



Jessica Montgomery &lt;montgomeryj@togny.org&gt;

---

## Draft Comprehensive Plan--Neighborhoods and Housing

1 message

laurel bohl [REDACTED]

Sat, Mar 15, 2025 at 4:23 PM

To: Peter Barber <barberp@togny.org>, Christine Napierski <napierskic@togny.org>, beedlea@togny.org, crawfordj@togny.org, santosg@togny.org  
Cc: Jessica Montgomery <montgomeryj@togny.org>

Hello Town Board Members,

I am sending you each a copy (attached) of the Neighborhood Housing and Town Character Committee's final report and recommendations for the Town Comprehensive Plan so that you can personally compare them to the final Comprehensive Plan to see what was edited out or otherwise deleted. In addition to the entire Town Character section being deleted from the final Draft Comprehensive Plan (see prior email), there were also several recommendations in the Neighborhood and Housing section of the current Draft Comprehensive Plan that are the exact opposite of what the subcommittee recommended.

For example, please note in particular the following deleted Neighborhood and Housing Objectives and goals:

(1) "Avoid overdevelopment especially in or near established neighborhoods". I recall when I was on the town board when I was on the town board and the Request for a Consultant was before us, and I noticed it did not list protecting established neighborhoods in town as a factor to consider. After bringing it to the Supervisor's attention, he agreed to add it in. Why then was this objective deleted?

(2) "As a general rule, ensure that all apartment buildings in all zones are located near transportation centers and limited to a percentage of overall town housing to match the objective sources for actual demand, to create a balanced distribution of housing in town." Why was this deleted? The subcommittee did a survey of all the apartment vacancies in town, and measured it against the expected growth, and found that we were building more apartment buildings than needed, and what we really needed was more "missing middle" or affordable housing. Its common sense to make sure apartment buildings are located near transportation centers. Why was this objective deleted?

As you are probably aware, this subcommittee was composed of very highly respected stakeholders in town, including Ellen Manning (head of the Mc Kownville Improvement Association), Robyn Gray (Chair of Guilderland Coalition for Responsible Growth), Elizabeth Lott (Chair of the ZBA), Dominic Riguso (current Planning Board member), Lisa Hart (Westmere resident), Rosemary Centi (former Town Board member), Gus Santos (current town board member), and myself (former town board member). Why was the work of this highly experienced subcommittee disregarded?

Thank you for considering the Subcommittee's final recommendations. I respectfully ask that you please give this careful consideration and add the Sub Committee's recommendations for Neighborhoods and Housing (along with Town Character) back into the Draft Comprehensive Plan. I also ask that this letter be included in the official record of comments for the Draft Comprehensive Plan.

Thank you,  
Laurel Bohl



**Town Comp Plan Update. Housing and Character Goals, Objectives and Recommended actions.docx**  
39K

## **HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS & TOWN CHARACTER SUBCOMMITTEE**

### **HOUSING GOALS:**

- I. Provide a balanced blend of quality housing opportunities, including a desirable range of housing types and price ranges, which are affordable and accessible for residents.
- II. As a general rule, ensure that all apartment buildings in all zones are located near transportation centers and limited to a percentage of overall town housing to match the objective sources for actual demand (not based on developers' studies) to create a balanced distribution of housing in town.
- III. Create sustainability developments that truly focus on diverse housing, environmental improvements and economic growth. Develop green building standards and codes that promote energy efficiency, water conservation and the use of sustainable materials.

### **HOUSING OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) Develop policies and programs that help maintain and strengthen the character, value and enjoyment of existing housing resources in established neighborhoods of Guilderland.

#### **Recommended actions:**

- a. AVOID OVER-DEVELOPMENT: especially in or near established neighborhoods.
  - b. CREATE PARKS: Develop a park for the Westmere area that includes areas for adults as well as playsets and facilities that kids can use.
- 2) Ensure that the town's zoning accommodates the need for housing diversity, and that supply matches need/demand.

#### **Recommended actions:**

- a. MULTI-RESIDENCE ZONES. The subcommittee on housing has determined that the current available apartment housing units are sufficient for the demand in Town. We especially recommend against any future zoning changes for any additional MR zones.<sup>1</sup>
- b. CURRENT CODE: The town code contains a variety of diverse types of housing (country hamlet, planned unit developments, senior housing, etc.). The subcommittee recommends adding some additional categories for "affordable housing" in the next section of this report.

---

<sup>1</sup> Donald Csaposs disagreed with this recommended action.

- 3) Encourage affordable housing opportunities for seniors and those with special needs, etc., that will allow residents to remain in town in their homes despite their changing housing care requirements.

**Recommended actions:**

- a. ENCOURAGE SMALLER HOMES. Encourage one-story ranch homes for seniors and people with special needs, etc., either in existing established neighborhoods or in new 1-1 ½ story “cottage-type” housing developments.
  - b. PROMOTE AGE-IN-PLACE PROGRAMS. Promote town programs like Guilderland Senior Services which allow seniors to age in place in their own homes with a range of services.
- 4) Identify appropriate sites and incentives for the creation of housing options that are needed but not adequately provided for in the marketplace. Houses that are +/- 1,000-1,500 sq. ft. are one of the most desirable types of housing, part of the missing middle housing. These are homes that are more affordable than the single-family homes currently being built. To meet this objective, the committee recommends exploring the following:

**Recommended actions:**

- a. INCENTIVIZE SMALLER HOMES: These are generally understood to be one-story ranch type houses or cottages that can be “starter homes” or “downsizing” for senior citizens, or smaller more affordable houses for low to middle income working families.
  - i. Create a new “Affordable Home Zone” category in the code. Create a new zoning category for developers to do smaller homes (+/- 1,000-1,500 sq. ft.) on smaller lot sizes than currently allowed in the zoning code (for example, if a zone calls for ¼ acre lot sizes, allow for 1/8 acre lot sizes for 1200 sq. ft. homes in these developments; that way the ¼ acre lot can be divided into two 1/8 acre lots with smaller houses on them). Setbacks would be adjusted accordingly, while still providing sufficient buffers between homes. This would incentivize building smaller homes because it would allow the developer to make the same amount of profit as larger homes on larger lots.
  - ii. Identify which areas of town this type of development would be suitable in.
- b. GIVE TAX INCENTIVES TO RENNOVATING OLDER SMALLER HOMES.  
Re-invest in established older neighborhoods. If possible, create tax incentives for renovating and updating smaller homes in established neighborhoods to make them more “sellable”. Residents could make improvements to their homes (adding a bathroom, bedroom, remodeling a kitchen) and get a tax break on their town property taxes.

- i. The Town should encourage renovations, enhancements, and additions to existing homes in established neighborhoods as an alternative to the sprawl created by a continuous pattern of new construction. One way to advance this goal would be the implementation of a program under which assessment increases associated with such improvements could be waived for a period of time or, alternatively, be phased in over a period of time. A program of this nature could be put in place for both single-family and multi-family properties.
- c. AFFORDABLE HOUSING REQUIREMENTS. While not requiring quotas, the subcommittee strongly encourages that a certain number of units in each housing development be ‘affordable’ housing units. (“Affordable” in the context of apartment units is defined as rent that is equal to or less than 30% of an average renter’s annual income). If possible, add provisions to the zoning code that require this. If not, work with developers and use the site planning process to encourage this.
- d. ATTACHED DWELLING UNITS/APPARTMENTS. Develop policies for accessory dwelling units (ADUs), either attached or detached, as an opportunity for alternative housing options in single-family residential neighborhoods while preserving the character of these neighborhoods. The intent is to provide low-cost housing options, slow suburban sprawl, and to allow more efficient use of existing infrastructure. Consider having the Town join the Plus One ADU Program of New York State.<sup>2</sup>

The Subcommittee recommends that the following conditions apply to all ADUs:

- (1) All ADUs must require a Special Use Permit. The SUP would address architectural character and guidelines so that the ADU is consistent with the surrounding neighborhood.
- (2) The ADU will be limited to a maximum square footage of 1,000 sq. ft., or not more than 30% of the gross floor area of the principal structure, whichever is less.
- (3) The maximum height of the detached structure should not be taller than the principal structure.
- (4) One of the residences must be owner-occupied.
- (5) The accessory dwelling would require a minimum of one additional off-street parking space. Encourage locating ADUs close to bus transit.
- (6) The accessory dwelling unit must meet the setback requirements of the primary structure or the zoning requirements on which the parcel is located, whichever is more stringent.

---

<sup>2</sup> The Plus One ADU Program provides grants to units of local government and not-for-profit organizations that are committed to crafting community-specific programs for generating safe, quality ADUs. By working with units of local government and community development partners, the program provides a full-service program to support low- and middle- income single-family homeowner occupants who wish to build a new ADU on their property or improve an existing ADU that needs to be brought into compliance with local and state code requirements (see. <https://hcr.ny.gov/plus-one-adu-program>).

- (7) Neither the ADU nor the primary residence can be used as a short-term rental (e.g., Airbnb, etc.)
- (8) The occupant of the ADU need not be a relative of the owner of the principal residence.
- (9) If the ADU is rented by the owner of the principal residence, it cannot be subleased.

**TOWN CHARACTER – GOALS:**

- I. Preserve and enhance Guilderland’s identity, image, and quality of life; and maintain and strengthen the distinction between the Town’s developed and rural areas, as well as the distinction between the town’s neighborhoods and commercial areas.
- II. Prevent any trends that move Guilderland towards the look of a city or large commercial town; namely, avoid putting all commercial businesses along the Western Avenue Corridor. Instead, spread them out thoughtfully in appropriately zoned areas in town that are in conformance with the town’s height limit and with landscaping and buffers to clearly separate them from the residential areas with native species landscaping
- III. Prioritize residents’ quality of life while encouraging small businesses to grow and flourish.
- IV. Town character should recognize the abundance of ethnic groups in the town and encourage and promote diversity.
- V. Establish resilience goals/strategies that reduce the Town of Guilderland’s vulnerability to potential natural hazards and events. Reduce risk to future developments through a careful planning process, and take steps to protect existing infrastructure and natural resources.

**TOWN CHARACTER OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) Establish guidelines to ensure that future residential and commercial development is of a scale and design that is appropriate from both a neighborhood and townwide perspective.

**Recommended action:**

- a. The town should proactively select one or two designated areas in town on main roads (avoiding Western Avenue) that have enough population to support small non-residential commercial uses in BNRP or LB districts in order to bring light offices, dining, professional services and employment opportunities to areas that need those services.

- 2) Identify boundaries of existing, or locations for potential, mixed-use community centers or hamlets (similar to the Village of Altamont).
- 3) Create neighborhood “community centers” and identify necessary transportation improvements for each area that will address traffic calming and other pedestrian safety issues.
- 4) Work with residents in Town’s traditional neighborhood corridors<sup>3</sup> to generate strategies for enhancing their existing environments, and require town leaders to provide updates on progress achieved with the Comprehensive Plan’s goals and objectives to each neighborhood corridor community periodically.
- 5) Ensure adequate, but not excessive parking.

**Recommended actions:**

- a. TERMINOLOGY. Change the language of the Zoning Code from “required” to “recommended” parking spaces.
  - b. RECOMMENDED PARKING LOT SPACES. The number of parking spaces in the code is excessive and underutilized in many commercial and residential apartment complexes, often causing stormwater runoff. Better to recommend less parking in the code and allow the developer to argue reasons for more parking spaces.
  - c. BANKED PARKING. Banked parking spaces should be required for all projects to allow for future growth.
  - d. CONNECTED PARKING LOTS. Adjust site plan code requirements to encourage connected parking lots for adjacent businesses that all filter traffic away from residential areas to a single traffic signal.
- 6) Support continued use of viable agricultural lands; preserve open space, and protect and preserve natural resources.

**Recommended actions:**

- a. NATURAL RESOURCES. The town should compile a list of its important natural resources which deserve special protection and draft code provisions protecting these resources (i.e., the Pine Bush Preserve, the Watervliet Reservoir, the Helderberg Escarpment viewshed, etc.).

---

<sup>3</sup> The term ‘neighborhood corridors’ is intended to refer to areas of town with unique identities and needs that have their own specific neighborhood Comprehensive Plans, i.e., McKownville, Westmere, Guilderland Hamlet, Guilderland Center, Carman Road area, Altamont, and West (rural) Guilderland.

- i. Draft Code provisions to protect the Pine Bush Preserve as a special area, similar to the Town of Colonie’s code provisions for the Pine Bush.
    - ii. In light of the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision limiting the Army Corps of Engineers’ designation of wetlands to only those that flow into U. S. navigable waters, immediately draft a new town code provision to protect our town’s wetlands, as other towns are doing (see the Town of New Paltz’s code provision, the upcoming code provision in the Town of Bethlehem, etc). This will serve many purposes including preventing the destruction of important natural ecosystems, as well as preventing uncontrollable stormwater runoff throughout the town.
    - iii. Protect views of the Helderberg Escarpment.
  - b. INCENTIVIZE FARMLANDS. Create a way to encourage continued use of farmlands for farming. Continue support of farmers’ markets in town.
  - c. ESTABLISH CONSERVATION PROGRAMS. Continue to establish programs like the town’s Conservation Easement program, which gives tax incentives to residents for conserving their lands.
    - i. Actively reach out to land trusts and partner with them to purchase open spaces.
  - d. ENCOURAGE USE OF VACANT PROPERTIES. Encourage Development of abandoned or vacant property for new housing and commercial uses, rather than breaking ground in open or green spaces in town.
    - i. Create tax incentives where possible to encourage developers to use already used property (e.g., vacant retail space in Pyramid, Westlawn Bowling Center, Jiffy Lube at Rt 155 & Western, Foundry Road/Western Ave properties, Rustic Barn, etc) for new projects in town, rather than building new structures on undisturbed lands.
  - e. SOLAR AND WIND FARMS. Encourage green energy in appropriately sited areas that will not cause a negative impact on any town or residential natural or historic viewsheds.
    - i. Do not allow major solar or wind farms in residential areas.
    - ii. Promote use of solar panels as much as possible on (a) town properties, such as the town hall, the Nott Road garage, the school bus garage, etc. and (b) on large private commercial structures such as perhaps Crossgates Mall and the Guilderland Center Industrial Park.
    - iii. Encourage residential rooftop solar panels, perhaps with tax incentives.
- 7) Retain and strengthen the character of Guilderland’s residential neighborhoods, and develop building, landscaping and signage guidelines for commercial areas to create a

cohesive and aesthetically pleasing visual environment and sense of place rather than a sprawling suburban patchwork.

**Recommended actions:**

- a. ZONING CODE UPDATES. To achieve this objective, improve the quality of site design, with an emphasis on harmonious signage, landscaping, lighting, planting and building façade designs to fit in with a small town look for commercial and business retail zones, similar to what Altamont has done.
    - i. Make initial sign permit reviews part of the initial site plan process.
- 8) Ensure that new development does not result in adverse impacts such as noise, odor, and vibrations, unapproved signage, or an undue burden on town infrastructure.

**Recommended actions:**

- a. ENFORCEMENT. Hire additional zoning personnel to actively enforce violations in the code for these items townwide. Actively seek out violators, quickly respond to residents' complaints, and take appropriate action to enforce the code.
  - b. FINES: Reexamine the code to determine if there are appropriate fines for these violations. Draft provisions to impose fines for successive, continuing or escalating violations that are strong enough to act as deterrents, and to help avoid the necessity of costly litigation.
- 9) Encourage street tree planting and other aesthetic improvements in residential neighborhoods using native/non-invasive species.

**Recommended actions:**

- a. TOWN ARBORIST. Hire a town arborist to evaluate trees in town, protect heritage trees from development, and enforce the code provisions regulating the amount of trees that can be cut down for any development project. Include fines in the town code for violations of town code provisions on tree cutting. The town arborist should also review and provide comments on all site plans and submit those comments to the Planning Board and/or Zoning Board for implementation as conditions to any site plan.
- b. IMPROVE THE CHARACTER OF EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS:
  - i. Provide more sidewalks in residential areas were desired by residents.
  - ii. Provide attractive historic (lamppost) streetlighting that meets the zoning code requirements in denser areas (McKownville, Altamont, Guilderland Hamlet) to enhance town character.

- iii. Provide funds for the garden club and/or other volunteer organizations to plant flower beds in areas along prominent roadways and intersections (as Albany and Saratoga do).

10) Seek out potential public and private partnerships to implement needed improvements. This includes land trusts, business organizations, community leaders, etc.

**Recommended actions:**

- a. GRANTS. Actively seek out and apply for all appropriate grants for town improvements.
- b. TREE PLANTING PROGRAM. Set up a town program, run by the town arborist, to encourage tree planting, with a special requirement in the town code for developers to replace cut trees with a proportionate number of new, well-established trees. This will not only add to town character, but also will add to green initiatives/climate change protections.

Sub Committee Members:

- 1) Laurel Bohl, Former Town Board Member
- 2) Elizabeth Lott, ZBA Chair
- 3) Robyn Gray, Chair of Guilderland Coalition for Responsible Growth
- 4) Don Csaposs, CEO of Guilderland IDA
- 5) Dominic Riguso, Planning Board Member, Architect, Comprehensive Plan Bd. Member
- 6) Lisa Hart, Comprehensive Plan Bd. Member
- 7) Rosemary Centi, Former Town Board Member
- 8) Gus Santos, Planning Board Member, Candidate for Town Board
- 9) Ellen Manning, Chair of McKownville Improvement Association
- 10)



Jessica Montgomery &lt;montgomeryj@togny.org&gt;

---

**Fwd: LTE- Town Character Deleted from Comp. Plan**

1 message

laurel bohl [REDACTED]

Sat, Mar 15, 2025 at 4:00 PM

To: Peter Barber &lt;barberp@togny.org&gt;, Christine Napierski &lt;napierski@togny.org&gt;, crawfordj@togny.org, santosg@togny.org, beedlea@togny.org

Cc: Jessica Montgomery &lt;montgomeryj@togny.org&gt;, Kenneth Kovalchik &lt;kovalchikk@togny.org&gt;

Good afternoon,

I would respectfully like to request that my attached Letter to the Editor in the Altamont Enterprise this week be included as part of the record for the Town Board's review of the Draft Comprehensive Plan. In addition, I am cc-ing Jessica to request that a hard copy please be made and provided in the individual mailboxes of all 5 town board members prior to the March 18th Town Board meeting.

Many thanks,  
Laurel L. Bohl

## Speak up: Comprehensive plan should retain section on town character

### To the Editor:

I'd like to bring something critically important to the attention of the residents of Guilderland. As you may know, the next and possibly last town board public hearing on the new draft comprehensive plan is scheduled for March 18.

I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to be on the resident subcommittee for the Neighborhood Housing and Town Character sections last summer/fall. That subcommittee included many very experienced and respected people, including Ellen Manning (head of the McKownville Improvement Association), Robyn Gray (chair of Guilderland Coalition for Responsible Growth), Elizabeth Lott (chair of the zoning board), Dominic Riguso (current planning board member), Lisa Hart (Westmere resident), Rosemary Centi (former town board member), Gus Santos (current town board member), Don Csaposs (chief executive officer of the Guilderland Industrial Development Agency), and myself (former town board member).

After several meetings, and a lot of hard work, this diverse group agreed on some very clear goals and objectives for both the Housing section and the Town Character section. I was shocked to see that months later, when the draft comprehensive plan was reworked by the consultant and town planner, not only did it recommend the exact opposite of what we recommended on many issues but, in fact, for the first time ever to my knowledge in Guilderland's history, it totally dropped the entire section on Town Character from the comprehensive plan. This cannot be allowed to stand.

A town's comprehensive plan is intended to be a recognition of what kind of town it is, and a road map for where it wants to be in the next 20 or so years. A comprehensive plan without a section on town character leaves the town rudderless, open to overdevelopment, spot zoning, a loss of community, and a destruction of the vision and values the residents hold dear for their town.

A path forward in any town is necessarily a compromise between the need to grow, and the sense of identity and community that it seeks to preserve. At the Feb 4 public hearing, the consultant casually declared, “There is no single community character” in Guilderland [[“Speakers call for small houses rather than large apartment complexes,”](#) The Altamont Enterprise, Feb. 7, 2025].

Part of what makes Guilderland so special is because it has so many rich neighborhood communities, like Mc Kownville, Altamont, Westmere, Carman Road, Voorheesville, and rural Guilderland. But because we have many pockets of close-knit communities does *not* mean that Guilderland has no town character. Quite the opposite.

I have lived here all my life and campaigned door to door throughout this town and, no matter what community you are from in Guilderland, there is most definitely a strong sense of town character, evidenced by closely held values and a vision that we all share for our town’s future.

Perhaps the reason why the consultant and the town planner don’t think there should be a Town Character section in the comprehensive plan is because neither live in Guilderland? Anyone who lives in this town knows just how important town character is.

Or perhaps the recent appearance of 3-, 4-, and 5-story apartment buildings all over town, some in historical residential neighborhoods or nearby the protected Pine Bush, have become so commonplace that they have torn at the seams of our town’s character to the point where we truly are poised to lose our identity as a town as Guilderland begins to look more and more urban?

Are we giving up?

Overdevelopment is not a reason to delete the section on Town Character from our plan, but instead its precisely why it is important to have it represented there, before our town character is indeed completely lost. A Town Character section grounds a town and incorporates our town values into our future.

The consultant has claimed that some of the Town Character points were incorporated elsewhere in other sections of the comprehensive plan. I have not been able to find this and, even if it were true, it does not negate the need for a separate full section on Town Character.

The Town Character section, with goals and objectives, acts as an independent and equally strong check and balance to overdevelopment. This section balances the natural tension between the two competing interests, and prevents the town from losing its identity. Not surprisingly, the character section of a comprehensive plan often serves as the basis for residents to challenge a developer’s overreach in court when a town begins to lose its character completely.

Since I think residents have a right to know what was deleted from their own comprehensive plan, and because no one is telling them this, here are the five goals from the Town Character section that were deleted in toto by the consultant and town planner:

— Preserve and enhance Guilderland’s identity, image, and quality of life; and maintain and strengthen the distinction between the town’s developed and rural areas, as well as the distinction between the town’s neighborhoods and commercial areas;

— Prevent any trends that move Guilderland towards the look of a city or large commercial town; namely, avoid putting all commercial businesses along the Western Avenue Corridor. Instead, spread them out thoughtfully in appropriately zoned areas in town that are in conformance with the town’s height limit and with landscaping and buffers to clearly separate them from the residential areas with native-species landscaping.

(Note: Although we recommended twice to avoid adding more development to Western Avenue, the draft comprehensive plan not only ignores this, it does the opposite — proposing to rezone an older residential area along

Western Avenue near Route 155 to General Business.);

Prioritize residents' quality of life while encouraging small businesses to grow and flourish;

— Town character should recognize the abundance of ethnic groups in the town and encourage and promote diversity; and

— Establish resilience goals/strategies that reduce the town of Guilderland's vulnerability to potential natural hazards and events. Reduce risk to future developments through a careful planning process, and take steps to protect existing infrastructure and natural resources.

Here are a few of the Character Objectives we recommended, all of which were again deleted from the draft comprehensive plan:

— Establish guidelines to ensure that future residential and commercial development is of a scale and design that is appropriate from both a neighborhood and townwide perspective. Recommended action: The town should proactively select one or two designated areas in town on main roads (avoiding Western Avenue) that have enough population to support small non-residential commercial uses in Business Non-Retail Professional or Local Business districts in order to bring light offices, dining, professional services and employment opportunities to areas that need those services;

— Identify boundaries of existing, or locations for potential, mixed-use community centers or hamlets (similar to the village of Altamont);

— Create neighborhood "community centers" and identify necessary transportation improvements for each area that will address traffic calming and other pedestrian safety issues;

— Work with residents in the town's traditional neighborhood communities to generate strategies for enhancing their existing environments, and require town leaders to provide updates on progress achieved with the comprehensive plan's goals and objectives to each neighborhood corridor community periodically;

— Ensure adequate, but not excessive parking;

Support continued use of viable agricultural lands; preserve open space, and protect and preserve natural resources;

Encourage use of vacant properties ... [developing] abandoned or vacant property for new housing and commercial uses, rather than breaking ground in open or green spaces in town;

Encourage green energy like solar and wind farms in appropriately sited areas that will not cause a negative impact on any town or residential natural or historic viewsheds;

Do not allow major solar or wind farms in residential areas;

— Promote use of solar panels as much as possible on (a) town properties, such as the town hall, the Nott Road garage, the school bus garage, etc. and (b) on large private commercial structures such as perhaps Crossgates Mall and the Guilderland Center industrial park;

— Encourage residential rooftop solar panels, perhaps with tax incentives; and

— Retain and strengthen the character of Guilderland's residential neighborhoods, and develop building, landscaping, and signage guidelines for commercial areas to create a cohesive and aesthetically pleasing visual environment and sense of place rather than a sprawling suburban patchwork.

These goals and objectives represent the residents' values and what they want to preserve in town as good and guiding principles for the next 20 years or more. Why were they ignored and deleted? What was the harm in including them?

Here is where you come in. If ever there was a time to save our town, now is the time, or we will just be handing the keys over to the developers for the next 20-plus years and giving up.

We cannot afford to have Town Character erased from our town comprehensive plan, or all is lost. It's time to make your voices heard.

The town board is holding a public hearing on the draft comprehensive plan on March 18. At this time, there are no further public hearings scheduled before the plan is approved.

If you feel that your town's character is important, and should continue to be a part of the comprehensive plan, as it has for decades, please attend this important meeting, or, if you can't, then please write a letter or send an email to each of the town board members telling them you insist that the Town Character section be reinserted into in the draft comprehensive plan, and please ask that your email or letter be included in the record.

It only takes a minute to send an email; this is your chance to preserve your quality of living and keep this a beautiful town for everyone to live, work, and raise a family in for generations to come. Please help. Email addresses of the board members are: [barberp@togny.org](mailto:barberp@togny.org); [napierskic@togny.org](mailto:napierskic@togny.org); [crawfordj@togny.org](mailto:crawfordj@togny.org); [beedlea@togny.org](mailto:beedlea@togny.org); [santosg@togny.org](mailto:santosg@togny.org).

Laurel L. Bohl

Guilderland

Editor's note: Laurel Bohl was formerly a Guilderland Town Board member.

On Mar 9, 2025, at 7:46 PM, laurel bohl [REDACTED] wrote:

Hi Melissa,

I trust this finds you well. Attached please find my LTE to the AE on the topic of the Town Character section which was deleted from the Draft Comprehensive Plan (I did not enter it on the AE website because I wanted to make sure you got it). I feel extremely strongly about the need to bring this issue to the attention of the residents, many of whom have no idea this happened, and time is running short, as the Town Board has what might be the last public hearing scheduled before the approval of the Draft Comp Plan on March 18th. I feel this is a story that needs to be told, and that the public needs to know. The Comp Plan will serve as a road map for the town of 37,000+ residents for the next 20+ years. As I say in my letter, we cannot afford to have Town Character erased from our town Comprehensive Plan, or all is lost.

I am submitting this tonight because its very important that this letter go in this week's AE, since next Tuesday will be too late (that is when the Town Board is meeting). I respectfully ask you to please print this urgent and necessary message so that people can be informed about what is going on before major decisions about our town's future are made.

Thank you for all you do,

Laurel

(I'll be at work on Monday, but will be working from home on Tuesday in case you need to call for verification. [REDACTED]).

<LTE.Comp Plan.Character.docx>

[altamontenterprise.com](http://altamontenterprise.com)  
[altamontenterprise.com](http://altamontenterprise.com)

