



HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION

Response to Town of Guilderland Draft Scope Project/Action Rapp Road Residential Development and Additional Lands

OVERVIEW

The Rapp Road Historical Association's (RRHA) mission is to further protect, preserve, and promote the rich history of the Rapp Road Community. By this document, the RRHA responds on behalf of the Rapp Road Historic District neighborhood community to the Town of Guilderland's Draft Scope for the Rapp Road Residential Development and Additional Lands project.

The RRHA's responses are to the following sections of the Draft Scope document:

- Description of Proposed Action
- Section 3.5 Traffic and Transportation
- Section 3.6 Land Use and Zoning
- Section 3.7 Character of The Community/Neighborhood
- Section 5.0 Reasonable Alternatives Analysis

As detailed below, the current plans for the Rapp Road Residential Development and Additional Lands project place the future, integrity, and quality of life in the Rapp Road Historic District community at great risk.¹

I. Description of Proposed Action

The Draft Scope's "Description of the Proposed Action" states that no current development plans exist for Sites 1 and 3. However, it does not state whether any current development plans exist for Site 2. Please clarify whether there are any current development plans for Site 2 by Pyramid Corporation or any other entity. If a current development plan for Site 2 does exist, is it consistent with the following statement in the Draft Scope?

"The second development area (Site 2 on the attached plan) is located on the corner of Crossgates Mall Road and Western Avenue and for purposes of the DEIS will be analyzed for development of a ±160,000 square feet retail building and associated fueling facility on ± 15 acres."

The current sizes of the Crossgates Mall and Crossgates Commons are 1.7 million² and 1.3 million³ square feet respectively. As described in the Draft Scope, Site 1 will have ±3,900 square feet of commercial space; Site 2 will be analyzed for development of a ±160,000 square feet retail building and associated fueling facility; and Site 3 will include, as possible future development, 115,000 square feet of retail space, 50,000 square feet of office space, and 48 multi-family apartments.

¹ More information about the Rapp Road Historical Association is available on its website <https://rapproad.wordpress.com/>

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crossgates_Mall

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crossgates_Commons



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The Draft Scope's projected square footages for Sites 1, 2 and 3 are much smaller than those of the existing Pyramid properties. Please provide an explanation regarding how the size and scope of Sites 1, 2, and 3 were determined. In addition, please specify if the Pyramid Corporation (or any other entity) will be allowed to deviate from the Draft Scope's stated parameters for the sites in any future development, and if so, to what extent.

II. Section 3.5 Traffic and Transportation⁴

Increased traffic will damage to no repair the quality of life in the Rapp Road Historic District (RRHD) Community. An important traffic metric that represents the RRHD's interests is the daily number of car trips traveling on Rapp Road between Gipp Road and Pine Lane. This metric is not the same metric used in the Traffic Impact Studies for the Rapp Road Residential project submitted by Maser Consulting on November 14, 2018, with a supplement in April 2019. Instead, in these Traffic Impact Studies, Levels of Service measures the amount of congestion at traffic intersections and focused on two Weekday Peak times between 7:30 AM – 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM – 5:30 PM.

The studies asked—can the road network handle the increase in traffic from the new apartment complex? Their answer to this question was yes. The Traffic Impact Studies found the current transportation network would provide sufficient levels of service if the apartment complex is built. However, the Traffic Impact Studies' focus was on travelers' experiences and does not include the community's perspective. Consequently, those who live in the Historic District will experience the traffic beyond the peak hours included in the study.

As mentioned, a more appropriate traffic metric for the Rapp Road Historic District is daily trips. Using the same data and methodology⁵ from the November 2018 study, the proposed apartment complex is expected to generate an ADDITIONAL 1,625 car trips every DAY. The Traffic Impact Study estimates that 20% of trips from the apartment complex will travel between Gipp Road and Pine Lane (see Figures 6 and 7 in the Traffic Impact Study). Therefore, using the same data, methodology and assumptions as the November 2018 Rapp Road Traffic Study, the new 222-apartment complex would generate an ADDITIONAL 325 car trips every day on Rapp Road between Gipp Road and Pine Lane.

⁴ The Traffic and Transportation section of RRHA's response was co-authored by Dr. Jennifer Pazour, Associate Professor of Industrial and Systems Engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York. Dr. Pazour's RPI Web page: <https://faculty.rpi.edu/node/34824>

⁵ 2017 Trip Generation Manual Report, the 10th edition. An ITE Land Use 220 – Multifamily Housing (Low-Rise) building is estimated to generate 7.32 trips per day per dwelling unit.



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This is unacceptable and RRHA recommends that mitigation strategies be pursued that reduce the daily number of car trips traveling on Rapp Road between Gipp Road and Pine Lane. For example, RRHA is in favor of the proposed design option in the supplemental Traffic Impact Study conducted in April 2019 to close Rapp Road between the project site’s northerly access and Gipp Road. RRHA is also in favor of closing off Rapp Road at the corner of Rapp Road and South Frontage Street. Both options should reduce the daily traffic on the community’s roads.

RRHA agrees with the review provided by Dr. Pazour, and the response provided by the Preservation League of New York (1/2/19) and Albany County Planning Board (5/13/19) that another traffic study is needed to examine the traffic related to daily use and to quantify traffic mitigation strategies. This would take into consideration traffic beyond peak times of the day and portray a more accurate assessment of the impact of the additional 222 residential units.

Furthermore, the additional traffic study should take into consideration the amount of traffic from the 222 unit apartment complex for traffic related to its residents coming and going to Crossgates Mall during hours of normal operation and the increase of traffic for hours of operation beyond normal hours for the residents who will frequent the adult and family venues, restaurants and stores (i.e. related to holiday shopping (Thanksgiving to Christmas), World Series, NBA finals and playoffs, Super Bowl and major soccer tournaments):

Venue	Maximum Hours
Dave and Busters	11:00 AM - 12:00 AM
Funny Bone	11AM - 10:30PM
IMAX Movies	10:00 AM - 9:30 PM (last movie showing)
Get Air Trampoline Park	10:00 AM - 12:00 AM
McDonalds	6:00 AM - 12:00AM
Ruby Tuesday	11:00AM – 11:00PM
SkyLoft NY	3:00PM - 2:00AM
The Standard Restaurant and Lounge	11:00AM – 1:00AM
Uno Pizzeria & Grill	11:00AM – 12:00AM
Wal-Mart	6:00 AM - MIDNIGHT
Source: Crossgates Mall Website	



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RRHA understands the Albany Planning Board’s concern outlined in their May 13, 2019 response to whether dead ending at Rapp Road and Gipp Road would result in less traffic, because the study does not present a realistic view of how many cars will travel through the Historic District each day. However, based on Dr. Pazour’s analysis and projection, the RRHA believes dead ending the intersection will result in less traffic. In addition, the RRHA agrees with the Albany County Planning Board May 13th response that:

- Traffic deterrent is vital to preserving the Rapp Road Historic District and that a recommendation should be presented to reduce traffic on Rapp Road as a result of the 222-apartment development
- Approved emergency access plan for both municipalities should be submitted with the application. More specifically, because of the increase potential for the need of emergency services due to the additional 222 dwelling units

Impact of Traffic on Quality of Life in the Rapp Road Historic District

The developments of the Washington Avenue Extension, Crossgates Mall, Crossgates Commons, and the Tru by Hilton Hotel have had a dramatic, adverse impact on the quality of life in the Rapp Road Historic District. Each commercial development near and around the Historic District eats away at the residents’ ability to stay in their homes and raise their children. For example, during an interview with the Altamont Enterprise on February 26, 2013, Beverly Bardequez, RRHA President and long-time Rapp Road resident, stated: “(I)n the 1970s, the community was split in half, forcing the Toliver’s to move their house -- the first ever built on Rapp Road -- a few hundred yards over to make way for Washington Ave. Extension.”

Each additional development around the Rapp Road Historic District has increased traffic flow through the neighborhood, negatively impacting the quality of life for all residents. The development with 222 dwelling units will bring an increased level of traffic to the community that is above and beyond what the residents should have to experience. As shown in this picture of old Rapp Road, at one time the Historic District was a place for children to play, the residents could utilize natural bike trails and had room to explore.

Now the residents constantly feel the pressure of commercial development: they consider the traffic a deterrent to leaving their homes for daily routines and their children can no longer play freely and safely as they once did. Families are now confined in their homes and must plan their daily activities based on when they think they





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can safely exit their driveways or safely walk to a nearby family member's home. They fear the freedom they once had on Rapp Road may turn into what they formerly experienced in the South: confinement, lack of freedom, and despair. Current families believe the fifth generation currently living in the Rapp Road Historic District will not have the opportunity to raise their families there due to unwanted traffic and infringement on their community from developers.

The history of the Rapp Road Historic District is intertwined with the history of the preservation of the Pine Bush. The Historic District's residents have protected their homes and community and in doing so have helped to protect the highly valued, unique Pine Bush ecosystem. These efforts have been successful due to the resilience and determination of the residents. The additional amount of traffic from the 222-unit development will consume the Historic District, and more specifically remove Albany's connection to the Great Migration of African Americans. This community of African American families and homes is in danger of being erased from history.

III. Section 3.6 Land Use and Zoning

This section evaluates the proposed development's compatibility with surrounding land uses and previously adopted zoning and planning documents for both the Town of Guilderland and City of Albany. The large-scale apartment plan on Crossgate's property is within a commercially zoned area in Guilderland, however, it sits directly next to and significantly affects existing small scale residentially zoned areas in both Guilderland (Attachment One) and Albany (Attachment Two).

Albany's Rapp Road Historic District lies in an R-1 Single Family Low Density area which begins at the corner of Gipp and Rapp Roads where the proposed 222 residential units with mixed use commercial space will be located (Attachment Two). The Historic District is especially vulnerable to further Crossgate's development because Albany's historic residential portion of Rapp Road is acknowledged in Guilderland planning documents to be a significant connector to Crossgates. This is because Guilderland has allowed its portion of Rapp Road to connect directly to Crossgate's Ring Road. A traffic analysis in Guilderland's 2016 Westmere Planning Study found that this Rapp Road connector has over 4,000 vehicles per day traveling through the historic residential community on a road originally built as a farm road, with no accommodation for pedestrians who are forced to share the road with these vehicles (Attachment Three). The current development plan will only make these conditions worse.

The Guilderland Comprehensive Plan specifically acknowledges that the Town's "development issues are a function of its proximity to the City of Albany". Additionally, the plan acknowledges that growth in Guilderland "has resulted in traffic impacts and a growing lack of neighborhood identity". In response, the Comprehensive Plan recommends: "Reinvestment in older neighborhoods; Use of buffers to reduce land use



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conflicts; (and) Improvement of the pedestrian environment and traffic calming measures". (Attachment Four, pp. ES 3-4).

The Guilderland Comprehensive Plan also directs the Town to "Consider coordination with NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP) for all projects on or in the vicinity of historic structures or sites" (Attachment Four, p. ES 4). Both the NYSOPRHP and the Preservation League of NYS have submitted letters cautioning that the current Crossgate's apartments development plan does not afford sufficient protection to the Rapp Road Historic District. These letters are contained in the comments already submitted to the Guilderland Planning Board.

NY State General Municipal Law Section 96 also contains protection for historical places and buildings that should persuade the Guilderland Planning Board to safeguard Albany's Rapp Road Historic District from negative consequences resulting from approving a site plan for this major Crossgate's development plan.

The RRHA has been advised that the City of Albany has had discussions with the Pyramid Corporation and a private landowner about creating an alternate route to and from the Crossgate's Ring Road other than Rapp Road. The RRHA has not received any direct information regarding the location of such an alternative route and whether it will be created. The RRHA suggests that the Guilderland Planning Board request this information from the City of Albany. The City of Albany should be expected to engage the Guilderland Planning Board regarding such alternative route planning. Albany's 2030 Comprehensive Plan states that "Regional cooperation among municipalities and agencies ... is key to achieving the goals outlined in the Vision Statement and are the foundation of the Comprehensive Plan's strategies and actions." (Attachment Five, p. 3)

IV. Section 3.7 Character of the Community/Neighborhood

The Rapp Road Historic District was created as part of the Great Migration (1927-1963) and has remained intact with decedents of the original homeowners for 90 years. The Historic District sits on both the State (2002) and National (2003) Historic Registries. These designations were granted based on an area of social history, community development, and the homes that support the history of the 28 acres. The Rapp Road Historic District represents 3 percent of all National Register listings that celebrate African American heritage. In addition, the RRHA is currently working with the National Park Service to develop and donate Historic American Landscapes Survey documentation for the Rapp Road Historic District to the Library of Congress.

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This unique community is a product of the Great Migration, however unlike other communities within New York State, it had no existing dwellings. The families who migrated predominately from Shubuta Mississippi (1927-1963) to Albany, New York had to build their Rapp Road homes without machinery and relied on scrap materials from deteriorating buildings throughout the City of Albany. The architecture of the homes built by African Americans brought a unique comparison to architecture of the 1700's. Just like other cultures, migrants from the south brought what they knew about building homes with them.



Photo: Rapp Road residents, 1955

Many of the homes in the Historic District were built by hand as southern style one-story bungalows which resemble the rich history of the community in Shubuta, Mississippi. The first home was built in 1937 and families continued to build homes until 1970. Originally, there were 27 lots with 28 original homes. There are currently 16 homes and one operable smoke house. Eight of the 16 homes are occupied by descendants of the original homeowners.



This is not the first time the residents of the Rapp Road Historic District have been displaced in Albany County. Originally, the Rapp Road families resided in the South End of Albany, along with other families who had migrated from the South. However, at that time if you were African American it was difficult to rent homes in Albany and almost impossible to buy a home.⁶ The Reverend Louis Parson (pictured here) understood that African Americans in Albany that migrated from the South needed a safe place to live and raise their children. He purchased land on Rapp Road, and since African Americans faced barriers to renting adequate housing or securing home mortgages, Reverend Parsons and his wife sold the land to their church parishioners, who began to build their homes there.

⁶ At the time, only one real estate company in Albany would deal with Blacks. Source: A Capital Area Oral History, public program recorded on tape, Albany Institute of History and Art, 22, February 1997.



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In the August 19, 1990 Times Union article “A Promised Land That Kept Its Word”, Rapp Road resident Willie McCann said he “paid \$90 cash for a wooded acre in western Albany in 1945, he was buying a better life for his family and an lot of work for himself” as he moved his family from the South End of Albany to Rapp Road.⁷

When the family moved into their home on Rapp Road, only the kitchen and bathroom were completed. Mr. McCann had masonry skills which he used to help build residences at 22, 23, 29, 38, and 39 Rapp Road and the smoke house at 38 Rapp Road. His accomplishments in helping to build the Rapp Road community demonstrates the resourcefulness, determination, and resilience of the community’s residents to create a better life for themselves on Rapp Road.

V. Section 5.0 Reasonable Alternatives Analysis

Section 5.0 of the Draft Scope states:

“The DEIS will include a description and evaluation of the range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed action. Alternatives to be considered will include the “no action” alternative, alternative site layout, alternate traffic options and alternate site uses. The alternative site layout will consider rearrangement of the proposed uses within the Sites that meet the Project Sponsor’s objectives. Potential traffic alternatives for northern Rapp Road within the Town of Guilderland will be provided. The impacts anticipated for each alternative assessed will be summarized within the DEIS.”

In response, RRHA directs your attention to Local Law No. 4 of 2018 (Adoption of §280-18A (Transit Oriented Development District).

“G. SITE PLAN DESIGN GUIDELINES. The following site plan design guidelines are recommended to promote the purposes of the TOD District.

b. Vehicular traffic should be directed, if feasible, to the existing Crossgates Mall Ring Road with improved vehicle and transit interconnectivity with Western Avenue in order to internalize circulation within the TOD District and relieve traffic pressures on Western Avenue.

d. Future street connections and extensions should be considered, particularly for providing access to underutilized outparcels to the Crossgates Mall Ring Road.”

These recommendations in Local Law No. 4 of 2018 are clear: directing traffic to the Crossgates Mall Ring Road and identifying future connections and extensions is central and crucial to the TOD District. Internalizing traffic circulation within the TOD district supports the traffic mitigation needs necessary for the portion of Rapp Road that leads to the heart of the Rapp Road Historic District.

⁷ Attachment 6



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RRHA also directs your attention to the Westmere Corridor Study (December 2016, pp. 64-65) which states:

“Section 5.2.2.1 Future Street Connections

It is recommended that future street extensions or connections be identified now and reflected in the zoning, so that as properties are considered for development, the Town can seek extensions, and negotiate ownership and maintenance responsibilities.

Examples include:

New street connections on underutilized “outparcels” associated with Crossgates Mall;

and

New streets running east and west of Rapp Road.”

These Westmere Corridor Study recommendations are clear as regards Rapp Road. RRHA contends these recommendations support traffic mitigation proposals that should include the creation of new streets running east and west of Rapp Road. The construction of such new streets should be designed to mitigate traffic on the portion of Rapp Road that leads to the center of the Rapp Road Historic District Community. Although the “no action” alternative will be specified in the Environmental Impact Statement, RRHA contends this is not acceptable and runs counter to Local Law No. 4 of 2018 and the Westmere Corridor Study traffic on Rapp recommendations.

The Rapp Road Historic District’s long-standing issues with the ongoing high traffic volume on the portion of Rapp Road that runs through it are documented in the book *Southern Life, Northern City: The History of Albany's Rapp Road Community*.⁸ The following passages from the book highlight historical traffic issues on Rapp Road within the community:

“In a newspaper article, Rapp Road resident Emma Dickson told the Knickerbocker News, “We never had any traffic down this road. There were no strangers here because the road was a dead end. It didn’t go anywhere. Since they build Washington Avenue (Extension) and all those nursing homes, traffic down this street has tripled.” Motorists use Rapp Road as a cut-across between Western Avenue and Washington Avenue Extension.” (Pages 92-93)

“Rapp Road’s location between the two main corridors of the city, Western Avenue and Washington Avenue, made it an easy shortcut for the people who knew about it. Longtime resident Labor Johnson felt that by 1987 “There’s already too much traffic for a residential neighborhood.”” (pp. 98-99)

⁸ Lemak, J. A. (2008). *Southern Life, Northern City: The History of Albany's Rapp Road Community*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.



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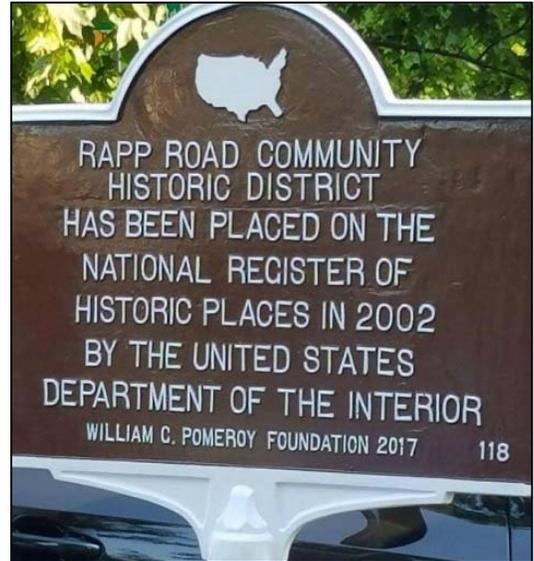
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“County Legislator Commisso had a plan for the community if the mall expanded. He proposed changing Rapp Road at Pine Lane to a one-way road going back to Western Avenue. This would route commuters away from the community and they would have to drive all the way around to get to either Washington Avenue or Western Avenue. Commisso felt that the community, at that point, had put up with developers long enough.” (p. 103)

CONCLUSION

The Rapp Road Historic District is unique, known to be the only African American community established in New York State as a result of the Great Migration. Rapp Road is placed in the New York State and National Historic Registries as a historic African American Community within the City of Albany. In 2006, the New York State Department of Education chartered the Rapp Road Historical Association (RRHA), recognizing the group as an active historical organization. In 2015, the RRHA became a not-for-profit organization.

The Preservation League of New York State added the Rapp Road Community Historic District to its list of Seven to Save endangered places for 2016-17, due to threats of deterioration and encroaching development, and began working with the RRHA toward the district's preservation and stewardship. The RRHA is currently working with the National Park Service to develop and donate Historic American Landscapes Survey documentation for the Historic District to the Library of Congress.



Rapp Road has earned its place not only on the state and national historic registries, but also in the history of the Albany Pine Bush — once considered a barren wasteland. Nearly 90 years later, the community is still here by the Grace of GOD. With His help we intend to remain an intact historical community. Our mission is to preserve and restore the Rapp Road Historic District and to educate individuals of our rich history as migrants of the Great Migration from Mississippi to Albany, New York.

Slowly and strategically developers continue to seek parcels within the community. Developers should not assume they can muscle their way into our community, and disregard and disrespect our presence. The Rapp Road Historic Community is our history, heritage and legacy, left to us by our ancestors. We will continue to honor and protect that legacy.



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Respectively submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beverly Bardequez".

Beverly Bardequez, President Rapp Road Historical Association

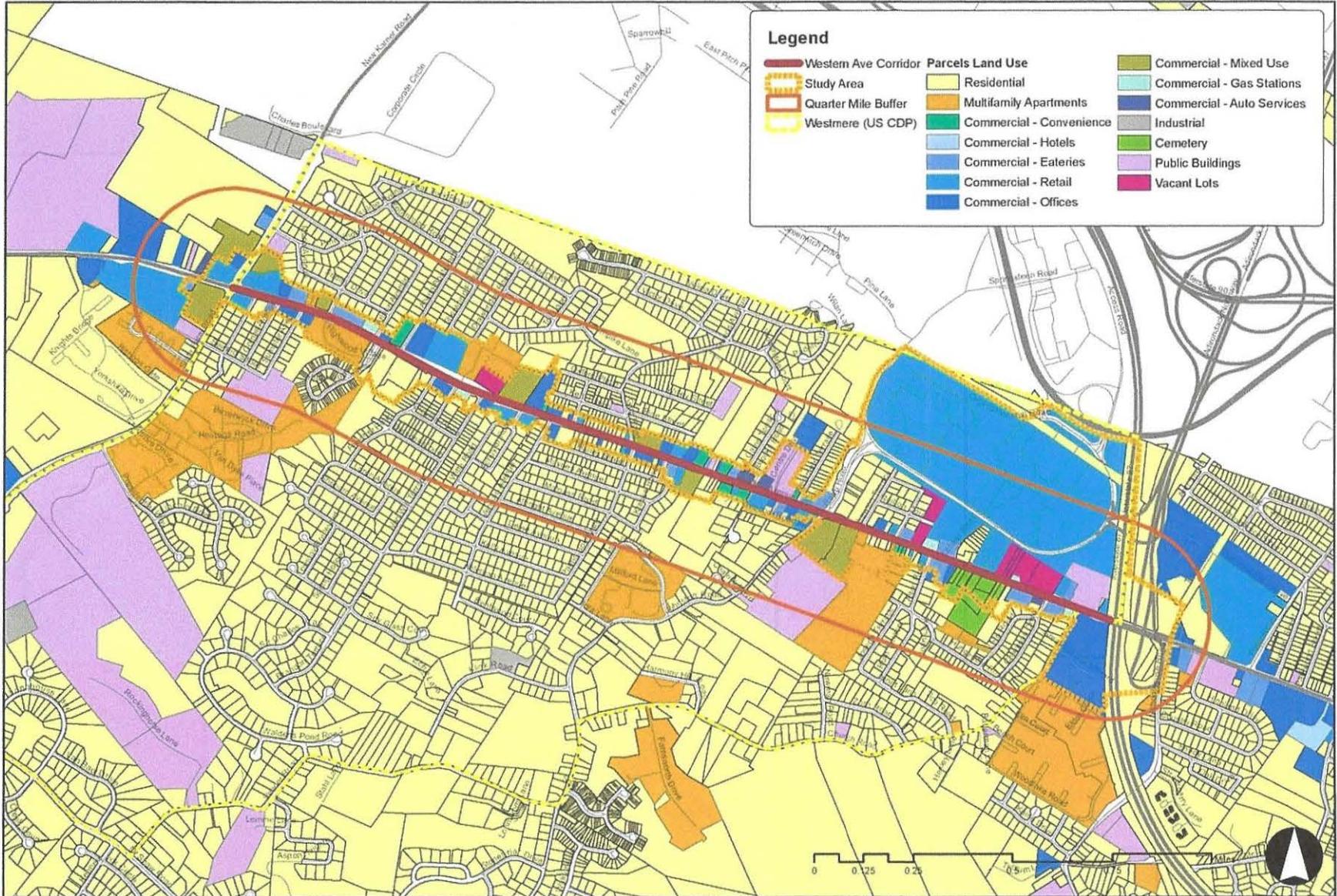
September 16, 2019

Date

Attachment One

IBI GROUP FINAL REPORT
 WESTMERE CORRIDOR STUDY
 Prepared for the Town of Guilderland and the Capital District Transportation Committee

Map 4-4: Existing Land Use





← To Map Inset

Town of Guiderland

Attachment Two

Residential

-  R-1L Residential, Single-Family, Low Density
-  R-1M Residential, Single Family, Medium Density
-  R-2 Residential, Two-Family
-  R-M Residential, Multi-Family
-  R-T Residential, Townhouse
-  R-V Residential, Village

USDO District

-  MU-CH Mixed-Use, Community Highway
-  MU-CI Mixed-Use, Campus/ Institutions
-  MU-CU Mixed-Use, Community Urban
-  MU-DT Mixed-Use, Downtown
-  MU-NC Mixed-Use, Neighborhood Center
-  MU-NE Mixed-Use, Neighborhood Edge
-  MU-FC Mixed-Use, Form-Based Central Ave
-  MU-FM Mixed-Use, Form-Based Midtown
-  MU-FS Mixed-Use, Form-Based South End
-  MU-FW Mixed-Use, Form-Based Warehouse

USDO District

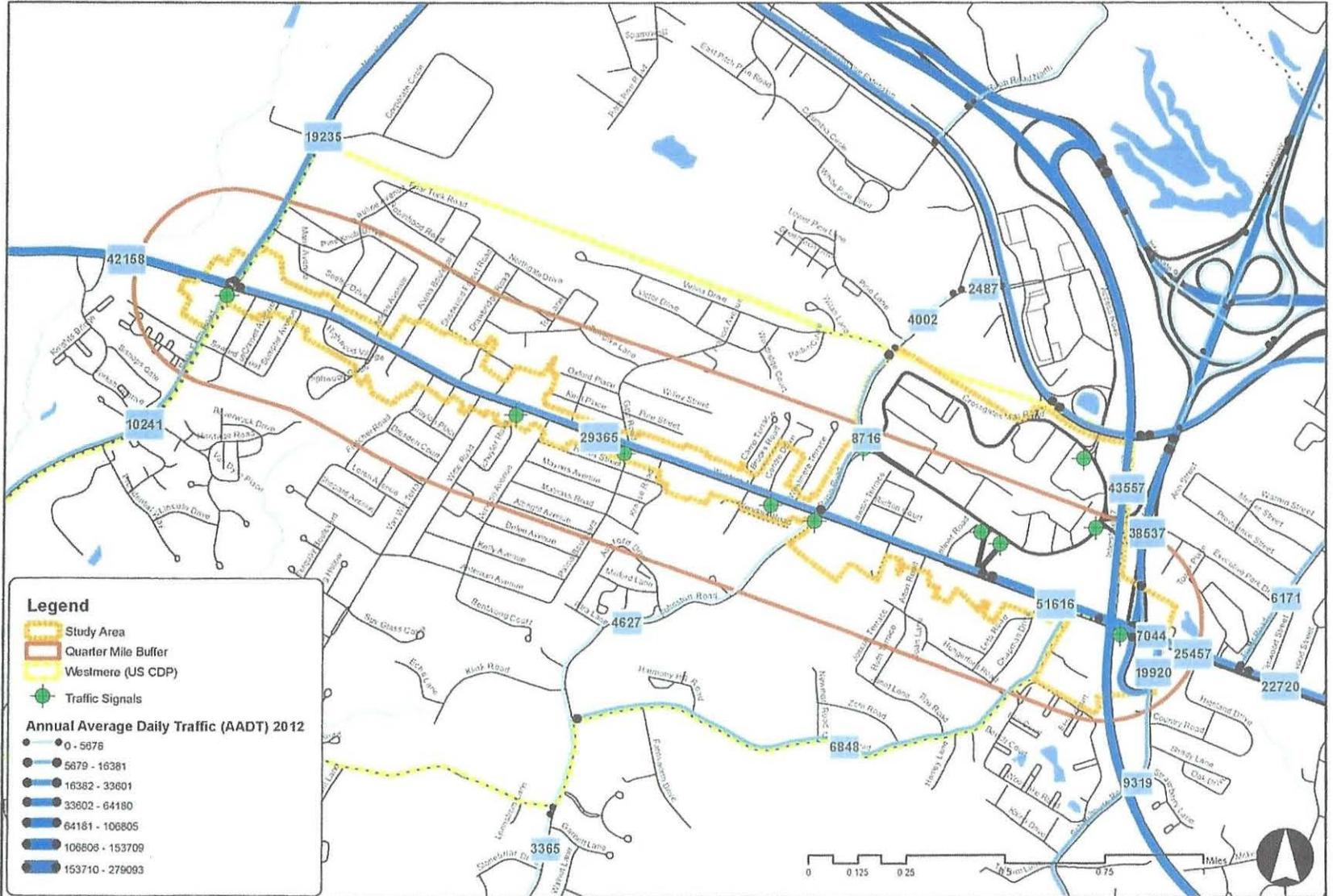
-  LC Land Conservation
-  I-1 Light Industrial
-  I-2 General Industrial

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Attachment Three

IBI GROUP FINAL REPORT
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Map 4-9 Traffic Characteristics (Source: NYSDOT AADT 2012)



Executive Summary

Comprehensive planning is the process by which data and opinion are synthesized into a vision for the future of a community, laying the framework for a series of recommendations based on good planning principals that will map a procedure for achieving the vision. In other words, a vision leads to recommendations that lead to an implementation program. Success is ultimately measured by the ability to implement the recommendations, therefore, it is important that the Comprehensive Plan identifies achievable projects/tasks. Since it is the residents and business owners of the community that will pay for or undertake projects/tasks their support is necessary. There is no better way to gain this support than to involve as many people as possible in the formulation of the plan. This can be a tremendous effort and the Town of Guilderland was equal to the task.

A. Community Outreach

The basic vision and guiding principle for the Town's Comprehensive Plan was to create a community-based plan that would provide the public with the greatest opportunity to assist in its preparation. This was accomplished through a Community Outreach Program. Different forums were established to provide different opportunities for input. At the grassroots level was Study Circles. This program provided residents to chat about their Town and how it should look in 20 years. Although facilitated (by trained residents) the process was much more relaxed. Other components of the process included a written survey sent to 12,000 homes (approximately 3,000 returned), a phone survey (sample group of 100 people), Focus Group Workshops, Neighborhood Meetings, Community Work Sessions, Advisory Board Meetings, and Fact-Finding Outreach. Focus Group Workshops concentrated on specific issues that included economic development and housing; natural resources, open space and agricultural land preservation; transportation and infrastructure; and recreation and cultural resources. Community Work Sessions were conducted as an opportunity for the public to review and comment on each step in the planning process. Neighborhood Meetings were conducted to get the planning process out of the central location and into the various communities in the Town. Fact-finding Outreach was also an attempt to actively seek information from the public outside of a public forum. This program involved conducting interviews with key organizations, agencies and individuals that can have a significant impact on the community and may provide unique insight. Most all the meetings occurring at the Town Hall were broadcast through cable. A web site was created and the media was used to the greatest extent practicable.

B. Inventory & Analysis

An Inventory & Analysis of the Town's resources was conducted concurrently with the Community Outreach Program. Both are information gathering process that are essential to develop the framework for the Plan Recommendations. Much of the basic information for the inventory was obtained from the Town's database, prepared by the Planning Department. This information was supplemented by further data collection and analysis.

As a component of the Comprehensive Plan, the Inventory & Analysis is an information resource for the Town, providing valuable data on historic and cultural resources, population and housing, land use and zoning, agricultural resources, physiography and topography, water resources, ecology, community services, transportation, utilities, recreational resources, economics, and fiscal resources.

C. Community Vision, Goals and Objectives

The Community Outreach Program, supplemented by an Inventory & Analysis of the Town's resources, provided the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Board and its consultants with the information and direction necessary to create a vision statement and prepare goals and objectives that would guide the preparation of the Plan. The Town's vision of the future is perhaps the single most important guiding principle used throughout the planning process. The vision states:

The Town of Guilderland envisions itself as a distinctive suburban and rural community within the Capital District. It is a desirable and attainable place for families and individuals of all ages to live and work - with a large assortment of local and regional opportunities for high-quality employment, education, recreation, and cultural activity. These opportunities are easily accessed within the town and throughout the region by a varied and efficient transportation system that emphasizes mobility and safety for all residents. Guilderland's settlement patterns are focused around attractive and vibrant neighborhoods, and are based on a recognition of, and shared sense of responsibility for the town's natural, agricultural, open space, and scenic resources and the value of these resources to the current and future health, culture, and economy of the community. It is a community that looks to the future in the belief that through continued community dialogue and action it can manage and shape change for the better.

The associated goals and objectives include the following topics: growth management; transportation and mobility; public utilities; business, employment, and fiscal resources; housing; town character; agriculture, natural resources, and open space; cultural resources; recreation; governance; and implementation.

D. Plan Recommendations

The Town of Guilderland is both a suburban and rural community whose development issues are a function of its proximity to the City of Albany, excellent access to interstate highways, and its residential qualities. The purpose of the following recommendations are to provide potential solutions to resolve the issues of current and future development based on the Town's vision for the future. Some issues are so complex that several steps may be required to ultimately solve the problem, the first of which may be to identify the problem in greater detail through additional study. In order to focus discussion, recommendations are grouped into three general topics or "new plan elements" that include Land Use, Natural Resources, and Transportation. The section "Growth Management Tools" is provided as an introduction to planning concepts and terms used elsewhere in the document. The final section of this chapter summarizes the Plan Recommendations on a geographic basis defined as planning areas.

D.1 Growth Management Tools

Growth management is a process by which a community develops the methods and means (tools) to control the type, location and amount of land development (growth) in the community. The most common growth management tool is zoning. This is a regulatory tool. Regulatory tools are essential to ensure orderly growth, however, other measures that rely on incentives and voluntary involvement by landowners are also available and can be very effective. Some of these tools include term easements and tax abatements, purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights, and development guidelines in conjunction with community supported plans. In some instances the Plan Recommendations identify specific growth management tools but the purpose of this section is to provide the Town with a comprehensive list of growth management tools for consideration in implementing future plans, such as the Rural Guilderland Plan recommended under Rural Guilderland.

D.2 Land Use

Residential Neighborhoods - The Town is comprised of numerous residential neighborhoods with many attributes that make the Town of Guilderland a desirable place to live. Growth in the Town and in neighboring communities has resulted in traffic impacts and a growing lack of neighborhood identity as neighborhoods expand outward. Primary recommendations include:

Reinvestment in older neighborhoods.

Use of buffers to reduce land use conflicts.

Improvement of the pedestrian environment and traffic calming measures.

Access management along Route 20.

Neighborhood meetings to discuss the need for the Neighborhood Master Plan.

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Concentration of higher density development within densely populated areas such as the Westmere/McKownville area, McCormack Corners and Fort Hunter.

Provision of neighborhood parks.

Cultural Resources – Numerous historic structures and locally important buildings have been identified in the Town. Preservation of these structures is important not only for their architectural significance but also to preserve our understanding and connection with the past. Primary recommendations include:

Institute an historic preservation policy to prevent the loss of historic structures and sites deemed important by the Town.

Consider coordination with the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP) for all projects on or in the vicinity of historic structures or sites and prehistoric resources. The need for such coordination typically occurs when there is State or federal involvement in a project. To protect the potential impact to cultural resources by projects that do not have federal or State involvement, the Town might consider making NYSOPRHP coordination a requirement of local approval for projects subject to site plan review.

Establish an historic resources education program in the Town. Conduct tours of historic properties and highlight their importance.

Economic Development – Current commercial development in the Town is concentrated along Route 20, primarily in the Westmere and McKownville areas. This development is very successful and is a significant contributor to the Town's tax revenue. Industrial development is primarily located in the Northeast Industrial Park that has significant room for future development. With improvements to traffic flow and the pedestrian environment, further development and redevelopment is suitable within the existing commercial areas of the Town and would benefit these areas. Suitable areas for industrial development and business parks are limited by access to the interstates. Prime areas have been consumed by commercial, office and residential uses. Continued development of the Northeast Industrial Park appears appropriate but not without an environmental analysis to address major issues such as truck traffic. Primary recommendations include:

Identify potential sites for industrial/business park development and consider the preparation of a GEIS for the sites to identify development potential and cumulative impacts in an effort to attract development but at the same time protecting the environment and community character.

Consider the use of incentive zoning (bonuses) and financial incentives to help facilitate reinvestment and redevelopment of vacant/underutilized frontage properties along Route 20.

Conduct a design charrette for the Westmere Commercial Area. Please refer to the Glossary for a more detailed description of the term charrette.

Prepare an access management plan for Route 20 to develop guidelines for shared access, shared parking, and the development of access roads.

Attachment Five

ALBANY 2030

The City of Albany Comprehensive Plan



1.0 Introduction

1.1 WHY A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

Albany, New York's state capital, is a historic city located on the west bank of the Hudson River about 150 miles north of New York City. First settled by the Dutch in 1614, Albany is the one of the oldest surviving settlements of the original thirteen colonies and the longest continuously chartered city in the United States (since 1686). The City's deep history and heritage is reflected in its spectacular natural setting on the Hudson River, historic building stock, major institutions, downtown (the region's prime activity center), and the attachment of its residents to their neighborhoods.

The City of Albany has chosen a key juncture in its 400-year history to prepare its first ever comprehensive plan, given the accelerating rate of transition and change in the 21st century. Looking forward 20 years and beyond, the plan provides the opportunity to set a new direction for a sustainable, prosperous future. To fully appreciate the significance of Albany 2030 for the City and its residents, it is useful to consider the basic purposes of a comprehensive plan:

1. A Comprehensive Plan is an expression of citizens' values, aspirations, and shared vision of the future.

Just as one would not begin a journey without first identifying a destination, the process of developing the Albany 2030 Plan began with citizens articulating in numerous meetings and workshops the kind of place they would like Albany to become. The resulting Vision Statement (Chapter 2) defines citizens' expectations and directions for Albany by the year 2030, sets the mandate for the strategies and actions detailed in this Comprehensive Plan document, and provides the benchmark to measure implementation progress.

2. A Comprehensive Plan sets a citywide framework to define how all of the City's plans, initiatives, investments, etc. fit together.

Albany has prepared many plans over the years for different areas within the City (e.g., neighborhoods and corridors) and topical concerns (e.g., transportation improvements and economic development). City leaders regularly make decisions on capital investments and programs without the benefit of a comprehensive "lens" through which to evaluate broader, citywide implications. The Albany 2030 Plan provides the overall framework to ensure that all of these plans, programs, and investments are aligned to support a common direction for Albany's future.

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3. A Comprehensive Plan is a guide for the management of change.

If the vision for Albany's future is to be realized, the Albany 2030 Plan must positively and deliberately influence how the City changes over time. To do so, the Plan must be actively used to guide how priorities are established, decisions are made, and actions are taken to advance Albany towards the vision. While city government will take a leadership role in this effort, the Plan calls on citizens, civic organizations, major public and private institutions, other levels of government, and businesses to coordinate efforts with a spirit of partnership and shared sense of direction.

4. A Comprehensive Plan is the foundation and reference point for policy and decision-making.

The "meat" of the Albany 2030 Plan is contained in Chapter 3, which defines specific policy directives (goals, strategies, and actions) for the functional components of the Plan. The Albany 2030 Plan takes a systems approach designed to leverage the interrelationships and synergies between these components (community form, economy, transportation, etc.) to achieve the Albany of the future envisioned by citizens. Integration of the goals, strategies, and actions into day-to-day decision-making, ongoing management and operations, and long-range planning by city government and its partners will be critical to the success of the Albany 2030 Plan.

5. A Comprehensive Plan is Albany's "to do" list.

The Albany 2030 Plan's influence on Albany's future will be a product of the motivating power of its shared vision and the effectiveness of actions taken to turn the vision into reality. The vision will be realized through steady progress made by adhering to a well-defined game plan that sets priorities for effective, short and long-term actions, as well as a process to monitor progress and adapt to changing circumstances. Chapter 4 of the Plan lays out a comprehensive program for action to produce tangible results in achieving the Albany 2030 Vision.

1.2 PLANNING CONTEXT

In accordance with New York State planning law regarding comprehensive planning, the Albany 2030 Plan addresses the City of Albany as a political jurisdiction. However, Albany is part of a larger region defined by natural and economic influences. The City is located in the Lower Hudson River Watershed, which makes up about 40% of the Hudson/Mohawk River Basin, one of the largest drainage areas on the eastern seaboard of

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the United States. From the economic perspective, Albany is located in the heart of New York's Capital Region, which encompasses Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schenectady Counties. The Capital Region is in turn part of New York's Tech Valley, which stretches from the Canadian border near Montreal to just north of New York City.

The technology sector is a major contributor to the Capital Region economy, spurred by investments such as the NanoTech Complex at the University at Albany and the semiconductor fabrication plant under construction by Global Foundries in Saratoga County. Albany is the largest of the Capital Region's cities (followed by Schenectady, Troy, and Saratoga Springs), and it is the region's major center for state government, higher education, arts and culture, and health care. It is strategically located overlooking the Hudson Valley midway up the Tech Valley from New York City. According to the Tech Valley Chamber Coalition, the "Tech Valley offers rewarding career and business prospects, world-class educational and research facilities, and a fantastic quality of life" as a place to "Live, Work, and Play" (www.techvalley.org).

The challenge and the opportunity for the City of Albany is to leverage its position within these dynamic regions, along with intrinsic assets such as its natural setting, historic building stock, and the spirit of its people, to reverse the national trend of urban disinvestment over many decades and increase quality of life and economic opportunity for residents. Despite this national trend, Albany has been successful in attracting more than \$6.5 billion in investment over the last two decades, indicating the strength of Albany's market and the commitment of local stakeholders. Albany can build from this significant investment by striving to achieve the community's vision and goals set forth in Albany 2030. **Regional cooperation among municipalities and agencies** (e.g., the Capital District Transportation Authority, Capital District Transportation Committee, the Center for Economic Growth and Capital District Regional Planning Commission) **and participation by Albany in regional initiatives are key to continuing this investment and achieving the goals outlined in the Vision Statement and are the foundation of the Comprehensive Plan's strategies and actions.**

While Albany 2030 is the first comprehensive plan in the City's history, numerous neighborhood, district, corridor, and topical plans (e.g., for economic development or transportation improvements) have been prepared over the years. Examples include the Arbor Hill Neighborhood Plan (July 2003), Midtown Colleges and University Plan Report (2005), Park South Urban Renewal Plan (2006), Capital South Plan (2007), Capitalize Albany (1996-2007), Albany SDAT: A Sustainable Capital for the 21st Century (2007), the Albany Bicycle Master Plan (2009), and the Education District Enhancement Study (2011). In accordance with the second major comprehensive plan purpose described above in Section 1.1, the Albany 2030 goals, strategies, and actions incorporate and align directions set by these and other plans and initiatives.

Attachment Six



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A PROMISED LAND THAT'S KEPT ITS WORD

Catherine Clabby Staff writer

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When Willie McCann paid \$90 cash for an wooded acre in western Albany in 1945, he was buying a better life for his family and a lot of work for himself.

Like some other black men and women from the South who settled in Albany during the Depression, the Mississippi native found he didn't like life in the inner city.

"I knew it wasn't the place to raise a family. We were near the red- light district," said McCann, a deeply religious man who landed in the South End and found work as a longshoreman. So, with his own hands, he cleared his patch of earth, dug a foundation and erected a tidy brick dwelling he still calls home.

McCann, now 89, was one of more than a dozen settlers of a portion of Rapp Road that became known as the Holy Land. Beginning in the 1930s, they transformed a piece of country within the city limits into a cluster of homes. They all belonged to a Church of God in Christ congregation, which became the Wilborn Temple, of which McCann remains an assistant pastor.

The neighbors had enough land to raise vegetables, fruit and livestock, and to hunt and fish. The children had room to roam. Church activities dominated many days. A dirt road was the only link to Western Avenue, the route to downtown.

Several of the original settlers and their children still reside in what is now an established, suburban stretch of Rapp Road south of Pine Road. The saplings Willie McCann and others planted when they arrived now are tall shade trees. Families conduct annual reunions in the once-isolated enclave that attract hundreds of people from several states.

Residents have felt the impact of commercial development, particularly since the opening in 1969 of Washington Avenue Extension and, more recently, of Crossgates mall.

These day, many Holy Land residents are wondering how best to protect what they and their parents built.

Last week, with eloquent pleas to city zoning officials, homeowners and their relatives convinced an entrepreneur to withdraw his plan to open a gymnastics school at the base of their street. But members of the community fear that battle will not be their last.

"We welcome residences. We just don't want commercial properties coming out here," said **Emma Dickson**, a woman in her 40s who was reared on Rapp Road and returned in 1978 when she could afford to build a home.

Dickson is president of the Pine Bush Neighborhood Association and a county Democratic committeewoman. She is hoping the neighborhood can be designated a historic district to help protect it.

Proud of the Holy Land's settlers, she said it is important for young people today to know what they did.

"There's a reason why they came here. They had faith and they had dreams, what we call stepping out on faith. They had to work hard," Dickson said.

Rich Nicholson, a city planner specializing in historic preservation, said the settlement may well qualify for the designation if research can be compiled to make the case.

While it doesn't boast buildings that are particularly distinctive or the work of a famous architect, the neighborhood does have a fascinating history, he said.

"It certainly is a real unique thing to have an ethnic neighborhood out there in the Pine Bush like that," he said. "I certainly can't guarantee it's going to get designated, but it seems worth pursuing if they can prove enough of a cohesiveness."

He said such recognition would serve as a reminder to policy-makers that something known to be worth preserving exists there.

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Julie Stokes, a deputy commissioner with the state Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, said preservationists increasingly are recognizing the need to save not just buildings and communities of the wealthy. "It's just as important to preserve simple neighborhoods where all the rest of us lived," she said.

In this lush, green corner of the city, ways of the past persist. Backyard vegetable gardens are big, fruit trees still stand.

But change is apparent. Rapp Road is a link for commuters between Washington Avenue Extension and Western Avenue. At least one of the original homes is vacant.

Leola and Alfred Woodard, Dickson's parents who are now in their 70s, moved to the Holy Land nearly a half-century ago and raised eight children there. Her mother worked as a domestic; her father was a laborer who walked home from his job cleaning buses on Broadway. There was plenty to do around the house, tending livestock and cultivating crops.

Seated in his kitchen after shucking a pile of corn in the bay of his pickup truck, Alfred Woodard stated simply why he supports whatever needs to be done to preserve what he and his family helped create:

"This has been very good to me."

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