Census data, poverty in the State of New York has been on the rise since 2000. The Town, County, and State level poverty rates increased for both families and individuals. In 2000, the percentage of individuals below the poverty line was 4.7% in the Town of Colonie. In 2015, the Town’s poverty rate for individuals climbed to 6.9%. This rate is lower than Albany County’s (13.5%) and the State’s (15.7%). For families in Colonie, the same trend was recorded. The percentage of families below the poverty line increased from 3% in 2000 to 4.9% in 2015.

According to United Way's *Study on Financial Hardship in the State of New York*, there are 1.1 million people who fall under the poverty line. The 2016 Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for individuals is \$11,880 a year. This rate increases by \$4,160 for each additional member in a family. For the 48 contiguous states, this rate has remained unchanged since 1974, meaning that the FPL is not adjusted for inflation or differences in cost of living throughout the country. To better capture the actual financial hardship that households in New York face, United Way created their own threshold that considers other factors, such as cost of living and inflation, into their calculations to paint a more realistic picture of how households are meeting their daily needs. This threshold is referred to as “ALICE”, or “Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed.” United Way estimated that an additional 2.1 million residents in New York State struggle to provide for their family. When this estimate is combined with those who are under the poverty line, approximately 44% of residents in New York are employed.

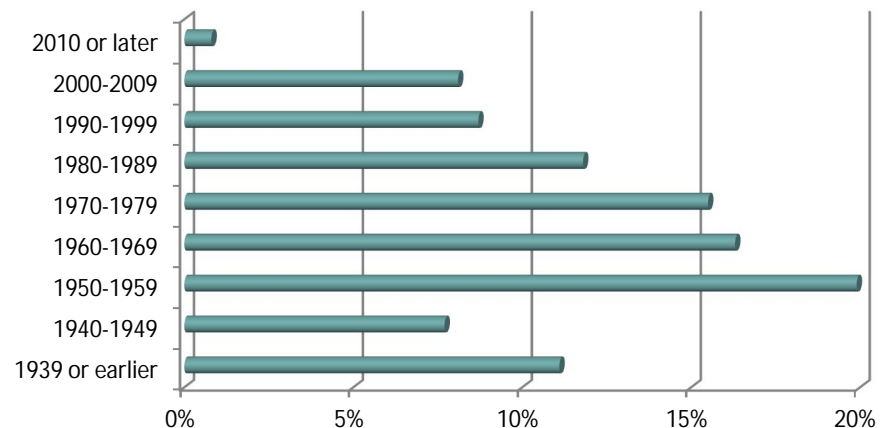
According to 2014 Point-in-Time data collected by United Way, 38% of the 124,716 households in Albany County fall under the ALICE threshold or the FPL. There are eight counties in NYS with lower rates than Albany County (one of which is nearby Saratoga County), and four counties with the same rate as Albany County (one of which is nearby Rensselaer County). ALICE households are disproportionate to those with a member 65 years or older and those headed by a single mother. Household stability in New York means a single parent must be able to make \$58.14 an hour (\$120,930/year) and each parent of a two-parent household must make at least \$29.07 an hour (\$60,465/year) to sustain a family of four.

In Colonie, 30% of residents fall under ALICE (23%) or the FPL (7%). These rates falls around the median when compared to other state divisions within the County. According to United Way's report, Colonie was ranked “fair” in affordability, “good” in job opportunities, and “fair” in community resources.

Housing

Until the post-WWII housing boom in the 1940's and 1950's, Colonie's vast agricultural base had been known as “the Breadbasket of the Capital Region.” From 1950 to 2010 the population of Colonie grew by 63.8%, from 29,553 to 81,591. This tremendous growth over 60 years resulted in a need for more housing units to accommodate the new residents. The Town experienced a growth rate of 44% between 1950 and 1960. Figure 7 (see right), shows that the largest portion (22.4%) of Colonie's existing housing stock was built between 1950 and 1959. As growth rates slowed, the need for housing

Figure 7
% of Housing Stock by Construction Decade



slowed. From 1970 to 1980, the population grew by only 24.9%, nearly half the 1950-60 growth rate. From 1980 to 1990, population growth dramatically slowed to a 2.6% increase. A low growth rate (between 2-4%) has been maintained since 1980, and is projected to remain at that level at least until 2040.

Between 1990 and 2000 there was an 8.7% increase in the number of housing units in Colonie. 2,966 housing units were constructed during that period. Of the Town’s 34,137 housing units in 2010, 95.57% were occupied. 71.1% of the occupied housing units were owner occupied (see Figure 8). Homeownership has only decreased by 0.1% since 2010. Single family – detached style housing accounted for 72.2% of the Town’s housing units; this figure has experienced an increase of 2.6% from 2000 to 2010.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the median housing value (2010) for owner-occupied units within Colonie was \$219,900, whereas Albany County’s median housing value for owner-occupied units was \$213,300. A significant portion (41.4%) of Colonie’s owner-occupied housing units range in value from \$200,000 to \$299,000, while 31.9% of owner-occupied units within Albany County are valued between \$200,000 and \$299,000. Only 19.6% of owner-occupied units are valued under \$150,000 in the Town, while 23% of owner-occupied units are valued under \$150,000 in the County. The value of homes in Colonie appear to follow the trends of Albany County.

CDRPC reported that in the six years from 1998 to 2003, the mean current dollar selling price of existing homes went up 43.9% in the area of Colonie west of the Northway. This area includes the Village of Colonie (see Table 4).

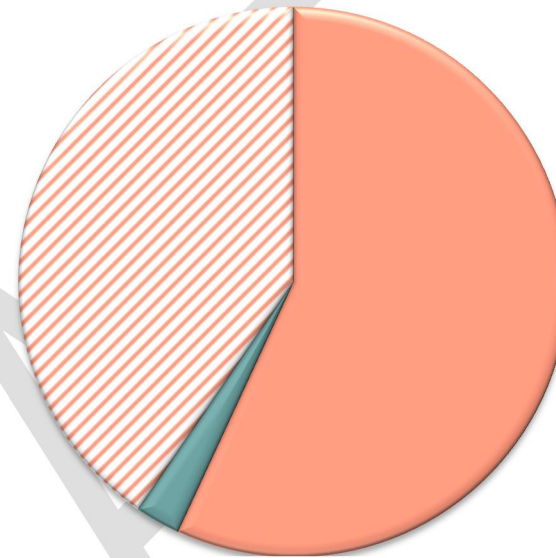


Figure 8
Housing Units, 2010

- Occupied Housing Units
- Unoccupied Housing Units
- Owner Occupied Units

Table 4 – Residential Mean Current Selling Price						
	1998	2003	2009	% change	2012	% change
Town of Colonie West of Northway, Village of Colonie	\$99,606	\$143,378	\$196,667	27.1%	\$205,529	4.30%
Town of Colonie East of Northway, Village of Menands	\$144,935	\$244,311	\$284,530	14.1%	\$285,207	0.20%
Albany County	\$130,554	\$178,552	\$224,033	21.3%	\$230,792	3%

For the area east of the Northway, which includes the Village of Menands, the mean current dollar selling price has increased 68.6%. The selling prices in both of these areas grew at substantially higher rates than that of Albany County which grew by%. From 2003 to 2009, the mean current dollar selling price of existing homes grew an additional 27.1% in the portions of Colonie that lie west of the Northway, including the Village of Colonie. For the area east of the Northway, including the Village of Menands, the mean current dollar selling price increased another 14.1%. This trend of significant increase has slowed, but it is still increasing. From 2009 to 2012 the mean current dollar selling price increased by only 4.3% in the portions of Colonie that lie west of the Northway, including the Village of Colonie. For the area east of the Northway, including the Village of Menands, the mean current dollar selling price has increased just 0.2%. The soaring housing market may account for the Town’s decrease in young adults.

The average time a home remains on the market in Colonie varies depending what part of the Town is being examined (see Table 5). For the portions of Colonie that lie west of the Northway, including the Village of Colonie the average day a home is on the market was 36 days in 2003. By 2009 the number of days to sell a home in this area had increased by 28% to 50 days on the market. This trend has continued, in 2012 the average home was on the market for 59 days, a 15.3% increase from 2009. For the area east of the Northway, including the Village of Menands, the average number of days on the market in 2003 was 39 days; by 2009 this figure experienced a 40.9% increase to 66 days. For this side of Town the trend did not hold up, in 2012 the average home was on the market for only 60 days, a decrease of 9.1% from the 2009 figure.

Table 5 – Residential Average Days to Sale						
	1998	2003	2009	% change	2012	% change
Town of Colonie West of Northway, Village of Colonie	97	36	50	28%	59	15.3%
Town of Colonie East of Northway, Village of Menands	100	39	66	40.9%	60	-9.1%
Albany County	113.5	45.8	70.8	35.3%	80	11.5%

The median annual income in the Town of Colonie is higher than both the County and State, across all age cohorts, with exception to the State’s median annual income for households under the age of 25 (see Table 6). In this case the Town of Colonie’s rate is lower by \$469. In Colonie, the overall median income was \$71,685. The 45-54 year age cohort had the highest median income, of \$87,330. The households under 25 age cohort, while nearly less than a quarter of the 45-54 bracket, was still higher than their peers in Albany County, but slightly lower than those of New York State. The other notable age cohort is the households 64 years and older. The average resident in this cohort is bringing home 9.4% and 21.5% more than their peers throughout the County and State respectively.

Table 6 - Median Annual Income, by Age of Householder, 2015 ACS			
	Town of Colonie	Albany County	New York State
Total	\$71,658	\$59,887	\$59,269
Households under 25 years	\$28,239	\$22,781	\$28,708
Householder 25 to 44 years	\$75,307	\$61,676	\$65,682
Householder 45 to 64 years	\$87,330	\$77,624	\$70,792
Householder 64 years and over	\$49,623	\$44,943	\$38,929

According to 2015 American Community Survey Data, 34.5% of renters and 20.2% of homeowners in the Town of Colonie spend over 35% of their annual income on housing. In Albany County as a whole 39.4% of renters and 19.7% of homeowners spend more than 35% of their annual

income on housing. Spending more than 35% on housing needs is a sign of moderate financial distress. If a household were to spend more than 50% of their annual income on housing that would be classified as severe financial distress. Data at this level is not available from the American Community Survey on the local or county level. It is ideal for households to spend less than 30% of their annual income on housing. In the Town of Colonie 56.4% of renters and 73.8% of owners spend less than 30% and in Albany County 65.9% of renters and 73.4% of home owners spend less than 30% on housing needs.

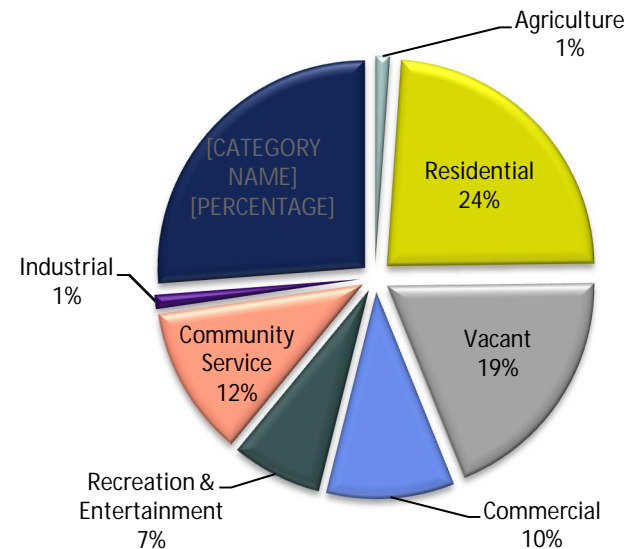
The Capital Region Coalition to End Homelessness (CARES) has compiled data to show where there are affordable housing needs within the Capital Region. Among all eight counties within the Capital Region, Albany County had the largest deficit between number of extremely low and low income households and the number of available affordable housing units. It is estimated that there are currently 13,615 extremely low to low income households within the County, while there are only 5,312 affordable housing units available. The lack of affordable units available leaves 8,303 households in unaffordable living situations or left without a permanent place to call home.

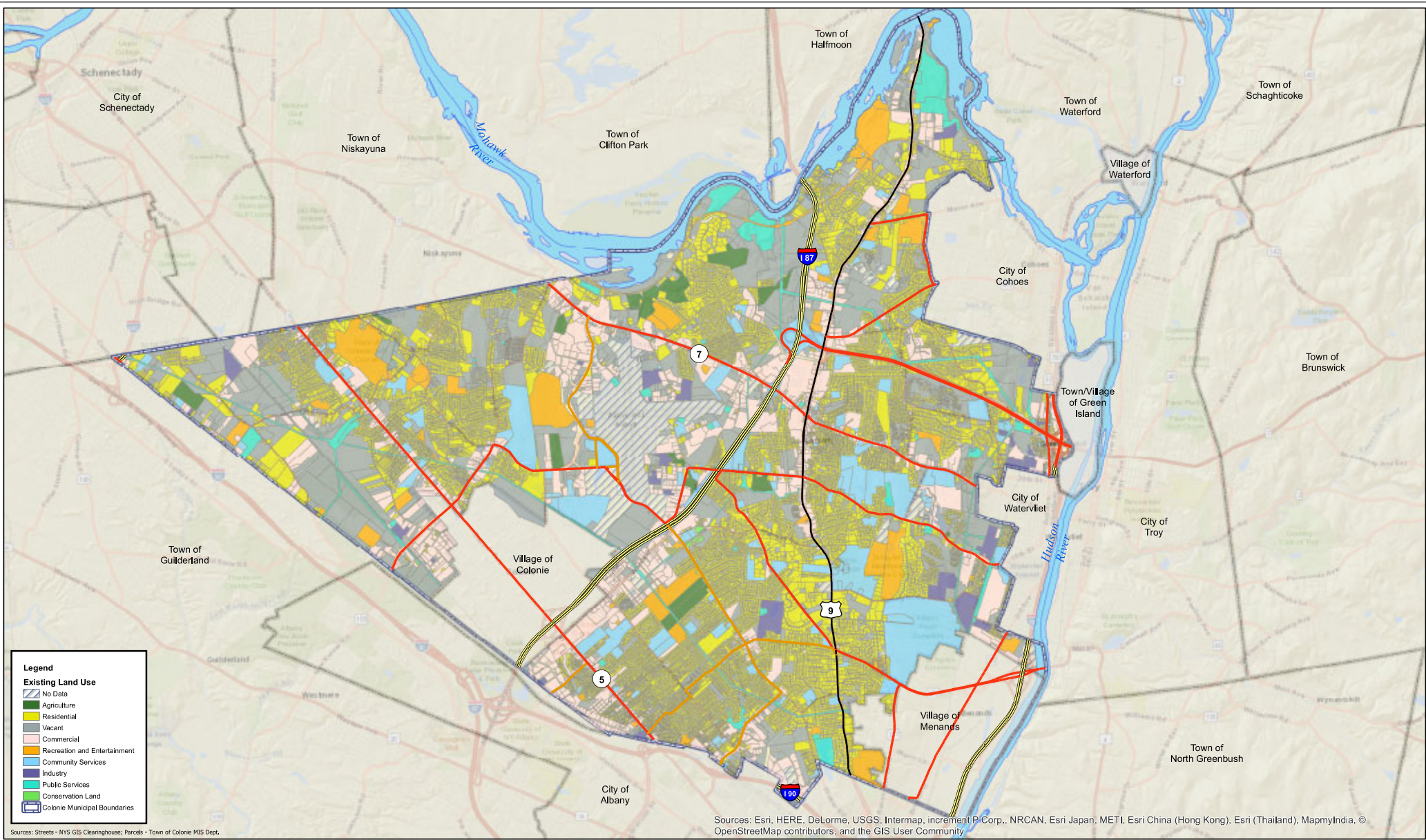
Existing Land Use and Land Use Regulations

Existing Land Use

In The Town of Colonie, the primary land use, 26.2%, is property used to provide services to the general public (see Figure 9). This includes utilities and transportation infrastructure. Residential land uses account for 23.7% of land within the Town. Before WWII, the Town's predominant land use was agriculture. Today only 1.1% of the Town's land area is used for such activities. Approximately 651.7 acres of land are in agricultural districts and are primarily utilized for greenhouses and vacant land associated with farming operations. After WWII, development began to creep out from the Route 5/Central Avenue and Route 9/Loudon Road Corridors. Secondary growth areas include the areas around Denison Road, Vly Road and Consaul Road, in the western part of Town. The Forts Ferry Road area is also a hub of residential development, as is the area east of Route 9 and north of Alternate Route 7.

Figure 9
Land Use by % of Acreage





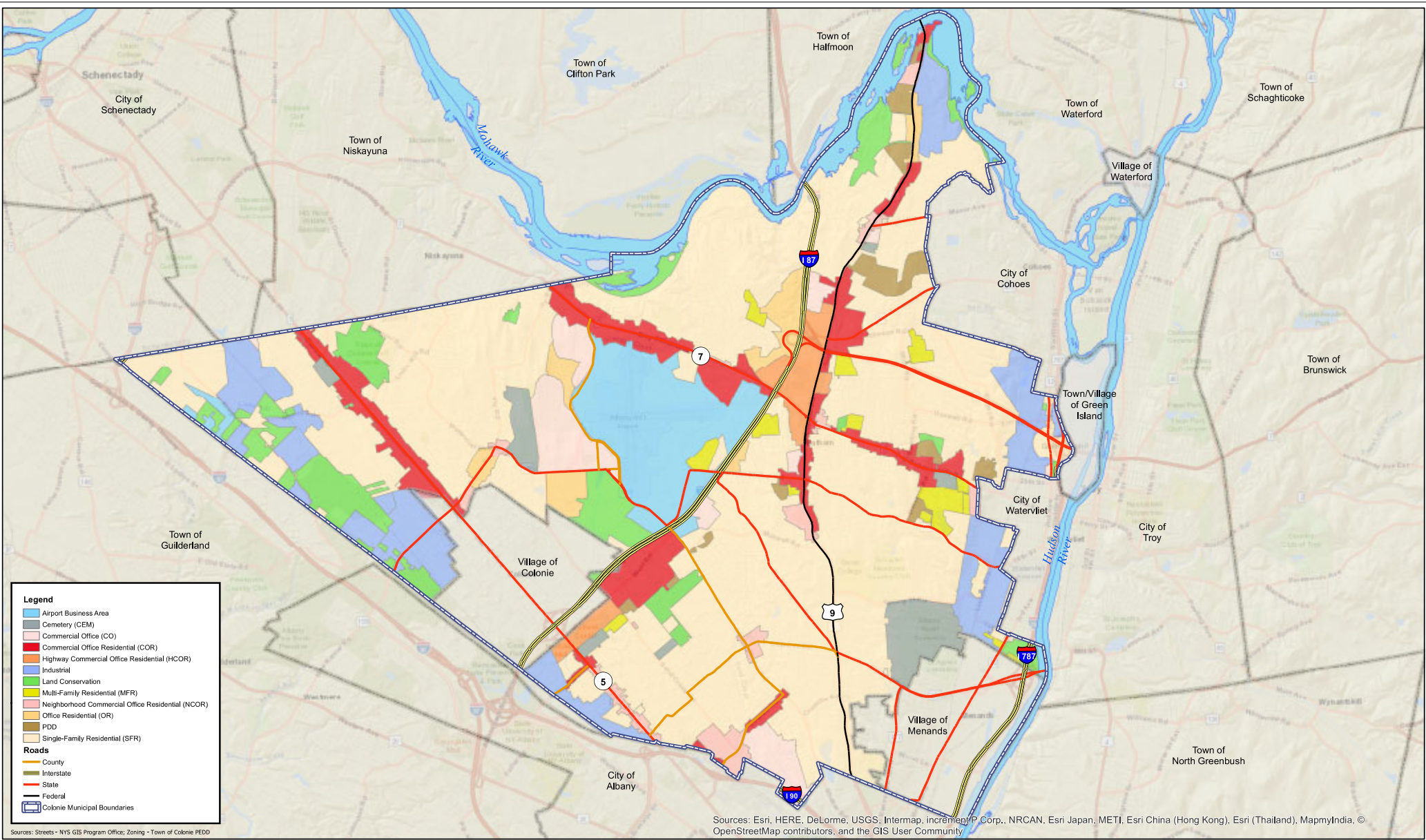
Sources: Streets - NYS GIS Clearinghouse; Parcels - Town of Colonie MIS Dept.

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



1 inch = 5,750 feet

Town of Colonie Comprehensive Plan Update		Figure -
Existing Land Use		
Albany County	November 2016	Project No. 922,135



Legend

- Airport Business Area
- Cemetery (CEM)
- Commercial Office (CO)
- Commercial Office Residential (COR)
- Highway Commercial Office Residential (HCOR)
- Industrial
- Land Conservation
- Multi-Family Residential (MFR)
- Neighborhood Commercial Office Residential (NCOR)
- Office Residential (OR)
- PDD
- Single-Family Residential (SFR)


Roads

- County
- Interstate
- State
- Federal
- Colonie Municipal Boundaries

Sources: Streets - NYS GIS Program Office; Zoning - Town of Colonie PEDD

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community




 1 inch = 5,750 feet

Town of Colonie Comprehensive Plan Update		Figure - Project No. 922,135
Current Zoning		
Albany County	November 2016	New York

11.1% of land is used for commercial and industrial activity. There is approximately 26,368,917 square feet of developed commercial space located within the Town of Colonie. These uses include, apartments and mobile homes, repair shops, large scale dealerships and retail outlets, fast food and restaurants, gas stations and car washed, hotels and other lodging accommodations, lumber yards, office buildings, storage facilities, and warehousing and distribution facilities. Central Avenue, Loudon Road and Troy Schenectady Road are all corridors of commercial use. Wolf Road is the location of the majority of the Town’s large hotels, and also has many restaurants, retail plazas and office buildings. The area around the Albany International Airport remains as an additional hub of commercial activity.

There are two main industrial areas of town. Railroad Avenue and Fuller Road are home to some of the older industrial enterprises in Colonie, and several large industrial complexes are located just outside of the City of Watervliet boundaries along Lincoln Avenue. The Lincoln Avenue area is the subject of a redevelopment plan to revitalize the area and encourage new development.

Table 7 – Existing Zoning Districts		
Zoning District Name	Acreage	% of Total
Airport Business Area (ABA)	2,155.3	6.5%
Cemetery (CEM)	806.2	2.5%
Commercial Office (CO)	1,186.1	3.6%
Commercial Office Residential (COR)	2,233.8	7.0%
Highway Commercial Office Residential (HCOR)	630.1	2.0%
Industrial (IND)	2,670.1	9.3%
Land Conservation (LC)	2,093.2	6.6%
Multi-Family Residential (MFR)	493.8	1.5%
Neighborhood Commercial Office (NCOR)	578.8	1.7%
Office Residential (OR)	753.3	2.2%
Planned Development District (PDD)	491.2	1.5%
Single-Family Residential (SFR)	17,697.1	55.6%
Total	31,789.0	100.0%

There are still large portions of the Town that are not yet developed, with additional efforts being made toward conservation and Open Space Preservation.

According to the most recent tax assessment that has been released, 19.1% of the Town’s land remains vacant. The western portion of town is mostly comprised of large, undeveloped parcels which have seen some development recently. This portion of the Town is located within the

Albany Pine Bush Preserve ecosystem, and is served by a sparse transportation infrastructure. Along the Mohawk River, on the northern side of town, there are also significant lands that continue to remain undeveloped, although more recently this area has been seeing an increase in development pressures.

Land Use Regulations

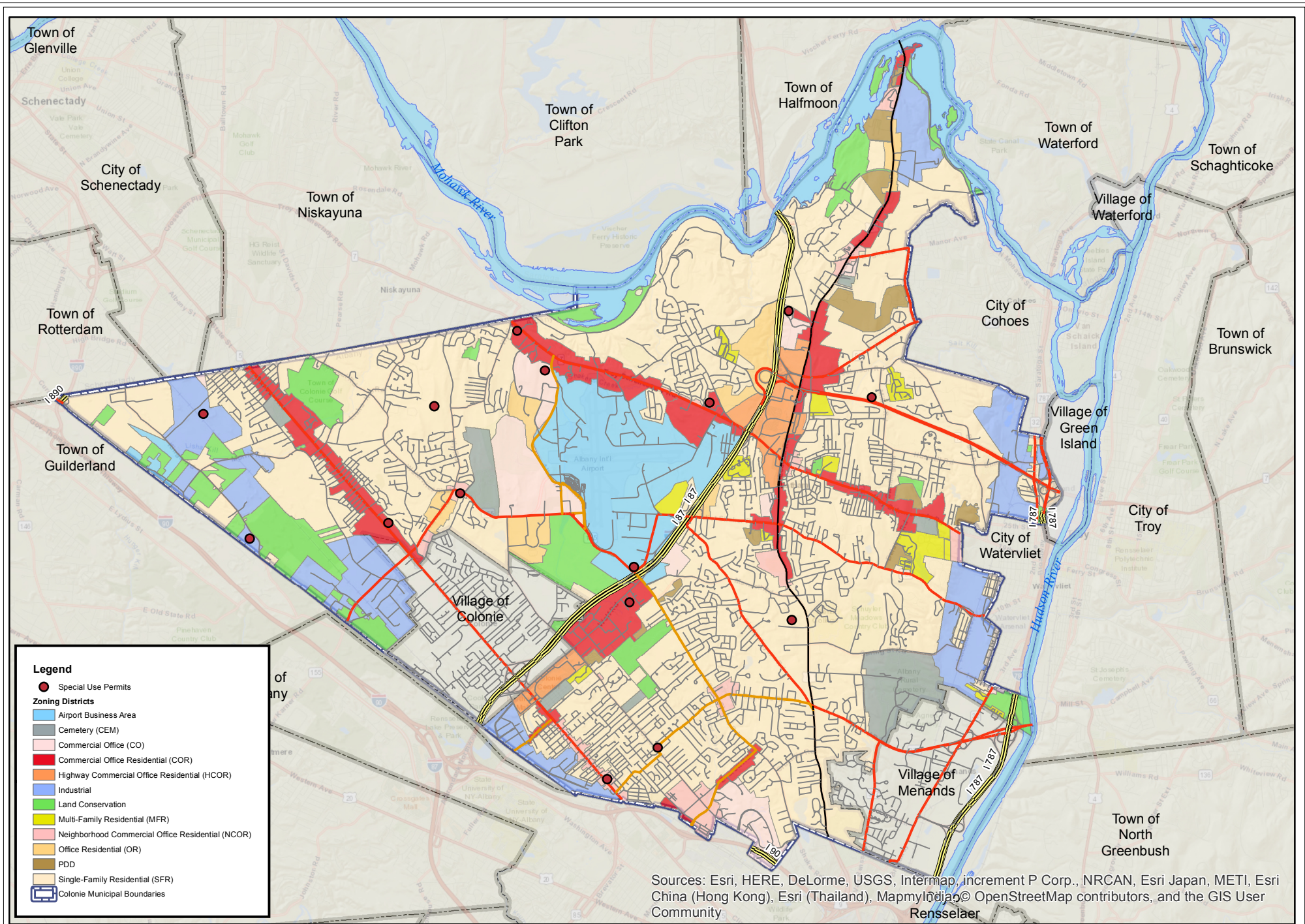
The majority of the land in the Town of the Colonie is zoned Single Family Residential (SFR), accounting for 55.6% of total land area. The minimum lot size in this zone is 18,000 square feet (see Table 7). 1.5% of the Town is classified as Multi-Family Residential (MFR). This zone allows multi-family residential structures, with a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet. SFR and MFR are not the only zones where residential uses are permitted.

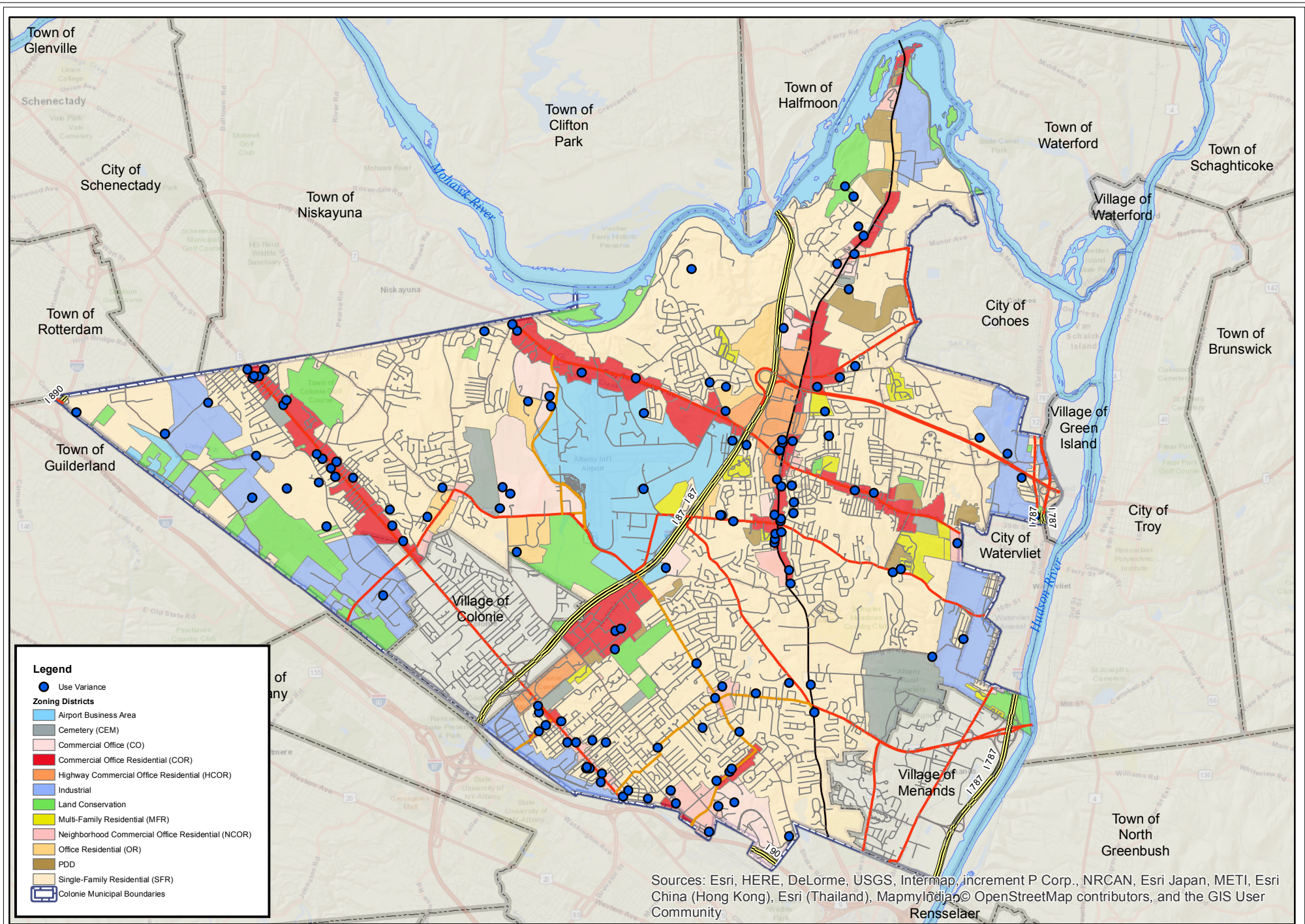
As part of the 2007 zoning code update, the Town of Colonie implemented six different commercial zones. Among these were mixed-use development districts which allow residential uses to be built in conjunction with other uses. These zones are the Commercial Office Residential (COR), Highway Commercial Office Residential (HCOR), Neighborhood Commercial Office Residential (NCOR), and Office Residential (OR). The zoning code update also created the Commercial Office (CO) and Airport Business Area (ABA) zoning districts. The latter encompasses most portions of Routes 2, 5, 7, and 9. Combined, these commercial districts account for 23% of the land area within the Town.

Approximately 356.6 acres or 9.3% of land in the Town of Colonie is designated for industrial uses. There are three areas where this kind of development is located. The first is the Railroad Avenue area adjacent to the Town of Guilderland and City of Albany. The second area is approximately 2,078 acres located in the western portion of the Town near Fuller Road. The third area is approximately 723 acres located along the City of Watervliet boundary off Lincoln Avenue.

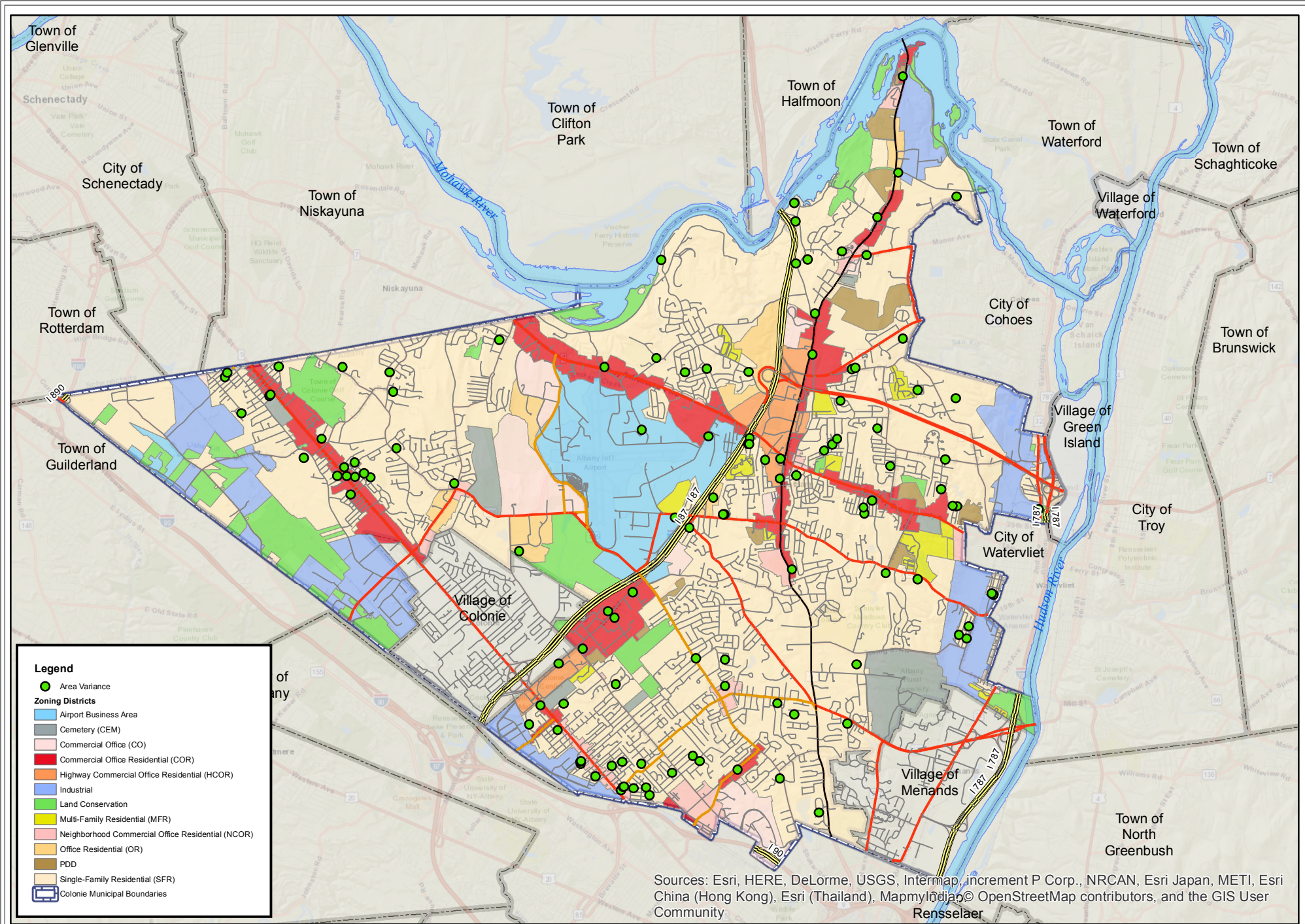
The Land Conservation Zone accounts for 6.6% of the Town's total land area. This zone has been increased by 51.5% since the 2005 Comprehensive Plan was adopted. Permitted uses within this zone are farms, agriculture, and nurseries, fire stations and other municipal uses, and recreation fields. Permitted accessory uses include farm stands and single-family farm homes. This zone is in several locations around the Town. Most of the Land Conservation Zone can be found along the Mohawk River in the northern part of Town, some portions of the waterfront along the Hudson River, many areas in the western part of Town near the Albany Pine Bush Preserve, and the area just north of the Village of Colonie surrounding the Northway.

The Planned Development District (PDD) was implemented after the adoption of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. It replaced the Planned Unit Development (PUD) district. The PDD is a floating district which provides for greater flexibility than conventional zoning as to land use and design to achieve development matched to the unique characteristics of the site. It allows for innovative development techniques that might not otherwise be possible through strict application of standard use, area, bulk and density specifications. Currently 491.2 acres or 1.5% of land area





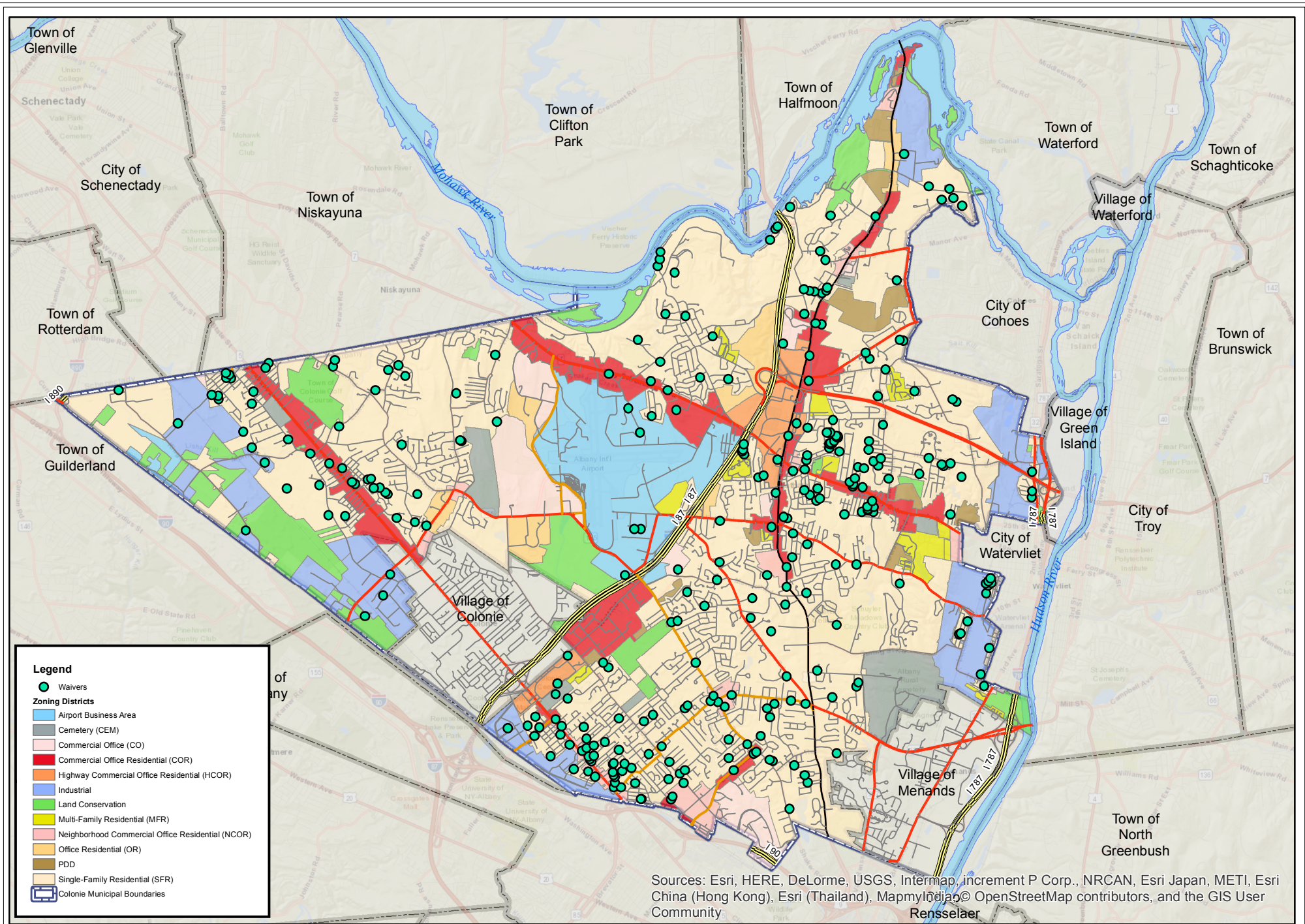
Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



Legend

- Area Variance
- Zoning Districts**
- Airport Business Area
- Cemetery (CEM)
- Commercial Office (CO)
- Commercial Office Residential (COR)
- Highway Commercial Office Residential (HCOR)
- Industrial
- Land Conservation
- Multi-Family Residential (MFR)
- Neighborhood Commercial Office Residential (NCOR)
- Office Residential (OR)
- PDD
- Single-Family Residential (SFR)
- Colonie Municipal Boundaries

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



Legend

- Waivers
- Zoning Districts**
- Airport Business Area
- Cemetery (CEM)
- Commercial Office (CO)
- Commercial Office Residential (COR)
- Highway Commercial Office Residential (HCOR)
- Industrial
- Land Conservation
- Multi-Family Residential (MFR)
- Neighborhood Commercial Office Residential (NCOR)
- Office Residential (OR)
- PDD
- Single-Family Residential (SFR)
- Colonie Municipal Boundaries

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

in the Town uses the PDD. The Town Board has the authority to establish a PDD as well as to return a property to its prior zoning district if performance requirements are not met or substantial and continuing progress in the development of the project is not made.

This PDD zoning district criteria is the most restrictive in use once the legislation is adopted. As we advance forward with continued land preservation practices, we should look to reduce this flexibility in the PDD legislation district and adopt language for greater preservation efforts.

In addition to zoning, the Town of Colonie adopted subdivision and site plan review guidelines for the development process. Cluster subdivisions gives developers greater flexibility than conventional subdivisions. It allows for the same number of units on a site, but concentrates them so as to preserve open space.

Public Safety

Police Department

In 1934, the Town Board resolved to create the Colonie Police Department, hiring a chief and 2 patrolmen with a total budget of \$2,500. As of today, the 2019 Budget projected that there will be 115 sworn officers, approximately 55 support personnel, and over 60 vehicles in the police fleet. The Police Department's annual budget is approximately \$16 million per year. Officer's work out of the Public Safety Center located at 312 Wolf Road. This facility also houses the Town's Emergency Management Services and Justice Court.

Town of Colonie – Emergency Medical Services

A 1989 Town Board resolution created the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department. Colonie EMS is an Advanced Life Support (ALS) service with a paramedic responding to and assessing each patient. Its average ALS response time is under 7 minutes and in 2009, its long-term survival rate for cardiac arrest patients was 22%, a gold standard of EMS systems in the USA. Colonie EMS received the International Association of Fire Chief's Heart safe Community award in 2010 for achieving the highest resuscitation rate in the United States for a community of less than 100,000 residents. Colonie EMS has access to several special operations units such as the Life Guard Air Rescue Program, Tactical Paramedic, and Water and Ice Rescue.

Colonie EMS has six stations, located strategically throughout the Town. Station 1, located in the Public Safety Building off of Wolf Road, is Colonie EMS headquarters. Station 2, located in the Village of Colonie off Thunder Road, is a combined station with the Colonie Village Fire Department which serves the western portion of Town. Station 3 is located off of Albany Shaker Road in Loudonville. Station 4, located within the Boght Fire Department off Preston Drive, serves the northern part of Town. Station 5 is located within the Latham Fire District's firehouse off Watervliet Shaker Road. Lastly, Station 6, off Consaul Road, is a consolidated location with the Midway Fire Department.



Sources: Streets - NYS GIS Clearinghouse; Parcels - Town of Colonie MIS Dept.

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



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Town of Colonie Comprehensive Plan Update		Figure - Project No. 922.135
Town Facilities		
Albany County	November 2016	New York

Fire Departments

There are 12 fire departments that serve the Town of Colonie, each operated by volunteer firefighters. These fire departments are Boght, Colonie Village, Fuller Road, Latham, Maplewood, Menands, Midway, Schuyler Heights, Shaker Road, Stanford Heights, Verdoy and West Albany.

Infrastructure

Transportation

Due to its central location within the Capital District, the Town of Colonie serves as a major crossroads within the region. US Interstate 87, commonly referred to as the Northway, and Route 9 bisect the Town from north to south. State Route 7 runs the length of Colonie from east to west from Rensselear County to Schenectady County. Along the Town’s western boundary runs Route 5 /Central Avenue from downtown Albany to downtown Schenectady. Colonie’s earliest roads include the Loudon Ferry Road, which crossed at a ford of the Mohawk River near the New York Power Authority property on the Cohoes Crescent Road. The Albany and Schenectady Turnpike began construction in 1802 replacing the old Kings Highway that ran between Albany and through the Pine Bush to Schenectady. Other early turnpikes in Colonie were the Troy and Schenectady Turnpike (1802) and the Watervliet Turnpike (1830) between Albany and through West Troy to Troy. The Watervliet Turnpike replaced a primitive Dutch road that once ran beside the Hudson River between Albany and points north.

Within the Town of Colonie there are approximately 11 miles of roads owned and maintained by Albany County and approximately 49 miles of roads owned and maintained by the State of New York. In addition, the Town’s Highway Department maintains approximately 325 miles or 60.5% of the roads within the Town. . Aside from snow removal, road paving and maintenance, and compliance with State stormwater regulations, the Highway Department is responsible for signage, drainage and brush cutting and removal within the Town’s right of way.

Public Transit

The Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) provides public bus service in the Town of Colonie through eight transit routes. Significant amongst these routes is the Capital Region’s first Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line, the No. 905 BusPlus, which began service in 2011. It provides limited stop service on the 17-mile stretch of Route 5/Central Avenue between downtown Schenectady and downtown Albany. The service runs through Colonie and Niskayuna where 15% of Capital Region’s population lives and where 30% of jobs are located. It provides access to major destinations such as Proctor’s Theater, Schenectady Community College, Colonie Center, the Capitol Building, and Empire State Plaza.



Legend

- Local
- County
- Interstate
- State
- Federal
- ▭ Colonie Municipal Boundaries

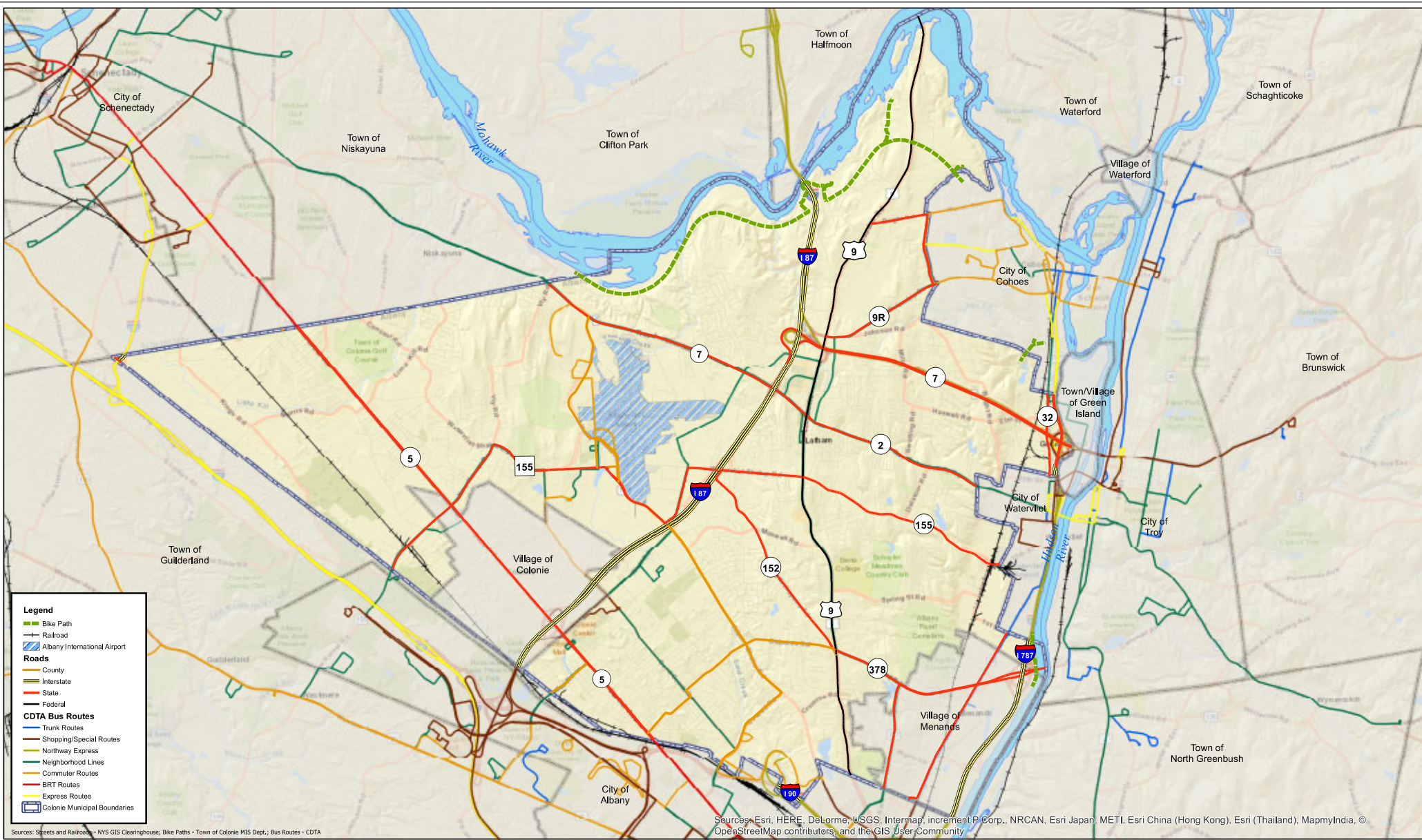
Sources: Streets - NYS GIS Program Office

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



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Town of Colonie Comprehensive Plan Update Transportation: Road Network		Figure - Project No. 922.135
Albany County	November 2016	



Sources: Streets and Railroads - NYS GIS Clearinghouse; Bike Paths - Town of Colonie MIS Dept.; Bus Routes - CDTA

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



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Town of Colonie Comprehensive Plan Update		Figure - Project No. 922.135
Transportation: Alternative Modes		
Albany County	November 2016	New York

This first BusPlus route has been extremely successful. Its ridership was nearly 1.6 million during fiscal year 2013 and has grown to over 4 million rides annually. In fact, it has been so successful that another two BusPlus routes are planned.

The BusPlus Washington/Western Corridor will run eight miles through the City of Albany along Washington and Western Avenues, including the region’s largest shopping center (Crossgates Mall), multiple campuses of the University at Albany, the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering, the Harriman Office Campus and the College of Saint Rose. BusPlus service will operate through urban neighborhoods and business districts, providing direct connections to downtown Albany. The corridor already has over 3 million annual boardings, making it the region’s second busiest.

The BusPlus River Corridor will run along the Hudson River connecting Albany, Cohoes, Menands, Troy, Waterford and Watervliet. The corridor has a growing employment base and the service will connect to a host of CDTA services including the other BusPlus lines in downtown Albany. The corridor has more than 2 million boardings annually, making it the third busiest transit corridor in the Capital Region. BusPlus is expected to reduce traffic congestion along Route 32 and stimulate economic development.

Walking and Bicycling

The Town of Colonie maintains more than 33 linear miles of sidewalk and more than 15 miles of multi-use trails. Additional work continues towards the adoption of a Townwide Pathways. As development presents itself in various areas we will continue to plan for such amenities.

In a 2017 Siena College Survey of Colonie Households??? (describe survey), 52 percent of respondents rated the Town of Colonie as an excellent place to live, followed by 44 percent rating it as a good place to live. When asked about needed Town improvements, respondents favored more sidewalks and encouraged bicycle lane and corridor development. Respondents also expressed great interest in the preservation of natural areas and the expansion of open spaces to further protect these areas and provide more multi-use trails.

Development review provides the opportunity for the Town to obtain needed improvements and amenities such as added sidewalks, new benches, bicycle parking and transit pads and shelters.

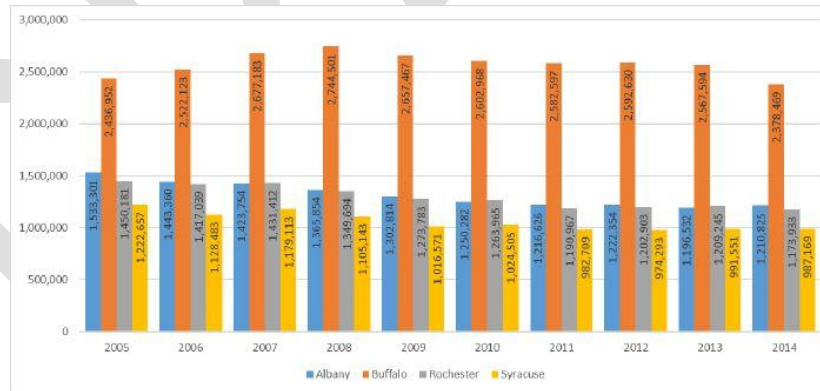
Airport Enplanements

The Town of Colonie is the location of Albany International Airport (AIA), the major air center for the Capital Region, Northeastern New York and Western New England. An active airport can facilitate commerce, making the Town of Colonie a more attractive business location. At the same time, an active airport with affordable fares can contribute to quality of life by providing greater travel opportunities for Town residents.

In 2015, Albany International Airport was served by Air Canada, AirTran, American Eagle, Cape Air, Delta Airlines, Southwest Airlines, United Airlines, and US Airways. There have been notable changes to Albany International Airport since the mid-2000s, most significantly, American Airline’s departure in 2008 and Continental Airline’s merger with United Airlines in 2010. According to the AIA, the price of jet fuel peaked around 2008 and in anticipation of higher costs, airlines hedged their purchase of fuel costs at rates above the actual market, resulting in higher ticket prices, lower capacity, and declining enplanements across the nation.

Declining enplanements in the Capital Region are reflected in Figure X but this was seen even in large airports. Between 2005 and 2013, Capital Region enplanements fell below 1.2 million, as did enplanements at Rochester and Syracuse airports. Buffalo’s enplanements peaked in 2008 to 2,744,501 before declining steadily like its upstate counterparts. Between 2005 and 2014, Albany had the highest drop in enplanements (21%) when compared to Buffalo (2%), Rochester (19%) and Syracuse (19%). Yet with the exception of 2007, 2010, and 2013, Albany still ranked second behind Buffalo with the most enplanements throughout both time periods.

Figure X: Enplanements of Upstate Airports, 2005 - 2014



Source: Capital Region Indicators, Capital District Regional Planning Commission, August 2016

Commercial and industrial businesses also have easy access to the Port of Albany-Rensselaer, a sizable deep water port. A regional passenger rail station located just to the east of the Town in the City of Rensselaer allows for residents to quickly access all forms of transportation.

Albany County engaged Creighton Manning Engineers (CME), a local consulting firm, to review their major transportation corridors. The study was focused on the County’s key commercial transportation routes, many of which are located within the Town of Colonie. This goal of this report was to determine where relations between major commercial routes and residential neighborhoods required *harmonization* as well as ensuring that transportation throughout the region works to facilitate economic development. The Lincoln Avenue Industrial corridor was identified as a study area in the plan. This area is of key importance because there is heavy truck traffic coming from I-787 via Route 378 (at Exit 7). Other routes that could be utilized are Route 155 and/or Route 32, both of which require routing traffic along residential road 1st Street. The study found that the easiest method of relieving truck traffic congestion would be to develop an additional route connection Lincoln Avenue with the existing FedEx parking lot to provide access to Route 32. This recommendation will also reduce traffic through the residential portion of 1st Street and minimize environmental concerns and cost issues.

The Route 32 Linkage Study was promoted in the Town of Colonie 2005 Comprehensive Plan as well as Albany County’s Commercial Transportation Access Study. Route 32 serves the residents of the Town of Colonie and the City of Watervliet as well as providing access to commercial truck traffic attempting to reach industrial sites located along the Lincoln Avenue corridor, near the Colonie/Watervliet Municipal Boundary. That area is currently being studied through a Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study to revitalize the former industrial corridor. Increased pressure would be placed on Route 32 if redevelopment of unused and underutilized industrial areas were to occur. The study recommends streetscape enhancements in the area to accommodate pedestrian and bicyclists utilizing the corridor. These enhancements would create consistency throughout the corridor. Enhancements such as providing adequate and consistent lighting, bike lanes, and sidewalks should be made to the corridor, these recommended improvements would encourage more users and have positive impacts on local traffic congestion. An additional route connecting Lincoln Avenue to Route 32 was also recommended for the area. The new connection to the Lincoln Avenue industrial area from Route 32 would require the addition of a commercial access road flowing through the existing FedEx site. The implementation of the alternative route would remove a considerable amount of truck traffic from 1st Street.

More recently a Route 5 Corridor Land Use and Transportation Plan was developed by CDTC in conjunction with several other state and regional organizations, multiple jurisdictions, and residents of these municipalities. Route 5 (also known as Central Avenue) is 16.5 miles long and connects the City of Albany with the City of Schenectady. The route was designed to accommodate automobile oriented land uses, because of this the corridor has significant traffic congestion during peak commuting hours. A study conducted by CDTC identified that 15% of households and 30% of job opportunities in the area are located within a half mile of the corridor. After administering a survey to residents living near the

route, CDTC found that residents want improved pedestrian amenities, mixed land use development throughout and surrounding the corridor, and solutions to accommodate multi-modal traffic.

Finally, the Town of Colonie, Albany County and Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) have completed a study on the Albany Shaker Road Corridor. The study area was based on the most eastern intersection of Everett and Albany Shaker then traveling west to the intersection of Albany Shaker of Wolf Road. The study reviewed Land Use potential as well as traffic and pedestrian improvements needed to provide an enhanced level of safety for this important corridor. The study provide both short and long term improvements that call for lane and speed reductions to striping, signage and access improvements. These improvements recently lead to the Town’s submission of a Transportation Improvement Grant submitted for a potential 2019 Fiscal Year award.

Latham Water District

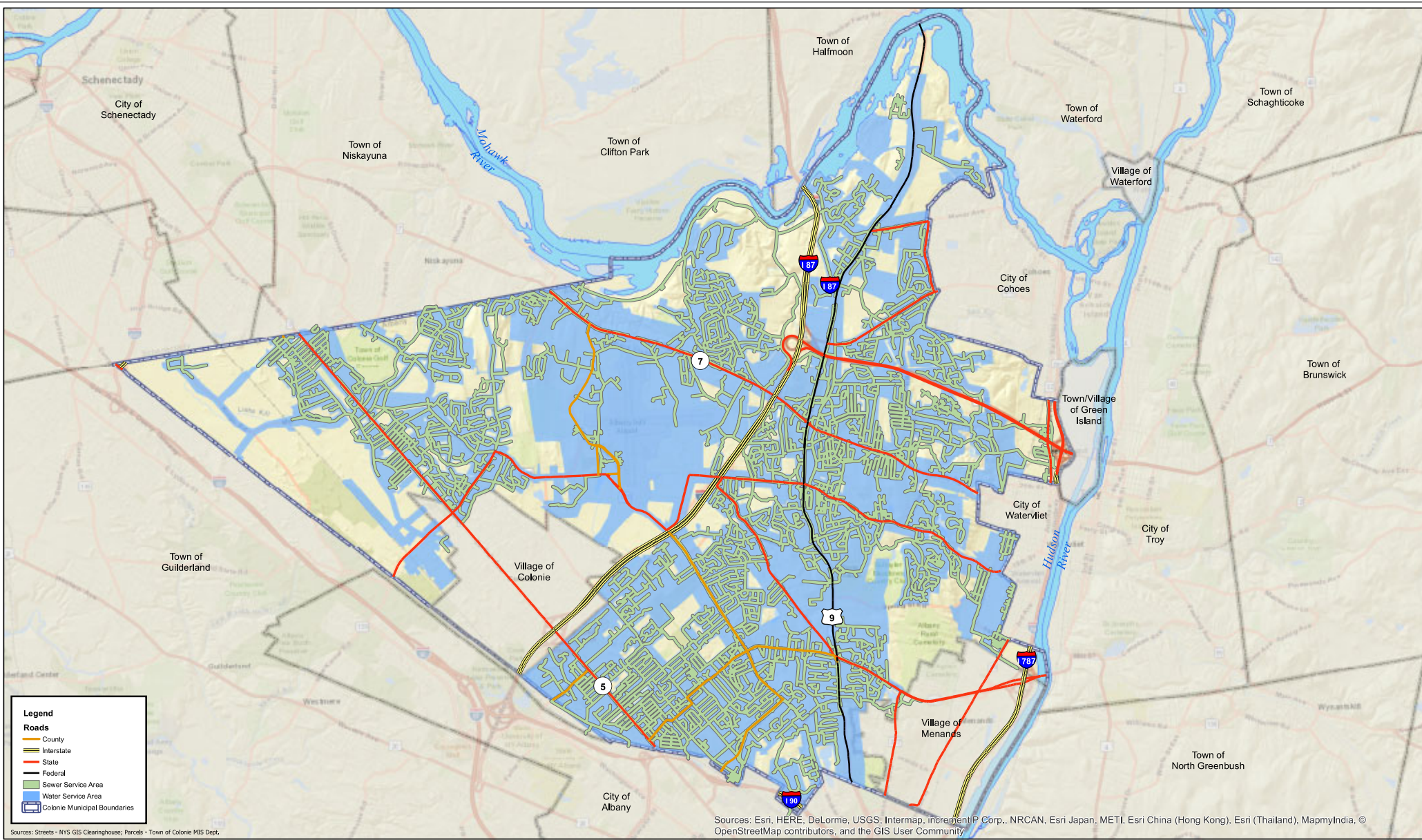
The Town of Colonie’s primary water district is the Latham Water District, a division of the Department of Public Works (DPW). It serves the whole Town, with the exception of the Village of Menands and parts of the Maplewood area. The Latham Water District uses the Stony Creek Reservoir, Mohawk River, and wells located along the Mohawk River as its water sources. The Mohawk River provides most of the water supply. The raw water is treated at the Mohawk View Water Treatment Plant before being distributed to residents. The Latham Water District is responsible for over 430 miles of water mains. It determines future projects based off the needs identified in three Generic Environmental Impact Statements (GEIS), the Boght Road – Columbia Street Area, the Albany International Airport Area, and the Lisha Kill – Kings Road Area.

Colonie Pure Waters

Colonie Pure Waters, a division of the Department of Public Works (DPW), is responsible for the Town’s sanitary sewer collection systems. It maintains 400 miles of pipe and 9,376 manholes. Using the Mohawk View Water Pollution Control Plant, Pure Waters can treat 6.0 million gallons of sanitary waste per day.

Sewer service is available throughout the Town, excluding the Villages of Colonie and Menands, and is available to nearly all the developed parts of town. Public sewer is required in all new developments, the cost of sewer extension being borne by the developer, at no expense to taxpayers.

The Town of Colonie has been able to provide adequate water infrastructure in nearly all developed parts of the Town through careful capital improvement planning and coordination. The quality of infrastructure and its associated services contribute to what makes Colonie a desired location for commercial and residential activity. To maintain this status the Department of Public Works will need to continue to excel to maintain existing levels of service and to improve problem areas within the systems.



Sources: Streets - NYS GIS Clearinghouse; Parcels - Town of Colonie MIS Dept.

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



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Engineers • Environmental Scientists • Planners • Landscape Architects

Town of Colonie Comprehensive Plan Update
Sewer and Water Service Area
 Albany County November 2016 New York

Figure
 -
 Project No.
 922.135

Natural Resources

Geology

The Town of Colonie encompasses 57.9 square miles in Albany Country. It is situated north of the City of Albany and Town of Guilderland, west of the Hudson River and City of Watervliet, south of the Mohawk River, and west of the Town of Niskayuna.

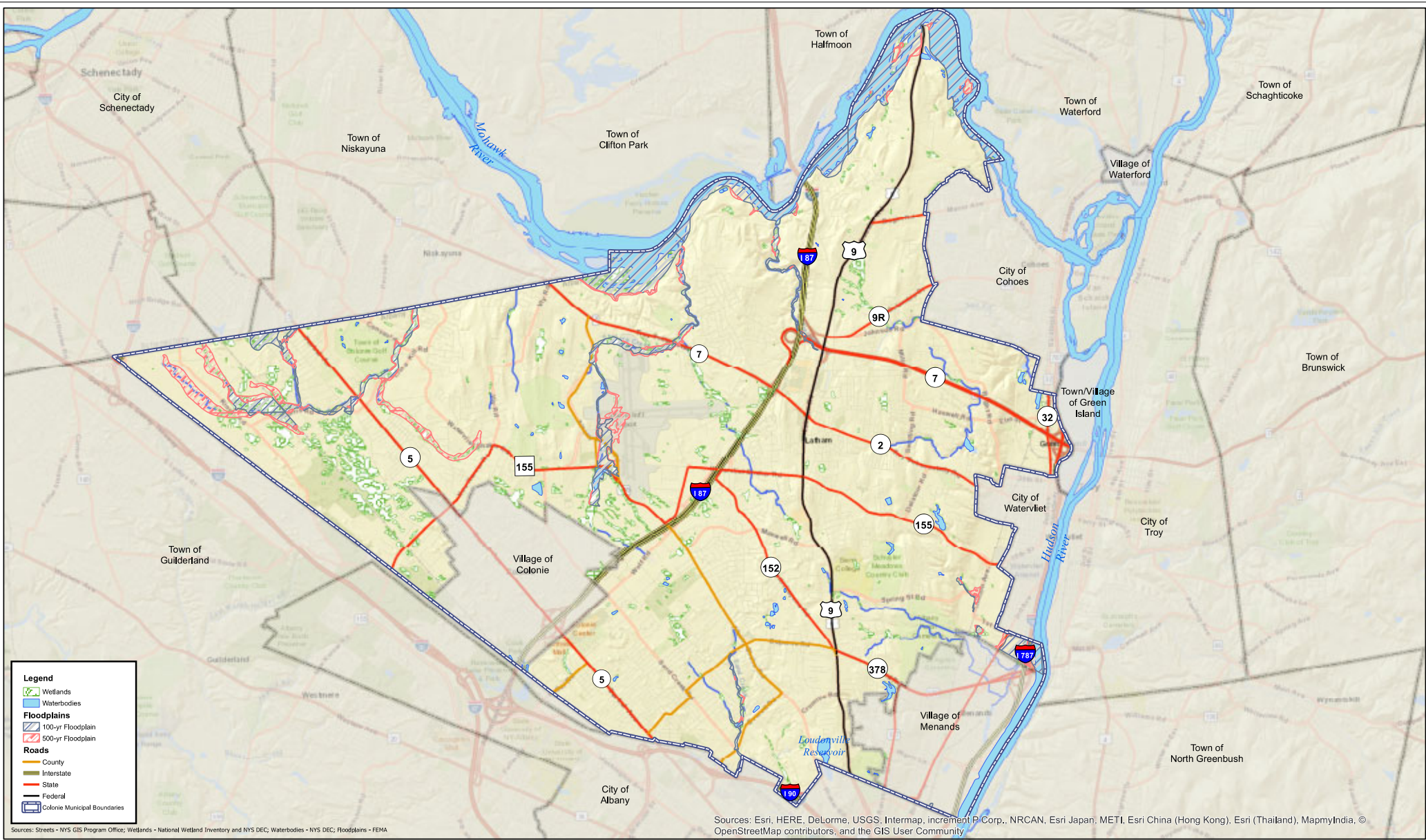
Ten to fifteen thousand years ago, when the glaciers covering North America receded, a large glacial lake, Lake Albany, formed in the Capital District. As that lake drained, much of Colonie was left a moderately level area. The small drainage rill eventually became Colonie’s larger creeks: Patroon Creek, Sand Creek, Lisha Kill, Shaker Creek, Delphus Kill and the Salt Kill. Along the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers are long alluvial flats that due to continual flooding provided extremely fertile soils for agriculture. Many of the geographic features located in the Capital Region extend from the Lower Hudson River Valley. This is because the Hudson River is tidal up to the Troy Dam.

The Capital Region is rich in wildlife habitat, with 22 significant habitat types that support species of greatest conservation need. The Hudson River Valley is broad and flat in the Capital Region, a legacy of the sands and clays left by an enormous glacial lake. The limestone Helderberg Escarpment is a prominent landscape feature on the west side of the river (located in the Town of New Scotland). The Albany Pine Bush is one of the world’s few inland Pine Barrens.

As Colonie is bordered on the north by the Mohawk River, and to the west, by the Hudson River, there are significant steep slopes on the crests of those two river valleys that provide beautiful views of both the rivers and the Taconic Ridgeway to the East. The Shaker Ridge area, in the northwest, and the lands to the east of the Northway are generally gently rolling hills. Very flat areas can be found in and around Albany International Airport, and along the Route 5 – Central Avenue corridor.

Watercourses

Approximately 91 miles of watercourses are protected in the Town of Colonie and 1,921 acres of the Town are located within the protected watercourse buffer. Included for protection are major tributaries of the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers, such as the Delphus Kill, Lisha Kill, Salt Kill, Sand Creek, and Shaker’s Creek. Any disruption or work within 100 feet of the watercourse’s banks must be approved by the Town’s Significant Environmental Areas Management Board.



Legend

- Wetlands
- Waterbodies
- Floodplains**
- 100-yr Floodplain
- 500-yr Floodplain
- Roads**
- County
- Interstate
- State
- Federal
- Colonie Municipal Boundaries

Sources: Streets - NYS GIS Program Office; Wetlands - National Wetland Inventory and NYS DEC; Waterbodies - NYS DEC; floodplains - FEMA

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



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Town of Colonie Comprehensive Plan Update		Figure -
Environmental Constraints		
Albany County	November 2016	Project No. 922.135

Wetlands and Floodplains

There are 1,531 acres of New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) wetlands in the Town of Colonie. NYSDEC wetlands must be at least 12.4 or more contiguous acres. Additionally, land within 100 feet of each NYSDEC wetland is protected by the State. Wetlands are determined not only by the presence of standing water, but by certain vegetation that thrive in wet soils, that indicate the presence of moisture over a period of time. The Federal Army Corps of Engineers protects wetlands that may be smaller than NYSDEC wetlands as long as they are connected to navigable waters. The number of federally protected wetlands in Colonie is unknown and unmapped, but is estimated to exceed the acreage of NYSDEC wetlands.

As a part of the 1972 Clean Water Act, the federal government protected wetlands for several reasons. Wetlands provide many benefits to communities, including flood and stormwater control, surface and groundwater protection, erosion control, treatment of pollution and habitat for fish and wildlife.

A floodplain is the level land along the course of a water body. To mitigate the effects of a flood during times of high water levels (after a large rain or snowmelt), the Federal Emergency Management Agency controls and protects the areas located within these federally designated floodplains. In Colonie, these floodplain areas are located in and around The Mohawk River, The Hudson River, The Lisha Kill, Shaker Creek, The Delphus Kill, Sand Creek, and The Salt Kill.

Mineral Resources

The Town of Colonie has valuable mineral resources including gravel, sand and shale. Within the Town, there are 19 mining permits that have been issued by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Mineral Resources. The majority of permits issued are for the mining of sand and gravel, with one permit allowing for the mining of shale. There are currently 370 acres of land that are affected by existing permits.

According to the NYSDEC Region 4 Office, Division of Mineral Resources, there is a growing depletion of gravel resources within the region as a direct result of the rate of growth in the region. Growth and development require the use of aggregate for roadways and grading purposes. At the same time, the ability to extract mineral resources has been and will continue to be reduced as increased residential growth occurs adjacent to the region's resource deposits. The noise, odor, associated truck traffic and air impacts of mining are often concerns for surrounding areas.

All mining operations must meet the requirements of the Mined Reclamation Law and the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR). SEQR is the State law that addresses the extraction of mineral resources and the operation of such extraction. Local municipalities may enact local

ordinances determining whether or not to allow mining and where mining may be permitted in the community. Local municipalities may also offer suggestions regarding the operation of a mine that address access issues, setback requirements, hours of operation, and dust control.

The Albany Pine Bush Preserve

The Albany Pine Bush Preserve is a 3,200 acre nature preserve located in the heart of the Capital District. A large portion of the Pine Bush Preserve is located on the south western border of Colonie where the Town abuts the Town of Guilderland. After glacial Lake Albany drained, dunes were formed by wind whipped sand, which were then stabilized by the globally unique plants of the Pine Bush, such as the Pitch Pine, Scrub Oak and Smooth Shadbush. Most notably, the Pine Bush Preserve is home to the Karner Blue Butterfly, which has been placed on the federally endangered species list. There are also two rare natural communities and fourteen rare insects native to the Pine Bush.

The Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission was established in 1988 by the New York State Legislature. Recognizing the Pine Bush is a “rare and endangered natural community,” the Commission was charged to “protect and manage the Albany Pine Bush.” The Commission is a coalition of public and private entities, including the Town of Colonie along with the NYSDEC, the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, The Nature Conservancy, the City of Albany, the Town of Guilderland, Albany County, and four citizen representatives.

The Mohawk and Hudson River

There are approximately 10 miles of Mohawk River waterfront and 0.4 miles of Hudson River waterfront in the Town of Colonie. Not only is the Mohawk River an important natural asset with its scenic views and adjacent bike/hike trail, it is also one of the main providers of the Town’s water supply. Recognized as an important, but underutilized, asset to the Town, Colonie received a grant to participate in the Countryside Exchange program in 2002. In 2003, an international team of Waterfront experts helped the Town plan for this critical area. As a result of the exchange team’s recommendations, the Mohawk River Community Partners of Colonie, Inc. was organized “to identify, preserve, protect and promote the natural, scenic, historical, economic and recreational resources” of the waterfront area. This group has since disbanded.

In 2006 Master’s in Regional Planning candidates at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Albany, created the Mohawk River Public Access Plan. This plan examined the 10 miles of waterfront along the Mohawk River. Its goals included improving physical and visual access to the Mohawk River, strengthening existing Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trails, and enhancing recreational activities. Its recommendations included improving parking areas to enhance access, improving signage along the bike/hike paths and to key areas along the waterfront, connecting these existing trails to the greater regional network, as well as providing higher quality waterfront recreation and fishing areas, and controlling invasive species to promote water quality.

Although there is not much waterfront area along the Hudson River in the Town of Colonie, town residents can easily access the waterfront at points located in the Village of Green Island and City of Watervliet.

Soil Types

There are 77 different soil types that can be found within Colonie. Soil types are determined based off several factors such as the composition of the soil, the granularity of the soil, soil color, drainage capacity, and slope. Soils can be impacted depending on what kind of development is located on top of its surface. For example, soil type “Ur” represents urban land – or soils that have been altered or obscured by urban works and structures.

Soils in the Town were assessed for their suitability to support a septic system and only very few small areas within the Town were identified. These areas are located in the northern part of Town near the Mohawk River and in the center of Town near the Albany International Airport. Soils that are somewhat suitable for septic systems can be found more frequently throughout the Town. A majority of the Loudonville area, the western part of Town, and many areas within Latham are classified as somewhat suitable for these systems.

There were many areas where highly productive agricultural soils were identified within the Town. Today, many of these areas have been developed and are used for purposes other than agriculture. There are approximately eighteen remaining farms in Colonie, only two of which are not at least partially located on highly productive soils. These farms are spread relatively evenly throughout the Town, but there are clusters located in the northern part of Town near the Mohawk River. A majority of farms remaining in the Town of Colonie are parcels of vacant land that are part of an existing operating farm or are lands used for nurseries or greenhouses.

Areas of Steep Slopes

Areas of steep slopes (slopes >15%) predominate in three parts of the Town. The largest area of steep slopes is located in the eastern part of Town. This includes much of the Latham Hamlet, Loudonville Hamlet, and the area between the City of Cohoes and the City of Watervliet. There is a smaller area of steep slope located near the Town of Colonie Golf Course located in the western part of Town. Much of the area surrounding the waterfront along the Mohawk River in the northern part of Town is also characterized by steep slopes.

Cultural and Recreational Resources

Historic Resources

The first known inhabitants of Colonie were the Native Americans who settled along the Mohawk River. They likely chose this location to take advantage of the fertile soils well suited for agriculture. In the first half of the 17th century, Dutch Colonists appeared and erected Fort Orange, a trading post, in what is modern day Menands. Kiliean van Rensselaer, in an effort to further the colonization effort, purchased a large tract of land, including all of Colonie, from the Iroquois Tribe. Through exhaustive efforts, he attracted a large number of farmers and artisans to settle in this new land which at the time was known as Beverwyck. In 1664, the Dutch reign in the New World ceded to British rule, and the area was re-christened “Albany”.

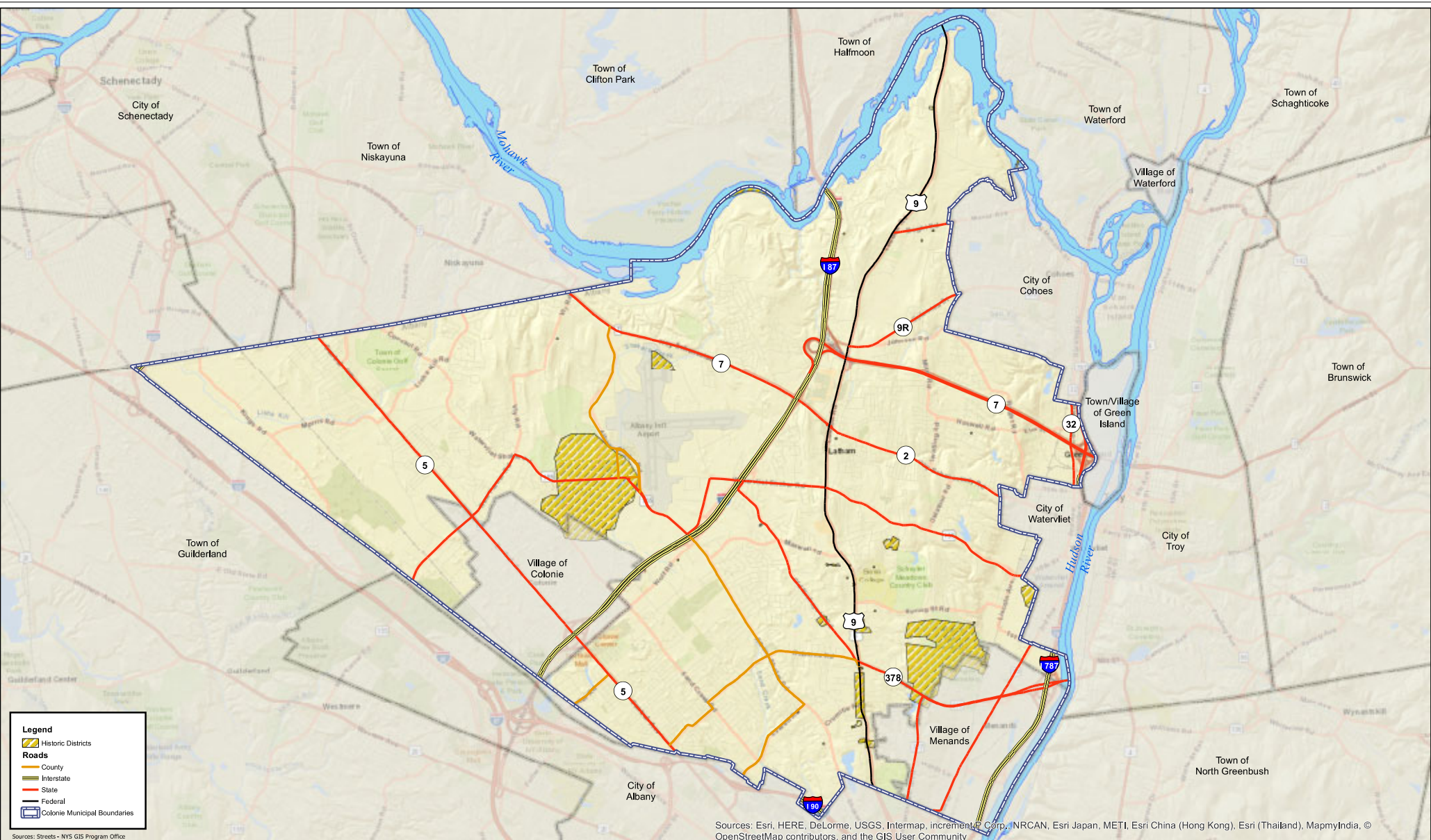
In 1774 the Shakers, a religious Christian sect that subscribed to tenets including celibacy, equality of the sexes, pacifism, industry, separation from the outside world, and communal living, made their first settlement in Colonie. This settlement is significant for their contributions to the garden seed industry and the invention of the flat broom and vacuumed-sealed tin cans. By the middle of the 19th century, Colonie’s Shaker population had grown to 350 members. The Shakers are well known for the quality of their products and workmanship. Since then membership has dwindled to just one small settlement located in Maine.

Today, the original Shaker site is now owned by Albany County and is looked after by the Shaker Heritage Society (SHS), a non-profit historic preservation group. The Historic District that protects the remaining nine historic structures includes distinctive natural and cultural resources. The historic district is located near the Albany International Airport, and is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In total, 68 properties in The Town of Colonie are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including a large section of the homes on Loudon Road in Loudonville. Also on the Register is the Albany Rural Cemetery, opened in 1844 and burial site to President Chester A. Arthur, and John Van Buren, along with a number of past Albany City Fathers.

National and State Registers of Historic Places located in Colonie:

- Watervliet Shaker Historic Society
- Newtonville Post Office (old Baptist Church)
- Schuyler Flatts
- Albany Rural Cemetery
- Loudon Road Historic District - (This includes 30 buildings, 27 on Loudon Road between 381 and 424 Loudon Road, 1 Imperial Drive, and 4 & 5 Cherry Tree Lane)



Legend

- Historic Districts
- Roads**

 - County
 - Interstate
 - State
 - Federal
 - Colonie Municipal Boundaries

Sources: Streets - NYS GIS Program Office

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



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Town of Colonie Comprehensive Plan Update		Figure - Project No. 922.135
Historic Resources		
Albany County	November 2016	New York

- Bryan's Store in Loudonville
- The D.D.T. Moore Farmhouse
- Gorham House
- Hughson Mansion
- Springwood Manor
- Wheeler Home
- Whitney Mansion
- Godfrey Farmhouse
- Sage Estate (Albany International)
- Menands Park Historic District of twelve homes on Tillinghast Avenue. 372 and 410 Albany-Shaker Road; 537 and 554 Boght Road; 225 Consaul Road; 140 Dunsbach Ferry Road; 33 Fiddlers Lane; 67 Haswell Road; 294, 441, and 463 Loudon Road; 27 Maxwell Road; 210 Old Loudon Road; 71 Old Niskayuna Road; 34 and 158 Spring Street Road; 957 and 1010 Troy-Schenectady Road; 379 Vly Road; 216 Wolf Road; 272 and 592 Broadway, and 40 Cemetery Avenue in Menands
- Casparus Pruyn House

The Pruyn House is one of Colonie’s most notable historic places. The home was built in 1830 by Casparus Pruyn. The property was purchased by the Town of Colonie in 1982, and after extensive renovations, opened to the public in 1985. The site provides the Town with a historic and cultural center that is host to numerous functions, including the popular “Concerts in the Barn” series.

Library

The Town of Colonie Library is located on Albany Shaker Road, just off Exit 4 from I-87 (The Northway). The library offers 169,000 books, including 42,500 especially for children, 8,000 adult reference titles, 3,500 large print books, 4,400 periodicals and 4,800 audiovisual materials (compact discs, talking books, and videotapes) to residents of Albany and Renssealaer Counties. The library has Internet and Word Processing computers available free for public use in both the adult and Youth Services areas. Game computers and a homework station are also available in the Youth Services Department. The Town of Colonie Library offers programs and classes for youth, teens, and adults, as well as art exhibits. Colonie TV, the Town’s local television station, is run out of the Library. The station provides daily programming that is available to watch online on the Library’s website or on Time Warner Channel 17/Verizon FiOS Channel29.

Youth Programming

The Town of Colonie Youth Services Division works cooperatively with the local community to coordinate, plan and develop programs and services that enhance and further develop the lives of its young people. The Youth Services Division of the Community Center acts as a resource to young people, families, the North and South Colonie School Districts, Christian Brothers Academy (CBA) and to the community in general. They offer a number of programs and services including:

- Red Cross Babysitting Courses
- Students in Local Government Day
- Youth Advisory Board

Youth Programs are offered through the Town of Colonie Library. Programs are tailored to children of all ages and interests and encourage whole family participation. These programs include:

- Storytime Programs
- Romp and Read
- Toddlertime
- Book Groups (Kindergarten-8th Grade)
- Treehouse Club
- Chess Club
- Lego Club
- Scrapbooking Club
- Read to Ruby & Glinda

The Youth Services Division also provides assistance in the planning and implementation of various Town events such as the Annual Easter Party and the Halloween Party. The Student in Local Government Day, run by the Youth Services Division, allows Colonie high school students to shadow Town Departments to learn more about how local government works.

The Town’s Youth Advisory Board meets the first Thursday of the month, October through May. It consists of select students from the Town’s three high schools, school administrators and various town officials. The board’s activities promote civic responsibility with participating students by selecting, planning and implementing projects. Current projects include volunteering for Colonie Senior Services, conducting fundraising walks, collecting items for social service organizations, and assisting at Town special events.

Senior Services

The Town’s Senior Resources Department offers many programs and services, including, housing options, entitlement assistance, transportation options, and Town funded senior citizens clubs. The department has also developed a Senior Resources Guide to assist seniors looking to access the multiple community-based programs targeted for seniors in Colonie. There are seven not-for-profit senior citizens clubs located in the Town of Colonie. They offer a wide range of activities and recreational opportunities for the Town’s adults age 60 or older.

The Colonie Senior Resources Department is located at the Beltrone Living Center. Beltrone is a program sponsored by Colonie Senior Services, Inc. (CSSC), an independent, community-based not-for-profit that supports, respects, and embraces the values and vitality of its senior citizens. Today CSSC is the largest provider of services for seniors in Colonie, serving the largest population of seniors over 60 in the Capital Region. CSSC offers many programs of their own, including social day programming, a financial resource center, and senior dining.

The Beltrone Living Center provides its senior residents with a lifestyle designed specifically for mature, active adults. Because the administrative offices of Colonie Senior Service Centers are located in the Beltrone Living Center, residents can easily take advantage of the many programs and services CSSC offers. In addition to having apartment homes specifically designed to be “senior-friendly,” residents have access to many on-site recreational amenities.

DRAFT

Parks and Open Space

Parks

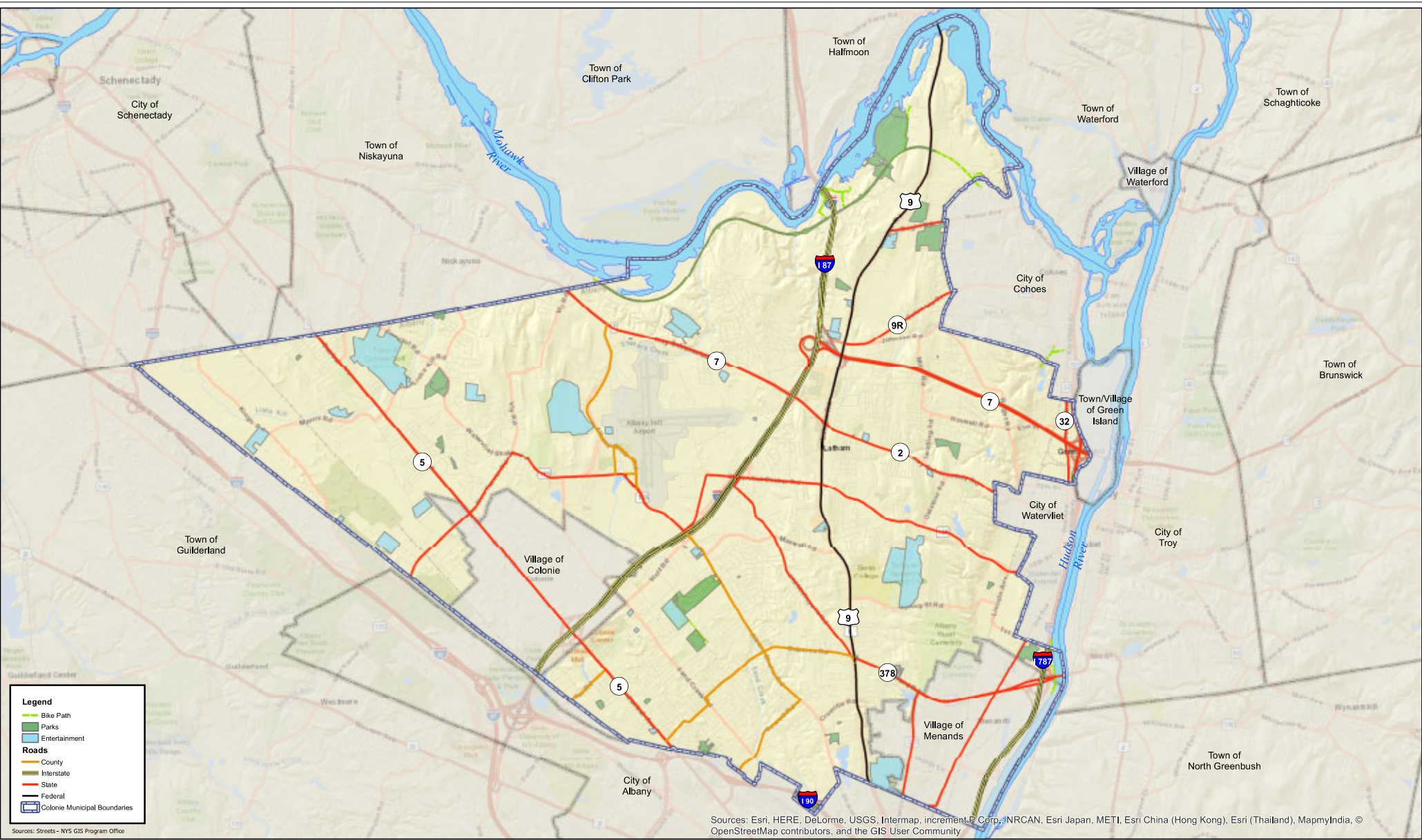
The Town of Colonie Parks and maintains approximately 850 acres, in addition to the 5 ½ Bike Hike Trail that is located in 8). The Department runs a for the public, including the weekly summer track meets program. The Department is schedules for the Town Band

The two largest parks in the Colonie Town Park and The were opened to the public in The Colonie Town Park offers a including walking and biking Pool, softball and football launch on the Mohawk River. 6 ½ miles of trails, a meeting conferencing facilities, a skating pond. The Crossings is Town of Colonie Veterans honors Town veterans from all The Colonie Farmers’ Market at largest farmers’ markets in the Saturdays from May 21st to

Park Name	Location	Land Area (Acres)
Mohawk river Park and Town of Colonie Dog Park	71 Schermerhorn Road	175
Town of Colonie Golf Course	68 Lishakill Road	300
The Crossings of Colonie	580 Albany-Shaker Road	130
Allegheny Pocket Park	Grenada Terrace	2
Burns-Whitney Pocket Park	Charles Road	2
California Avenue Pocket Park	California Avenue	2
Forts Ferry Pocket Park	Forts Ferry Road	1.5
Latham-Kiwanis Pocket Park	First Avenue	3
West Albany Pocket Park	110 Braintree Street	25
Lishakill Pocket Park	Jones Drive	3
Loudonville Pocket Park	Osborne Road	1
Maplewood Pocket Park	Easy Street	1.5
Palma Pocket Park	Martin Terrace	3
Roessleville Pocket Park	Wilson Avenue	3
Stanford Heights	Nutwood Avenue	1.5
James G. Egan Memorial Park	Timberland Drive	.5
Maywood Pocket Park	Brent Street	4
South Colonie Sports Complex	288 Consaul Road	44
North Colonie Soccer Complex	500 Boght Road	54
Boght Ball fields	1155 New Loudon Road	20

Recreation Department acres of park and recreational miles of the Hudson Mohawk the Town of Colonie (see Table series of programs and events Summer Enrichment Program, and a summer playground also responsible for the concert and Town Brass Choir.

Town of Colonie are the Crossings of Colonie. The parks 1967 and 2003, respectively. wide array of amenities, trails, playgrounds, the Town fields, tennis courts, and a boat The Crossings of Colonie offers house with available barrier-free playground, and a home to the 2,500 square foot Memorial. The memorial military branches and all wars. the Crossings is one of the Capital District. It is open on October 1st.



Sources: Streets - NYS GIS Program Office

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



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Town of Albany Comprehensive Plan Update Parks, Recreation, and Trails		Figure - Project No. 922.135
Albany County	November 2016	New York

The Town maintains a 300-acre, 36-hole public golf course and associated club house that is available to Town residents and their guests. Approximately 80,000 to 100,000 rounds of golf are played there each year.

There are 15 “pocket parks” located throughout the Town providing recreational amenities. Many of these parks include playground facilities and tennis and basketball courts. The West Albany Memorial Park, at 25 acres, is the largest pocket park. West Albany Memorial has 8 baseball/softball fields available for use by the general public. Additionally the Town has three ball field complexes, with soccer, baseball, softball and tee ball fields.

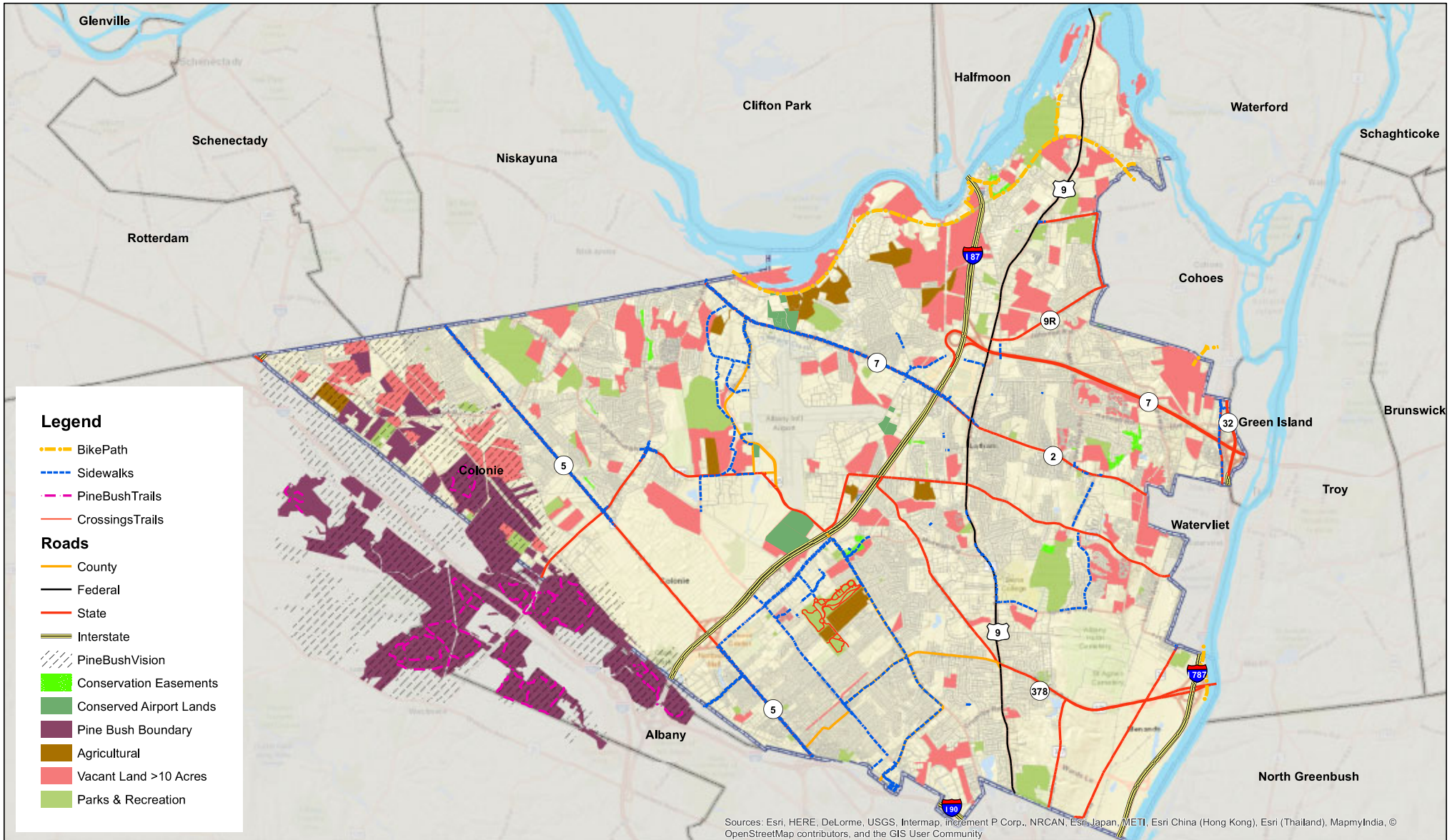
The Mohawk Hudson Bike Hike Trail is a 35 mile long multi-use trail that runs through Schenectady and Albany Counties. This trail feeds into the larger 350-mile statewide “Canalway Trail” that extends from Buffalo to Albany. In 2003, the Capital District Transportation Committee developed a plan to fill in the gaps in the trail. Priority areas for trail connections in Colonie include connecting Broadway in Colonie/Menands, the newly realigned Albany Shaker Road and Peebles Island. The Hudson Valley Greenway has long-range plans to connect the Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail to a trail proposed to run along the Hudson River from Albany to New York City.

The Schuyler Flatts Cultural Park is located in Colonie between the Village of Menands and the City of Watervliet. This 43-acre site provides educational resources to residents and visitors, as well as an open field available for passive recreation.

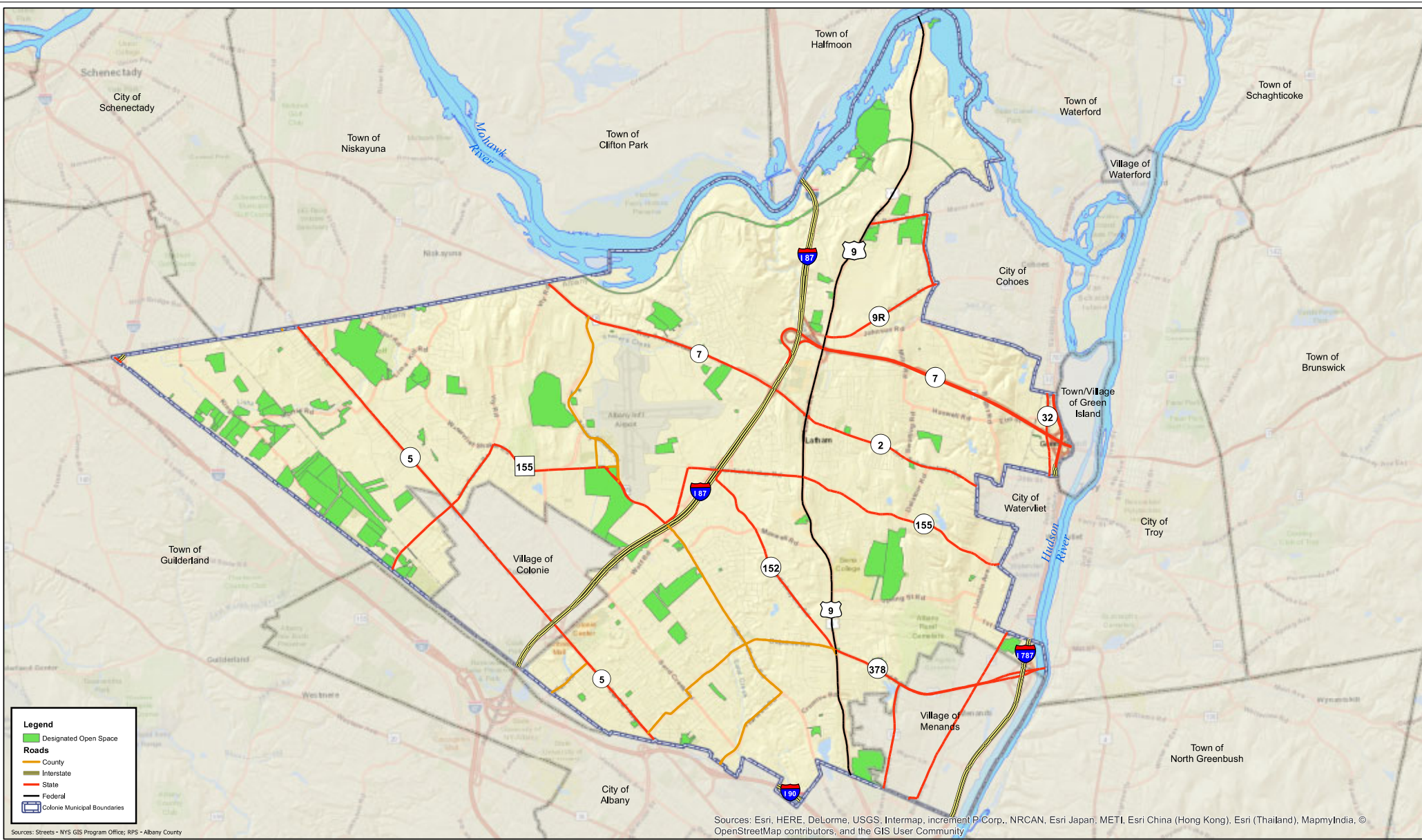
Because of the Town’s abundant cultural and recreational resources, the Parks and Recreation Department may face challenges while trying to maintain current levels of service and expand underutilized facilities. The Town must continue to work with various partners to protect and promote the viability and access to these resources to fully realize their value to the community.

Open Space

The 2010 New York State Open Space Plan identifies two major areas that the Town should review for preservation. These areas are the Albany Pine Bush Preserve and the Barge Canal/Mohawk River Waterfront. The mission of the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission is to protect and manage the unique and endangered natural communities and species of the Albany Pine Bush, for ecological benefits and controlled and appropriate public recreation and educational use. It was identified by the Pine Bush Preserve Commission that to achieve this goal the commission must be able to acquire an estimated 2,180 acres of land surrounding the existing 3,200 acres of the preserve. The Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission has made management goals for 2017 that may impact the surrounding areas in Colonie. The Preserve Commission is looking to acquire more land to “infill” within the preserve. The Commission is also looking to acquire land through easements, right-of-way, or other means to serve as buffer areas to protect the preserve from the outlying community. Lastly, the Preserve Commission will be reviewing their existing trail and recreation spaces. If there are areas that are significantly inhibiting the health of the preserve’s ecosystem these resources



1 inch = 5,750 feet




Legend

- Designated Open Space
- Roads**
- County
- Interstate
- State
- Federal
- Colonie Municipal Boundaries

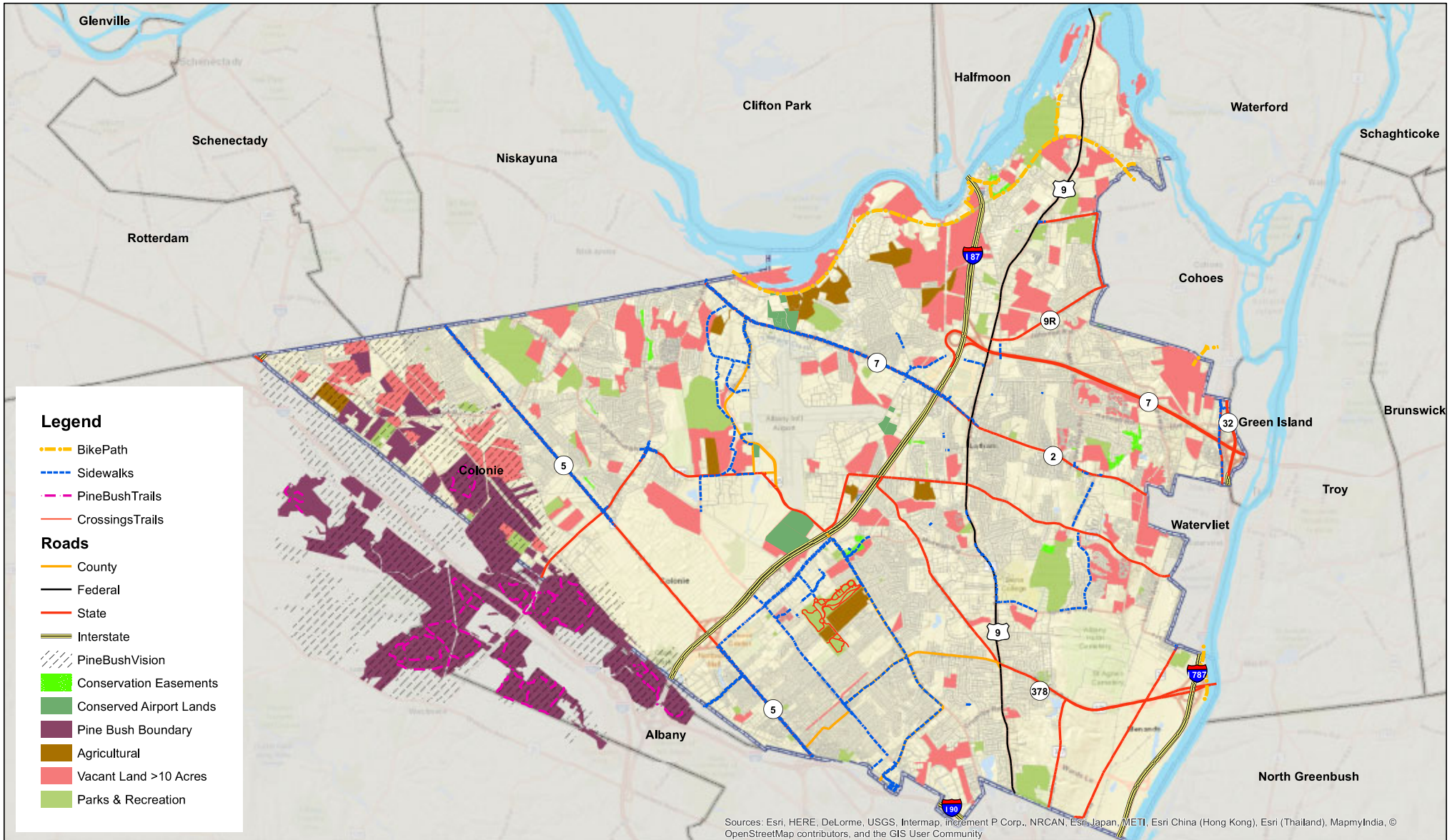
Sources: Streets - NYS GIS Program Office; RPS - Albany County

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community




 1 inch = 5,750 feet

Town of Colonie Comprehensive Plan Update		Figure - Project No. 922.135
Conservation Open Space		
Albany County	November 2016	New York



1 inch = 5,750 feet

Town of Colonie

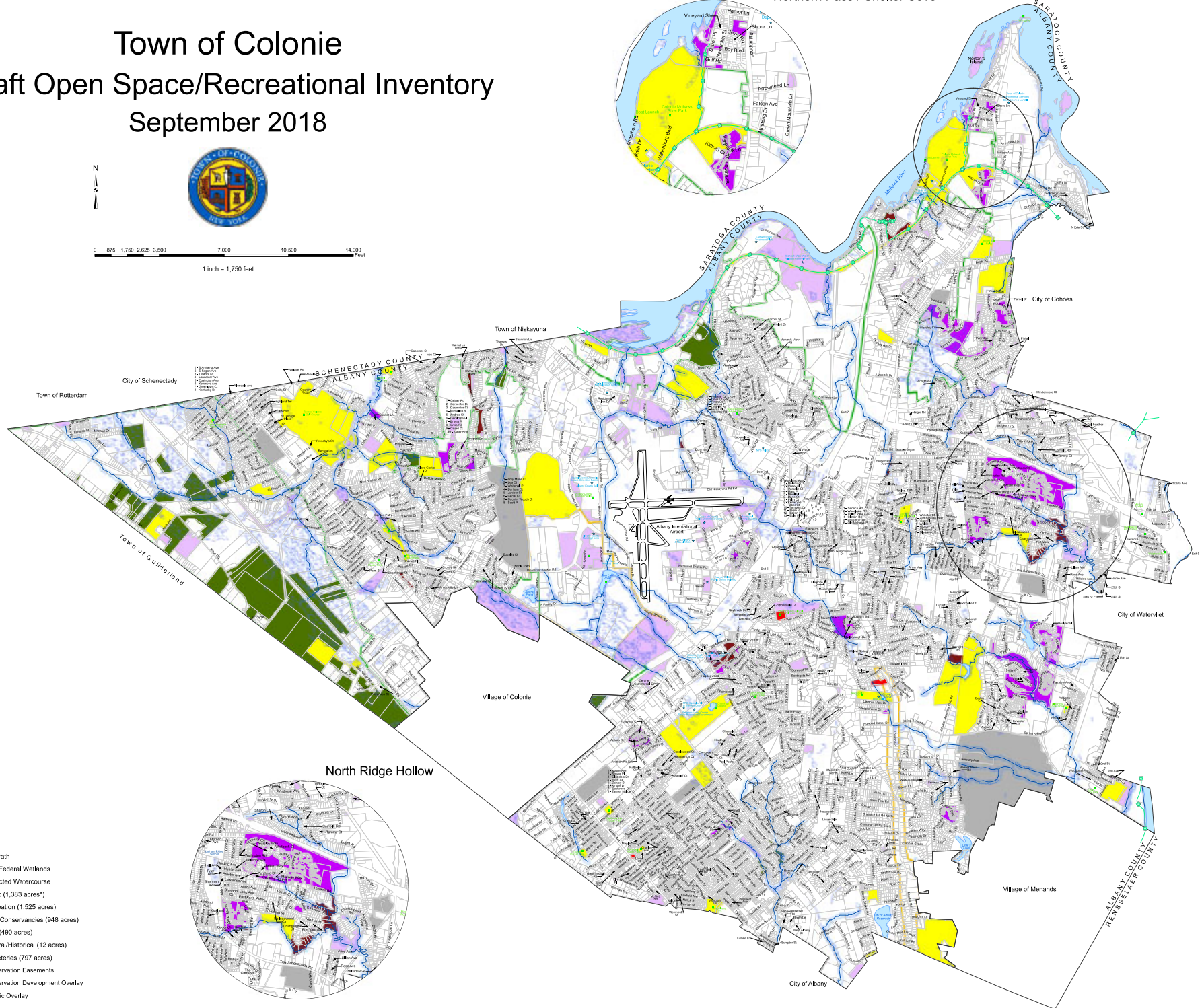
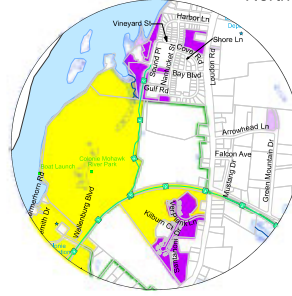
Draft Open Space/Recreational Inventory

September 2018

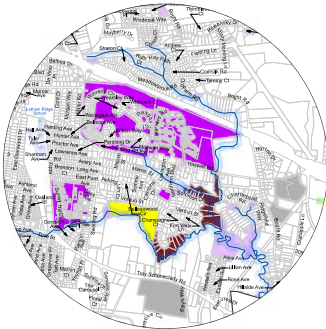


0 875 1,750 2,625 3,500 7,000 10,500 14,000 Feet
1 inch = 1,750 feet

Northern Pass / Shelter Cove



North Ridge Hollow



- Legend**
- BikePath
 - NYS/Federal Wetlands
 - Protected Watercourse
 - Public (1,383 acres*)
 - Recreation (1,525 acres)
 - Land Conservancies (848 acres)
 - HOA (490 acres)
 - Cultural/Historical (12 acres)
 - Cemeteries (797 acres)
 - Conservation Easements
 - Conservation Development Overlay
 - Historic Overlay

* The building footprint has been subtracted from the acreage of the parcels classified as public.

will be removed. This may eliminate some of the recreational resources that residents located in the western part of Town may use. If this is to occur the Town may need to enhance their recreational resources in this area.

The State’s Open Space Plan also identified the Barge Canal or Mohawk River waterfront. The plan set a goal to protect the significant scenic, cultural, recreational and natural resources located along the waterfront. The Mohawk River waterfront is especially important in Colonie because of its proximity to the Great Flat Aquifer located in neighboring Schenectady County. This aquifer was identified by the US EPA as one of five source aquifers in Upstate New York. Colonie should look to protect this waterfront area as it serves as an important aquifer as well as the source for the Town’s water supply.

The Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail is a 35-mile long multi-use trail that runs through Schenectady and Albany Counties along the Mohawk River waterfront. The trail is a part of the 350-mile statewide “Canalway Trail” that extends from Buffalo to Albany. In 2003, the Capital District Transportation Committee developed a plan to fill in the gaps that are located throughout the trail. Priority areas for trail connections in Colonie include connecting Broadway (in Colonie/Menands) and Albany Shaker Road with the trail as well as a trail extension to Peebles Island (Watervliet). The Hudson Valley Greenway has ultimate plans to connect the Mohawk Hudson Bike Hike Trail down the Hudson River that will like to trails leading to New York City.

The 2005 Comprehensive Plan identified the following areas where open space preservation should either remain or be established:

- Ashford Glen Preserve – The Ashford Glen Preserve is already a preserved area and the opportunity exists to expand the open space resources here through creative design of development and conservation easements.
- Ann Lee Pond Area – The Ann Lee Pond is a significant natural resource in the community. Albany County is currently responsible for the Ann Lee Pond. Perhaps the Town could coordinate with the County to improve access to Ann Lee Pond and improve the hiking and biking amenities there as well. This area is also adjacent to a park in the Village of Colonie and expanding the protected open space in this area would assist in creating a more regional open space and recreation network.
- Area north of Albany International Airport (between Route 7 and River Road) – The airport, as part of its acquisition program, has acquired several parcels in this area. The Town should encourage this program and assist when necessary.
- Mohawk River Revitalization Area – There are specific locations within this study area that might be considered for preservation. Protection of viewsheds and land stewardship should be promoted, as well as traditional uses of the land including hunting and fishing. If development occurs within this area, the use of a conservation design approach should be encouraged.

- Delphus Kill Area – Within this area are specific parcels that would be appropriate for preservation, such as the Kettle Hole Bog. The emphasis should be on maintaining open space. However, when development does occur in this area, it should be in the form of conservation design.
- Fonda Road Area – This area is located south of Boght Ball Fields and east of Route 9. When development occurs in this area, the use of conservation subdivision design should be required.
- Area north of Route 7 near the boundary with the City of Cohoes - When development occurs in this area, the use of conservation subdivision design should be required.
- Area south of Route 7 in the vicinity of Haswell Road - When development occurs in this area, the use of conservation subdivision design should be required.
- Area between Troy-Schenectady Road (Route 2) and Route 155 near the boundary with the City of Watervliet - When development occurs in this area, the use of conservation subdivision design should be required.

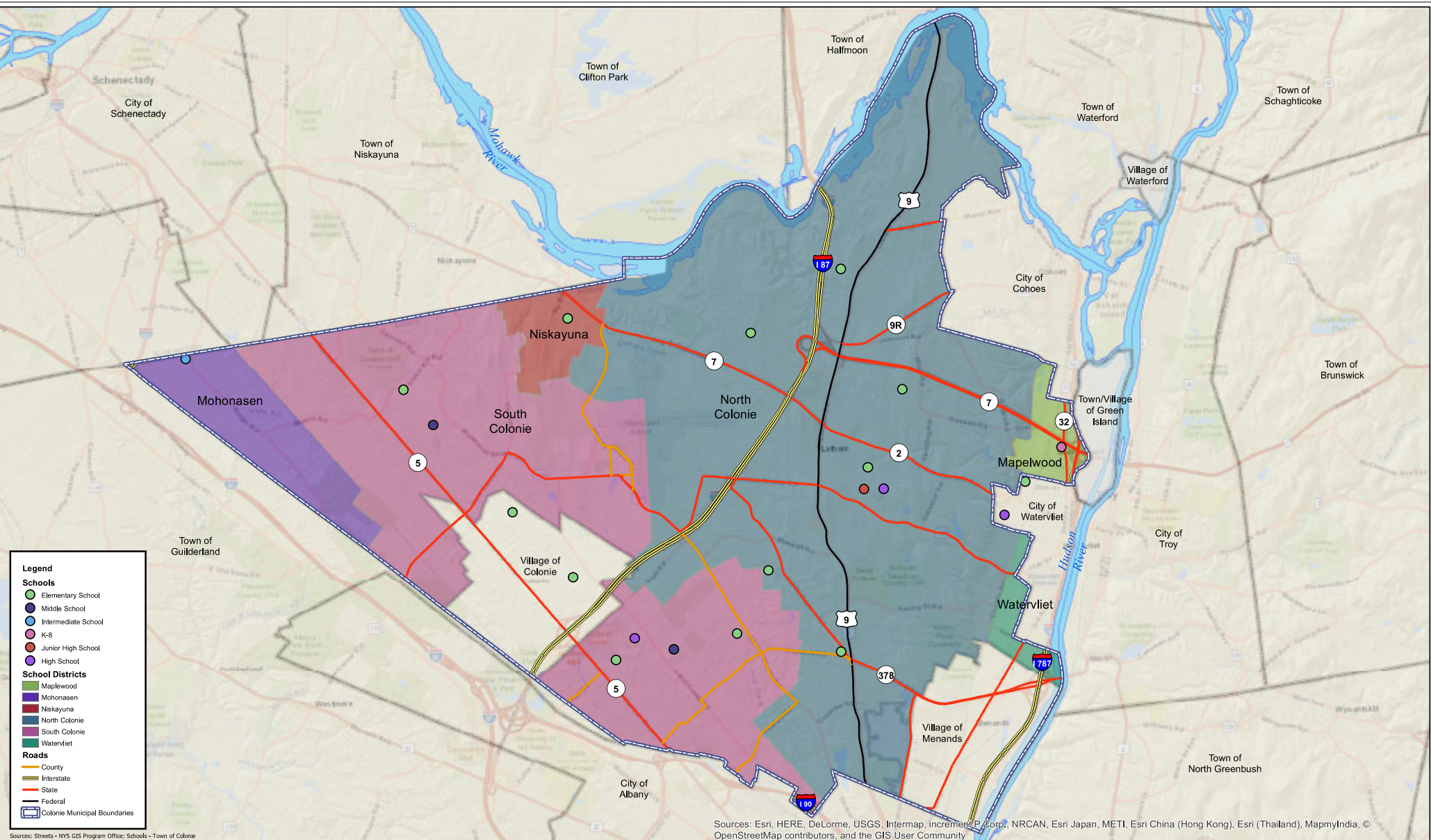
Education

There are five school districts that serve students within the Town of Colonie.

They are as follows:

- Mohonasen Central School District
- Niskayuna Central School district
- North Colonie Central School District
- South Colonie Central School district
- Watervliet City School District

Not all school districts that serve residents of Colonie are located within Colonie. The Mohonasen and Niskayuna School Districts predominately cover residents of the neighboring City of Schenectady and Town of Niskayuna, while the Watervliet School District primarily serves residents of the City of Watervliet. Within Colonie these five school districts are made up of twelve elementary schools, two middle schools, one intermediate school, one school serving grades K-8, a junior high school, and three high schools. Table 9 (*following page*) shows that North Colonie Central



Sources: Streets - NYS GIS Program Office; Schools - Town of Colonie

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

School District (CSD) has the highest rates of district enrollment throughout all five districts. This bump in enrollment began in the 2014-15 school year when an unforeseen number of kindergarteners were enrolled. According to a statement made by the North Colonie CSD district superintendent, this scenario occurred because the district did not take into account enrollment of full-day kindergarten. This drastic difference in enrollment projections and actual enrollment for the 2014-15 school year encouraged the North Colonie CSD to reach out to the Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC) to conduct a study to develop more accurate enrollment projections.

CDRPC’s 2015 study found that North Colonie’s enrollment was most heavily influenced by a substantial increase in housing development in the area. CDRPC reached out to the Town of Colonie to obtain records of what new development projects had been granted building permits. Based on the number of units proposed, CDRPC found that a majority of existing homes and a majority of new residential development are or would be owner-occupied single-family development. This housing type is the most likely to produce school-aged children. Based on approved building permits it is estimated that an additional 900 units will be built within the North Colonie CSD area by the end of 2018. It is estimated that at least 1/3 of these homes will be single-family housing units. It is estimated that the development of these units will bring an additional 470 students to North Colonie schools by the end of 2018. Within the 900 units to be built, it is estimated that another 100 students will result from the development of townhouses. Other factors that are not as easy to predict include the home sales by empty nesters to young families and the rate at which full-day kindergarten will be attended. Because the program is new, historical data is not available to use for the enrollment projections. The inability to accurately measure these factors may create further challenges to the school district when determining the long range needs of facilities, supplies, faculty, and staff.

Table 9 – School District Enrollment		
School District	Total Enrollment	Enrollment Year
Mohonasen	2,858	2014-15
Niskayuna	4,100	2015-16
North Colonie	5,500	2015-16
South Colonie	4,917	2015-16
Watervliet	1,280	2014-15

The impact of new development on the North Colonie CDS is significant. Historic enrollment figures show that the district’s total enrollment for the 1985-86 school year was 4,516 pupils and the 2015-2016 enrollment was 5,500 pupils. These figures show a growth of 1,000 students over a 30 year period of time. It is estimated that the 2025-26 school year will have total enrollment of 6,290 pupils, this indicates growth of another 800 pupils, but over a 10-year period. This analysis has encouraged the district to strategize about how to deal with this growth and was one of the main reasons why the district increased its budget and subsequently the district’s tax rate.

The South Colonie Central School District (CSD) also asked CDRPC to conduct an enrollment projection study. The story of the South Colonie CSD differs from that of the North Colonie CSD. This is because the school district is not as old and because the district covers areas of the Town that have already been substantially developed or where less development is occurring. Whereas North Colonie is a district struggling to keep up

with enrollment projections, South Colonie is a district hoping to stabilize its enrollment. During the 2001-02 school year, enrollment was at an all-time high for the district, reaching 5,798 pupils. A sharp decline in enrollment began during the 2006-07 school year and was sustained for 9 consecutive school years. The district’s reported enrollment of about 4,750 pupils for the 2014-15 school year is down about 18.1% from the peak enrollment of 2001-02. Enrollment trends usually begin in the kindergarten to grade 4 age cohort and extend to the older age groups as the younger age groups move up through the grades. Recent stabilization is likely due to the increasing enrollment of kindergartners.

CDRPC found that fluctuation in enrollment in the South Colonie CSD is generationally-based rather than based in new residential development like it is in North Colonie. For example, when the “Baby Bust” generation (the generation following the “Baby Boomers”) was enrolled in school enrollment was lower than that of the Baby Boomer generation. Then when the Millennial generation was enrolled the number of pupils rose significantly (see 2001-02 all-time enrollment high). The generation following the Millennials “echoed” the enrollment of the Baby Bust generation bringing enrollment figures down once again. The recent stabilization of enrollment figures can likely be tied to the oldest Millennials beginning to have school-aged children. It is likely that the enrollment figures for the South Colonie CSD will continue to mimic the generational ebb and flow that the district experienced in the past.

Compared to the North Colonie CSD the opportunities for development within the South Colonie CSD are relatively low, making the amount of land developable less of a factor for the South Colonie CSD than that of the North Colonie CSD. That being said, turnover of existing homes is more of a factor in this district, and may impact enrollment projections looking forward. Overall, CDRPC’s findings are that the South Colonie CSD should expect flat, stable enrollment in the future.

Colonie is also home to higher education facilities, such as Siena College located on New Loudon Road in Loudonville, Bryant & Stratton College located on Central Avenue near the Colonie/Albany municipal boundary, and ITT Technical Institute located near the Albany International Airport.

Section 4 – Updated Vision, Goals & Recommendations

The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) was charged with updating the Town of Colonie’s 2005 Comprehensive Plan. Over the course of the last year and a half, the CPAC has reached out to the community through several public workshops, multiple committee meetings and via a town-wide community survey. The committee has met regularly since the fall of 2016 and discussed existing conditions in the Town, identified issues and concerns shared by Town residents, and developed an updated Vision and Goals to guide the community into the next decade.

The CPAC developed an updated Vision for how the Town should grow and updated plan recommendations and established priorities for implementation of those goals. The updated Vision and goals were presented to the public in the winter of 2019, and the resulting feedback was discussed by the Committee and incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan Update. Updated Vision and Plan recommendations, organized by goal, are identified below.

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 busy, yet the Town has worked 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 an affordable and desirable community for living, learning, and doing business.

Goals and Preliminary Recommendations

To achieve this vision, the Town of Colonie has established a set of goals to supplement the 2005 Comprehensive Plan goals and guide decision-making into the next decade. These goals address a wide range of issues that have been raised through the public involvement process and through the development of an inventory and analysis of existing conditions. The updated goals, and a set of implementation recommendations for each, are as follows:

- Ø Accommodate the provision of a range of housing types in appropriate locations to meet the diverse needs of Colonie’s residents. Provide incentives for affordability and to encourage mixed-income developments and multi-generational neighborhoods.
 - Support reinvestment in the Town’s older housing stock and the neighborhoods where such housing is concentrated.
 - Develop an inventory of “zombie properties” and consider working 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 affordable, workforce housing and/or other community benefits that are difficult to obtain in the marketplace without such incentives. This should also include consideration of school projections and possible new services that might be needed.
 - 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, multi-generational neighborhoods designed to facilitate independent living may be found in the Town’s mixed-use nodes. Universal design and sensitivity towards seniors needs also need to be incorporated into these strategies.

- Ø Protect existing neighborhoods from encroaching commercial and higher density residential development. Work with neighborhood groups to identify and address quality of life concerns.

- Create 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.
 - Given the town’s large size and diverse neighborhoods, it might be appropriate to prepare neighborhood area plans focusing on more specific local issues on a neighborhood by neighborhood basis. This can be done on a more long-term basis over the next 3-5 years.
- Ø Improve mobility throughout the Town. This includes thoughtful investments in roads and highways to relieve significant impacts of traffic congestion and to enhance the safety and attractiveness of active transportation modes (walking and biking). Continue to expand and improve access to public transportation. Coordinate with our partners at Albany County, CDTC, CDTA, and NYSDOT in addressing these mobility issues.
- Establish a point person at the Town for transportation issues – this person would be responsible for coordinating with partners at CDTC, CDTA, Albany County, and NYSDOT.
 - 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 thru traffic concerns appear to conflict
 - 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.
 - Incorporate “Complete Streets” design concepts and guidelines into the next Zoning Code update.
 - Consider commissioning a “Sidewalk Connectivity Study” of the Town to help prioritize the installation of new pedestrian sidewalks and see where gaps in existing sidewalk infrastructure exist.
 - Consider applying 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. A number of communities in the Rochester region have prepared such studies in partnership with the Genesee Transportation Council, that region’s Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

- Ø 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 BOA (Brownfield Opportunity Area) 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 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. The process for developing the Town of Clifton Park’s Town Center Master Plan and resulting form-based code provide a good example of how this can be accomplished.
 - 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 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.

- Ø 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 immediately 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 provide for shared parking
 - § Update the sign regulations to address newer technologies such as LED signs and consider moving the sign approval process from the ZBA to the Planning Board.
 - § 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.
 - § Work with the Albany County Airport Authority to incorporate appropriate language related to the airport’s Runway Protection Zones (49 CFR Part 77) into the Town’s zoning.

- ∅ 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, the Town should develop a Town-wide Economic Development Strategy. This strategy should include methods to pro-actively market the Town to attract the kinds of businesses the Town wants and needs.

- ∅ 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 and grading of land in anticipation of development to ensure that such activity conforms to a plan approved by the Planning Board. Create appropriate limits on clearcutting. Expand the town’s capacity to monitor and enforce development activity.
- 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.

- Ø 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.
 - Support the preservation of existing, and the development of new wild-life corridors in Town.
 - Establish an Open Space Conservation Program
 - § Identify what entity should take the lead in developing this program – perhaps a committee comprised of the CAC, Planning Board, Planning Department and Parks Department staff, regional conservation partners (Pinebush Commission, Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, etc.) and someone representing the agricultural community in Colonie.
 - § 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.
 - § Identify appropriate sources of funding for a Colonie Open Space Fund – from the town budget, an open space bond, a Community Preservation Program (real-estate transfer tax), mitigation funds under the Town’s Area-wide GEIS studies, etc.

- Ø Enhance and expand active and passive recreational resources available throughout the Town to meet the growing and changing demand for these amenities.
 - Consider creating a Town Parks & Recreation Master Plan that includes a list targeted parcels that the Town may be interested in acquiring for future active and/or passive recreational uses.

- Ø 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.
 - Consider supplementing existing funding for water and sewer infrastructure maintenance through a Community Preservation Program (see Open Space financing)
 - Review Albany County Hazard Mitigation Plan for suggestions about adaptation and resiliency measures in Colonie.
 - Consider implementing an Asset Management Program to inventory infrastructure assets, equipment, materials, etc.

- Ø Encourage low-impact development techniques and green infrastructure to address stormwater management.
 - 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.

- Ø 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.

- Ø Maintain the Town’s high level community services for youth, seniors, and the public at large.
 - Protect public spaces and public greenspace to maintain use for community services.
 - Establish inter-generational programs for seniors and youth.
 - Facilitate volunteer opportunities for youth, seniors, and public at large.

- Ø Protect and promote the Town’s significant cultural and historic resources.

- Have a/the historical society perform an inventory of historically significant areas, buildings, public spaces.
 - Preserve and protect spaces that are deemed as historically significant to the Town.
 - Seek grants which exemplify and protect the Town’s cultural and historic resources and can attract tourism.
- Ø Promote energy efficiency and conservation, the use of renewable energy, and waste reduction in the Town.
- Consider participating in the NYSDEC’s Climate Smart Communities program and actively seek certification in NYSERDA’s Clean Energy Communities program.
 - Seek to encourage applicants for new commercial projects to incorporate and follow LEED design standards, and seek LEED certification for all new buildings.
- Ø 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 mediums to keep the public up to date on current events.
- Ø Cooperate with the Villages of Colonie and Menands, the school districts, and other neighboring and regional municipalities, agencies, and organizations on issues of mutual concern. Look for opportunities to share services when appropriate.
- Establish a Town Board Liaison with the local school boards and meet monthly to provide updates on issues of mutual interest.
 - Increase the frequency of meetings between the Town and the North Colonie and South Colonie School Districts to once every six months.
- Ø Establish an identity for the Town of Colonie that transcends the Town’s size and diversity while maintaining the integrity and distinctiveness of individual neighborhoods. Encourage and support efforts to beautify Colonie.

- Draw upon the data found in the Siena College Research Institute’s Survey to help determine how the broader Colonie community identifies itself (rural/suburban/urban) and then seek ways to integrate the perspective into long range growth and development plans.

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Section 5 – Updated Implementation Table

The following table outlines the various updated goals and recommendations of this Plan and prioritizes them as well as provides recommended time frames for their implementation by the Town. It is important to note that these are recommendations only and are not binding in any way nor do they commit the Town to any direct action. They are meant to serve as a guide to assist the Town with its future land use growth and development decisions. Implementation of these goals and recommendations will ultimately be the responsibility of current and future Town administrations and officials over the next five to ten years.

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Town of Colonie - Comprehensive Plan Update

Goals	Recommendations		Priority Level	Timeframe
<p>Accommodate the provision of a range of housing types in appropriate locations to meet the diverse needs of Colonie's residents. Provide incentives for affordability and to encourage mixed-income developments and multi-generational neighborhoods.</p>	<p><i>Develop an inventory of "zombie properties" and consider working 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.</i></p>	<p><i>Support reinvestment in the Town's older housing stock and the neighborhoods where such housing is concentrated.</i></p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>5-10 Years</p>
	<p><i>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, multi-generational neighborhoods designed to facilitate independent living may be found in the Town's mixed-use nodes. Universal design and sensitivity towards seniors needs also need to be incorporated into these strategies.</i></p>	<p><i>Review incentive provisions in current zoning and ensure that incentives (i.e. density bonuses) are targeted to the provision of affordable, workforce housing and/or other community benefits that are difficult to obtain in the marketplace without such incentives. This should also include consideration of school projections and possible new services that might be needed.</i></p>		
<p>Protect existing neighborhoods from encroaching commercial and higher density residential development. Work with neighborhood groups to identify and address quality of life concerns.</p>	<p><i>Create 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.</i></p>	<p><i>Given the town's large size and diverse neighborhoods, it might be appropriate to prepare neighborhood area plans focusing on more specific local issues on a neighborhood by neighborhood basis. This can be done on a more long-term basis over the next 3-5 years.</i></p>	<p>High</p>	<p>1-3 Years</p>
<p>Improve mobility throughout the Town. This includes thoughtful investments in roads and highways to relieve significant impacts of traffic congestion and to enhance the safety and attractiveness of active transportation modes (walking and biking). Continue to expand and improve access to public transportation. Coordinate with our partners at Albany County, CDTC, CDTA, and NYSDOT in addressing these mobility issues.</p>	<p><i>Establish a point person at the Town for transportation issues – this person would be responsible for coordinating with partners at CDTC, CDTA, Albany County, and NYSDOT.</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 thru traffic concerns appear to conflict</i></p>	<p>High</p>	<p>1-3 Years</p>
	<p><i>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>Consider applying 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. A number of communities in the Rochester region have prepared such studies in partnership with the Genesee Transportation Council, that region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).</i></p>		
	<p><i>Incorporate "Complete Streets" design concepts and guidelines into the next Zoning Code update.</i></p>	<p><i>Consider commissioning a "Sidewalk Connectivity Study" of the Town to help prioritize the installation of new pedestrian sidewalks and see where gaps in existing sidewalk infrastructure exist.</i></p>		
<p>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.</p>	<p><i>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. The process for developing the Town of Clifton Park's Town Center Master Plan and resulting form-based code provide a good example of how this can be accomplished.</i></p>	<p><i>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 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.</i></p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>3-5 Years</p>
	<p><i>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.</i></p>			

Town of Colonie - Comprehensive Plan Update				
Goals	Recommendations		Priority Level	Timeframe
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.	<p><i>The Town's zoning should be refined immediately 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:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revising parking requirements to reduce the amount of parking required and to provide for shared parking • Update the sign regulations to address newer technologies such as LED signs and consider moving the sign approval process from the ZBA to the Planning Board. • 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. • Work with the Albany County Airport Authority to incorporate appropriate language related to the airport's Runway Protection Zones (49 CFR Part 77) into the Town's zoning. 		Medium	1-3 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.	<p><i>Building off the Industrial Development Agency's (IDA) Economic Assessment Study that is currently underway, the Town should develop a Town-wide Economic Development Strategy. This strategy should include methods to pro-actively market the Town to attract the kinds of businesses the Town wants and needs.</i></p>		Medium	1-10 Years
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.	<p><i>Strengthen standards regarding the clearing and grading of land in anticipation of development to ensure that such activity conforms to a plan approved by the Planning Board. Create appropriate limits on clearcutting. Expand the town's capacity to monitor and enforce development activity.</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>	High	1-10 Years
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.	<p><i>Support the preservation of existing, and the development of new wild-life corridors in Town.</i></p>	<p><i>Establish an Open Space Conservation Program:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify what entity should take the lead in developing this program – perhaps a committee comprised of the CAC, Planning Board, Planning Department and Parks Department staff, regional conservation partners (Pinebush Commission, Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, etc.) and someone representing the agricultural community in Colonie. • 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. • Identify appropriate sources of funding for a Colonie Open Space Fund – from the town budget, an open space bond, a Community Preservation Program (real-estate transfer tax), mitigation funds under the Town's Area-wide GEIS studies, etc. 	High	1-10 Years
Enhance and expand active and passive recreational resources available throughout the Town to meet the growing and changing demand for these amenities.	<p><i>Consider creating a Town Parks & Recreation Master Plan that includes a list targeted parcels that the Town may be interested in acquiring for future active and/or passive recreational uses.</i></p>		Medium	1-10 Years

Town of Colonie - Comprehensive Plan Update				
Goals	Recommendations		Priority Level	Timeframe
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.	<i>Consider implementing an Asset Management Program to inventory infrastructure assets, equipment, materials, etc.</i>	<i>Review Albany County Hazard Mitigation Plan for suggestions about adaptation and resiliency measures in Colonie.</i>	Medium	3-5 Years
	<i>Consider supplementing existing funding for water and sewer infrastructure maintenance through a Community Preservation Program (see Open Space financing)</i>		Medium	1-3 Years
Encourage low-impact development techniques and green infrastructure to address stormwater management.	<i>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.</i>		Medium	1-3 Years
Maintain the Town's high level of public safety services.	<i>Continue coordination of shared services with surrounding municipalities.</i>	<i>Locate areas to expand and improve public safety services.</i>	Low	3-5 Years
Maintain the Town's high level community services for youth, seniors, and the public at large.	<i>Protect public spaces and public greenspace to maintain use for community services.</i>	<i>Establish inter-generational programs for seniors and youth.</i>	Medium	3-5 Years
	<i>Facilitate volunteer opportunities for youth, seniors, and public at large.</i>			
Protect and promote the Town's significant cultural and historic resources.	<i>Have a/the historical society perform an inventory of historically significant areas, buildings, public spaces.</i>	<i>Preserve and protect spaces that are deemed as historically significant to the Town.</i>	Medium	3-5 Years
	<i>Seek grants which exemplify and protect the Town's cultural and historic resources and can attract tourism.</i>			
Promote energy efficiency and conservation, the use of renewable energy, and waste reduction in the Town.	<i>Consider participating in the NYSDEC's Climate Smart Communities program and actively seek certification in NYSEERDA's Clean Energy Communities program.</i>	<i>Seek to encourage applicants for new commercial projects to incorporate and follow LEED design standards, and seek LEED certification for all new buildings.</i>	Medium	1-3 Years
Expand opportunities for sharing information and for encouraging community involvement. Promote volunteerism and community service.	<i>Continue updating the Town's website as well as using other social media mediums to keep the public up to date on current events.</i>		Medium	1-3 Years
Cooperate with the Villages of Colonie and Menands, the school districts, and other neighboring and regional municipalities, agencies, and organizations on issues of mutual concern. Look for opportunities to share services when appropriate.	<i>Establish a Town Board Liaison with the local school boards and meet monthly to provide updates on issues of mutual interest.</i>	<i>Increase the frequency of meetings between the Town and the North Colonie and South Colonie School Districts to once every six months.</i>	Medium	1-3 Years
Establish an identity for the Town of Colonie that transcends the Town's size and diversity while maintaining the integrity and distinctiveness of individual neighborhoods. Encourage and support efforts to beautify Colonie.	<i>Draw upon the data found in the Siena College Research Institute's Survey to help determine how the broader Colonie community identifies itself (rural/suburban/urban) and then seek ways to integrate the perspective into long range growth and development plans.</i>		Medium	3-5 Years