



ROTTERDAM COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

DRAFT
JUNE 2022



"A Great Place to Live"



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section One: Introduction	I-1
Rotterdam: A Nice Place to Live	I-1
Comprehensive Plan Overview	I-3
The Planning Process	I-4
 Section Two: Vision, Goals and Vision Map	 II-1
Vision Statement	II-1
Goals	II-2
Rotterdam Vision Map	II-3
Vision Map Graphic.....	II-5
 Section Three: Vision Map Recommendations	 III-1
Corridor Improvements and Neighborhood Connections	III-1
Mixed-Use Nodes.....	III-10
Key Regional Access	III-15
Maintain and Enhance Existing Character.....	III-16
 Section Four: Town-wide Recommendations.....	 IV-1
Transportation and Mobility.....	IV-1
History, Culture, Education and Community.....	IV-4
Economic Growth.....	IV-7
Governance and Infrastructure	IV-10
 Section Five: Implementation.....	 V-1
Prioritization of Recommended Actions.....	V-1
Implementation Actions.....	V-1



Section One: Introduction



INTRODUCTION

In October 2019, the Town of Rotterdam initiated an update to its 2001 Comprehensive Plan to reflect the current needs of the Town and identify a vision for the future development of the community. The Comprehensive Plan establishes a framework for the future for a range of topic areas including land use, economic development, infrastructure, transportation, neighborhoods, housing and the environment. In the 20 years since the development of the Town's last comprehensive plan, the Town has experienced many changes, including demographic and socio-economic changes as well as changes to the built environment. The year 2020 also marked the 200th anniversary of the establishment of the Town. While the challenges of the year 2020 stalled the celebrations for this momentous occasion, the resilience and sense of community in Rotterdam will drive the community forward into the future with a plan that serves as both a guide for the future but also serves as a testament to the 200-year legacy of the Town.

ROTTERDAM: A NICE PLACE TO LIVE

The Town of Rotterdam is centrally located in Schenectady County, New York. It is bounded by Princetown to the west and, the Town of Glenville and the Mohawk River to the northeast. To the immediate south is the Albany/ Schenectady County border with the Town of Guilderland and to the southeast the City of Schenectady. The Town's location in the heart of the capital region, in close proximity to the main population and job centers of the Cities of Albany and Schenectady, has resulted in an attractive location for commercial and residential growth.



Rotterdam Town Hall

The Town consists of a number of distinct neighborhoods that range from highly urbanized areas with higher density residential and commercial land uses in the eastern part of the Town bordering the City



of Schenectady, to scenic rural uplands, agricultural lands and historic riverfront hamlets in the western part of Town. Historically, the Town's location along the Mohawk River helped to drive industry and commerce and today serves as a key recreational resource for the community.

From a transportation perspective, the Town is ideally located along several key transportation corridors, including Interstate 90 (I-90), Interstate 88 (I-88), and Interstate 890 (I-890), State Routes 7 (Route 7), 146 (Route 146), 158 (Route 158) and 159 (Route 159), and a system of local roadways that connects each area of town. The road system in Rotterdam allows for easy access both into and out of the community which makes the Town an ideal location to live, work, do business, or commute to the many retail and employment opportunities in New York's Capital Region.

The Town offers two highly regarded school districts, including Schalmont Central School District (SCSD) and Mohonasen Central School District (MCSD), as well as a number of other important educational resources like the Rotterdam Public Library and the Boys and Girls Club of Rotterdam. Many residents of the Town identify with the schools that their children attend which serve as important markers of community identity and pride.

The Town's diverse neighborhoods offer a variety of housing including single-family and, multi-family, such as apartments and townhomes, that meets the needs of a variety of homeowners and renters. Rotterdam provides opportunities for young families and first-time home buyers to purchase a home, or empty nesters looking to downsize into an apartment or townhome.

The many resources described above coalesce to form a unique community identity and sense of place that makes the Town a nice place to live, work, do business and visit. The primary goal of this plan is to strengthen and build on these key resources to set the Town on a path towards success, resilience and opportunity.



Rotterdam Girls Softball League Mural



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OVERVIEW

The following provides information about what a comprehensive plan is, how it is used and the organization of the plan for context and ease of use.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan is both a vision for the future and a blueprint for how to get there. The Comprehensive Plan document will create a framework for the future for a range of topic areas including but not limited to land use, economic development, infrastructure, and housing. The Comprehensive Plan evaluates existing conditions of the community (existing state); identifies a vision for the future (future state); and outlines a series of recommendations and steps to achieve that vision (implementation).

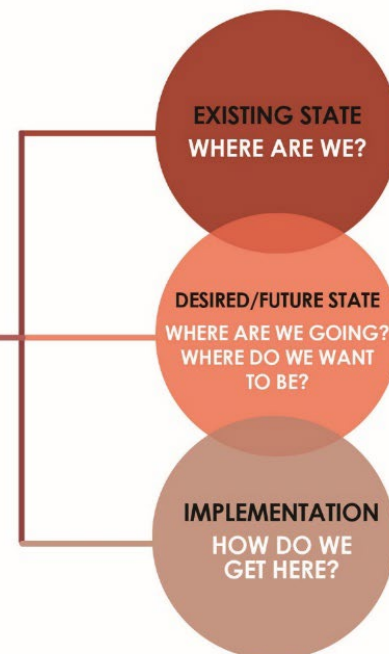
Essentially, the Comprehensive Plan answers three important public policy questions:

1. Where are we?
2. Where do we want to be? And
3. How do we get there?

PURPOSE OF A COMP PLAN



STAGES





Town Law §272-a identifies a comprehensive plan as “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 the municipality.

A key component to any comprehensive plan is public participation in the process. Understanding the needs and wants of members of the community results in a consensus driven document that increases the likelihood of implementation and progress. Rotterdam’s planning effort included a public engagement effort that is detailed later in this section, as well as in **Appendix A**, Community Engagement Plan.

Organization of the Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive plan is organized into several different sections that are described below.

Section One of the Plan is the Introduction. This section provides a general overview of the Town of Rotterdam, an overview of the comprehensive plan document and an overview of the planning process and how the plan was developed.

Section Two includes the Vision, Goals and Vision Map that provides the basis and guiding principles of the plan for Rotterdam. The section begins with a vision statement that describes the future state that the community aspires the Town to be. This statement is intentionally broad in nature and is a statement of aspiration, not necessarily the existing state of the Town. Following the Vision are a set of topic-based goals to guide the recommendations of the plan. The intention is for the goals and recommendations of the plan, once implemented, to achieve the overall vision in the future. Also included in this section is a Vision Map which provides a visual representation of the Vision and how those elements relate to the built environment.

Section Three includes an overview and recommended actions that correspond to each Vision Map component which include Corridor Improvements and Neighborhood Connections, Mixed-Use Nodes, Key Regional Access, and Maintain and Enhance Existing Character.

Section Four is dedicated to additional Town wide or topic specific recommendations apart from the vision map components. This includes topics such as land use and zoning, infrastructure and governance.

Finally, Section Five proposes a means of implementing the plan that will assist the Town with achieving the recommended actions.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Comprehensive Plan Update process began in October 2019 with the appointment of a Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) to oversee the development of the Comprehensive Plan. The CPAC was appointed by the Rotterdam Town Board and comprised of representatives from the Town that represent local committees, land use boards and at-large community members. The CPAC held regular meetings over the course of the planning process, working closely with the community



with assistance from Town staff, local elected officials and the consultant team from [M.J. Engineering and Land Surveying, P.C.](#) (MJ), A project website was established at the outset of the process to compile and share important documents and materials.. Public comment opportunities were available at each CPAC meeting, and a record of each meeting was posted to the project website. This plan represents a synthesis of information gathered from the community, CPAC, Town staff and key stakeholders with a plan of action to address the issues and opportunities facing the Town.

Existing Conditions

The planning process began with an inventory of existing conditions in Town to help gain an understanding of the current state of the community. The inventory includes information on the following topic areas:

- Historic and Cultural Resources
- Demographic and Socioeconomic Trends
- Land Use and Zoning
- Transportation and Mobility
- Community Facilities and Services
- Infrastructure and Public Utilities
- Natural Resources and Water Quality Protection
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Agriculture
- Economic Development

The Inventory of Existing Conditions is available in **Appendix B**.

In addition to the Inventory of Existing Conditions, a review of prior planning initiatives was conducted to understand the types of planning efforts that have occurred in the community since the previous comprehensive plan was developed. These prior planning efforts remain relevant today. Updating a comprehensive plan creates an opportunity to take stock of past planning undertaken by the Town and reignite the progress and action intended from the plans. Recommendations from past plans that are still relevant have been identified and incorporated into this plan. Past planning initiatives that have been reviewed for this effort are listed below.

Local Plans

- 2001 Rotterdam Comprehensive Plan
- Rotterdam Junction Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study
- NY 7/NY 146 Land Use and Transportation Study
- NYS Thruway Exit 26 & I-890 Land Use and Transportation Study
- Five Corners Transportation and Land Use Linkage Study
- Burdeck Street, I-88 & NYS Thruway Exit 25A Land Use and Transportation Study



Regional Plans

- Schenectady County-Mohawk River Blueway Trail Plan
- Mohawk River Waterfront Revitalization Plan for Schenectady County
- Schenectady County Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan
- CDTC – Capital District Trails Plan
- Capital Region RECD Strategic Investment Plan

The review of past planning initiatives is available in **Appendix C**.

Public Engagement

A key focus of this plan was the participation of the community throughout the planning process to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan was developed through an inclusive, consensus-driven process. Participation of residents, developers, landowners, business owners, appointed and elected officials, and other stakeholders throughout the community were vital to the plan's development.

As the CPAC was in the midst of this planning effort, the Town of Rotterdam, the Nation and the world faced many unprecedented challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these challenges the Town focused on a path forward to continue engaging community members and drive the planning process forward. Although public engagement efforts had included in-person engagement at public meetings, forums, stakeholder interviews, and direct community events, starting in March 2020, the focus of public engagement efforts shifted to virtual and socially distanced formats to protect the health and safety of community members. The public engagement methods described below includes both in-person engagement opportunities that occurred prior to COVID-19 and virtual formats during the pandemic that were intended to keep community members safe while soliciting public input.

A variety of in-person and virtual public engagement methods were utilized throughout the development of this plan to provide a wide range of opportunity for the public to participate. The following is a list of public engagement opportunities that have occurred with a brief description of each.

Public engagement included:

- Public Workshops
- Community Surveys
- Key Stakeholder Interviews
- Web/Social Media Outreach
- Pop-up Information Stations

In addition to these engagement opportunities, the CPAC and Town Board each held public hearings prior to the adoption of the plan in accordance with §272-a of New York State Town Law.



Public Workshops

Public workshops provide an opportunity to actively engage with the public to learn more about challenges and opportunities from the perspective of community members. The information gathered from these events helped to inform the overall Vision, Goals and Recommendations of this plan. A summary of input received from each public workshop is available in **Appendix E**. Following is a description of each event.

Public Open House and Visioning Workshop #1

On Thursday, November 14, 2019 the CPAC held the first in-person public open house and visioning workshop. The event was held from 6:30-8:30 PM at Fire District #6, 6 Old Mariaville Road, Schenectady. Over 70 residents, property owners, business owners, and other stakeholders participated in the event. The main purpose of this workshop was to gather information about needs and opportunities and a vision for Rotterdam in the next 5, 10 or 20 years. The workshop included a variety of activity stations that provided information about the project and stations to collect information about the Town based on particular topic areas. The workshop also included a presentation from the Project Team and a welcome from the Town Supervisor. Additionally, participants had the opportunity to speak with Town staff, CPAC members and the Project Team and share written ideas on comment cards.



Public Open House and Visioning Workshop #1

The open house component of the event allowed participants to informally walk through eight (8) activity stations to learn about the project at their own pace and provide input and ideas about the community.



Activity stations included:

- Station 1 – Project Overview
- Station 2 – Community Profile
- Station 3 – Community Vision
- Station 4 – Community Hot Spots
- Station 5 – Planning Across Generations
- Station 6 – Challenges and Opportunities
- Station 7 – Idea Station
- Station 8 – Other Thoughts and Ideas

Public Open House and Visioning Workshop #2

The second in-person open house was held on Thursday, February 27, 2020 at Fire District #1, 1215 Main Street, Rotterdam Junction. Over 45 residents, property owners, business owners, and other stakeholders participated in the event.

This open house was identical to the first open house and was located in Rotterdam Junction to ensure that community members from each area of Town had ample opportunity to participate. The open house component of the event allowed participants to informally walk through eight (8) activity stations to learn about the project at their own pace and provide input and ideas about the community.

Activity stations included:

- Station 1 – Project Overview
- Station 2 – Community Profile
- Station 3 – Community Vision
- Station 4 – Community Hot Spots
- Station 5 – Planning Across Generations
- Station 6 – Challenges and Opportunities
- Station 7 – Idea Station
- Station 8 – Other Thoughts and Ideas



Public Open House and Visioning Workshop



Comprehensive Plan Virtual Public Meeting (Meeting #3)

The third public event took place on Monday, October 19, 2020. This event was held virtually via Zoom Webinar to ensure the health and safety of community members in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The purpose of this event was to present the draft Vision, Vision Map and general direction of the Comprehensive Plan and gather feedback from members of the public. The virtual session included a presentation by the consultant team and opportunities for the public to share feedback through live polls and a question-and-answer period following the presentation. Following the event an online survey was developed to gather additional public feedback on the draft Vision and Vision Map. The online survey was live from October 19, 2020 to November 20, 2020 and received a total of 368 responses during that time.

Community Surveys

The public engagement component of the Rotterdam Comprehensive Plan Update included three community surveys that were designed to collect public input about needs and opportunities in Rotterdam. The three surveys include a student conducted face-to-face survey by students from the Schalmont High School Syracuse University Project Advance Policy Studies 101 class, an Online Community Survey, and a Vision Map Survey. The following is an overview of each survey.

Online Community Survey

Online surveys provide a unique opportunity to reach a broad range of community members. For those that may not be able to make a public meeting or other events, an online survey can be a great way to collect public input about a variety of topic areas. The purpose of the online survey was to gather input from community members, business owners and other stakeholders about Rotterdam. This information was used to help inform the overall Vision, Goals and recommendations for the town and help shape the Comprehensive Plan. The survey was conducted using the Survey Monkey platform and went live on February 27, 2020 and was open to participants until April 1, 2020 with a total of 223 respondents.

The survey was advertised on several platforms, including the Rotterdam Comprehensive Plan project website, Town website and social media and through a press release that was distributed prior to and during the survey period. Information and links to the survey were also distributed on flyers and business cards which included a Quick Response (QR) code so respondents could access the survey directly on their smartphone or tablet.



Online Survey Business Card

The survey included 15 questions that covered the following topic areas:

- Demographic and Background Information
- The Places We Gather
- The Way Land is Used
- The Future

A summary of the survey is available in **Appendix F**.



Student Conducted Community Survey

In November 2019, students from Schalmont High School enrolled in the Syracuse University Project Advance Policy Studies 101 class conducted a community survey to assist the CPAC and Town of Rotterdam in collecting input about community needs. The target population encompassed the entire voting populous of the Town of Rotterdam, which exceeds 23,000 citizens aged 18 and older. A sample size of 200 was selected providing a 95% confidence interval with a margin of error of $\pm 7\%$. The sample population is 0.86% of the target population in the Town of Rotterdam.

The surveys were administered face-to-face and respondents completed it on site. The face-to-face method made the respondents more likely to participate and to complete the survey. Any questions and/or misconceptions from the respondents could be clarified by the surveyors. Surveys were distributed outside of the ten polling locations in the Town of Rotterdam on Election Day, November 5th, 2019. The survey was administered on Election Day providing an equal opportunity to registered voters to participate in the survey.

The results of the student conducted survey are available in **Appendix G**.

Vision Map Survey

Following the Virtual Public Meeting #3, a Vision Map Survey went live to provide the public with the opportunity to view the proposed Vision Map, the draft Vision and to gather additional public feedback on the draft Vision and Vision Map. The online survey was live from October 19, 2020 to November 20, 2020 and received a total of 368 responses during that time. The survey was conducted using the Survey Monkey platform and was made available on the Town website and project website. Members of the public were informed of this survey through a variety of methods. The attendees of the Virtual Public Meeting #3 were informed of the survey, and following Virtual Public Meeting #3, the survey was publicized through the Town's social media and website, the project website, digital and hardcopy flyers and through the email distribution lists of the Town's local school districts. The information gathered from this survey helped shape the Vision and Vision Map components.

Key Stakeholder Interviews

Key stakeholder interviews were conducted and also serve as an important component in the development of this plan. The purpose of these meetings was to learn more about critical challenges and opportunities in the Town based on particular topic areas. Key stakeholders include property owners, business owners, Town staff, regional partners, community leaders and more. Over the course of several months, eight stakeholder meetings were conducted and nearly 40 stakeholders provided input. In some cases, a phone call or separate meeting was held to accommodate schedules of the participants. A summary of stakeholder input received is available in **Appendix D**.

In-person Stakeholder meetings were held over a two-day period on February 10 and 11, 2020 and were organized into eight topic-based groups which included:

- History, Culture and Education
- Planning, Zoning and Land Use
- Infrastructure, Mobility and Transportation
- Economic Growth



- Regional Partners
- Health, Human Services and Emergency Services
- Services and Community Organizations
- Open Space, Recreation and Agriculture

Web/Social Media Outreach

Members of the community were kept informed about the Comprehensive Plan Update via the Town's website, social media and dedicated project website. The project website, located at www.RotterdamNYPlan.com provided background information about the project, access to documents, maps and reports and provided information about public engagement events and engagement opportunities.

The Town's social media was utilized to post information about public meetings, CPAC meetings and other updates throughout the planning process.

Pop-Up Information Stations

Another method of outreach included several in-person information pop-up stations set up during the planning process to meet with and inform members of the public about the Comprehensive Plan Update project. A pop-up station provides an opportunity to meet community members where they are, offering a measure of convenience for those who may not otherwise attend public meetings. The purpose of the stations was to inform the public about the project and offer an opportunity for public input. The pop-up stations were staffed by a member of the consultant team and committee volunteers. The stations included a project area map, information boards, handouts with information about the project and comment cards for community members to leave thoughts, concerns and ideas about the community. Pop-up stations were conducted on October 25, 2019 at the Senior Center Health and Wellness Event, on December 11, 2019 at the Schalmont High School Holiday Concert, and on December 12, 2019 at the Mohonasen High School Holiday Concert.



Senior Center Pop-Up Information Table



Section Two:

Vision, Goals and Vision Map



SECTION TWO: VISION, GOALS AND VISION MAP

A vision describes the future state that the community aspires to be. This statement is intentionally broad in nature and is a statement of aspiration, not necessarily the existing state of the Town.

VISION STATEMENT

The Town of Rotterdam is a thriving, inclusive and friendly community that celebrates the diversity of its people and neighborhoods that together create a desirable place to live, work and play.

Locally owned businesses, walkable neighborhoods, excellent schools and vibrant commercial corridors as well as an active industrial area support a growing tax base, employment opportunities, and a high quality of life.

At the crossroads of several major transportation routes, Rotterdam is accessible to and from major Capital Region destinations for employment, retail and institutions of higher education.

Rotterdam enjoys a diversity of housing options. From historic single-family neighborhoods to multi-family neighborhoods, there are housing choices to accommodate all generations.

Rotterdam is respectful of its rich history and natural resources prioritizing the health and well-being of its residents, visitors and the environment.

Parks and recreational opportunities abound providing options for people of all ages to connect with nature and each other.



Eunice O. Esposito Park



GOALS

The plan includes a series of goals that together provide guidance and a framework to achieve the vision of the community. Goals include:

Transportation and Mobility

- Maintain a safe, reliable and efficient transportation system that provides multi-modal access to all residents and visitors.
- Enhance the walkability of historic hamlet areas and increase neighborhood connectivity.
- Improve accessibility of neighborhood commercial corridors by using complete street design elements.

History, Culture and Education

- Protect, enhance and promote historic and cultural resources of the Town for the enjoyment of community members and visitors.
- Expand opportunities for residents and visitors to experience history, arts and culture.
- Support and foster educational opportunities to ensure the success of future generations.

Parks and Recreation

- Provide recreational opportunities that utilize the scenic and natural resources of the town.
- Provide a diversity of year-round recreational opportunities for the enjoyment of all residents and visitors.

Neighborhoods, Housing and Community

- Preserve and enhance the character and unique identity of existing neighborhoods and hamlets.
- Create places and activities to celebrate community.
- Maintain and enhance existing housing stock.
- Support housing options that are appropriately located, meet the needs of seniors and all generations and serve all incomes.

Economic Growth

- Promote investment and reinvestment to attract and retain local businesses and employment opportunities.
- Ensure that commercial growth occurs in a manner that maintains the character of the community while expanding the Town's tax base and the availability of services to members of the community.
- Support and promote existing commercial and industrial areas.



Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment

- Preserve and protect key natural resources and critical environmental areas including the Great Flats Aquifer.
- Preserve and protect farmland and support a local agricultural economy.

Infrastructure and Governance

- Ensure the availability of public facilities, infrastructure and emergency services that adequately serve the present and future needs of Rotterdam.

ROTTERDAM VISION MAP

A key element of the Rotterdam Comprehensive Plan Update is the development of a Vision Map. A Vision Map is a visual representation of the community vision that illustrates how the vision is applied to the built environment. The illustration provides a general framework and direction for decision making in the community. The map illustrates areas of focus for changes, enhancement and improvements in the community. The map includes four main topic areas, including Corridor Improvements & Neighborhood Connections, Mixed-Use Nodes, Key Regional Access and Maintain and Enhance Existing Character. A number of the recommendations of the plan center around these topic areas and are intended to achieve the community vision when implemented. Following is a description of the key elements of the Vision Map along with an illustration of the map on page II-6. Section Three of this plan includes further discussion and recommended actions to accompany each map element, which aim to achieve the vision when implemented.

The Vision Map is not zoning, nor is it parcel specific.

Vision Map Topic 1: Corridor Improvements

The Corridor Improvements and Neighborhood Connections component of the Vision Map is intended to promote improvements to key commercial and transportation corridors with a focus on establishing better pedestrian and vehicular connections to neighborhoods.

There are two categories of Corridor Improvements and Neighborhood Connections presented, including Hamlet Center Mixed-Use and Corridor Mixed Use. A description of each follows:

- **Hamlet Center Mixed-Use** - The Hamlet Center Mixed-Use area is focused on the Rotterdam Junction area of Town. The intent is to promote small-scale mixed-use development and redevelopment along Main Street and create better connections and enhancements to neighborhoods and recreation areas. This also includes improvements to the streetscape and a more consistent look and feel of the corridor.
- **Corridor Mixed-Use** - The Corridor Mixed-Use areas includes improvements to key commercial and transportation corridors in Town. It also promotes mixed-use development and redevelopment along these corridors with a focus on office/commercial/retail establishments and higher density residential opportunities. The Corridor Mixed-Use is intended to promote a larger scale of development than the Hamlet Center Mixed-use, while focusing on compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods. These areas include a



consistent design and streetscape while promoting multi-modal transportation options and connections to neighborhoods.

Vision Map Topic 2: Mixed-Use Nodes

The Mixed-Use Nodes are nodes of commercial activity in key locations and corridors in the Town. The intent of the Mixed-Use Nodes is to create vibrant and attractive destinations to live, shop, work and gather that promote mixed-use development and redevelopment through the infill of vacant and underutilized properties. These areas are intended to be compact and walkable in nature with a consistent building design and streetscape with access multi-modal transportation options.

Several key mixed-use nodes have been identified in the Vision Map, including:

- Carman Road - Hamburg Street Node
- Curry Road - Altamont Avenue
- Five Corners Node
- Hannaford Plaza Node (Altamont Avenue)
- Western Gateway Node
- Via Port Mall Node

Vision Map Topic 3: Key Regional Access

The Key Regional Access points are main access points to the Town which promote the accessibility of the Town in the Capital Region and beyond. Enhancing regional connections and gateways creates a sense of place and also creates opportunities to attract future business, industry, employers and residents and provides an opportunity for marketing the Town.

Key Regional Access points include:

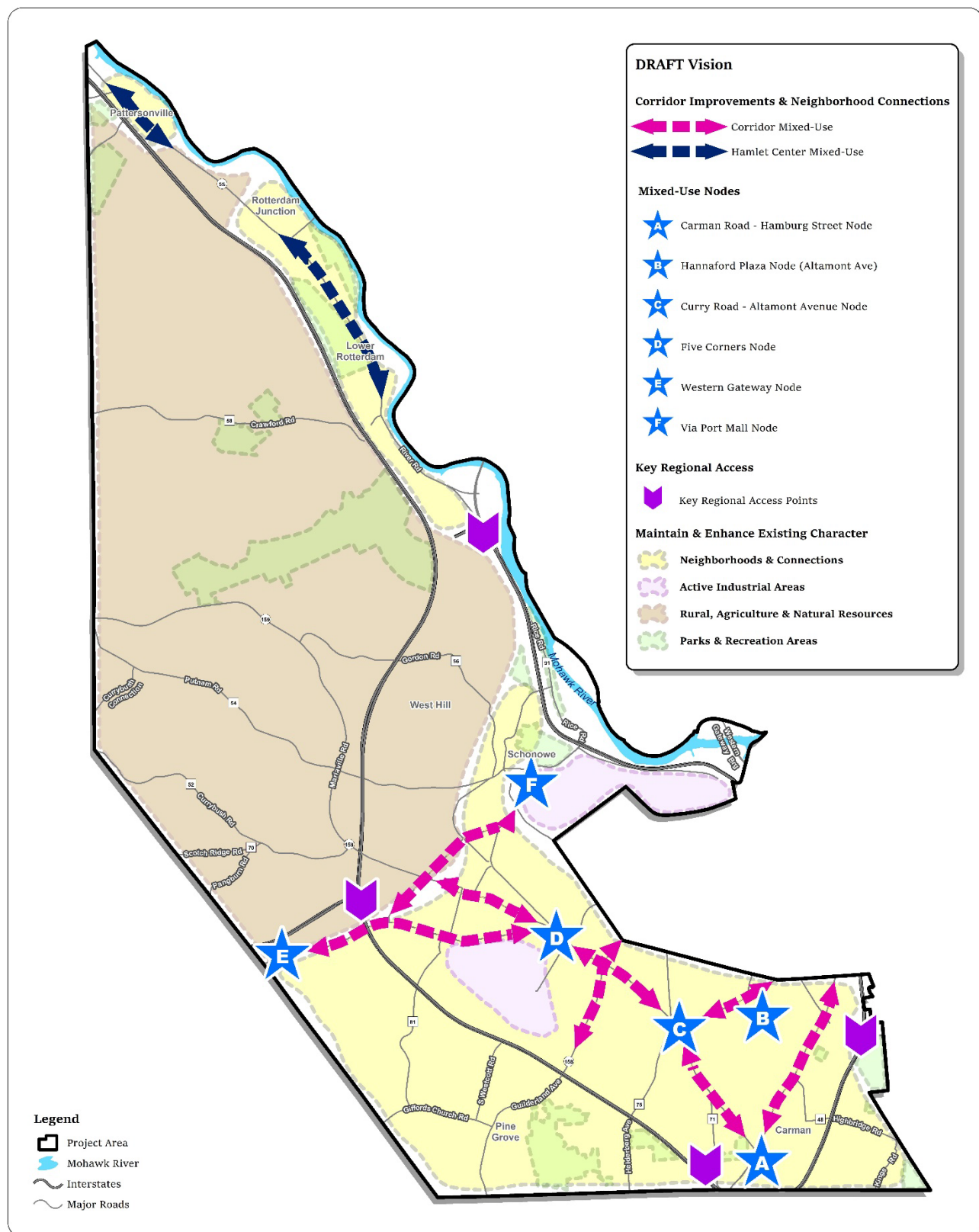
- Exit 25 (I-90)
- Exit 25A (I-90/I-88)
- Exit 26 (I-90/I-890)
- Exit 7 (I-890/Route 7)

Vision Map Topic 4: Maintain and Enhance Existing Character

Based on input from the public, stakeholders and the CPAC, a key focus of the Comprehensive Plan Update is on maintaining and enhancing existing areas in Town, such as existing neighborhoods, parks and recreational opportunities, rural and agricultural lands and industrial areas. This includes maintaining the existing character of these areas while promoting improvements and enhancements. Improvements may include pedestrian enhancements, better connections from neighborhoods to commercial areas, supporting agriculture and agricultural businesses and promoting economic development in industrial areas.

The main areas of focus for maintaining and enhancing existing character include the following:

- Neighborhoods and Connections
- Active Industrial Areas
- Rural, Agriculture & Natural Resources
- Parks and Recreation Areas





Section Three: Vision Map Recommendations



SECTION THREE: VISION MAP RECOMMENDATIONS

The Vision and Vision Map presented in Section Two provides a broad overview for the direction of this plan. Section Three represents a more in-depth discussion of each of the elements presented in the Vision Map along with key recommendations to achieve the vision.

The four key elements discussed in this section derive from the Vision and Vision Map, and include:

- Corridor Improvements and Neighborhood Connections
- Mixed-Use Nodes
- Key Regional Access
- Maintain and Enhance Existing Character

Together, these four elements act to preserve and protect the character of the community, while recommending key enhancements and improvements that build on Rotterdam's successes, improve the quality of life and support the community as a nice place to live.

KEY ELEMENT 1: CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS AND NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

The Corridor Improvements and Neighborhood Connections component of the Vision Map are intended to promote improvements to key commercial and transportation corridors with a focus on establishing better pedestrian and vehicular connections to neighborhoods and encouraging a mixed-use development and redevelopment within key commercial corridors.

Two categories have been identified, Corridor Mixed Use and Hamlet Center Mixed-Use. The following is a discussion of each category and the key corridors that are addressed.

Corridor Mixed-Use

The Corridor Mixed-Use areas include improvements to key commercial and transportation corridors in Town and promote mixed-use development and redevelopment with a focus on commercial retail establishments and higher density residential opportunities. The Corridor Mixed-Use areas are intended to promote a larger scale of development than the Hamlet Center Mixed-use, while focusing on compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods. These areas should include a consistent design and streetscape while promoting multi-modal transportation options and connections to neighborhoods.

The following is a description of each of the corridors identified on the Vision Map.

Burdeck Street Corridor

Burdeck Street is centrally located in the Town of Rotterdam and runs from Duanesburg Road, northeast to West Campbell Road. Existing land uses along this roadway are characterized by a mix of commercial, residential and industrial uses. Residential uses generally include higher-density condominiums, townhouses and apartments with some areas of single-family homes. While much of the central and



eastern portions of the Town are largely developed, the area along Burdeck street presents a number of opportunities for development and redevelopment.

The strategic location of Burdeck Street near the I-88 and NYS Thruway Exit 25A interchange creates a significant economic development opportunity for the Town. Past planning initiatives, including the *2001 Comprehensive Plan* and the *2004 Burdeck Street, I-90 and NYS Thruway Exit 25A Land Use and Transportation Study* (2004 Transportation Study) both identified a number of recommended actions for this roadway.

The following includes key discussion points and recommendations from those plans:

- **2001 Comprehensive Plan** - The 2001 Comprehensive Plan identified the Burdeck Street corridor as a likely location for commercial and industrial growth, hindered by a lack of sewer infrastructure and transportation deficiencies.
- **2004 Burdeck Street, I-90 and NYS Thruway Exit 25A Land Use and Transportation Study** - The 2004 Transportation Study was undertaken to examine future land use options for the study area, which included approximately 1,000 acres along Burdeck Street and Duanesburg Road. The plan identified a series of land use and zoning recommendations to consider for the orderly growth of the areas identified in the study. The study identified several land use alternatives for the Town's consideration. The land use alternatives included the following:
 - **Alternative 1 – Regional Office:** Alternative 1 focuses on increasing the amount of office space in Town and encourages office development in appropriate locations.
 - **Alternative 2 – Mixed Use:** Alternative 2 promotes a significant amount of mixed-use development and recommends the establishment of a new Mixed-Use zoning district to encourage a more village-like type of development, promoting residential, commercial, office and retail in close proximity to each other. This alternative also encourages the reuse of existing housing stock as office space rather than removing and erecting new buildings for office uses.
 - **Alternative 3 – Modified Existing:** Alternative 3 focuses on maintaining the more rural aspects of the study area while modifying existing commercial and industrial areas.

Currently, Burdeck Street is not connected to municipal sewer infrastructure. However, the Town is actively pursuing the extension of sewer infrastructure to this area which will create opportunities to spur the development of the corridor.

New York State Route 7 Corridor

New York State Route 7 (Route 7) is a main corridor through the Town of Rotterdam and traverses many of the commercial and residential areas of Town. Starting from the west, Route 7 travels from the western boundary of the Town at the I-88 and I-90 interchange and travels east on Duanesburg Road



until it reaches the Five Corners area. From Five Corners, Route 7 continues in a southeastern direction on Curry Road and continues to the Town boundary with the Town of Guilderland. The land uses along Route 7 vary greatly and include areas of low and high density residential, industrial and commercial land uses. This corridor travels along many of the Town's main commercial destinations and neighborhoods, making it a significant opportunity for economic development and improved connections.

The roadway is primarily a two-lane street. Certain areas along Duanesburg Road have wide enough shoulders to accommodate bicyclists, but in other areas, the shoulders narrow making bicycle travel unsafe for the average user. Notably absent along much of the Route 7 corridor is sidewalk infrastructure until arriving at the Five Corners area. This presents a significant hindrance in providing connections between the densely populated neighborhoods along this corridor and key commercial areas and community services. The lack of continuous pedestrian infrastructure also creates challenges for those that rely on public transportation to get to their final destinations.

While the Route 7 corridor is a primary access point into and out of the Town, these areas generally lack gateways that indicate when visitors are entering or leaving the Town. Gateways help to create a sense of place and a sense of pride for the community and can also be a way to direct visitors of where key destinations are located with informational and wayfinding signage.

2008 NY 7/NY 146 Land Use and Transportation Study

Previous planning efforts undertaken by the Town have examined sections of the Route 7 corridor and provided recommended improvements, including the *NY 7/NY 146 Land Use and Transportation Study* (2008 Study), completed in 2008 through the Capital District Transportation Committee. This study focused on an area of Town that encompassed 768 acres along Hamburg Street, Carman Road and Curry Road. The intent of the study was to ensure that future commercial and industrial growth was appropriately located and to ensure that future growth adhered to the following goals:

- Attract appropriate development
- Ensure that future growth is planned to minimize impacts to the transportation system
- Ensure that future growth compliments the surrounding residential neighborhoods
- Ensure that future growth provides new and inspired identity to the Hamburg Street Commercial District

The study identified key assets along this corridor that are still relevant today and present a number of opportunities to be considered in future planning pursuits. Those key assets include:

- The corridor provides a direct connection to I-890, I-90 and I-88 making this an ideal access point for commuters in and out of the Town and visitors to Town
- The densely populated residential neighborhoods surrounding this corridor creates opportunities for housing and also creates a critical mass of people to support local business



- There are two parks along the corridor, including Eunice Esposito Park and Memorial Park, which provide areas for active recreation
- Vacant land in key locations offers opportunities for infill development
- Civic and cultural land uses, including churches, schools and Town Hall are located off this corridor, providing services to residents and visitors

Key challenges identified in this study for the Route 7 corridor include:

- Lack of gateways entering and exiting the corridor
- The mixing of incompatible uses along the commercial corridors has led to a lack of clear identity along the corridor
- The lack of continuous sidewalks throughout the corridor has contributed to the Town being a vehicular dependent community that is unsafe to walk

The 2008 study included several land use and zoning related recommendations to improve the corridor and to encourage appropriate growth and development. These recommendations included allowing for a mixture of complementary land uses along the corridor that includes housing, retail, offices, commercial services and civic uses to create economic and social vitality and to encourage better pedestrian connections to reduce vehicular dependence and improve pedestrian safety. Recommendations also include facilitating development that supports public transit where applicable which has the potential to reduce traffic congestion.

Based on feedback from the public and discussions with the CPAC and Town staff, the goals and recommendations of the 2008 plan are still relevant today and are affirmed by the Vision and Guiding Principles of this Comprehensive Plan Update

New York State Route 146

New York State Route 146 (Route 146) travels southwest from the border with the City of Schenectady to the border with the Town of Guilderland in the eastern most area of the Town. From Schenectady, the road travels along Hamburg Street to the Route 7-Route 146 Roundabout and continues along Carman Road to the Guilderland Border. Route 146 traverses several of the Town's more densely populated neighborhoods. Route 146 along both Hamburg Street and Carman Road are two-lane roadways with a single travel lane in each direction. The Route 146 corridor primarily includes a mix of auto-oriented commercial land uses and single-family homes. The high number of single-family homes and auto-oriented commercial uses creates many driveway access points which can reduce pedestrian safety and create traffic back-ups. In a portion of Route 146, a central turning lane and more clearly defined driveway access points with curbing were added as part of a highway improvement project a few years ago that helps address these issues where the improvement project occurred.

The Route 146 corridor includes many assets for the community to build upon and to support proposed enhancements. Key assets along the Route 146 corridor include:

- Proximity of densely populated residential neighborhoods to nearby businesses



- Access to civic and cultural land uses, including churches and the Senior Center. Access to these uses is an important component of the community, where residents and visitors can gather and share common needs and interests
- Opportunities for infill development

As noted above, significant pedestrian and streetscape improvements have been recently made along Hamburg Street, including the construction of sidewalks from Carman Road to the City of Schenectady which implemented key elements of the 2001 Comprehensive Plan and the 2008 Plan. This is a significant improvement that helps to create safe connections for pedestrians from the numerous single-family neighborhoods to the many businesses throughout the corridor. Another significant improvement was the addition of a turning lane which helps to ease traffic congestion caused by left turns.

While significant enhancements have been made, there are still challenges to overcome along this stretch of roadway, including the mix of potentially incompatible land uses and a lack of a consistent look and feel along the corridor. Recently, sewer service has been provided along Hamburg Street.

Another challenge along Hamburg Street is the significant number of curb cuts for driveway access to businesses and residences. The high number of curb-cuts creates safety challenges for pedestrians trying to navigate around cars entering and exiting. The high number of access points can also create more opportunities for rear-end collisions as there are more locations for cars to stop.

The intent for this area in the future is to promote mixed-use development and redevelopment with a focus on commercial office and retail establishments and higher density residential options such as a first-floor business with second floor apartments. Any future development should be compatible with surrounding land uses, particularly surrounding residential single-family neighborhoods. The corridor should include a consistent design and streetscape while promoting multi-modal transportation options and connections to neighborhoods.

There are a number of tools that the Town can utilize to implement the vision for the Route 146 corridor, including changes to zoning to allow for more mixed-use development and design guidelines. Design guidelines are a set of recommendations providing guidance to designers, developers and land use boards on how to achieve a desired look and feel for a defined area of the community. Design guidelines should be user friendly, and graphic based to convey complex design principles. As new commercial development occurs, or redevelopment of existing properties occurs, design guidelines can help shape the development in a way that complements the community character. Building design guidelines may address building height, façade improvements, placement of doors and windows, use of materials and architectural elements. Site design guidelines may include placement of buildings near the street, parking areas located to the side or rear of lots, landscaping, site circulation and access management. Design guidelines are helpful for future applicants to understand the Town's vision and create predictability in the development review process creating a more efficient process. These design guidelines can be a stand-alone document or integrated into the Town site plan review regulations. In part, design guidelines have been incorporated in the zoning code through the use of overlay districts,



which currently permit, but do not yet require, property owners to pursue more flexible development in certain areas.

Guilderland Avenue Corridor

Guilderland Avenue is located in the southeastern portion the Town and runs from the border with the City of Schenectady, southwest to the border of the Town of Guilderland. From north to south this corridor experiences a variety of land uses and population density with the densest areas closer to Schenectady and gradually becoming less dense south of I-90 approaching the Town of Guilderland. The portion of the corridor north of I-90 is characterized by a mix of single and multi-family residential uses and auto-oriented commercial businesses. Commercial businesses are located in both single occupant buildings as well as auto-oriented strip malls.

The Guilderland Avenue corridor presents a number of opportunities for the Town. The corridor is located adjacent to densely populated residential neighborhoods, giving residents access to many commercial services and establishments within a five-to-ten-minute walk. This provides opportunities for economic development and the support of local businesses along the Corridor. The corridor also includes a number of civic and community services, including schools and churches.

There are several key challenges that should be addressed in the future planning and development of this corridor. A significant challenge is the lack of continuous sidewalk infrastructure. Sidewalks are largely missing throughout the corridor and the sidewalks that do exist have significant gaps between them. Where sidewalks are lacking, an unsafe situation is created in which pedestrians have to share the road with vehicles. Given the adjacent residential neighborhoods, this presents an opportunity to improve pedestrian safety and create better connections from neighborhoods to local businesses and services.

Another challenge along this corridor is the lack of a gateway treatment at the Town border with the City of Schenectady, indicating that one has entered the Town. A gateway treatment in this area can help to create a sense of place and identity for the community. A gateway treatment can also help to improve the aesthetic of the streetscape as one enters the Town.

The intent for this area in the future is to promote mixed-use development and redevelopment with a focus on commercial office and retail establishments and higher density residential options such as a first-floor business with second floor apartments. Any future development should be compatible with surrounding land uses, particularly surrounding residential single-family neighborhoods. The corridor should include a consistent design and streetscape while promoting multi-modal transportation options and connections to neighborhoods.

Altamont Avenue Corridor

Altamont Avenue runs northeast to southwest from the boundary with the City of Schenectady to the Curry Road/Route 7 intersection. This corridor consists primarily of auto-oriented commercial development with a limited amount of single-family residential uses. Altamont Avenue contains many local businesses and access to goods and services, including two grocery stores, Walmart, banks, restaurants, medical facilities, gas stations and convenience stores. Densely populated residential



neighborhoods lie adjacent to Altamont Avenue providing residents with easy access to a number of goods and services.

Pedestrian infrastructure in the form of sidewalks and crosswalks are available throughout the Altamont Avenue corridor which presents a great opportunity for residents and visitors to access goods and services and to access public transportation. The auto-oriented nature of this corridor, however, creates several challenges, including a reduction in pedestrian safety and an aesthetically undesirable appearance. The many curb cuts and driveway access points creates many opportunities for conflicts between drivers and pedestrians and should be considered for future improvements to the area.

Design guidelines should be considered along this corridor to encourage a more consistent look and feel. Streetscape improvements, such as street trees and benches should also be considered to help create a more inviting space to encourage people to spend time and gather along the corridor.

Recommended Actions – Corridor Mixed-Use

- CMU1. Promote mixed-use development and redevelopment of key commercial and transportation corridors in the Town, including Burdeck Street, NYS Route 7, Curry Road, Guilderland Avenue, Altamont Avenue and Hamburg Street.
- CMU2. Consider the development of form-based zoning along key commercial and transportation corridors to encourage mixed-use development and to establish a consistent look and feel.
- CMU3. Consider the development of design guidelines or standards along key commercial and transportation corridors to encourage a more consistent look and feel in the community.
- CMU4. Allow a mixture of complimentary land uses that includes housing, retail, offices, commercial services, and civic uses, to create economic and social vitality and to encourage the linking of trips.
- CMU5. Develop commercial and mixed-use areas that are safe, comfortable and attractive to pedestrians.
- CMU6. Provide flexibility in the siting and design of new developments and redevelopment to anticipate changes in the marketplace.
- CMU7. Reinforce streets as public places that encourage pedestrian and bicycle travel.
- CMU8. Provide roadway and pedestrian connections to residential areas.
- CMU9. Encourage efficient land use by facilitating compact, high-density development and minimizing the amount of land that is needed for surface parking.
- CMU10. Facilitate development (land use mix, density and design) that supports public transit, where applicable.



Hamlet Center Mixed-Use

The Hamlet Center Mixed-Use area is focused on the Rotterdam Junction area of Town. The intent is to promote small-scale mixed-use development and redevelopment along Main Street and create better connections and enhancements to neighborhoods and recreation areas. This also includes improvements to the streetscape and a more consistent look and feel of the corridor.

Rotterdam Junction is a historic hamlet located in the northwestern portion of Town along the Mohawk River and is located in an area that is considerably less populated and more rural than the eastern areas of Town. Main Street is the primary commercial corridor through the hamlet and includes a mix of small-scale commercial, civic and residential land uses. Shooting off from Main Street are a series of local streets and single-family residential neighborhoods. The hamlet includes significant recreational resources, including Woestina Park and direct access to the Mohawk Hudson Bikeway. Just down the road is the Mabee Farm Historic Site which is a significant cultural and historical resource that provides educational opportunities and serves as a local destination.

Over time, the hamlet has experienced significant economic and environmental challenges that have resulted in the need for development and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized buildings and properties, a need for streetscape improvements and façade improvements to commercial and residential structures.

In 2013, the Town completed the Rotterdam Junction Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study which examined existing conditions and a series of recommendations to address numerous vacant and underutilized sites in the Hamlet. The study identifies that 63.1% of the Study Area established in the plan is comprised of underutilized and strategic sites totaling 393.5 acres. These sites present opportunities for development and redevelopment to help drive the economic development of the hamlet.

Several key challenges must be considered for future planning and development of Rotterdam Junction. Key challenges include:

- A significant portion of Rotterdam Junction lies within the 100- and 500-year flood zone creating a potential barrier to development and the cost of living when flood insurance is considered. Significant flood damage has occurred in Rotterdam Junction, most recently in the aftermath of Hurricane Irene in 2011 which devastated the community.
- Another challenge is the location of the hamlet within the Great Flats Aquifer well head zone. The Great Flats Aquifer presents a major barrier to development and redevelopment given the strict regulations that are associated with it.
- A lack of sewer and water infrastructure also creates less demand for the development of the hamlet, particularly along the commercial corridor on Main Street.

While there are significant challenges to overcome in Rotterdam Junction, there also exists significant opportunities. Opportunities include:



- Access to significant recreational opportunities that can help promote the hamlet as a key destination in the Town to visit. This includes access to Woestina Park, the Mohawk Hudson Bikeway and cultural destinations like the Mabee Farm Historic Site.
- Access to regional transportation, including I-90 and I-890. Access to these transportation routes makes Rotterdam Junction an ideal location for commuters, particularly for people that may be looking to buy a home in a smaller historic hamlet rather than the more densely populated areas of Rotterdam.
- Opportunities for infill development of vacant and underutilized sites

The Hamlet Center Mixed-Use area promotes small-scale mixed-use development and redevelopment along Main Street to encourage the economic development of the hamlet. This also includes streetscape improvements like improved sidewalks and the potential for bike lanes to encourage riders along the bikeway to ride through the hamlet and visit local businesses. Design guidelines are encouraged for this area to help create a more consistent look and feel and to create a sense of place and community identity.

Recommended Actions – Hamlet Center Mixed-Use

- HMU1. Promote small-scale mixed-use development and redevelopment along Main Street in Rotterdam Junction.
- HMU2. Explore opportunities for the adaptive reuse of existing buildings to encourage redevelopment. Due to limitations related to the Great Flats Aquifer and lack of sewer infrastructure, adaptive reuse of existing buildings may be a more viable option for economic growth in Rotterdam Junction than development of new buildings.
- HMU3. Consider the development of design guidelines or standards to encourage a consistent look and feel along Main Street in Rotterdam Junction.
- HMU4. Enhance walkability by encouraging pedestrian connections from neighborhoods and recreational resources to commercial and mixed-use areas along Main Street in Rotterdam Junction.
- HMU5. Implement the zoning and land use recommendations of the Rotterdam Junction Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study.
- HMU6. Consider developing a feasibility study for extending sewer infrastructure to the Rotterdam Junction area. Development and redevelopment of this part of Town is significantly limited due to constraints related to the Great Flats Aquifer regulations. The construction of public sewer capable of serving either all or some portions of this area would significantly alleviate development limitations.
- HMU7. Explore opportunities for the next generation of uses on formerly industrial parcels in Rotterdam Junction.



- HMU8. Consider opportunities for the adaptive reuse of existing housing stock for small-scale commercial and retail use. This may include small, in-home businesses, such as legal, accounting, hair salons or seasonal businesses such as farmer's markets.
- HMU9. Focus redevelopment efforts in Rotterdam Junction on small-scale and mixed-use commercial entities that cater to tourists taking advantage of the abundant cultural and recreational resources in the area.
- HMU10. Work with regulatory partners to evaluate the regulations associated with Great Flats Aquifer to identify necessary modifications to encourage redevelopment in Rotterdam Junction while protecting this important resource.

KEY ELEMENT 2: MIXED-USE NODES

Mixed-Use Nodes are nodes of commercial activity in key locations and corridors in the Town. The intent of the Mixed-Use Nodes is to create vibrant and attractive destinations to live, shop, work and gather that promote mixed-use development and redevelopment through the infill of vacant and underutilized properties. These areas are intended to be compact and walkable in nature with a consistent building design and streetscape with access multi-modal transportation options. The key areas described below are already existing nodes of commercial activity, however, there are many opportunities to enhance these areas as key destinations that support local business and create inviting spaces for the community to visit.

Placemaking

A key concept for the enhancement of mixed-use nodes in Rotterdam is the concept of placemaking. Placemaking focuses on strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, known as the public realm. Placemaking is more than just promoting better urban design, it facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.¹

Many suburban communities are centered around automobile dependent uses and development patterns that do not incorporate a significant amount of shared public spaces, resulting in a loss of sense of place that exists in cities and smaller villages.

A key hallmark of placemaking is to create destinations that draw in and encourage visitors to visit and spend time in the community. A destination might include a downtown square or town center, a main street, waterfront area, park, museum or community center. Each destination should have multiple places within it to encourage people to spend time. For example, a town center may have shops and cafés, a playground for children, sidewalks with benches for people to sit or a small park area. The key is to create comfortable spaces that encourage people to spend time. More broadly, a town or region should have destinations and each destination should have places or things to do to encourage residents and visitors to spend time in the community.

¹Project for Public Spaces - <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>



According to the Project for Public Spaces, there are four key elements that create a great place. Those elements include:

- **Access and Linkages** – Great places are accessible and well connected to other important places in the area. This includes places that are walkable, accessible to all people and abilities, conveniently located and connected via roadways, sidewalks, multiuse paths and public transportation where available.
- **Comfort and Image** – Great places should be comfortable and project a good image. This may include places to sit and congregate, displays of local art, a focus on historic preservation, improving building conditions, landscaping and overall aesthetic improvements to an area.
- **Uses and Activities** – Great places attract people to participate in activities there. Having something to do gives people a reason to visit and return. A variety of activity areas can also encourage people to congregate at different times of the day. For example, a playground may attract young children and families during the day, while a band shell or concert space may encourage adult visitors in the evening.
- **Sociability** – Great places are sociable environments in which people want to gather and return.

Benefits of Placemaking

There are many benefits to incorporating placemaking elements into a community. Listed below are some of the key benefits to placemaking.

- Promotes a sense of comfort
- Nurtures and defines a sense of community
- Promotes health by creating more pedestrian friendly spaces
- Creates improved accessibility
- Builds and supports the local economy
- Fosters social interaction

Several key nodes have been identified in the Vision Map, including:

Carman Road - Hamburg Street Node – The Carman Road-Hamburg Street Node represents a key intersection at the junction of Routes 7 and 146. This is a busy intersection with active commercial activity at each corner, connected by a roundabout. This area is a gateway into the Hamburg Street corridor and presents opportunities for enhancement to create an inviting gateway. Roadway improvements, including new sidewalks along Hamburg Street and the roundabout at Routes 7 and 146 have led to significant pedestrian and traffic safety improvements. Streetscape improvements in this area should continue to be prioritized, including the addition of street trees, seating areas, public art



installations and wayfinding signage to the commercial district along Hamburg Street. A key challenge in this area is to balance commercial growth and aesthetic improvements with existing successful businesses and residential areas.

Curry Road - Altamont Avenue – The Curry Road-Altamont Avenue Node is another existing node in the Town with opportunities for enhancement. This area is located at the intersection of Altamont Avenue and Curry Road and is primarily characterized by commercial, auto-oriented land uses. This node is a gateway into the Altamont Avenue commercial corridor and presents an opportunity to provide an inviting space to celebrate the commercial success of Altamont Avenue businesses. Walkability is a significant challenge for this node. Currently, there are few crosswalks to allow pedestrians to safely travel from one area of the intersection to another. Streetscape improvements, including street trees, benches, local art installations and improved lighting would have a significant impact on the look and feel of this node.

Five Corners Node – The Five Corners intersection is a major commercial center in Rotterdam. This node is located at the intersection of four main roads in Town, including Curry Road, Duanesburg Road, Mariaville Road and Broadway. Although this area is a major focal point in the community, it is generally considered an unfriendly place for motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists. Significant challenges exist within this area, including poor traffic circulation and safety concerns, aesthetic concerns, lack of walkability, large areas of impervious surfaces and underutilized spaces and a prioritization of parking over pedestrian and placemaking amenities.

The lack of continuous sidewalks throughout the area has created a vehicular dependent community that is unpleasant to walk. Improving the walkability and pedestrian safety will help improve the connectivity between and within the Five Corners intersection and the surrounding residential area. New sidewalks would connect the major commercial areas and activity nodes including the library and park. In addition to the streets that intersect at the Five Corners, sidewalk upgrades are recommended along Broadway, Westcott Road and intermittent areas on Draper Avenue and Guilderland Avenue.

The area could also benefit from bicycle infrastructure improvements that could connect residential areas with major commercial centers. Public transportation improvements are also needed for this area. In addition to protected bus shelters, these improvements may include pedestrian infrastructure, such as sidewalks and crosswalks which would allow transit users to safely travel from bus stops to commercial and residential areas.

Access management is a significant challenge for the Five Corners Intersection. Access management is defined as the “systematic control of the location, spacing, design and operation of driveways, median openings, interchanges and street connections to a roadway”.² The purpose of access management is to ensure that a roadway functions safely and efficiently while providing the appropriate degree of access to adjacent properties. Good access management reduces traffic congestion and improves safety for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians alike.

Past planning efforts have offered recommendations for this area that are still relevant today. In 2011, the Town completed the Five Corners Transportation and Land Use Linkage Study to examine

² 2011 Five Corners Transportation and Land Use Linkage Study



opportunities for enhancements to traffic circulation and land use improvements. The study's objective was to develop a coordinated land use and access management plan for the Five Corners area to ensure that any redevelopment activity is properly accomplished using an integrated multi-modal network that complements the Town's existing and future land uses.

The Town should consider re-examining the preferred design alternatives explored in the 2011 study to determine areas of improvement for the Five Corners intersection.

Hannaford Plaza Node (Altamont Avenue) – The Hannaford Plaza Node is located off Altamont Avenue in a heavily commercial area and surrounded by residential neighborhoods. This shopping center provides the community with many retail and community services. The location of this node in proximity to several residential neighborhoods provides a critical mass of residents to support the many businesses located here. While this area is a significant location for goods and services, there are many opportunities for enhancements that can create a sense of place, establish community identity and turn this node from an auto-oriented shopping plaza to a destination that attracts visitors and encourages patrons to spend time in the community.

A significant challenge for the Hannaford Plaza Node is the vast amount of surface parking and lack of continuous sidewalks between commercial establishments. This is particularly challenging for those that utilize public transportation to travel to the plaza to access services and for shopping.

There are a number of opportunities to enhance the Hannaford Plaza area. Key opportunities include streetscape improvements such as additional sidewalks, street trees, bicycle infrastructure, seating areas and public art installations. Key elements of placemaking should be considered to create a more inviting space for visitors to gather and spend time.

Design guidelines and standards are another way to enhance this space. A consistent look and feel among the built environment help to create a visual identity for the node and can help establish the area a key destination.

Western Gateway Node – The Western Gateway Node is located in the area where Route 7 enters the Town. This is currently a highly visited truck stop and the location of a significant amount of vehicular traffic in and out of the Town. This node is located near the I-90 and I-88 interchange making it a major transportation access point.

A challenge that has been identified for this area is the high volume of truck traffic and lack of infrastructure to properly accommodate the high truck volume. Input from the community and key stakeholders have identified that the truck stop here is often full and that the high volume of truck traffic often leads to unsafe conditions for vehicle users, including overnight parking on Route 7.

Another deficiency of this area is an overall lack of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. While certain areas have wide enough shoulders to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists, most areas are lacking sidewalk infrastructure. Placemaking would promote services for the community and school adjacent to this corridor.

Via Port Mall Node – The Via Port Mall Node is located on Route 377 (West Campbell Road) in Rotterdam. This area is a major retail and commercial hub easily accessible via Exit 2A off I-890. The



accessibility of this node to the regional major transportation networks creates a locational advantage to attract businesses, visitors, employers and employees to the area. Many local residents are familiar with the original name of the mall which opened as “Rotterdam Square Mall” in 1988. A once popular and well visited establishment, the mall declined economically over the years, yielding less visitors and closing storefronts. In 2016, the mall was purchased by a new owner and renamed “Viaport Rotterdam”, named after the new property owner, Via Properties. As retail establishments have shifted from a brick-and-mortar model to online retail, shopping malls across the Country have had to reimagine themselves as destinations with experiential opportunities, rather than just brick-and-mortar retail establishments. In many areas, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated this change to online shopping. Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Viaport Rotterdam had begun to reimagine the shopping experience and introduced new establishments, including the Via Aquarium, to attract a new customer base to the area. In addition, Viaport Rotterdam has modified their plan to include leasing space for office use.

Despite the economic decline of many retail establishments, opportunities exist in emerging brick-and-mortar retail trends that show signs of improvement. One such trend is the involvement of large tech companies directing their attention towards retailers to help digitize stores in ways that create an efficient operation for the retailer but can also deliver a seamless and intuitive experience for the consumer. Another emerging trend is the idea of shopping as entertainment. Furthermore, with the State’s recent decriminalization of cannabis use and possession and the State’s intent to license retail cannabis dispensaries and on-site cannabis consumption sites, it is likely that such uses will be limited to brick-and-mortar establishments, particularly in light of the expected strict regulatory licensing program and continued illegality of cannabis under federal law.

Another emerging trend in retail is that many retail spaces have begun to reduce in size and the retail experience has begun shifting towards a hybrid of in-person and online shopping. A big-box retail store that may have once required large building footprints, may now opt for smaller showrooms to showcase products, while the actual purchasing happens online with products delivered directly to consumers.

Recommended Actions – Mixed Use Nodes

- MUN1. Encourage the creation of vibrant and attractive destinations to live, shop, work and gather by promoting mixed-use development and redevelopment.
- MUN2. Create walkable nodes with unique, identifiable character that have access to services, housing and commercial establishments.
- MUN3. Identify and promote the adaptive reuse and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties in key mixed-use nodes.
- MUN4. Encourage walkability and multi-modal transportation options in key mixed-use nodes.
- MUN5. Consider the development of form-based zoning or design guidelines to create a more consistent look and feel within key mixed-use nodes.



- MUN6. Focus commercial and mixed-use development within and surrounding mixed-use nodes to encourage compact and walkable development.
- MUN7. Foster an inclusive community through design by creating safe and inviting public spaces for all to gather.
- MUN8. Explore opportunities to reinvigorate investment in the Via Port Mall or adaptive reuse of vacant spaces within the mall.

KEY ELEMENT 3: KEY REGIONAL ACCESS

Key Regional Access includes areas that are main entry points into the Town of Rotterdam. This includes Key Access Points of major roads and highways, as well as gateways into the community on local roads from other municipalities. Key Regional Access is focused on enhancing regional connections and gateways to help create a sense of place and also to help attract future business, industry, employers and residents.

Key Access Points

Key Access Points include the entrances to Town from major transportation routes, including I-890, I-90, and the I-90/I-890 interchanges. These areas are often a visitor's or commuter's first introduction into the Town. These areas should include gateway treatments that identify their locations within the town and may include wayfinding signage to local business districts and regional destinations.

Gateways

A gateway is an important entranceway into the community providing a sense of arrival and can help to create a sense of community identity upon arriving in the Town. These areas can be enhanced to be more prominent and welcoming. Design standards as well as a well-placed sign with landscaping, banners or flowers can improve the sense of place in a community and indicates a transition from one municipality to another. Key gateways into the community include the following:

- New York State Route 7 – Located at the boundary with the Town of Princetown
- Hamburg Street – Located at the Boundary with the City of Schenectady
- Altamont Avenue - Located at the Boundary with the City of Schenectady
- Bridge Street – Entering Rotterdam Junction
- State Route 5s – Entering Pattersonville from the Town of Florida
- Broadway – Entering from the City of Schenectady
- Guilderland Avenue – Entering from the City of Schenectady
- Carman Road – Entering from the City of Schenectady



Recommended Actions – Key Regional Access

- KRA1. Enhance gateways into the Town at key regional access points. Gateways can help to define the character of a neighborhood or area of Town and demonstrate community pride and identity.
- KRA2. Establish branding and design guidelines for informational and wayfinding signage to help direct visitors to key destinations and commercial areas in Town.
- KRA3. Create design guidelines to ensure that gateways to the Town along major roadways develop in ways that respect existing businesses, create opportunities for new enterprises and create aesthetically appealing entrances into the Town.
- KRA4. Coordinate with the Capital District Transportation Committee on future freight studies along the Route 7 corridor.

KEY ELEMENT 4: MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE EXISTING CHARACTER

Based on input from the public, stakeholders and the CPAC a key focus of the Comprehensive Plan Update is on maintaining and enhancing existing areas in Town, such as existing neighborhoods, parks and recreational opportunities, rural and agricultural lands and industrial areas. This includes maintaining the existing character of these areas while promoting improvements and enhancements. Improvements may include pedestrian enhancements, better connections from neighborhoods to commercial areas, supporting agriculture and agricultural businesses and promoting economic development in industrial areas.

The main areas of focus for maintaining and enhancing existing character include the following:

- Neighborhoods and Connections
- Active Industrial Areas
- Rural, Agriculture & Natural Resources
- Parks and Recreation Areas

Neighborhoods and Connections

The focus of the Neighborhoods and Connections component of the Vision Map are to maintain the character of existing neighborhoods in the Town, while enhancing connections for pedestrians, bicyclists and those that utilize public transportation. Many neighborhoods in the Town are located adjacent to key commercial corridors yet lack sufficient pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to connect to those corridors. This includes neighborhoods that are adjacent to Route 7, Route 146, Altamont Avenue, Guilderland Avenue and Burdeck Street among others. This component of the Vision Map also emphasizes the protection of existing character within these neighborhoods to only allow for development that is appropriate with the scale and uses that are currently in place.



Recommended Actions – Neighborhoods and Connections

- NC1. Maintain the land use patterns of existing residential neighborhoods to preserve the character of established neighborhoods.
- NC2. Encourage a mix of high-quality residential development in Town with diverse offerings for families of all sizes, income levels, and stages of life.
- NC3. Actively pursue enhancement, revitalization and reinvestment in existing neighborhoods, particularly in older, more established neighborhoods in rural hamlet areas and areas that border the City of Schenectady.
- NC4. Attract high quality housing project proposals offering contemporary amenities and conveniences attractive to people of all ages, such as maintenance-free amenities, multi-modal transportation options, alternative energy solutions, and integration of natural resource feature protection into development plans and ensure these land development projects are constructed to Town requirements.
- NC5. Establish a housing program to update and improve existing homes to maintain the stability of neighborhoods.
- NC6. Use zoning as a tool to incentivize a diverse housing stock. This may include inclusionary zoning, density bonuses or streamlined development review to maintain and increase housing diversity, promote mixed-income neighborhoods and make homeownership more affordable by reducing development costs.
- NC7. Identify which areas of Town may be eligible for grants to assist with housing rehabilitation or to subsidize the cost of affordable housing construction.
- NC8. Continue to enforce building and zoning codes to maintain quality of housing.
- NC9. Provide opportunities for senior housing, assisted living and supportive housing where appropriate.
- NC10. Adopt design guidelines focused on scale, design and density to ensure that new housing is sensitive to surrounding neighborhood context.
- NC11. Identify alternative housing types that allow increased densities, while limiting neighborhood impacts.

Active Industrial Areas

There are several active industrial areas in Town that contribute to the economic growth of the Town and the region. Active industrial areas within the Town include General Electric, areas off Burdeck Street Corridor and the Rotterdam Industrial Park. The industrial activity at these sites helps to create jobs and support the Town's tax base. The intent of this Comprehensive Plan Update with regards to the active industrial areas is to maintain the existing areas, promote economic development, support the local tax base and provide employment opportunities within the community.



Recommended Actions – Active Industrial Areas

- AI1. Work with local and regional partners, including the Capital Region Chamber, Schenectady Metroplex Development Authority and Rotterdam Industrial Park to find approaches to support local businesses and entrepreneurship.
- AI2. Continue to ensure the adequate installation and maintenance of buffer areas for both new development and redevelopment activities during Site Plan Review. Such buffer areas may include both landscaped and structural materials.
- AI3. Ensure adequate infrastructure exists to support existing industrial areas and future industrial growth.

Rural, Agriculture and Natural Resources

The Town of Rotterdam can generally be separated into two distinct areas. The eastern part of Town is mostly developed and urbanized and is the location of most of the Town's infrastructure. The western portion of the Town, however, is distinctly unique in its low level of development, rural character, agricultural lands and diversity of natural resources. The Rural, Agriculture and Natural resources component of the Vision Map focuses on maintaining and protecting these key resources while support agricultural businesses and preserving natural resources.

Recommended Actions – Rural, Agriculture and Natural Resources

- RAN1. Consider the development of a Natural Resources Inventory to provide factual and scientific based information for decision making in Town.
- RAN2. Create an open space plan for the Town of Rotterdam to develop a plan of action to protect and preserve open space, agricultural lands and environmentally significant areas of Town.
- RAN3. Protect the Town's unique plants, animals and habitats, particularly in the western upland and rural areas of Town.
- RAN4. Recognize the importance of agriculture and promote innovative practices among farmers that enhance the viability of agricultural businesses while protect water and soils conducive to farming.
- RAN5. Encourage smart growth principles in development and redevelopment projects to protect natural resources while supporting economic growth of the Town.
- RAN6. Position the Town of Rotterdam to be prepared and resilient in the face of climate change.
- RAN7. Plan ahead for more frequent extreme weather events, particularly for flood prone areas along the Mohawk River corridor, by conducting a climate vulnerability assessment.



- RAN8. Promote climate conscious practices, including obtaining Climate Smart Certification, which provides a framework for actions that help reduce risks and costs associated with a quickly changing climate and mitigate emissions.
- RAN9. Consider participation in NYSEERDA's Clean Energy Communities Program.
- RAN10. Conserve the rural character of western Rotterdam and rural hamlets, including Rotterdam Junction and Pattersonville.
- RAN11. Evaluate the regulations associated with the Great Flats Aquifer to identify necessary modifications to encourage redevelopment in Rotterdam Junction while protecting this important resource.
- RAN12. Evaluate zoning and other land use tools relative to farm viability to allow compatible value-added production, small-scale or artisanal manufacturing, and other activities to increase overall farm income and promote diversification. Work with local and regional partners to develop, expand and/or strengthen farm supporting infrastructure, such as local ag product processing facilities as well as business strategy-related resources, such as marketing and direct sales technical assistance.
- RAN13. Encourage cluster development as a method to preserve open space.

Parks and Recreation Areas

The Parks and Recreation Areas component of the Vision Map centers on maintaining and enhancing existing parks and recreational resources while exploring opportunities for new resources and amenities for the community.

The Town of Rotterdam owns and operates 10 neighborhood parks that are located throughout town. With the help of volunteers and Department of Public Works the parks are well maintained and are a great destination for residents and visitors. The parks offer various play equipment for kids to enjoy and all the parks have new picnic tables and benches.

Existing Town-owned parks include:

- Boxwood Park - Boxwood Park has a full basketball court, pavilion and new playground equipment.
- Eunice O. Esposito Park - The Eunice O. Esposito Park has been recently renovated to provide a safe environment that is accessible to all. The park has an expanded parking lot, two tennis courts, new playground equipment, a pavilion, full basketball court, bocce ball courts that are handicap accessible.
- Fiero Park - Located on the outskirts of Coldbrook near the end of Fiero Avenue. Fiero Park has a half basketball court, pavilion and playground equipment.



- Juracka Park - Located in Colonial Manor Juracka Park has a half basketball court, a tennis court, two volleyball courts, new playground equipment and pavilion.
- Kiwanis Park - Located on the Mohawk River this park offers a boat launch with ample parking and a picnic area overlooking the river.
- Leonard C. White Park - Leonard C. White Park has a full basketball court, new playground equipment and pavilion. This park is also home to RC Little League that has four separate baseball fields.
- Memorial Park - Memorial Park is home to RC Little League and Rotterdam Babe Ruth with three separate baseball fields. The park also has a full basketball court and new playground equipment for visitors.
- Pansy Park - Located at the end of Pansy Street, Pansy Park has an all-new swing set and play area.
- Rotterdam Junction, Woestina Park - Woestina Park has a half basketball court, new playground equipment. Woestina Park is the home of Rotterdam Little League that has three separate baseball fields and the Rotterdam Challenger League.

Additional parks and recreational resources in Town include:

- Plotter Kill Nature Preserve - Plotter Kill Nature Preserve is a 632-acre nature reserve and hiking area located in Rotterdam. The preserve is owned by Schenectady County and has three major waterfalls, several cascades, a gorge, and hiking trails.
- Erie Canal Lock Parks - Located along the Mohawk Hudson Bikeway, Lock 8 Park overlooks the Mohawk River with multiple seating areas and parking for the bike trail.
- Mohawk Hudson Bikeway - The Mohawk Hudson Bikeway is owned by New York State and runs the entire northern boundary of the Town along the Mohawk River. Once the location of the Erie Canal, this bikeway is a key recreational resource that attracts many from around the region and is a significant opportunity for the Town.

The Town has a variety of active recreation areas that contain ballfields and other opportunities for active recreation. These parks are primarily smaller neighborhood-oriented parks that offer a number of opportunities for sports and active recreation. Input from the public and the CPAC indicates that there is a need for a larger centralized park in Town that offers more opportunities for passive recreation, such as walking trails and picnic areas. The eastern part of the Town is mostly developed, presenting little opportunity for such a park, but opportunities may exist to a dedicated Town park in the western portion of the Town.



Recommended Actions – Parks and Recreation Areas

- PR1. Improve and increase outdoor recreation opportunities and access to natural and scenic areas Town-wide.
- PR2. Maintain and enhance existing Town-owned recreation facilities.
- PR3. Consider the development of a Town-wide parks and recreation master plan to evaluate and plan for future parks and recreational needs, which may identify a need for new recreational facilities.
- PR4. Improve connections between neighborhoods and recreation areas, including multi-use trails and sidewalks for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- PR5. Investigate opportunities for a centrally located Town park or community center with the potential for active and passive recreational opportunities.
- PR6. Work with community stakeholders, institutions, and neighborhood organizations to encourage and enhance community activities and events to promote neighborhoods and a sense of community (e.g., block parties, neighborhood arts and cultural festivals, concerts, etc.).

DRAFT



Section Four: Townwide Recommendations



SECTION FOUR: TOWNWIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

The focus of the previous section was on recommendations related to specific topic areas identified in the Vision Map. Section Four focuses on broader town-wide recommendations that center around specific topic areas that address the Vision and Goals of this plan. The topic areas include:

- Transportation and Mobility
- History, Culture, Education and Community
- Economic Growth
- Infrastructure and Governance

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

Transportation and circulation of people and goods have historically and continue to be the driving force of growth and development in the Town. While the first wave of growth centered on the development of the Erie Canal and railroads, the next wave of growth began with the development of more extensive roadways. The construction of Interstate 90 (I-90), Interstate 890 (I-890) and Interstate 88 (I-88) was a driving force that led to the growth of the Town into the suburban community that exists today. The Town is well-connected to major employment and retail centers in Albany and Schenectady via these road systems. Public transportation is available through the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA), primarily in the eastern portion of the Town.

Vehicular Mobility

The Town of Rotterdam is primarily an auto-oriented suburban community with a series of local, county, state and interstate roads to circulate traffic. Interstates found within the Town include I-90 and its interconnector I-890 and I-88. Other major arterials in the Town include State Route 7, State Route 146, State Route 5S and State Route 337. The remaining secondary roads include county highways and town roads which serve as collector roads and neighborhood streets.

Public Transit

Public Transportation is provided by the CDTA with a variety of bus routes, including Neighborhood Routes, Express Routes, Commuter Routes and Shopping/Retail Routes. The bus routes are located primarily in the eastern portions of Town, located near the Town's more densely populated areas. Most of these routes provide connections to nearby retail centers, employment centers and the Cities of Schenectady and Albany.

Bus routes in Rotterdam include:

- Neighborhood Routes 351-354 and 450
- Express Routes 530 and 531
- Commuter Route 763



- Shopping/Special Routes 830



Route 7/Route 146 Roundabout

Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility

As a primarily auto-oriented suburban community, bicycle and pedestrian mobility is fairly limited in Rotterdam. More densely populated areas in the eastern portions of Town that are closer to Schenectady tend to have more pedestrian infrastructure by way of sidewalks and crosswalks. A number of arterial roads have sidewalks, but many local connector roads lack such infrastructure.

In 2018, the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Capital Region, completed an effort to develop an inventory of sidewalk infrastructure at the regional level. CDTC created a GIS-based inventory of existing sidewalk infrastructure in all 77 municipalities within CDTC's planning area. The primary objective for creating this inventory arose from an increasing emphasis by the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) to ensure that MPO's and State DOT's are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, which requires local governments to develop Transition Plans to identify a course of action to bring deficient pedestrian facilities into ADA compliance. CDTC's Sidewalk Inventory is intended to be used as a baseline or first step in assisting municipalities with developing a screening process to evaluate ADA compliance of their existing sidewalk facilities. In addition to providing a summary of regional sidewalk mileage, the inventory can be used to help in future planning projects and programs by identifying existing pedestrian facilities as well as gaps in the pedestrian network.

Opportunities and Challenges – Transportation and Mobility

According to CDTC, there are 17 miles of sidewalks within the Rotterdam Town limits. Almost all of the sidewalk mileage within the Town is located on state or county routes (93%). Most of the Town does not contain any sidewalk infrastructure. Sidewalk infrastructure exists at least partially on the following routes: County Routes 48, 75, 81, 83, 160 and 161, State Routes 5, 5S, 7, 103, 146, 158, 159, 337 and 911H.



The following areas contain limited sidewalk infrastructure on local roads: Pattersonville, Rotterdam Junction, in the vicinity of Via Port Rotterdam, and a few neighborhoods between the Schenectady City Line and Interstate 90. 94% of sidewalks within the Town are concrete only, with the remaining 6% consisting solely of asphalt or of a mix of concrete and asphalt.

Freight Mobility

Freight mobility refers to the transportation systems that contribute to the movement of goods into and out of a region. This may include truck transportation, rail transportation and water transportation. The Town of Rotterdam includes a number of industries that rely on a safe, efficient and reliable freight transportation system. Areas including the Rotterdam Industrial Park, General Electric, the Route 7 PILOT Travel Center and the many businesses in Town rely and benefit on trucks for shipments and deliveries. The CDTC has identified key areas for improvement in their 2016 Regional Freight and Goods Movement Plan (2016 Freight Plan). The 2016 Freight Plan identified improvements to the entrance to the Rotterdam Industrial Park to realign and signalize the entrance at Route 7. The purpose of this project is to provide safer and more efficient truck movements at a major logistics center and improve traffic and non-motorized safety and mobility in the area. CDTC is currently in the process of updating the 2016 Freight Plan and is expected provide the CDTC, its member jurisdictions, and strategic partners with information and recommendations to embrace freight's key contributions to regional prosperity, while also help minimize the negative impacts of freight movement on local communities. This study will include all modes of freight transportation. As part of this study, CTDC will be examining potential improvements to truck traffic and safety considerations along Route 7 in Rotterdam and at the PILOT Travel Center.

Complete Streets

Complete streets design is defined as roadway design features that accommodate and facilitate convenient access and mobility by all users, including current and projected users, particularly pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and individuals of all ages and abilities. Complete streets may also play a role in making a community healthier, reducing environmental impact, and leading to private investment in a corridor. The concept of Complete Streets encompasses many approaches to planning, designing, and operating roadways and rights of way with all users in mind to make the transportation network safer and more efficient. Complete Street policies are set at the state, regional, and local levels and are frequently supported by roadway design guidelines. The Town of Rotterdam should consider adopting a Complete Streets Policy to ensure that future road improvements incorporate design features that suit multiple modes of transportation.

Recommended Actions

- TM1. Encourage land use practices and design that supports alternate travel modes, thereby reducing vehicular traffic as growth occurs.
- TM2. Infill missing sidewalk gaps and provide new sidewalk connections from neighborhoods to commercial corridors to promote and encourage walkability.
- TM3. Develop a Capital Improvement Program or Plan to prioritize bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in future transportation improvements.



- TM4. Consider the adoption of a Complete Streets Policy to encourage multi-modal transportation options in future transportation upgrades and land use decisions.

HISTORY, CULTURE, EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY

Historic and Cultural Resources

The Town of Rotterdam was first settled by the Dutch in the early 1660s and served primarily as an outlying farming district for settlers living in the Stockade of Schenectady. Rotterdam was named for the City of Rotterdam in the Netherlands and existed as a ward of the City of Schenectady until 1820 when the Town formed.

Agriculture was the primary driver of growth in the early history of the Town due to the fertile soils along the Mohawk River. The completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 and growth of the railroad system led to an expansion of industry as well as the development of hamlets, including Rotterdam Junction, South Schenectady, Pattersonville, Athens Junction and Mohawkville. Like many communities along the Erie Canal, the flow of goods and services along the waterway, and the jobs that came along with it, resulted in significant growth of the community. Within the boundaries of Rotterdam were three locks and eight miles of the Erie Canal. Later, the expansion of railroads into the area furthered the prosperous growth of the community. The location of Rotterdam along the level and narrow plains of the Mohawk River Valley created an ideal route for rail lines. At one time, Rotterdam Junction was one of the most important railyards in the region. The community rapidly formed around these transportation corridors and many homes, schools, businesses and community services were built and established.

The historic resources of the Town are curated and maintained by the Town Historian. The Town Historian is an official of the local government appointed by the Supervisor and Town Board. The duties of the Historian include collecting, preserving and making available materials relating to the history of the community. The historian is also responsible for preserving current records for the future.

There are several significant historic and cultural sites and organizations in Rotterdam that contribute to the quality of life in Town and draw visitors from around the region. Below is a list of National Historic Register Sites in Town that play a significant role in preserving the Town's rich history.

Historic Register Sites

Dellemont-Wemple Farm – A historic farm complex located on Wemple Road in Rotterdam. The complex consists of the farmhouse, Dutch barn, chicken house and family cemetery. The site is noted for its brick, gambrel roofed, Dutch style farmhouse, built in the 1790s. The farm complex was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1973¹.

Enlarged Double Lock No. 23, Old Erie Canal – This historic Erie Canal Lock was built in 1841-1842 as part of the first enlargement of the Erie Canal. Lock 23 fell into disuse after the opening of the New



York State Barge Canal opened in 1918. Between 2000 and 2003 a replica of a locktender's hut was built on the site by students from the Union College Department of Civil Engineering. The site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2008².

Mabee Farm Historic Site – The Mabee Farm Historic Site contains the oldest house in the Mohawk Valley. The site was settled by Daniel Janse VanAntwerpen around 1670. The property was sold to Jan Mabee in 1705 and was passed down to subsequent generations of the Mabee family for the next 300 years. The complex includes a 17th Century Dutch house, Inn, 1760 Dutch barn, English barn, Mabee family cemetery and other outbuildings. The Schenectady County Historical Society owns the property and operates that site as a museum and educational center. The site includes the newly built 13,000 square foot George E. Franchere Education Center which allows the site to be open year-round. The building includes an Exhibition Hall, Conference Room, Lecture Hall, commercial kitchen and pavilion³.

General Electric Research Laboratory – The General Electric (GE) Research Laboratory was the first industrial research facility in the United States. The laboratory was first established in 1900 and was responsible for a number of GE's technological innovations and set the standard for industrial innovation for many years. The laboratory is located on the GE campus adjacent to I-890 and encompasses an area that lies partially in the City of Schenectady and partially in Rotterdam. The site was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1975.⁴

Education and Community Resources

Education and community resources in the Town are a key element of the Town's identity and sense of place. The Town of Rotterdam is a family-oriented Town with deep ties to the two school districts that serve the community.



Mohonasen School District



The Town of Rotterdam is served by two public school districts that include the Mohonasen Central School District and Schalmont Central School District. Collectively, these school districts serve approximately 4,636 students from grades K-12 at three elementary schools, two middle schools and two high schools.

Mohonasen Central School District

The Mohonasen Central School District draws most of its students from the Town of Rotterdam, however, students also come from the Towns of Colonie and Guilderland. Mohonasen is a Colonial Council school district that serves about 2,800 students in kindergarten through 12th grade. The district has two elementary schools: Bradt Primary School, which serves students in grades kindergarten to second grade, and Pinewood Intermediate School, which serves students in grades 3-5. Draper Middle School serves students in grades 6-8 and Mohonasen High School serves students in grades 9-12. The district includes an instructional staff of approximately 250 professionals supported by three academic administrators and nine principals and assistant principals.

Schalmont Central School District

Schalmont Central School district spans five towns and three counties to serve approximately 1,900 students in kindergarten through 12th grade. The district includes three school buildings, including Jefferson Elementary School, Schalmont Middle School and Schalmont High School. Jefferson Elementary is split into two houses – one for grades K-2 and one for grades 3-4. The Middle School comprises grades 5-8, and is located on the same campus as the High School, which serves grades 9-12.

Community Resources

The Town of Rotterdam has a number of important community resources that provide services and educational opportunities to residents and visitors from around the region. Following is a description of key community resources.

- Schenectady County Public Library Rotterdam Branch – The Rotterdam library branch is located at 1100 North Westcott Road in Rotterdam and is part of the Schenectady County Public Library System (SCPL). SCPL serves a population of 154,604 people with a Central Library and three branches in the City of Schenectady and branches in the communities of Duanesburg, Glenville, Niskayuna, Rotterdam and Scotia.
- Boys and Girls Club of Schenectady – Rotterdam Clubhouse – The Boys and Girls Club promotes the social, educational, health, leadership and character development of boys and girls during critical periods of their growth. They provide a safe place to learn and grow, educational programs and childcare to many children of Rotterdam. They also provide summer programs, including Camp Lovejoy at the Rotterdam Club.
- Rotterdam Senior Citizens' Center – Located on Hamburg Street, the Rotterdam Senior Citizens' Center is open to all persons 55 years and older. The Senior Center offers a number of activities and services to seniors, as well as a library. The Senior Center is owned and operated by the Town of Rotterdam and is a significant asset for the senior population of the community.



Opportunities and Challenges – History, Culture, Education and Community

There are a number of opportunities and challenges related to history, culture, education and community. Historical and educational resources help to maintain the history of the community while creating destinations to attract visitors that support the local economy. Through stakeholder meeting discussions, a need for a dedicated Town museum was identified to both create a local attraction and to better house the Town's historical artifacts.

Creating a sense of place includes addressing aesthetic improvements throughout the Town. One way to create a sense of place is to encourage public art installations into streetscape improvements. This helps to support and celebrate local artists as well as creating a unique identifiable character in hamlets, neighborhoods and commercial corridors.

Recommended Actions

- HCE1. Work with community leaders to promote and encourage diversity and inclusivity in Town.
- HCE2. Work with the Town Historian to increase public awareness of historical resources.
- HCE3. Explore opportunities for a dedicate Town Museum.
- HCE4. Integrate public art into streetscape improvements (e.g., light poles, gateway signage, bus shelters, etc.) in key areas, including Hamlet Center Mixed-use areas, Mixed-Use Nodes and gateways into and out of Town.
- HCE5. Promote the use of historic tax credits, as well as green building related incentives to encourage rehabilitation and reuse of historic buildings.
- HCE6. Support the library as a local educational and community resource.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

The economic development of a region centers on actions that seek to attract and retain businesses and residents to build the workforce, enhance and increase housing opportunities and encourage business growth. Economic development can also be described as targeted growth that influences all sectors, including employment and business development, housing, education and recreation.

The Town of Rotterdam is ideally located in the Capital Region providing a locational advantage for businesses and corporations looking to relocate or for commuters looking for a nice place to live that is easily accessible to employment opportunities.

Available to the Town are a number of resources to assist and collaborate with to drive the economic growth of the community. Following is a list of key economic resources available to the Town of Rotterdam.

- **Schenectady Metroplex Development Authority (Metroplex)** – The Metroplex was established in 1998 as a public benefit corporation by the State of New York to institute a comprehensive, coordinated program of economic development activities in the Route 5 and



Route 7 corridors of Schenectady County, with a focus on downtown Schenectady. Metroplex now works on economic development related projects across Schenectady County. The Metroplex enabling statute allows the Authority to design, plan, finance, site, construct, administer, operate, manage and maintain facilities within its service district.

- **Schenectady County Industrial Development Agency (IDA)** - The County IDA's mission is to provide resources that promote private-sector investment, innovation, and growth and attract, retain and nurture high-quality jobs throughout Schenectady County with a focus on sustainable commercial, industrial, research and recreational facilities and projects. To secure increased private investment and job development, the Agency will provide technical assistance and financial assistance to eligible projects consistent with Article 18-A of the General Municipal Law of the State of New York.
- **Rotterdam Business Association (RBA)** - The RBA seeks to serve as a unified voice for the Rotterdam business community and to provide mutual support to help each member reach their potential for success. The RBA promotes local businesses, provides networking opportunities, and encourages the growth of the local economy.
- **Capital Region Chamber** - The Capital Region Chamber is the largest business organization in the Capital Region, serving Albany, Schenectady, Rensselaer and Saratoga Counties. The goal of the organization is economic prosperity for business members and the community. The Chamber helps build a strong community by connecting its members to people, business and issues important to business success.
- **Schenectady County Department of Economic Development and Planning** - The Schenectady County Planning Department is another resource available to the Town of Rotterdam in the pursuit of economic development. The department offers a range of services, including assistance with grant applications and other technical assistance.

Opportunities and Challenges

The Town of Rotterdam is well-positioned to grow and strengthen its local economy. A significant opportunity for the Town is its location within the Capital Region. The Town is located along several major transportation routes, including I-90, I-890 and I-88, making it easily accessible to major employment centers in the region and within the Town. This locational advantage is ideal for commuters that travel outside of the community for employment and for those that travel to Rotterdam for employment. This locational advantage is also ideal for industrial and manufacturing businesses for shipping and producing goods and services.

The Rotterdam Industrial Park presents a significant economic opportunity to the Town which supports the local economy and provides numerous jobs at its facilities.

A significant opportunity lies in the many businesses that line the key commercial corridors in the Town. To support these businesses and to help facilitate corridor improvements, the Town should consider the development of business improvement districts (BIDs) along the main commercial corridors. These



corridors include Altamont Avenue, Hamburg Street, Guilderland Avenue, and Curry Road. A Business Improvement District (BID) is a geographical area where local stakeholders oversee and fund the maintenance, improvement, and promotion of their commercial district. BIDs can help to create vibrant, clean, and safe commercial areas and can deliver services and improvements above and beyond those typically provided by a municipality. These services may include:

- Street cleaning and maintenance
- Public safety and hospitality
- Marketing and events
- Capital improvements
- Beautification
- Advocacy
- Business development

Recommended Actions – Economic Growth

- EG1. Create economic resilience through diversity in the type, scale and variety of business, commercial and industrial activities in the Town.
- EG2. Promote businesses in the Town to achieve a healthy local economy and to provide diverse goods, services and employment opportunities and to stabilize the tax base.
- EG3. Conduct site-specific cooperative planning with landowners to redevelop key parcels that can act as catalysts for future redevelopment in Corridor Mixed-Use areas.
- EG4. Encourage the creative re-use of existing underutilized buildings.
- EG5. Encourage the creative reuse of vacant properties.
- EG6. Support mixed-use buildings and develop site and architectural design standards along key commercial corridors and mixed-use nodes to help ensure high-quality places for the community.
- EG7. Work with local and regional partners, including the Capital Region Chamber, Schenectady Metroplex Development Authority and Rotterdam Industrial Park to find approaches to support local businesses and entrepreneurship.
- EG8. Work with local business and other regional partners to identify creative and collaborative ways to address needs, such as funding of public infrastructure investments and supporting investment along key commercial and transportation corridors.
- EG9. Develop a marketing and branding approach supporting comprehensive economic development in Town, and work to “tell the story” of successful investments and their contributions to the local economy.



- EG10. Evaluate zoning regulations in light of emerging markets and/or businesses, such as the craft brewing sector, artisanal forms of manufacturing, and the creative economy, to create flexibility and a right-sized approach which still ensures neighborhood compatibility as well as advancing community goals.
- EG11. Create incentives to encourage use and application of design guidelines, such as density bonuses.
- EG12. Consult with area businesses and institutions to identify and facilitate additional opportunities for economic growth in Town.
- EG13. Maintain and market inventory of available commercial and industrial properties.
- EG14. Use zoning and development regulations as tools to create incentives for business development.
- EG15. Support the creation and operation of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) or other small business groups where appropriate to stimulate neighborhood business investment and encourage collaborative efforts to manage and market commercial areas.
- EG16. Investigate opportunities for adaptive reuse of large-scale, commercial and retail brick-and-mortar.

GOVERNANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Towns are units of local government that are responsible for providing the practical needs of its citizens. Those needs include a variety of functions, such as highway maintenance, police services, recreational services, property assessment and providing sewer and water infrastructure to protect public health. The Town of Rotterdam strives to provide these services in an inclusive, efficient and streamlined manner with a focus on customer service to meet the needs of the community.

Local government functions in the Town of Rotterdam are carried out and directed from Town Hall located at 1100 Sunrise Boulevard, or virtually due to COVID-19, and is open to the public for a variety of needs and functions.

Infrastructure related to stormwater, wastewater and the drinking water supply are critical for a community's health and well-being. This infrastructure is also directly related to the pattern of development and types of land uses that occur within a community and also imposes a maintenance cost on the Town and future generations. The following includes an overview of the Town's existing stormwater, wastewater and drinking water supply, an identification of challenges now and in the future and recent upgrades that have been undertaken by the Town.



Rotterdam Town Hall

Land Use and Zoning

Land Use

Evaluating the existing land use and zoning in the Town of Rotterdam provides a snapshot of the general distribution, location and characteristics of land used throughout the Town. Land use and zoning differ in that land use describes what the land is currently being used for, while zoning describes the types of land uses that are allowed as established by local zoning laws. Land use and zoning are a direct reflection of the community character that exists today.

Land use regulations are implemented in a community to guide the type and intensity of development occurring within its borders. It is the Town's goal to promote land uses that enhance existing patterns of development, as well as to preserve and maintain the quality of existing residential development while providing opportunities for future development consistent with the natural characteristics of the land and its ability to accommodate growth.

The most predominant land use in the Town of Rotterdam is Residential – Low Density at 43% of the total acreage of the Town. The eastern portion of the Town is largely developed with single and multi-family neighborhoods connected by a network of commercial transportation corridors. Most of the commercial development in the Town exists along the major transportation networks, including, Route 7, Route 146, Altamont Avenue and Guilderland Avenue. Industrial land uses comprise about 3% of the Town's land area and are concentrated in certain areas, including the Rotterdam Industrial Park, General Electric and areas along Burdeck Street.

Zoning

The Rotterdam Zoning Ordinance was first adopted in 1945 and the first official zoning map was issued in 1955. This ordinance underwent major revisions in the late 1980's. The Town's subdivision regulations were enacted in 1970. The current Rotterdam Zoning Ordinance is available from the Town Clerk. The ordinance currently contains one Agricultural District, five residential districts (RA, R-1, R-



2, R-3, R-4), five Commercial and Industrial Districts (B-1, B-2, C-1, I-1, I-2), and eight Special-purpose districts which include Land Conservation Overlay District (LC), Planned Residential Development District (PRD), Main Street/Neighborhood Center Overlay District (MS/NC) Corridor Commercial Overlay District (CORR), Commercial Planned Unit Development District (C-PUD), Aquifer Overlay District (AO), Floodway Channel District (F-1) and Flood Hazard District (FH).

A brief description of each of the zoning districts, as they currently exist, follows. It is important to note that the descriptions below are merely summary. The precise regulations applicable to each district is contained within the Town's zoning code.

Residential Districts:

- **Agricultural District (A)** – Areas within the local jurisdiction where farming is the preferred economic activity.
- **Residential Agricultural District (RA)** – The Residential-Agricultural District is intended to permit agricultural, rural, and open space uses, and to permit a very low density of residential use designed to retain the open space and rural character of the district without conflicting with farm operations.
- **One-Family Residential District (R-1)** – The R-1 Single-Family Residential district is established primarily to provide areas for single family homes, although a limited number of other housing types and uses are allowed. This is the most restrictive residential district that encourages the construction and maintenance of homes on larger lots.
- **Two-Family Residential District (R-2)** – The R-2 Residential district is established with the same principal regulations and uses permitted in the R-1 District with the addition of permitting two-family dwellings.
- **Multiple-Family Residential District (R-3)** – The following principal uses are permitted as of right in the R-3 District: multiple-family dwellings, two-family dwellings, churches or similar places of worship, parish houses, convents and community houses, public and private schools, firehouses, public parks, playgrounds and other municipal recreational uses, public libraries and museums, child and infant day-care centers.
- **Small One-Family and Townhouse Residential District (R-4)** – The R-4 Residential district is established to allow the construction and development of small one-family residential homes and townhouses. These apply to lots less than 15,000 square feet in size or small one-family residences with a maximum of three bedrooms and 2,000 square feet of habitable space.

Commercial and Industrial Districts:

- **Retail Business District (B-1)** – Permitted in the B1 district are all uses permitted as of right in the R-1 and R-2 Districts (subject to the regulations specified in such residential districts), as well as personal service shops e.g., barbershops, shoeshine shops, beauty parlors, dry-cleaning and laundry-pickup and -delivery shops, card shops, banks, offices,



restaurants, cafes, tearooms, grocery and meat stores, flower shops and similar retail establishments, except businesses primarily engaged in the sale of used goods.

- **General Business District (B-2)** – The B-2 district is established with the same principal regulations and uses permitted in the B-1 district with the addition of permitting establishments for making, assembling or repairing articles, provided that no machinery or process is used which creates a nuisance or is noxious or offensive to neighboring uses by reason of dust, refuse matter, odor, smoke, gas fumes, noise, vibration, glare or fire hazard.
- **Corporate Commerce District (C-1)** – The primary purpose of the Corporate Commerce District C-1 is to permit, where appropriate, the construction of facilities providing research and development, and information and communication services. This district is primarily for the location of high-technology facilities, office parks, research and development facilities and headquarters of corporations and organizations, with light manufacturing that is consistent with the purpose of this article. The district is also intended to provide a location for office, research, computer and telecommunication uses in a well-designed and landscaped setting.
- **Light Industrial District (I-1)** – The I-1 district permits as a matter of right, with site plan review, all the principal, nonresidential uses allowed as of right in the B-2 district and a number of industrial type uses, such as dry-cleaning facilities, bottling plants, bus barns/public garages, car washes, contractor shops, creameries, kennels and veterinary hospitals, lumberyards, trucking terminals and warehousing, as well as others. Additional industrial uses, including asphalt/concrete mixing plants, crematoriums, propane filling facilities, motor vehicle repair/sales/rental, certain manufacturing, public utility/communications facilities, as well as others, are permissible upon issuance of a special use permit.
- **Heavy Industrial District (I-2)** – The I-2 district permits essentially the same uses permitted as of right or by special use permit in the I-1 district. It also permits additional, heavier industrial type uses by special use permit.

Special purpose districts include:

- **Land Conservation Overlay District (LC)** – The LC Overlay District is established to provide for areas identified in the Comprehensive Plan for the preservation of recreation, open space, or environmentally sensitive lands. It is also intended to facilitate the classification of lands in need of preservation, to provide for the protection of the aquifer, the preservation of wetlands or other lands unsuitable for development.
- **Planned Residential Development District (PRD)** – The intent of these planned residential development provisions is to provide flexible use and design regulations through the use of performance criteria so that small- to large-scale neighborhoods or portions thereof may be developed within the Town which incorporate a variety of residential types



and contain both individual building sites and common property which are planned and developed as a unit.

- **Main Street/Neighborhood Center Overlay District (MS/NC)** – The purpose of this overlay district is to promote a mixture of complementary land uses that include housing, retail, offices, commercial services, and civic uses, to create economic and social vitality and to encourage the linking of trips and develop commercial and mixed-use areas that are safe, comfortable, and attractive to pedestrians.
- **Corridor Commercial Overlay District (CORR)** – This overlay district was created to support infill and redevelopment along existing commercial corridors by allowing a mixture of automobile-dependent commercial services to create economic vitality and commercial areas that are safe, comfortable, and attractive for both vehicles and pedestrians.
- **Commercial Planned Unit Development District (C-PUD)** – The Commercial Planned Unit Development District is intended to be located to serve a community or regional market area and to provide access to transit where available and beneficial. The intent of the Commercial Planned Unit Development District is to allow larger-scaled commercial uses that require larger parking areas but that are designed to include commercial out-parcels along the primary road network, with the out-parcel commercial uses complying with the requirements of the CORR Corridor Commercial District.
- **Aquifer Overlay District (AO)** – The AO Aquifer Overlay District is intended to preserve and maintain the quality and quantity of water found in the Schenectady Aquifer and thereby protect this principal water supply source for the Town and surrounding communities.
- **Flood Hazard District (FH)** – The Flood Hazard District is created to minimize public and private losses due to flooding in areas of flood hazard. Further, it is the intent of this district to promote the purposes of the Town of Rotterdam Flood Damage Prevention Law.
- **Floodway Channel District (F-1)** – Subject to the uses permitted within the floodway channel district shall be the same as those permitted within the district through which the Floodway Channel District runs, except, however, where two different districts adjoin a Floodway Channel District, the use regulations of the more restrictive district shall apply.

Stormwater

The Town manages stormwater through a Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System (MS4) in accordance with the MS4 State Pollution Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) Permit issued by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)¹. The MS4 consists of infrastructure designed to convey (e.g., pipes and ditches), treat (e.g., stormwater management "retention" ponds), and discharge (i.e., "outfalls") stormwater to receiving waters. The Town's MS4 is comprised of a combination of privately and publicly owned and operated facilities. The MS4 Permit

¹ <https://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/6054.html>



regulates the discharge of stormwater in an attempt to both reduce the amount of stormwater discharge and reduce the number of pollutants entering nearby water bodies. All MS4 communities located within the boundaries of a Census Bureau defined “urbanized area” are regulated under the Environmental Protection Agency’s Phase II Stormwater Rule, which requires adherence to the MS4 Permit.

Stormwater runoff is generated from rain and snow melt that falls on impervious surfaces such as parking lots, paved streets, roof tops, and compacted bare soil. When water flows over impervious surfaces it may collect and transport pollutants that are harmful to the environment and drinking water supplies. The increase in runoff generated during such precipitation events is directly related to the increase in impervious surface and, therefore, to land development activities which increase impervious surfaces. Adherence to the MS4 Permit includes the implementation of control measures to reduce the number of pollutants entering a water body.

Wastewater

The Town operates and maintains a sewerage collection system and wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) that serves the more densely populated sections of the Town bordering the City of Schenectady, principally within Geographic Area “D”. The WWTP located on West Campbell Road was constructed during the late 1930’s as part of a Works Progress Administration project (WPA). While the existing sewerage collection system serves the most populated area of the community, the majority of Town residences and commercial facilities, approximately 80%, continue to rely on septic systems for waste disposal.

The Town currently maintains seven (7) existing sewer districts. Sewer District #2 is the largest district and extends from the Via Port Mall on the north to Altamont Avenue on the southeast providing service to Helderberg Meadows, running south of Interstate 90 and continuing to the Town line. Sewage collected from this district as well as Sewer District #2 SIA, is directed to the West Campbell Road WWTP for treatment. The remaining five districts, Sewer Districts #3, #4, #5A, #6A, and #7, are all interconnected with the City of Schenectady (City) sewerage system for treatment at the City’s wastewater treatment facility. A portion of the wastes generated at the Rotterdam Industrial Park - Sewer District #5A, 5 million-gallons annually, is also treated at the Town’s WWTP while the remaining 39 million gallons generated annually by Sewer District #5A is pumped to the city system. Currently, 130,000± gallons of wastewater from the Town is treated daily at the City wastewater treatment facility.

The Town WWTP currently treats between 900,000 gallons per day (GPD) to 1.1 million gallons per day (MGD). The WWTP has rated treatment capacity of 1.5 MGD. During storm events inflow and infiltration (I&I) into the sewerage collection system can increase flows by an additional 100,000 GPD. The Town is currently under an order of consent with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to investigate and reduce the I&I and associated sanitary sewer overflow events.

In 2018, improvements totaling \$2.5 million dollars were provided to upgrade and rehabilitate the existing WWTP. Improvements consisted of modifications to the building and treatment components. Although the WWTP is rated at 1.5 MGD, additional improvements would be required to treat more than 1.25 MGD. Presently, the Town is looking to increase the capacity of the WWTP to 1.8 MGD to serve



additional areas of the community. Future growth anticipated along West Hill/Putnam Road, Myrtle Avenue, Mariaville Road, and in the area around the Exit 25A interchange (I-88) of the NYS Thruway (I-90) is expected to increase wastewater flows to the WWTP by an additional 400,000 GPD. The anticipated growth plus an additional 300,000 GPD from existing approved developments and Burdeck Street Extension #16 to Sewer District #2 would bring the total flows to the WWTP to an estimated 1.8 MGD.

Three options are currently being considered to increase the capacity of the existing WWTP. Alternative #1 provides improvements to the existing trickling filter sewage treatment facility that would enable the facility to treat a 1.5 MGD, the current permitted capacity of the plant. Alternative #2 similarly entails retaining the existing trickling filter system but would increase the capacity of the WWTP through the provision and installation of additional clarification units and associated improvements. Alternative #2 would increase the capacity of the WWTP to the required 1.8 MGD. Alternative #3 similarly would increase the WWTP capacity to 1.8 MGD but would entail replacement of the existing trickling filter system with a new sequencing batch reactor process that would both increase capacity and also improve treatment performance.

In addition to improvements to the WWTP, a \$3.5 million dollar improvement project is proposed for the sewage collection system. This would include the installation of new sewer mains and improvements to existing collection lines and manholes to improve flow and reduce I&I.

Proposed extensions to the sewer system, principally to Sewer District #7 would provide service to areas along Hamburg Street and Carman Road, including the Whispering Pines development and ultimately along Curry Road, north and south of Hamburg Street. With the completion of the new district extensions, it is anticipated that an additional 100,000 GPD of sewage will be directed to the city sewerage system for treatment.

Given the relatively flat topography of the community, the Town currently operates twelve (12) sewer pump stations to convey sewerage to the respective treatment facilities. All of the pump stations have been upgraded or replaced since 2001 with the exception of two on Altamont Avenue which are well maintained and in good operating condition. With the proposed extensions to Sewer District #7, four (4) additional pump stations will be installed; two (2) for the Whispering Pines development, and one (1) each for the Carman Road and Curry Road extensions. An additional pump station is also proposed for Sewer District #2. The pump stations are all connected with a new SCADA system that controls the overall operation of the system. New alarms are also currently being installed in the pumps stations to comply with DEC requirements.

With the proposed modifications to the WWTP, the Town will also be in a position to extend the sewer district into additional areas of the community bordering the existing districts. The proposed improvements will enable and promote future development in outlying areas of the Town. The establishment of new sewer districts will be required to serve areas to the north of the Via Port Mall and the Exit 25A Interchange (I-88) of the NYS Thruway (I-90) complete with additional pumps stations and transmission mains to interconnect with the existing system.



Sewer rates for residential units and commercial establishments are established by the Town Board and vary within the districts and extensions depending upon the outstanding bond issues. Each single-family residence connected to the sewer system is charged the rate as established for that district. Unmetered commercial users are similarly charged as one or more units depending upon the number of businesses on the property. Metered commercial establishments are charged based upon their metered water usage.

Water Supply

The Town of Rotterdam is served by two (2) individual water systems. The first and earlier district serves principally the Hamlet of Rotterdam Junction in the northeast section of the Town, encompassing Town Water Districts #3 and #4. The area served is essentially the central section of Geographic Area “A” and is situated between the Hamlets of Pattersonville and Lower Rotterdam, extending to the Thruway Interchange at Exit 26. The larger water system located in the southern section of the Town, Water district #5, extends from the southern border of the Town with the Town of Guilderland and runs north to Burdeck Street and NYS Route 7. The water district encompasses the majority of Geographic Areas “D” and “E”.

Rotterdam Junction Water System – Water Districts #3 & #4

The Rotterdam Junction water system, Water Districts #3 & #4, was initially established in the 1930’s. The system serves a relatively small area of the Town, straddling NYS Route 5S, and positioned between the New York State Thruway (Interstate 90) and the Mohawk River. The district serves approximately 1,900 people through 400 service connections of which approximately 20 -30 are commercial users. The service area was increased in 2004 with an extension on the west side of Rotterdam Junction to serve the new Schenectady International (SI) facility. The average daily demand for the Rotterdam Junction system is approximately 228,000 ± gallons per day (GPD) with a maximum daily usage of approximately 350,000 gallons.

The Rotterdam Junction system operates two (2) wells, both located on Main Street. The wells, #1 and #2, rated at 365± gallons per minute (GPM) and 565± GPM respectively, draw water from the Great Flats aquifer. Districts #3 and #4 are permitted to take 1 million gallons per day (MGD) from the aquifer. The Aquifer, with a capacity exceeding 60 MGD, serves the majority of communities in this area, including the City of Schenectady.

The two wells serving Rotterdam Junction provide excellent quality water requiring only chlorination for treatment. Hypo-chlorination is provided individually to each well at each well house. The wells are both located at 1214 Main Street in the Hamlet of Rotterdam Junction. System storage and pressure is maintained through a 500,000-gallon glass lined standpipe located on the Pattersonville-Rynex Corners Road to the west of the Thruway in the Hamlet of Pattersonville. System pressure ranges between 50 PSI to 60 PSI. Flow along Main Street through the existing 8” water main is sufficient for fire protection, however, some water mains on adjacent side streets are 2” galvanized pipe.

The principal deficiencies facing this water district are both the age and type of pipe. Much of the water distribution system is original. The distribution system was constructed principally with Transite pipe



with some minor sections of ductile iron lines. Although the lines are old only a few breaks are known to occur each year. No program has been established for replacing the Transite lines. Planned projects for the Rotterdam Junction system include the installation of a second 12" water main to convey water from the wells to the distribution system.

Water rates for the Rotterdam Junction system are based upon the assessed value of the property. Residential customers pay a fee of \$3.85/1,000 dollars of assessed value for operation and maintenance and repayment of bonds to finance the construction and installation of the 500,000-gallon storage tank. Each residential customer is also charged an additional \$25 water rent fee. No plans have been proposed to increase the water rate until the bond has been paid off.

At this time only a few commercial users are metered in the district. Similar water rates apply for unmetered commercial users. Metered users would pay an additional \$50 fee for the first 75,000 gallons of water consumed plus \$35 for each additional 75,000 gallons used or portion thereof.

The installation of water meters on all service connections would assist in reducing the amount of water produced each day. Given the age of the distribution network a leak detection survey should also be conducted to determine if any significant leaks exist where repairs or piping modifications would be required.

Expansion of the district both to the north and south to serve the Hamlets of Pattersonville and/or Lower Rotterdam is possible but may require the provision of booster stations to convey the water into these areas as well as additional storage tanks to maintain system pressure. This would similarly apply should the district be extended to the west to serve other areas of the Town.

District #5 Water System

Water District #5 serves the principal populated areas of the Town, located in designated Geographic Areas "D" and "E". This district was created between 1950 and 1955. Similarly tapping the Great Flats aquifer, Water District #5 is supplied by five (5) high yielding wells, ranging in capacity from 500 GPM to 3,750 GPM. The wells are, located off of Rice Road adjacent to the Mohawk River. The wells are 88' deep, each equipped with a vertical turbine pump to convey water into the distribution system.

The population served by the Water District #5 is approximately 25,000± residents through 11,000 service connections. In addition, major commercial and industrial users, principally the Rotterdam Industrial Park and the North Avenue Industrial District place significant demands on the water system. The average daily demand in the system is approximately 4 MGD depending upon the time of year with a maximum daily consumption of 7 MGD during the summer months. Water is also supplied through a metered connection to the Town of Guilderland. The Town of Rotterdam has a contract with the Town of Guilderland to supply up to 2.0 MGD of water, however the Town of Guilderland is only taking approximately 1.0 MGD during the summer months. In addition, the Town also maintains emergency interconnections with the City of Schenectady's water system.

To allow for future expansion, the Town has submitted an application with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to increase its permitted withdrawal from the Great Flats aquifer from 10 MGD up to 15 MGD. The DEC has granted a conditional approval whereby the



Town can now take up to 12 MGD. To increase its daily withdrawal rate to 15 MGD, the DEC is requiring that the Town demonstrate that the Water District #5 wells have the capacity to produce 15 MGD with the largest yielding well out of service. The DEC is also requiring that a leak detection survey and program be initiated as well as a program to install water meters throughout the District. In order to meet the first condition, the Town must first drill another well to augment the yield from its existing wells.

With the current operating system, the Town wells first convey water to a treatment facility located on 49 Rice Road. With excellent water quality, treatment principally consists of chlorination for disinfection. Sodium hexametaphosphate is also added to the water to sequester iron and manganese and for corrosion control. The treatment building was rehabilitated and refurbished during 2020 complete with new gas chlorinators and controls. From the treatment building the water is conveyed through two (2) 24" water mains to supply the distribution system and water storage tanks.

Five (5) water storage tanks are situated throughout Water District #5 to maintain system pressure and flow. Three of the five tanks are 400,000-gallon water storage towers constructed in the 1950's. The tanks are located on Bernard Street, Elizabeth Street, and Hamburg Street. In addition, a 2 million-gallon standpipe was constructed on Helderberg Avenue in 1968 with a second 2 million-gallon storage tower constructed on May Avenue in 1985. The May Avenue tank was rehabilitated and repainted during the summer of 2020. Together with the well pumps, the tanks maintain system pressures between 55 to 65 PSI throughout the District.

The Helderberg tank is next scheduled to be either repainted or replaced within the next five (5) years. Reconditioning of the original three (3) towers will follow sequentially, however, no dates have been established as to when this will occur. An asset management plan is currently being developed that will schedule required tank reconditioning as well as distribution system improvements.

In addition to rehabilitating the treatment building and reconditioning the May Avenue water tower in 2020, approximately 0.82 miles of 20" transmission main was replaced on Princetown Road from the Five Corners intersection to North Thompson Street. Projects scheduled for 2021 include valve replacements at the treatment facility and regular system maintenance. Principal issues with the water system are related to the age of the infrastructure, specifically, the water lines, valves, and hydrants. Most of the distribution system is ductile iron. However, there are sections of steel pipe within the District. Other recent improvements include the replacement of two (2) miles of 12" water main on Hamburg Street in 2018 to upgrade the piping network.

Of the problems confronting the District, one of the principal issues is the existing piping layout. If a break were to occur in the distribution system, depending upon the location, some of the water storage tanks cannot be completely refilled until the pipe repair is completed, leading to temporary reduced storage and system pressure. New waterlines are proposed to reinforce the network to eliminate this issue. Scheduling for the required improvements will be addressed in the forthcoming asset management plan.

Water rates for Water District #5 are considerably lower than those applied in Water district #3 and #4 serving Rotterdam Junction as Water District #5 is not currently encumbered with bond repayment.



Water rates for Water District #5 are similarly based upon the assessed value of the property. Residential customers however only pay a fee of \$0.348/1,000 dollars of assessed value for operation and maintenance plus an additional \$75 water rent fee. Due to the extremely low rates being charged for water in this district, only limited funds are available for improvements to the system. An increase in the water rates for Water District #5, bringing them into compliance with those at a comparable system, would increase revenues for system operations, maintenance, and improvements.

As with Water Districts #3 and #4, only a few commercial users are metered at this time. For those unmetered commercial users water rates would be comparable to those for residential properties. Metered users would pay an additional fee of \$75 for the first 75,000 gallons used plus \$50 for each additional 75,000 gallons of water consumed or portion thereof.

The provision and installation of water meters on all service connections would assist in reducing the amount of water produced each day. A leak detection survey of the distribution system should also be conducted to determine if any significant leaks exist where repairs or piping modifications are required.

Recommended Actions – Governance and Infrastructure

- GI1. Ensure the resilience and efficiency of Town Hall through various means, including modernizing the Town website, updating internal systems to ensure files are available digitally, ability for Town staff to work remotely and ensuring that local residents can stay informed.
- GI2. Work to ensure that all areas of the community are adequately serviced by fire, police and emergency medical response.
- GI3. Work with emergency service providers to recruit and retain qualified volunteers.
- GI4. Encourage the use of green infrastructure to address stormwater management, water quality and to provide streetscape enhancements.
- GI5. Continue to maintain and upgrade sewer and stormwater infrastructure and plan for future maintenance needs.
- GI6. Continue to comply with the MS4 program and update stormwater GIS database.
- GI7. Support relationships between the police department and community leaders and neighborhoods.
- GI8. Utilize Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) to increase public safety. CPTED is a multi-disciplinary approach of crime prevention that uses urban and architectural design and the management of built and natural environments. CPTED strategies aim to reduce victimization, deter offender decisions that precede criminal acts, and build a sense of community among inhabitants so they can gain territorial control of areas, reduce crime, and minimize fear of crime.
- GI9. Work with neighborhood groups and stakeholders to develop a network of social media, contact lists or other interactive web-based forums to serve as a mechanism



for residents to communicate general information, such as current events or public safety concerns.

- GI10. Continue to use social media and other interactive web-based tools for sharing information and engaging the public.
- GI11. Reduce energy consumption in municipal operations and develop a Municipal Facility Energy Efficiency Plan that includes energy audits and a funding plan to retrofit municipal buildings with green building practices.
- GI12. Consider becoming a Climate Smart Community.
- GI13. Explore all options for renewable energy systems in municipal buildings and properties.
- GI14. Update building codes to reflect the latest energy-efficient building code standards for new and rehabilitated housing (e.g., International Green Construction Code) and ensure that staff are fully trained and supported to implement.
- GI15. Consider developing green building incentives, such as height and density bonuses to projects that meet specific building and sustainable site standards.
- GI16. Develop a capital asset management plan and program to fund projects.
- GI17. Continue adherence of the State Environmental Quality Review Act requirements in review procedures for all development projects.
- GI18. Minimize damage from erosion and sedimentation by preserving natural patterns of stormwater drainage, mature trees and woodlands associated with steep slopes and waterways to the maximum feasible extent. In areas of the Town without access to public sewer and/or water infrastructure, the natural characteristics of the land should dictate the type and intensity of development to occur.
- GI19. Utilize energy-efficiency and renewable energy technologies in construction and rehabilitation projects to reduce the Town's greenhouse gas emissions, and as a means of increasing the long-term affordability of housing.
- GI20. Consider establishing criteria for permitting of short-term rentals and address potential impacts of short-term rental activity in neighborhoods.
- GI21. Evaluate the appropriateness and land use impacts relating to Cannabis retail dispensaries and on-site consumption locations within the Town.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dellemont%E2%80%93Wemple_Farm

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enlarged_Double_Lock_No._23,_Old_Erie_Canal

³ <https://www.albany.org/listing/mabee-farm-historic-site/357/>

⁴ General Electric Research Laboratory, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Electric_Research_Laboratory



Section Five: Implementation



SECTION FIVE: IMPLEMENTATION

Following adoption of this comprehensive plan update the first step in the implementation process is to evaluate the zoning and subdivision regulations in Rotterdam for consistency with the plan and update the zoning to be consistent with the comprehensive plan. This plan is the result of considerable effort on the part of the Town of Rotterdam, Town Board, Town staff, the CPAC, residents, business owners and concerned citizens. An active implementation process will be necessary for the plan to have a lasting impact. Working with a range of public, private and nonprofit implementation partners, the community can accomplish the recommended actions and continue striving toward its vision. It is recommended that the Town evaluate the Comprehensive Plan in its entirety at least every five years to ensure that the document meets the needs of the community and addresses changing trends in the future.

Prioritization of Recommended Actions

The implementation table that follows represents the prioritization of recommendations based on the input from community members and members of the CPAC. Each recommendation has been categorized as a short-, mid- or long-term goal to give guidance to Town staff as to which recommendations to implement in the near term versus the long term.

In addition to a timeframe for implementation, the table also includes an identification of the recommendation lead and potential partners to assist in implementation. Potential funding sources are also listed to support implementation.

Finally, a recommendation status column has been included to allow for easy tracking and review of comprehensive plan implementation progress related to each recommendation. The recommendation status column can be translated into an annual reporting to the Town on progress of the recommendations.

Implementation actions

The following recommendations are priority actions to be completed immediately following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

- IA1. Review and evaluate the community's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to ensure consistency with this comprehensive plan. Specific considerations should include:
 - a. Illustrate zoning standards and guidelines graphically. Greater use of design examples and guideline graphics will help the public and applicants visualize the desired development, which will also assist land use boards in their review.
 - b. Update and revise definitions in the Comprehensive Zoning Law to reflect current needs.
 - c. Review and update sign regulations in the Town's Comprehensive Zoning Law.



- d. Update existing zoning districts and boundaries to reflect the purpose and vision of the proposed future land uses.
 - e. Evaluate and update for consistency with New York State Town Law.
- IA2. Establish a Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee to guide the plan implementation effort and provide a status report of plan implementation to the Town Board on an annual basis.
- IA3. Provide and/or support training opportunities for land use board members to keep up to date on current planning and zoning practices and laws and meet the minimum four-hour training requirement as per Town Law §271.7-a.
- IA4. Continue enforcing existing land use regulations.
- IA5. Create a Citizen's Guide to Land Use and Development Regulations.
- IA6. Work with the Project Review Team to foster a development review process that considers the direction set forth by the comprehensive plan vision.
- IA7. Identify locations for future development and extend public utilities as needed and in keeping with smart growth principles, recognizing the balance between new development and the cost of providing new services to support that development.
- IA8. Review the Comprehensive Plan in its entirety every five years to ensure that the document meets the needs of the community and addresses changing trends in the future.