

STATE OF THE TOWN 2024



Peter G. Barber
Town Supervisor
February 15, 2024

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Provide diverse network of active and passive recreational activities
- Preserve open space and natural resources
- Promote long-term viability of agriculture
- Provide quality and affordable housing options
- Support a diverse economic base
- Protect historic resources
- Provide safe, convenient, and efficient transportation options

PATHWAY TO OUR FUTURE GUILDERLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Public Meeting
Tuesday, March 12 at 7pm
Town Hall

OUR TOWN: BY THE NUMBERS

Town's Pop. (2020 Census): 36,848
Children (under 18 years): 18.3%
Seniors (65 years or over) : 18.8%

Growth (2010-2020):
Town of Guilderland: +4.36%
Albany County: +3.24%
State of New York: +4.25%

Race (2020 Census)

White alone 28,520 (77.4%)
Asian alone 4,050 (11.0%)
Two or more races 2,120 (5.8%)
Black alone 1,500 (4.1%)
Other race 549 (1.5%)
Native Hawaiian alone 69 (0.2%)
American Indian alone 40 (0.1%)
Total 36,848 (100%)

Hispanic 4.6%
Non-Hispanic 95.4%

Households (2022 est.) 14,803
Persons per household 2.36

Language other English 14.7% of households

TOWN COMPTROLLER

SIMPLIFIED 2024 BUDGET

- Paid off purchase bond for Western Turnpike Golf Course
- Eliminated separate budget lines for WTRC and merged with Parks & Rec
- 2024 Budget under tax cap by nearly \$100,000, and total increase is 2.85%
- Estimated Unassigned Fund Balance is 29% of 2024 Budget's appropriations

STREAMLINED 2024 PROPERTY TAX BILL

- Eliminated lines on tax bill for NYS Retirement & County Election Mandate
- Eliminated separate taxes for Guilderland & Altamont ambulance districts
- All amounts are now included in the Town General tax
- Most property taxes go somewhere else: 68% (School District); 13% (Albany County); 4% (Fire District); 4% (Library); **and only 11% for the Town of Guilderland**

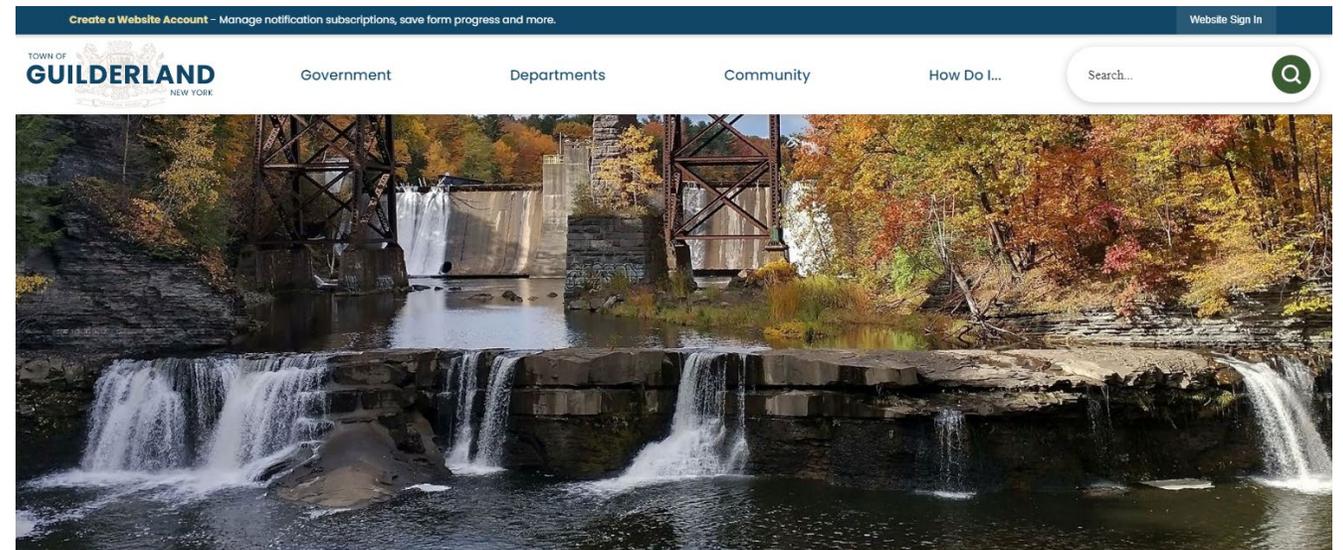
INFORMATION & TECHNOLOGY

New Website Launched (Dec. 2023)

- Full-year calendar for all meetings of boards and committees
- Expanded access to news; weekly newsletters of announcements & events
- Complete agenda packets & digitized recordings
- “Report a Concern” and other applications
- More GIS Property Information
- Community partners (Fire Departments, Library, YMCA)
- Online submission of forms and applications

Upgraded Broadcast System

- New cameras & audio enhancements
- Televising of all boards/committees
- Oversized screen displays



TOWN CLERK & ASSESSOR

TOWN CLERK

Licenses etc.

146 marriage licenses
1,935 dog licenses
267 certificates of residence
Over 1,000 resident stickers
814 disabled parking hang-tags

Official records

190 Freedom of Information Law Requests

More than 20 online applications

Started digitizing old birth, marriage, and death certificates from microfilm

Receiver of Taxes

\$72.5 million (2023, School)
\$35.3 million (2024, County & Town)
\$2.7 million (Water charges)

New program for real-time online tax payments

TOWN ASSESSOR

Town's Assessed Value: \$4,491,810,789

Total Tax Parcels (2023) **13,907**

Residential Parcels 11,985 (86%)

Comm., Tele., Special Fran. 1,922 (14%)

Senior Citizen & Disability Exemptions (2023)

Increased maximum exemption from \$37,400 to \$58,400

Firefighter Exemption (2023)

New exemption for firefighters, active for two years, and own property in Town

Applies to Town, County & School Tax Bill

TOWN COURT

2023 COURT STATISTICS

Vehicle & Traffic Law	4,772 tickets
Penal Law	823 cases
Civil	127 cases

Back to pre-pandemic caseload

2023 JUSTICE COURT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

- **Enhanced security**
 - Metal detector
 - Door fobs
 - Calibrator
 - Facemasks (COVID)
- **Furniture**
 - Conference table and chairs in judge's chambers
 - Courtroom chairs
 - Utility cart



SENIOR SERVICES

Expanding coverage

- 800+ Town seniors (60+) served
- 3,000+ transportation requests for shopping, medical, and congregate meals
- Seven day trips
- Fleet of four busses
 - Newest bus (2022) (80% State grant; \$150,000 cost)

Programs

- Recreation (bingo, games, mahjongg, pinochle)
- Exercise and nutritional programs
- Painting and quilting,

Services

- Income tax and legal referrals
- Help applying for government assistance
- Home maintenance referrals
- Assistance finding appropriate housing
- Caring calls



WATER & WASTEWATER



Watervliet Reservoir

Replacement of Water Meters (2024)

- 13,000+ meters; remote monitoring

Excessive Summer Water Usage

- Winter usage (2 to 2.5 million gallons per day)
- Summer usage (5 to 7 million gallons per day)
 - Why? Lawn sprinklers @ wrong times

Rotterdam Interconnection

- \$3.5 million (60% grant)
- Aquifer-sourced water; no filtration plant use
- Added capacity: 1.5 million gallons per day

Improvements at Water Filtration Plant

- New filters; pre-treatment of Reservoir water
- Added capacity: 0.5 million gallons per day

Possible green sand filtration for Town wells

Reducing loss of water

- Increased rates for over usage (2024)
- GIS Mapping of water shutoff valves

PLANNING & BUILDING

Economic Development (2023)

- 12 special use applications (19 in 2019)
 - restaurants, shops, and specialty markets
- 3 site plan use applications (5 in 2019)
 - medical offices and apartments
- 3 major (5+ lots) subdivision applications (5 in 2019)

Transit-Oriented Development District

TOD's purpose: "regional shopping, entertainment, and employment centers, **a robust transit service with high ridership and proposed enhancements, direct vehicle access to the interstate highway system, and a nearby local business community.**"

- Zoned for intense residential & commercial uses
- Costco (filed 11/2019; approved 5/2023)
- New York Oncology & Hematology (2023)



ROAD SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

Two Roundabouts: Proven Safe & Successful

Per DOT, two prior traffic-light intersections had serious accident histories, with fatalities & chronic delays

- (1) Carman Road/Lydius St roundabout (October 2022)
 - 12 accidents (2 with personal injuries)
 - common cause: failure to yield right of way
- (2) Northway/Crossgates Mall roundabout (July 2023)
 - 4 accidents (1 with personal injury)
 - common cause: following too closely
 - No DOT detour signs due to holiday backups

Another Planned Roundabout

Route 155 & Washington Avenue intersection

- Albany County (2025-26)

Adding 300 feet to left turn at Old State Road



**Northway/Crossgates Mall Roundabout
(Times Union, July 21, 2023)**

POLICE DEPARTMENT

NYS Law Enforcement Accreditation

- 110 standards of practices & training
- Accredited since 2009
- Only 1/3rd of police agencies are accredited

Police programs & services

- Civilian Response to Active Shooter
- Drug Abuse Resistance Program (DARE)
- School Resource Officers
- Retail Interdiction Detail
- Drug Take Back Day
- National Night Out
- Nixle Community Alerts
- Rape Aggression Defense Program (RAD)
- Sex Offender Registry
- Explorer/Cadet Post
- Neighborhood Watch
- Take Me Home
- Project Child Safe



POLICE DEPARTMENT

New vehicles (2024)

- Two new police vehicles
- New Animal Control van

Replaced Body & Car Cameras (2023)

- First area police department to deploy (2016)

Upgrading dispatch consoles (2024)

- Essential for 911 responses
- Most modern radio equipment available for emergency communications and interoperability

Microwave communications (2023)

- Required for Town-wide emergency
- Redundant microwave radio network linking Town system to the Albany County radio core, and allows for seamless communications between the Town and all other emergency service agencies in neighboring counties



PUBLIC SAFETY

Expanded Police Force

- 2024 budget: Added officer and sergeant; now at 43 uniformed officers; largest in Town history

Increased School Security

- 2024 budget: Added resource officer at Farnsworth Middle School
- Department of Justice COPS grant (sponsored by Congressman Paul Tonko) for emergency communication in each of the seven school buildings

Traffic Safety

- New Traffic Safety Officer
 - dedicated to address speeding complaints
- “Your Speed” signs
 - allows for permanent placement
- Now broadcast Traffic Safety Committee meetings



PUBLIC SAFETY: NEXT STEPS

Reduce speed limit to 25mph (maybe 20mph)?

- 2023 law allowed Town to reduce speed limit on Town roads to 25mph; **required expensive traffic engineer study to justify lower speed**
- Proposed 2024 law would allow reduction to 20mph speed limit; **eliminate need for traffic study**

Use of Speed “Humps” to reduce speed?

- Installed on Elmwood Street (2023)
- Planned for Kennewyck Drive (2024)
- Considered in Highway Dept’s annual paving schedule



PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Sidewalks (over 50 miles)

New planned sidewalks (2025)

- Carman Rd (Western to E. Old State)
- E. Old State (Carman Road to Hillside)

New planned multi-use path (2025)

- NYS State Route 146 (Western Avenue to Winter Rec Area)

ADA self-assessment (2024)

- State grant to evaluate the condition of all sidewalks for disabled persons
- Assessment will also include access to Town-owned buildings, parks, and facilities



Carman Road sidewalk

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

ROAD MAINTENANCE

- 168.5 miles of center lane of Town road; 337 miles with returns
- Annual paving of 16 miles; on average, Town road paved every 10 years
- Surging costs of materials kept paving to 8 miles for past two paving seasons
- 30-40 tons a day of blacktop repairs
- 2 crews for pothole repairs
- 2 crews for roadside mowing
- In-house paving equipment; save dollars
- Mechanics fabricate parts in-house



Highway Plow Truck 2024

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

CLEAN UP

- Fall leaf pick-up schedule on Town roads
- Year round pick-up of lawn bags and tied brush
- Cleaning of stormwater catch basins
- Sweep all Town roads (five times per year)
- Install stormwater catch basins & pipes

SIGNAGE

- In-house sign shop
- Manufacturing signs for other communities



Highway Sweeper

IMPROVED SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE

NEW EQUIPMENT (2024)

- Ventrac sidewalk snowplows (State Senator Neil Breslin) with attachments to maintain hiking trails
- Mini-excavator (Assemblyperson Phil Steck) with attachments

SHIFTING RESPONSIBILITY? (2024-25)

- Consider transferring responsibility for maintaining sidewalks from Parks & Rec to Highway Department



New Ventrac Snowplows

EMS: LEADER IN ALS RESPONSE

ADVANCED LIFE SUPPORT (ALS)

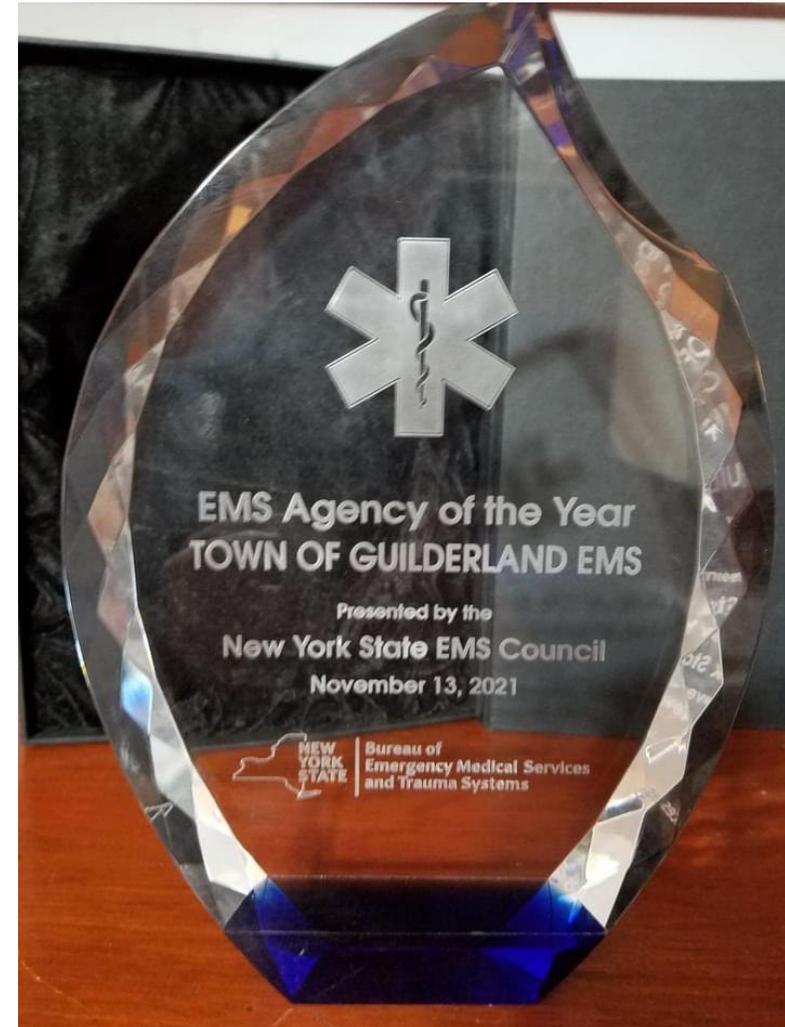
- 6,717 (+5.9%) calls and 3,807 (+9.1%) transports
- Intravenous therapy; tracheal intubation; administer Rx; electrocardiography

EMS AGENCY OF THE YEAR (2021)

- COVID-19 vaccine clinics (2020-21)
- Expanded ALS ambulance coverage in the Village of Altamont and the Town of Knox (2023)
- Pending State law re: “essential services”

EMS LEADER WITH INDUSTRY INITIATIVES

- Hospital off-load policy (ambulance delay)
- Direct pay legislation (insurance payments)
- Expanded EMS training center
- Hardship policy



EMS AMBULANCE FLEET

NEW AMBULANCES

- 2 new ambulances; now 6 ambulances
- 2024 Budget: Added 4th ambulance crew from 12am to 12pm, seven days

CREATED AMBULANCE RESERVE

- \$350,000+ per ambulance
- 2024 Budget: reserve for ambulances

AMBULANCE MAINTENANCE

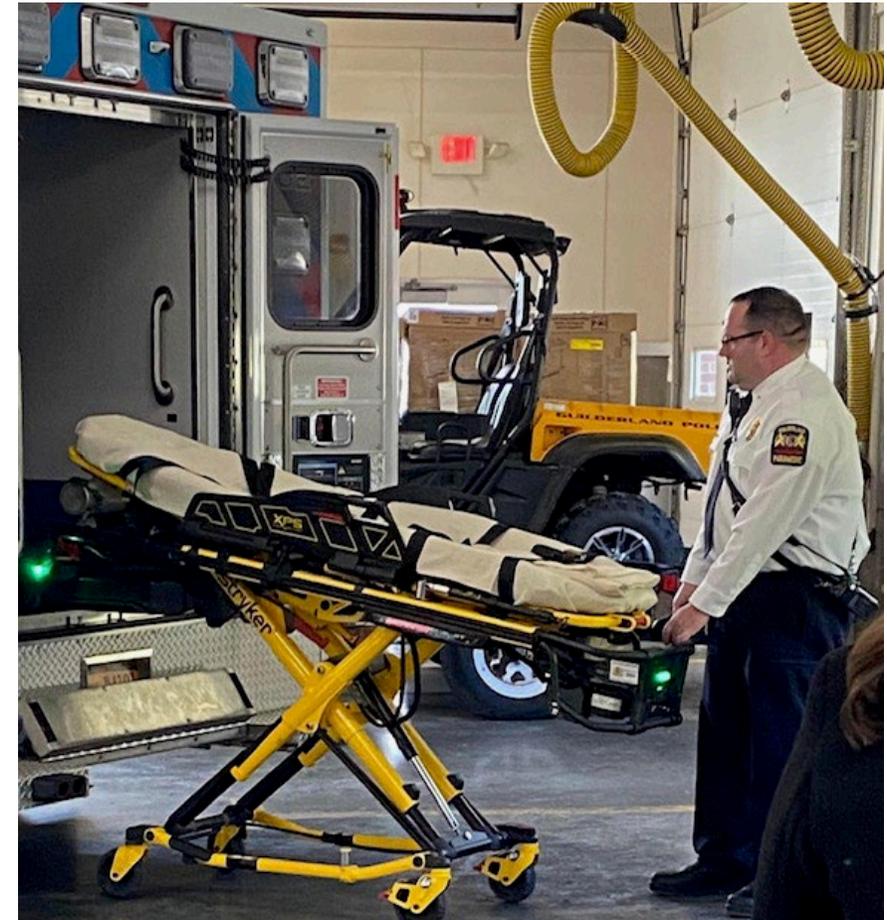
- In-house mechanics
- Investment in new mechanic space and equipment



EMS' ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT



Zoll Ventilator Monitors
Gary Sinese Foundation



Power stretcher & lift
Assemblyperson Phil Steck

NEW EMS SUBSTATION THREE



Opening late Spring 2024

**First EMS ambulance station in
40 years**

**No financing or land acquisition
costs**

**New home for Town's
Emergency Command Vehicle**

Superior ALS response times

**At entrance to Western Turnpike
Golf Course with direct access to
Routes 20 & 146**

SUPPORT FOR FIREFIGHTERS



Prototype of New Fire Training Facility

Fire Training Facility

- Opening late 2024
- Replace 50-year old facility
- \$500,000 Albany County grant
- Partnering with Town's fire departments
- Essential training for volunteer firefighters

Town Property Tax Exemption (2023)

- Maximum benefit offered

New Town website

- Devoting webpage for recruitment efforts

2023 PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Trail Maintenance Equipment (Fahy)

- New trail mower, mini-excavator and utility cart

Abele Park (Fahy)

- New playground
- New entrance sign
- Improved access trail

Nott Road Park

- New trail adjacent to Normanskill

New Westmere Dog Park

- Behind EMS Station One

Vosburgh Open Space

- New trail loop (Orange)

New Mini Park @ Carman/Lydius Roundabout



mini-excavator, trail mower & utility cart

MORE 2023 PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Tawasentha Park

- *GPAC renovations (Sponsored by former State Senator George Amedore)*
 - Terraced platforms
 - Dance/patio area
 - New lighting & audio system
 - Roadway improvements
- *Two pickleball courts on former tennis court*
- *Filtration pump replaced*
- *Splashed pad installed @ pool*
- *Refurbished baseball field's backstop*
- *Fitness Court (Albany County, MVP)*
- *Fiber installation to GPAC, pool etc.*

Western Turnpike Golf Course

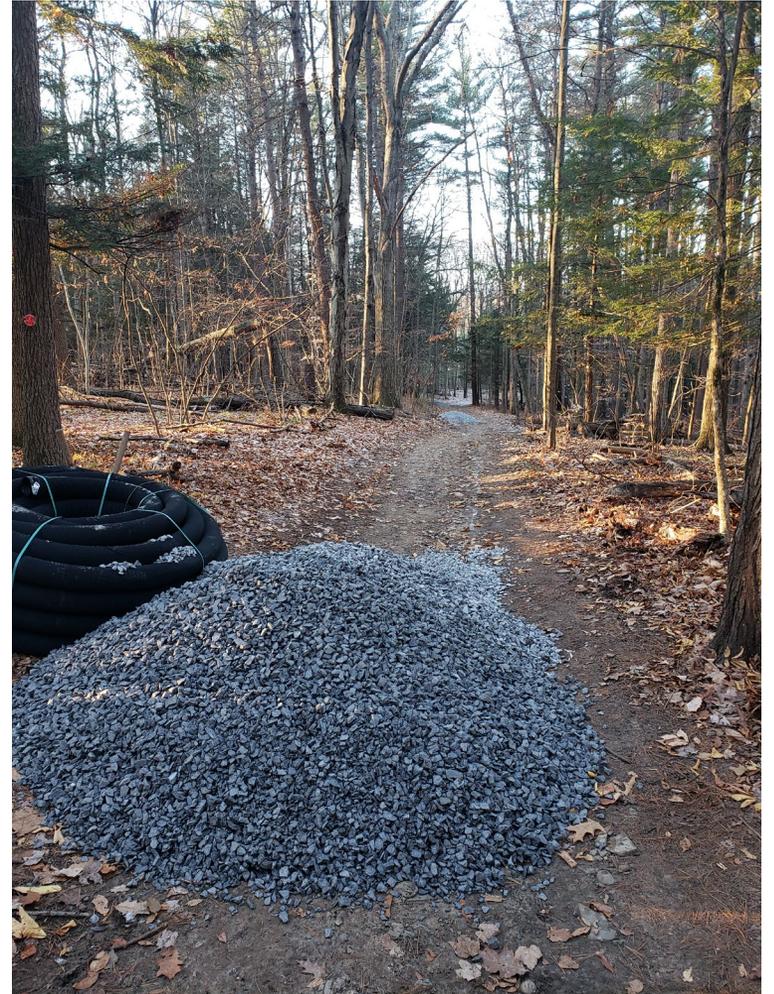
- *Replaced clubhouse roof, new carpeting, ceiling tile*
- *Upgraded drainage on several holes*



GPAC terraced platforms with new lighting and sound system

ESSENTIAL PARTNERS

(Scout Troops 50, 83, 264 and Cub Scout Pack 50)



2024 PLANNED PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Nott Road Park

- Playground (Assemblymember Fahy)
- Ballfield grading (State Senator Hinchey)
- Improved irrigation system (Hinchey)
- 4 Pickleball courts

Volunteer Firefighters Mem. Park

- Dog park (State Senator Breslin)
- Playground (Breslin)
- 4 Pickleball courts (Breslin)
- Small pavilion (Breslin)
- Irrigation lighting & water

Fort Hunter Park

- Playground (Assemblymember Steck)
- Refurbish playfield & backstop (Steck)
- Small pavilion (Steck)
- Paving parking lot (Steck)

Tawasentha Park

- Paving the park road (Fahy)
- Upgrade bathroom (State Senator Amedore)

Abele Park

- New bathroom (Fahy)
- Resurfaced basketball courts (Fahy)

DiCaprio Park

- New playground (Steck)

New Kaikout Kill Park

- Former Hiawatha Trails Golf Course
- 28.16 acres (64%) preserved grasslands
- Multi-use trail system (ADA) w/bridge
- Bird watching with pond; picnic tables
- Pickleball courts

Watervliet Reservoir (FERC relicensing)

- Restore shoreline fishing with platform & parking
- Hiking and snowshoeing trails

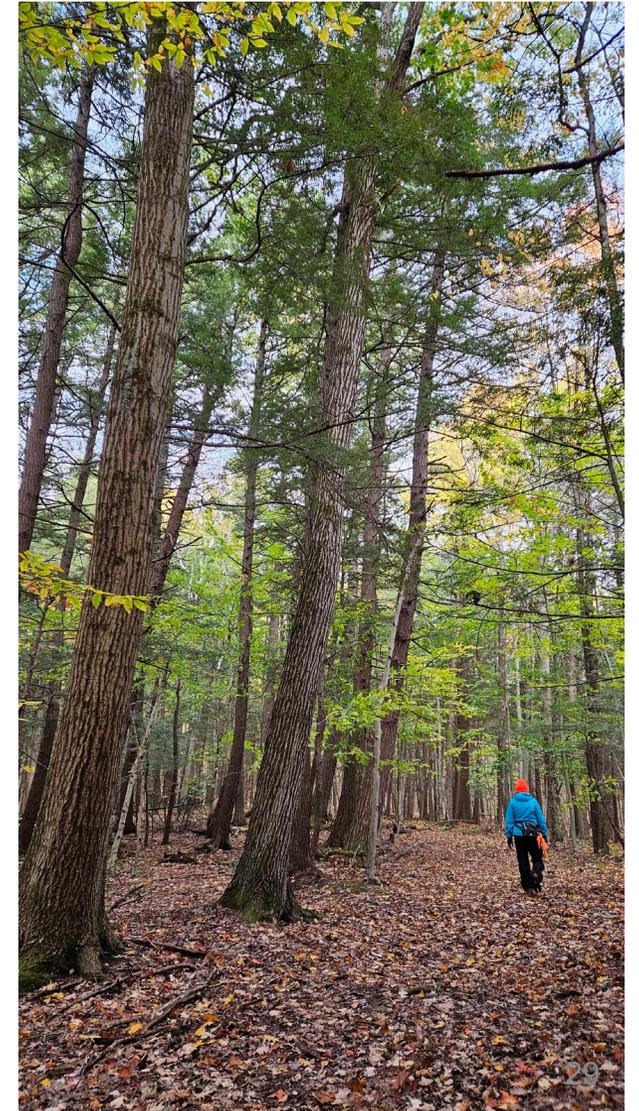
OPEN SPACE EXPANSION

BOZEN KILL CONSERVATION CORRIDOR



Bozen Kill Preserve (2024)

- Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy
- 225-acres on Bond Road
- Preserved
- Trail system
- Protect Bozenkill & water resources
- Major tributary to Watervliet Reservoir



CLIMATE ACTION

Preserve 30% of Town's land mass

- Updating Zoning Map: rezone parks, open space, protected lands from underlying zoning to open space/parklands district
- Partners: Albany Pine Bush Preserve, Department of Environmental Conservation, Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, and Open Space Institute

Clean Energy Community

- Adopted NYS unified solar permit
- Installed electric vehicle charging stations
- Upgrading Town Hall's HVAC system
- Converted 603 National Grid lights to LED
- Changed Town lighting to LED

Community Solar

- Amsterdam solar facility
 - National Grid credits on utility bills
- Transfer Station: contract for solar facility



Tawasentha Park

Protecting Open Space

Conservation Easement Program

- State law (2022) (Sponsored by State Senator Michelle Hinchey & Assemblymember Pat Fahy)
- Provide property tax exemption for voluntarily preserving environmentally sensitive area
- Only handful of communities participate
- Albany County's participation
- First application (2023)
 - 44 acres preserved (Normanskill) (see photo)

New Native Tree Preservation Law

- Protect Town's natural environment by preserving native trees and eradicating invasives
- Educational, not punitive
- Committee now researching policies to prepare a Forestry Plan



View of Normanskill from preserved parcel

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Mynderse-Frederick House (1802)

- Back porch reconstructed (completed)
- Shutter removal & repair (Fahy grant)
- Foundation & cellar repair
- Exterior paint (Fahy grant) (Spring 24)
- Replace window (grant)
- Replace rear roof extension



Schoolcraft House (circa 1840)

- Furnace replacement (completed)
- Fix chimney leakage
- Replace roof
- Repair deteriorated siding (Spring 24)
- Exterior paint (Spring 24)
- Pave parking lot



Cobblestone Schoolhouse

Built 1860 (original School No. 6)

National Registry of Historic Places

Potential Town ownership?

2024 Grant (Assemblymember Fahy)

- New cedar shake roof
- Replace interior walls and ceiling
- Upgrade bathroom
- Improve gas and electric
- Restore outhouse (not for use)

Multi-use path connection to Keenholts Park



THANK YOU