



Neighborhoods and Neighbors First!

March 6, 2019

Dear Supervisor Mahan and Colonie Town Board:

SAVE Colonie, a Partnership for Planning has prepared the following comments and assessment of the draft *Town of Colonie Comprehensive Plan Update* as adopted by the Town of Colonie Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee on February 27, 2019 and forwarded to the Town Board for consideration.

Since 2016, SAVE members have attended Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee meetings, enthusiastically participated in public outreach sessions, and provided written comments via the Comprehensive Plan website. It was our hope that this process would culminate in an updated Comprehensive Plan which would provide valuable guidance for the Town of Colonie and our fellow residents for the next 10 years. We envisioned the updated plan would address how the goals of the 2005 comprehensive plan were accomplished and implemented; what has occurred in the Town since 2005; the current and future needs of the Town concerning key issues such as development, preservation of open space, transportation needs, recreation needs, utilities and public services.

Unfortunately, the draft updated plan, as presented at the February 27, 2019 meeting, falls well short of both what was expected and what a municipality the size and complexity of Colonie requires to grow in an equitable and sustainable manner. As the result of our review, we have developed extensive comments which are detailed later in this communication. These issues can be grouped into a few major themes, as follows:

1. An Executive Summary is needed which not only highlights updated findings, but clearly connects to the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, since that was the stated major charge for the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee. Additionally, the status of goals included in the 2005 Plan and their relationship to updated findings need to be addressed in this document.
2. Conclusions, charts, maps, and tables should be supported by the most current data available; data sources need to be identified and dated.
3. Recommendations for implementation should be either linked to the text and supported by data--or omitted from the document (See Appendix D comments).
4. Proposed studies to assess town assets such as open space, sidewalks, utilities, and recreation areas as well as future transportation, development and

redevelopment priorities should be approached in stages as part of an integrated, holistic approach rather than in an isolated fashion, as presented in this document (See Appendix C).

Given the extent of these deficiencies (see Appendices A and B), we believe the Town Board must proceed cautiously until the public has had ample opportunity to review and provide their input to the Town Board. We believe that the Town's March 1, 2019 referral to the Albany County Planning Board for its March 21, 2019 agenda was premature because there is no finalized comprehensive plan update document. More than one public hearing is necessary because the public's ability to provide public comment was already stymied by inclement weather and misleading public notices on February 27, 2019.

As SAVE representatives outlined at that meeting, the draft update presented to the Comp Plan Advisory Committee on February 27 is technically deficient and incomplete. Both the Town Planning and Economic Development Director and the Town Designated Engineering firm representative acknowledged in the meeting that the draft under consideration by the Committee was incomplete and missing critical information. We remain very concerned that the draft update does not comply with NYS Town Law 272-a. There were other members of the public who attended the meeting and voiced similar concerns.

It is our hope that the updated comprehensive plan draft will reflect and address the concerns identified in this document before the March 21, 2019 public hearing and that a revised draft will be available for public review well in advance of the March 21, 2019 scheduled hearing. We also request that the Town Board contact the Albany County Planning Board to request removal of the draft comprehensive update from their March 21, 2019 meeting agenda. We must question the Town's decision to hurry this critical process along to meet a subjective deadline rather than proceeding in a transparent manner that allows for public review and comment.

As Town of Colonie residents, we share the common goal of making this comprehensive planning effort result in the most accurate, data rich and useful planning document for our Town. We are hopeful that after considerable Town resources have been expended on this effort over the last several years, the Town will yet produce a credible plan that we can support.

Thank you for your consideration of these important issues.

Sincerely,

SAVE a Partnership for Planning

Appendix A: General Deficiencies

The draft update does not address the following:

- Directive to establish an open space fund and how should town prioritize open space acquisitions (2005 Comp Plan directive)
- How should parks be developed, improved, new parks (2005 Comp Plan town recreation master plan directive)
- Update the town GEIS's (2005 Comp Plan directive)
- Why actions listed in the 2005 plan were not carried out or whether they will be continued in the future.
- How the town will address future and ongoing infrastructure maintenance
- A commitment to public broadcast meetings, more advance notification residents, more complete record keeping Town Pedd, ZBA websites, audio visual upgrades for PB and ZBA, Town Board agenda sessions be televised or minutes uploaded on website.
- Explanation of open space inventory methodology and criteria for amount of funding and location of open space acquisitions.
- Explanation for criteria for location of senior housing, amenities, affordability and whether current zoning allows for senior needs.
- Explanation for what IDA benefits should be included with development approvals, when appropriate
- Types of zoning regulation changes recommended and why, how prior variance/ special use permits be factored into any zoning regulation changes. Should these variances, special use permits be continued? Instead of a discussion, there are five pages of zoning exception maps that provide little or no useful information to the public.
- How town will deal with future drinking water issues such as NYSDEC chlorination requirements for drinking water supply and discharges to the Mohawk River.
- The cost/benefit of Stony Creek reservoir as a water source, especially for future needs
- The status of Colonie landfill capacity, recycling programs, waste reduction initiatives

- Impact of climate change, stormwater initiatives on town planning, alternative transportation, workforce management techniques to encourage telecommuting and lower traffic congestion.
- Plan for training and professional development for Department staff.

Appendix B: Detailed, Indexed Comments

- p. 7 “Colonie has benefitted from a moderate growth rate over the past fourteen years with an increase of roughly 2,000 people.” No footnote and no reference to actual current population figures.
- p. 7 “an increased number of redevelopment projects occurring all across the Town” No reference to stats for this statement and conclusion and does not put into context of all the development approvals that have occurred since 2005 comp plan. How many **redevelopment** projects, types?
- p. 8 “town has made great strides in adding to and expanding its open space and recreational amenities.” No reference to specific actions and timeline for this statement.
- p. 8 “tougher regulations incorporated into the Town’s land use laws allowed the Town to preserve more sensitive and natural open spaces through the site plan review process.” No reference to acreage added, time frame etc.
- p. 8 “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.” Need reference to plan and status. Clarification needs to be provided regarding the linkage plan and the pending Radtke property PDD proposal.
- p. 8 “in **2008** the Town Board commissioned a complete overhaul of the Town’s Zoning Code.” These code revisions were completed in January 1, 2007 and became effective January 1, 2008.
- p. 8 “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.” What are these plans and studies?
- p. 8 Appendix C What is the relevance of a document which was prepared by a disbanded committee and no Town Board vote on the disbanded committee’s recommendations? Instead, Appendix C should include an analysis of the 2005 plan recommendations and how the draft update addresses how the 2005 recommendations have or have not been implemented. The current comp plan update needs to address and explain how the 2005 Comp Plan recommendations apply to 2019.
- p. 10 “the Town Board felt that it was time to sunset the older plan.” This is not correct. See Spring 2017 Colonie Chronicle, June 2016 Press Release, June 28, 2016 Colonie Spotlight Article.

- p. 12 “draft pathways plan (2008) referenced. Draft needs to clarify that this draft pathways/sidewalk plan was never finalized. Address how the Town has implemented a sidewalk bike path policy to date.
- p. 13 List of studies needs to be amended to list all studies referenced throughout the document with footnotes.
 - CME study major transportation corridors
 - Albany County Commercial Transportation Access Study
 - Mohawk River Public Access Plan
 - Brownfield Opportunity Study
 - Not mentioned in Update but should be included and referenced-Capital District Transportation Committee Bike Pathway plan
- p. 14 public involvement results found in Appendix A is an executive summary. They are not found on the Town website as claimed. Where are the written comments submitted via the comp plan website and otherwise. Where are the responses to written comments?
- p. 14 “top 3 concerns” There were other concerns listed by residents that are not discussed. Why were these top 3 concerns selected?
- p. 15 full survey results are not provided. These are not on the town website.
- p. 16 incomplete data. There are still blanks to be filled in. When will these be filled in? When will the final draft be available to the public for review, given that it is less than a month away already and this is clearly not a final draft?
- Town wide meeting 2 still sounds as if it will happen, not as if it is being reported on as part of a past process. These bullets need updating.
- p. 17 “this plan should be reviewed regularly every 5-10 years.” Note 2005 comp plan required town committee to monitor when updates needed. Time frames for the action items are now 1-10 years. There is no requirement in the comp plan update for future monitoring of the Plan under development.
- Maps included are not up to date. No 2019 dated maps or explanation for why the maps are not current.
- p. 18 Community Profile 2010 census data utilized. Why is there no more timely census data? If not, there needs to be an explanation for why 2010 Census data is utilized.

- p. 19 CDTC population projections need footnote to data source.
- p. 22 Household makeup is this 2010 data?
- CDPRC population projections need footnote.
- p. 23 economics educational attainment 2010 data can updated data be used?
- p. 24 Employment data 2010 why no updated data?
- p.25 Economic development patterns regional is 2010 data. Need footnotes and explanation for why this data was used. Please fix formatting so you can easily read the text around the table.
- p. 26 transportation data is 2010.
- p. 29 Poverty income data is 2015 per American Community Survey. Is there more updated data and why isn't the American Community Survey used throughout?
- p. 30 need foot note to United Way study on Financial hardship in the State of NY
- p. 31 Using 2010 data for housing units. No data # units from 2005-2019. No housing unit trend analysis.
- p. 31 "value of homes" based upon 2010 data. Why isn't current data utilized?
- p. 32 7- year old data for market sales days. Table 4 need footnotes.
- p. 33 utilizes 2015 American community survey data for homeowners and renters. Is this most current data.
- p. 34 Figure 9 Existing land use needs a footnote that indicates the date. What is the data source? Please fix label in dark blue section of pie chart. This is not a final draft.
- p. 34 current zoning map is not the Map on the town website. Not updated to show i.e. Elks PDD granted in 2016.
- p. 35 According to the most recent tax assessment- no date provided is it 2018?? Update does not discuss the methodology for determining vacant properties. How was vacant land determined? Some vacant parcels are not listed in "vacant" category on the town assessment rolls.
- p. 35 citation to 19.1% vacant but no reference to acreage total town acreage v. total vacant acreage.
- p. 36 the land conservation zone accounts for 6.6% of the towns total land area. This zone has been increased by 51.5% since the 2005 comp plan. Again, no reference to data for this statement and no acreage data included.

- Maps showing the variances and waivers. No explanation for why this information is included, what the basis for these maps were, data source is it PB or ZBA or Town Board legislation. List is from 2006-2016. Not updated to 2019. What is the purpose for this information-is it to suggest amendments to the land use code?
- p. 20 Senior statistics are from 2010. Updated information should be obtained from the Colonie Senior Services Department. What is the purpose of these statistics and how does this information pertain to plan goals and recommendations?
- transportation. No total miles listed for town owned roads and no percentages for all roads from total roadways to provide a comparison. Need road labels.
- chart transportation alternative modes- what is the purpose. This is not discussed in the draft. How does this information relate to plan goals and recommendations?
- Airport enplanements 2014 data. Why included and why not 2019 data? What is the purpose for this data?
- No footnote the Creighton manning study for Albany County. Is this the Albany county Commercial transportation access study?
- Need date for the Route 5 Corridor study.
- Environmental constraints listed on map does not include steep slopes. Steep slopes are included in the definition of constrained land in Land Use Law Section 190-6.
- p. 39 Second paragraph has draft language about Siena survey that needs to be updated and finalized before this draft can be considered for public review.
- p. 42 The draft plan states, “public sewer is required in all new developments, the cost of sewer extension being borne by the developer, at no expense to taxpayers.” This comment needs to be clarified as it sounds untrue. There are long term costs of sewer extensions that have implications for the town’s capital and operational budgets. These costs are not discussed and analyzed and glossed over by the simplicity of this statement which is misleading.
- p. 44 wetlands floodplains. Fed definition of wetlands is subject to continuing litigation. Dec regulated wetlands can be less than 12. 4 acres if determined to be a wetland of unusual local importance. Why reference this at all?
- p. 44 mineral resources. Incorrect reference to SEQRA rather than the Mined land reclamation law. Why need to define what the town can regulate. This is subject to legal interpretation and could be subject of future litigation regarding limits to Town of Colonie regulatory jurisdiction.

- p. 46 why reference to septic systems in soil type description. Is this an issue in Colonie?
- p. 46 lists steep slopes greater than 15%. Colonie Land use law defines slopes greater than 25%. Why is there a different number?
- p. 47 Historic Resources. No discussion 2005 comp plan recommendations. Why switch to responsibility of a historical society rather than town historian and PEDD to develop historic inventory? How to empower this recommendation? Create a Historical Commission like Clifton Park?
- p. 48 reference to Time Warner Cable and channel 17. Spectrum now provider. No Chanel 17. Add include broadcast of town meetings.
- p. 51 The table being in the middle of the text makes this page incredibly difficult to read.
- p. 52 “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.” This statement is unlike anything of the sort about other issues facing the Town such as acknowledgment of the need to maintain the “free infrastructure “given” to the town by developers. Why? This statement could be utilized by applicants who may not wish to set aside recreation and park facilities on their developments pursuant to NYS Town Law and Section 190-60 or provide public benefit amenities related to open space and parks and recreation facilities. This statement also does not reflect the results of the Siena Survey where town residents rated the creation of parks and recreation facilities as high priority.
- p. 53-54 The list of areas that should be conserved or “remain” conserved from the 2005 comp plan is included. Why are there no additions to this list? Why is there no discussion about how to prioritize lands to be conserved or remain conserved?
- p. 55 when was school enrollment information provided and why not updated. No mention all school districts in the Town and all private schools.
- p. 59 Why reference to Rochester/Genessee models with no footnote. What do these plans contain and why significant for Colonie?
- p. 60 Form based code- 2005 Comp plan only had form based code apply to Route 5. Is the Town going to adopt a form based code for entirety of town, other transportation corridors? Where is analysis and discussion of this in the updated draft?
- p. 61 sign review board and ZBA. Who is responsible for sign permits? If only ZBA why have a sign review board at all?

- p. 61 There is no analysis of what is contemplated by updated zoning regulations for airport protection zones? Per FAA advisory, a Runway Protection Zone “is to enhance the protection of people and property on the ground. Such control includes clearing RPZ areas (and maintaining them clear) of incompatible objects and activities. Per FAA advisory, “while it is desirable to clear all objects from the RPZ, some uses are permitted, provided they do not attract wildlife, are outside of the Runway OFA and do not interfere with navigational aids. Automobile parking facilities, although discouraged, may be permitted, provided the parking facilities and any associated appurtenances, in addition to meeting all of the preceding conditions, are located outside of the central portion of the RPZ. Fuel storage facilities may not be located in the RPZ. Land uses prohibited from the RPZ are residences, and places of public assembly (churches, schools, hospitals, office buildings, shopping centers, and other uses with similar concentrations of persons typify places of public assembly.) Fuel storage facilities may not be located in the RPZ.”FAA Advisory No. 150/5300-13 3/28/2007.
- p. 62 open space conservation program- add neighborhood representatives, change “identify” to implement funding for open space. Eliminate “consider creating” to around create. These goals were identified in 2005 and were never implemented.
- p. 63 “work with utilities and providers for fiber optics and other communications infrastructure to ensure that high quality services are available to meet the growing needs of residents and businesses.” What are the implications for 5G ? Draft should discuss the potential number of new cell towers, how cell tower obsolescence should be addressed, small cell stations that will likely be located within the town for 5G technology and their impacts. Discussion should include the need for expert assistance to review these applications, siting criteria, FCC safety rules for siting, collocation requirements, height limits, importance of uniform enforcement of the town’s cell tower law, enforcement of the town’s location priorities and setback requirements in Chapter 189 and the need for any amendments to Chapter 189.
- p. 64 This section does not reference Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee discussions to encourage the inclusion of electric vehicle chargers at gas stations, parking lots and other facilities that come before the planning board and other town boards for approvals. This would fit in with the other climate change/renewable energy goals.
- p. 64 “have a historical society perform an inventory of historically significant areas.” Why not the Town Historian and PEDD per 2005 comp plan. Will town be paying the historical society to do this and what is the time frame?
- implementation table does not address goals and tasks of the 2005 plan and why the town is no longer adhering to the 2005 recommendations and goals.
- p. 51 move graph from center page makes it difficult to read.

- p. 52, p. 53 add CDTC bike path study and bike path connections completed and identified for completion. Cumberland Farms bike path connection to Mohawk River bike trail is not identified. Referenced by PEDD director during the February 27, 2019 meeting. Discuss complete streets. Incorporate and address Albany Bike Coalition comments presented at February 27, 2019 hearing.
- p. 52 “because of the Town’s abundant cultural and recreational resources, the Parks and Recreation departments may face challenges while trying to maintain current levels of service and expand underutilized facilities.” Why is this statement included? The update contains no discussion about what is adequate desired parks and how the need for more parks will be determined. No reference to NYS Town Law authorization for the creation of parks and recreation during the subdivision review process. No discussion about priority locations and whether there are underserved areas of the town. 1988 LUMAC study should be referenced and discussed for relevance to future development and planning.
- Vacant Land Map vacant land listed to be greater than 10 acres. Why is 10 acres significant? Why was this # selected is it because of the Town GIS?
- Vacant land map dated December 2017 needs to be checked for accuracy and updated to date (2019) development approvals. i.e. On the Farm, Elks PDD, Afrims sports arena, Gordon/Rosetti Apts, British American Offices/Hotel, Starlite, Londonderry Ridge, Boght Road subdivisions, Lupe Way, Morris Road developments.
- Nov 2016 Map Conservation Open space needs to be updated to 2019.
- Recreation and Trails map. What is purpose of this map? How is “entertainment” category defined?
- Conservation Open Space November 2016 needs to be updated. What is definition utilized to map.
- P. 68. How was this December 2017 map compiled? What are “existing open space opportunities. Map should be updated to reflect 2019.
- No discussion of the timelines associated the goals.
- p. 67 the prioritization table is helpful. Development process transparency should be labeled high priority.
- Appendix B-all public comments submitted online to the committee should be printed out and included in this section in addition to meeting notes. Town residents have submitted emails to PEDD and to the Comp plan website form that must be included in this section. A response should be provided to these comments.

Appendix C- Assessment of Town Assets

An Asset Class/Category list should be developed for the Town of Colonie.

Examples of assets could include:

- **BUILDINGS/FACILITIES:** All municipal buildings (town halls, storage buildings, libraries, museums, theatres) as well as recreation facilities (gymnasiums, hockey arenas, indoor soccer complexes). This category also includes facilities that house water and wastewater treatment equipment, but not the equipment itself.
- **PARKS:** All municipal parks, gardens, playgrounds and green spaces, etc.
- **ATHELETIC FIELDS:** All outdoor athletic fields including soccer fields, baseball diamonds, rugby fields, football fields, etc.
- **CULTURAL/TOURISM:** An historic site, statue, sign, commemorative plaque, something similar having historical significance or that is used to attract tourists.
- **TRAILS:** All walking/hiking/biking trails.
- **LAND:** Woodlots, fields, vacant properties

An asset inventory is a comprehensive list and assessment of all assets that are owned by the Town. The purpose of an asset inventory and assessment is to develop an asset management plan. “The Concept of Municipal Asset Management” A Toolkit for Municipal Asset Management

“Estimates show that in many cases, the value of fixed assets of a municipality can amount to more than 4 times its yearly expenditures (400%). In these cases, if property can be rented out, a conservative estimate is that the municipality could earn additional yearly revenues equivalent to 10% of the budget expenditures (assuming conservatively that about 50% of the fixed assets are rented out at 5% of the value of the asset per year). With a balanced budget, this means that additional revenues to local government could potentially increase by 10%. Hence, there is strong incentive for local governments to develop their fixed asset base as a productive resource to help in the attainment of public goals.”

Appendix D: Implementation Table Comments

"The Future of Colonie is in the Planning for Tomorrow"

2019

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.

Question- what is the relationship between the priority level and the timeframe in the tables?

These time frames were not discussed at the Comp Plan Advisory Committee meetings. They were selected by PEDD staff and the TDE. Town Board should validate whether these time frames are acceptable.

It would seem that any timeframe starting in Year 1 would be a "high" priority. If it isn't, the timeframe should be later.

Eliminate all wording such as "consider, should" and replaced with directives. There were various goals which were part of the 2005 comp plan which were not implemented due to "fuzzy" language.

Town of Colonie - Comprehensive Plan Update

Goals	Recommendations		Priority Level	Timefram
<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>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.</p>	<p>Support reinvestment in the Town's older housing stock and the neighborhoods where such housing is concentrated.</p>	<p>Medium/High</p>	<p>5-10-15 Years <u>Colonie is being inundated w/hi-end senior housing requests incompatible w/ intergenerational living. If not addressed soon, this will become a future liability for the Town</u></p>
<p>Work with the Senior Resources Department to <u>develop strategies for addressing the housing and transportation needs</u> 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.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><u>Density incentives as currently used in the Town provide a VERY limited view of the options for facilitating independent senior living and do not address "transportation needs". Innovative initiatives that have been undertaken elsewhere include</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>the "Village" concept of housing in place w/caring networks</u> <u>Intergenerational supportive housing developments (e.g Beacon Community in Guilderland)</u> <u>Student/senior housing developments</u> <p><u>Transportation needs in the area include pedestrian-friendly streets & especially intersections (crosswalks, bus shelters, sidewalks)- especially on Rte 9 in the built-up area between Maxwell Rd and Latham Farms. This requires coordination w other agencies, but is critical for our students & retail workforce</u></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>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. <u>An architectural review board is needed to achieve any level of consistency of approach in TOC development. It shouldn't be dependent on the tastes of a variable roster of Planning Board members present at any given meeting.</u></p>	<p>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. <u>The Town has a number of neighborhood groups already that would respond positively to the chance to be more proactive in planning their neighborhoods. This needs to start NOW, not in 3 years and could start as a pilot in one or two neighborhoods w/grant funds to support a professional planning facilitator.</u></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 NYS DOT in addressing these mobility issues.</p>	<p>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 NYS DOT.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>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</p> <p><u>Consider applying to CDTC for funding to prepare an Active Transportation Plan for the Town of Colonie. Develop an Active Transportation Plan <u>would</u> 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. Apply to CDTC for funding to prepare this Active Transportation Plan. If unsuccessful, seek funding from other sources as a top priority for the Town.</u></p> <p><u>NOTE: 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).</u></p>	<p>High</p>	<p>1-3 Years</p>
<p>Incorporate "Complete Streets" design concepts and guidelines into the next Zoning Code update. <u>How is this going to be done? No discussion in text</u></p>	<p>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 <u>in high traffic areas.</u></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>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.</p> <p><i>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. There is no discussion in text</i></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>3-5 Years</p>
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Town of Colonie - Comprehensive Plan Update				
Goals	Recommendations		Priority Level	Timeframe
<p>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> <p><u>Enhanced notification via town websites, project document uploads to include all project documents. Improve ZBA website to provide past decisions & meeting minutes, index of variances & approvals to be maintained online.</u></p>	<p>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:</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. <u>What role will the Sign review board have if this is done?</u> 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. <u>The TB needs a stated PDD policy which will be consistently implemented by the PEDD. Currently benefits are determined in an ad hoc manner. Language in zoning code is sufficient and mimics NYS Town Law.</u> 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. <u>what amendments are contemplated?</u> 		Medium-High	1-3 Years
<p>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>	<p>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. <u>Any economic development strategy needs to be a coordinated and integrated part of an overall strategic plan for the Town, not an independent study. Update the Town's GEIS to reflect current Town infrastructure, open space, and recreation needs.</u></p>		Medium	3-10 Years
<p>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. <u>develop a tree ordinance and review the towns clearing and grading regulations to require approvals for clearing less than 1 acres.</u></p>	<p>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. <u>What does this mean? Why is it up to the PB? Why not Town-wide standards? Create appropriate limits on clearcutting. Expand the town's capacity to monitor and enforce development activity. Develop a tree clearing protocol similar to East Hills subdivision approval process.</u></p>	<p>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.</p>	High	1-10 Years
<p>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>	<p>Support the preservation of existing, and the development of new wild-life corridors in Town. <u>Identify these lands on maps and update these areas on maps on a continuing basis. Identify who will update these maps. Conservation Advisory Council, PEDD?</u></p>	<p>Establish an Open Space Conservation Program:</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	<p><u>How is it a high priority when 1-10 years given?</u></p> <p>1-10 Years</p>
<p>Enhance and expand active and passive recreational resources available throughout the Town to meet the growing and changing demand for these amenities.</p>	<p>Consider creating <u>Create</u> 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. _</p>		Medium-High	1-10 Years

Town of Colonie - Comprehensive Plan Update

Goals	Recommendations		Priority Level	Timeframe
<p>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.</p>	<p>Consider implementing an Asset Management Program to inventory infrastructure assets, equipment, materials, etc.</p>	<p>Review Albany County Hazard Mitigation Plan for suggestions about adaptation and resiliency measures in Colonie.</p>	Medium	3-5 Years
	<p>Consider supplementing <u>Supplement</u> existing funding for water and sewer infrastructure maintenance through a Community Preservation Program (see Open Space financing)</p>		Medium	1-3 Years
<p>Encourage low-impact development techniques and green infrastructure to address stormwater management.</p>	<p>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.</p>		Medium	1-3 Years
<p>Maintain the Town's high level of public safety services.</p>	<p>Continue coordination of shared services with surrounding municipalities.</p>	<p>Locate areas to expand and improve public safety services.</p>	Low	3-5 Years
<p>Maintain the Town's high level community services for youth, seniors, and the public at large.</p>	<p>Protect public spaces and public greenspace to maintain use for community services.</p>	<p>Establish inter-generational programs for seniors and youth.</p> <p>Facilitate volunteer opportunities for youth, seniors, and public at large.</p>	Medium	3-5 Years
<p>Protect and promote the Town's significant cultural and historic resources. <u>Establish an historic register</u></p>	<p>Have a/the historical society perform an inventory of historically significant areas, buildings, public spaces. <u>Why not town historian?</u></p>	<p>Preserve and protect spaces that are deemed as historically significant to the Town.</p>	Medium	3-5 Years
	<p>Seek grants which exemplify and protect the Town's cultural and historic resources and can attract tourism.</p>			
<p>Promote energy efficiency and conservation, the use of renewable energy, and waste reduction in the Town.</p>	<p>Consider participating <u>Participate</u> in the NYSDEC's Climate Smart Communities program and actively seek certification in NYSEDA's Clean Energy Communities program.</p>	<p>Seek to encourage applicants for new commercial projects to incorporate and follow LEED design standards, and seek LEED certification for all new buildings.</p>	Medium	1-3 Years
<p>Expand opportunities for sharing information and for encouraging community involvement. Promote volunteerism and community service. <u>Utilize the Coalition of Neighborhoods for outreach and notification</u></p>	<p><u>Require Planning Board meetings to be broadcast. Improve audiovisual and meeting amenities for planning board and zba meetings. Upload meeting transcripts of town Board agenda sessions online or broadcast town board agenda sessions.</u> Continue updating the Town's website as well as using other social media mediums to keep the public up to date on current events.</p>		Medium	1-3 Years
<p>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.</p>	<p>Establish a Town Board Liaison with the local school boards and meet monthly to provide updates on issues of mutual interest.</p>	<p>Increase the frequency of meetings between the Town and the North Colonie and South Colonie School Districts to once every six months</p> <p>Niskayuna and mohonosan school districts also included in the town</p>	Medium	1-3 Years
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>		Medium	3-5 Years