

***SOMEWHAT FREQUENT QUESTIONS & ITEMS OF INTEREST  
PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENTS  
“THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROCESS”***

***What is a Comprehensive Plan?***

NYS Town Law §272-a defines “Town Comprehensive Plan” as “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 town located outside the limits of any incorporated village or city.”

A comprehensive plan expresses the Town’s goals and recommends actions, guides development and protects the health, safety, and welfare of Town residents. The plan focuses on protecting the Town’s assets and resources, addressing population and demographic changes, providing housing resources and future housing needs, and improving the local economy and recreational opportunities.

***Is a Comprehensive Plan required?***

NYS Town Law §272-a(1)(h) states: “It is the intent of the legislature to encourage, but not to require, the preparation and adoption of a comprehensive plan pursuant to this section.”

***How was the Comprehensive Plan developed?***

The Town’s Comprehensive Plan was a multi-year effort with wide-based public participation, including a written survey to 12,000 homes (about 3,000 were returned) and phone surveys. The effort involved neighborhood gatherings, board meetings, outreach efforts, and workshops on economic development, housing, natural resources, open space, farm land preservation, transportation, recreation, and cultural resources.

***What is the Town’s Comprehensive Plan?***

The Town’s Comprehensive Plan includes, at a minimum, the Comprehensive Plan Study (2001); *Fort Hunter/Carman Road Neighborhood Transportation Plan* (2003); *McKownville Corridor*

*Study* (2003); *Rural Guilderland: Open Space and Farmland Protection Plan* (2005); *Guilderland Hamlet Neighborhood Plan* (2007); *Route 20 Corridor Study* (2008); *Guilderland Center Neighborhood Master Plan* (2010); *McKownville Drainage Study* (2010); *Railroad Avenue Area Transportation & Revitalization Plan* (2011); *Westmere Corridor Study* (2016); and *Official Zoning Map* (2019). Each of these documents is available on the Planning Department’s webpage.

With the completion of this Comprehensive Plan process, the Town adopted a new Zoning and Land Use Law (2016), and amendments (2017-19).

***What was the cost of the Town’s Comprehensive Plan process?***

The comprehensive plan process, including the preparation of neighborhood studies, cost about \$1,000,000. This cost was mostly covered by competitive grants secured over this time period.

***What are possible next steps in the Comprehensive Plan process?***

The next step in the Comprehensive Plan process would involve exploring renewal and updates to the existing Plan. A first step would be securing competitive grants, and having public meetings and resident surveys to prepare the update’s scope.

Among possible scoping topics are:

- providing affordable housing options for all ages, physical abilities, and incomes
- encouraging climate-smart growth
- developing green infrastructure linking neighborhoods to destinations
- farmland protection
- preserving open space and historic places
- protecting water resources
- promoting sustainable energy
- developing a coordinated multi-modal transportation network including public and non-motorized transit