

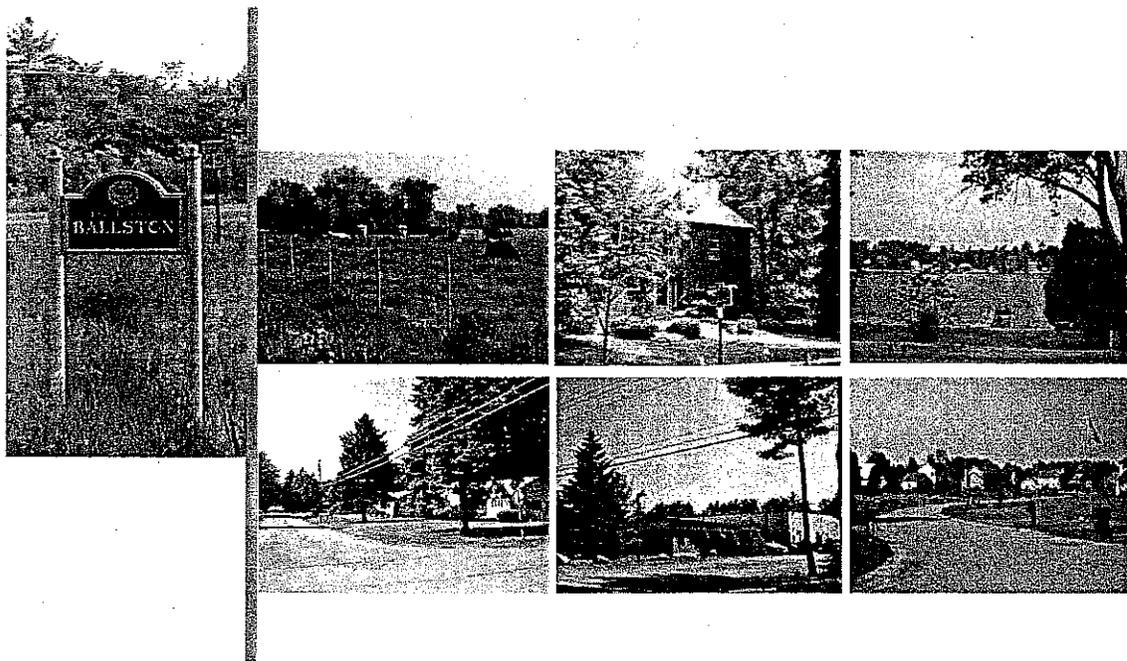
Appendix A
Final Draft Comprehensive Plan,
December 2005

SARATOGA
ASSOCIATES

TOWN OF BALLSTON FINAL DRAFT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Town of Ballston, New York

December 2005



**Forwarded to the Town Council
by the CPAC
December 2005**

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Section 1

Section 1

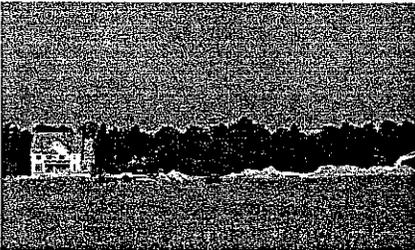
1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Town of Ballston is located within Saratoga County, New York. Facing increasing residential and commercial development pressure, the Town Council instituted a temporary moratorium to allow the community time to establish a vision and a direction for the future.

The Town has decided to take a comprehensive look at issues related to its continued growth and development. The Town's primary concerns looking forward include ensuring the community retains its rural, small-town character, remains a great place to live and that the area's natural resources, open spaces and agricultural land are protected.

This Comprehensive Plan:

- > Identifies needs, assets and opportunities;
- > Is founded on a community-based process which includes input from residents, businesses, institutions, environmental interests and others;
- > Results in a coordinated vision for the future of Ballston;
- > Outlines actions to achieve the shared vision; and
- > Establishes a framework for community-wide efforts on plan implementation.



Example of new residential development taking place in Ballston

It is important to note that the Comprehensive Plan is a flexible document that is intended to evolve as the community's needs and desires change over time. The Comprehensive Plan focuses on a wide-range of issues affecting the community. The Plan does not, however, examine project-specific issues. Rather, the Plan examines a broader set of Town-wide issues, provides recommendations to address such issues and outlines an implementation strategy to achieve success.

1.2 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROCESS

The Town of Ballston began the comprehensive planning process early in 2005. The Town hired Saratoga Associates to assist in developing the comprehensive plan, and the Town Council established the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC). The CPAC included a cross-section of residents who have been involved in community activities. The CPAC held committee meetings throughout the comprehensive planning process. All committee meetings were open to the public and a portion of the agenda at each meeting was devoted to

public comment. All CPAC meeting notes, as well as public workshop meeting results can be found at the Town Hall, the library and the Town website.

In May 2005, a community survey was mailed to 1,500 randomly selected property owners and registered voters within the Town of Ballston. There was a 35% response rate for the community survey. This very positive response demonstrates the commitment of the community to the future of Ballston. Full survey results are found on the website at www.townofballstonny.nycap.rr.com and also in the appendix.

In addition to the previously mentioned CPAC meetings and community survey, the CPAC reached out to the public on several other occasions including:

Issues Identification Workshop – The purpose of this public workshop was to introduce the community to the comprehensive planning process. In addition, participants were asked to work together to define the Town's strengths and identify issues that should be addressed in the plan. Over 140 people attended this workshop in April 2005.

Visioning Workshop - Participants were asked to take part in an image preference evaluation. Nearly 40 images were shown illustrating various styles and types of commercial development, housing, streetscape and public spaces. Participants were given a scorecard and asked to rate each image on a scale of 1 to 7. A score of 1 indicated that the image was undesirable or inappropriate; a score of 4 was considered indifferent, while a score of 7 indicated that the image was very desirable or appropriate for Ballston. Following an initial run through the images for scoring, a facilitator initiated a discussion about the positive and negative design characteristics of each image with the participants. Later in the meeting, attendees were divided into groups to brainstorm ideas for the Town on aerial photos. A facilitator worked with each group, and reported the group's ideas to the entire workshop audience at the end of the evening. Approximately 125 people attended this workshop in May 2005.

Community Ambassadors – Members of the CPAC served as Community Ambassadors to solicit additional information from various groups and organizations within the Town. Informal meetings were held with the Fire Departments, the Business Community, Seniors and others.

Townwide Meeting – The purpose of this townwide meeting was to solicit public input about the draft plan. The draft plan document was available for public review in advance of this meeting. Feedback from this meeting was considered in the development of the committee’s final draft plan.

Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) Public Hearing - The purpose of this public hearing was to receive comments about the committee’s final draft plan. As required by state law, the CPAC conducted this formal public hearing before it voted on a resolution to forward the final draft plan to the Town Council for its consideration.

Town Council Public Hearing – Once it formally received the Final Draft Comprehensive Plan from the committee, the Town Council scheduled a public hearing. In accordance with state law, the public hearing was held prior to making a decision regarding plan adoption.

At the start of the CPAC’s work, while portions of the public involvement process were taking place, an inventory and analysis of existing conditions of the Town was created. This inventory and analysis is located in the appendix of this comprehensive plan. The inventory describes existing land use and use regulations, demographic and economic trends, environmental resources, cultural and recreational resources, infrastructure and transportation, as well as fiscal conditions.

The information obtained from the public workshops, community survey and the inventory and analysis was used as a basis for plan recommendations. In addition, the multiple written comments and email messages received from stakeholders within the Town were also taken into consideration when crafting plan recommendations. Specific policies and actions were developed to address the problems and issues defined as part of the inventory and through the public outreach process. Finally a strategy for implementing the recommended policies and actions was created. The strategy prioritizes actions and identifies resources for implementation.

A comprehensive plan should serve as a guide for future action by public and private entities in the Town. As with any planning document, this plan should be reviewed regularly to determine if the goals and recommendations found within continue to be relevant based on changing circumstances, and updated as needed.

Section 2

Section 2

2.1 VISION

The recommendations within this plan direct the Town of Ballston toward an overall vision to which most residents can agree. The plan has been developed with the intent of achieving a balance between Village, suburban, and rural perspectives and a balance between new growth and protecting the existing quality of life.

The Town of Ballston aspires to preserve its working agricultural landscapes, natural resources, and high quality of life as it continues to accommodate residential and commercial growth. The community has expressed a desire to maintain the small town and rural qualities still present throughout much of the Town. As the Capital Region continues to attract new commercial growth and new residents, the Town seeks to manage this growth in a manner that maintains the best of the Town of Ballston's character for this and future generations.

2.2 GOALS

The Town has established multiple goals to achieve the vision set forth by the community. These goals address a variety of issues and will guide decision-making. The recommendations found within this plan (Section 3) attempt to direct short-term and long-term actions toward achieving these goals. The goals are listed below and are in no particular order of priority.

- > Encourage the conservation of farmland and significant open spaces and ensure the long-term viability of agriculture.
- > Create a network of open spaces to provide wildlife habitat and potential greenway/recreational trail corridors.
- > Expand the Town's active and passive recreational resources to meet the growing demand for these amenities.
- > Protect and promote the Town's significant historic and cultural resources.

-
- > Ensure the protection of all of the Town's important natural resources such as stream corridors, wetlands floodplains, and in particular, the water quality and scenic qualities of Ballston Lake.
 - > Maintain community character by addressing the design, form and location of new development. (Design and form refer to the physical aspects, shape and arrangement of development.)
 - > Promote commercial and industrial growth in specific centers.
 - > Improve mobility in the Town. This includes investments in needed highway infrastructure, improved access to public transportation, and enhancements to the safety and attractiveness of non-motorized modes of travel such as bicycling and walking.
 - > Provide a business friendly environment that is supportive of local and regional businesses and helps assure the provision of quality employment and a diverse economic base in the community.
 - > Encourage agri-business opportunities and support existing agri-businesses.
 - > Strive for a balanced tax base. As the community continues to grow, the cost of providing services (such as schools, recreation, etc.) for new residential development will grow as well. From a fiscal perspective, new residential growth rarely pays for itself in property taxes. Therefore it is important to ensure that the community maintains a balance of residential development, commercial development, and open space.
 - > Provide opportunities and incentives for the development of a variety of housing options to meet the changing needs of the community.
 - > Maintain existing public water and sewer infrastructure. Provide for services where public safety is a concern. Limit the unnecessary expansion of urbanizing infrastructure (especially sewer service) in areas of the town where increased growth is not encouraged by the plan.
 - > Cooperate with neighboring municipalities on issues of mutual concern, and look for opportunities to partner in the delivery of services when appropriate.

Section 3

Section 3

3.1 RURAL AREAS

Much of Ballston's rural area is characterized by working landscapes and open spaces, with single family residential development along the road frontage and an occasional small scale commercial parcel. This area is illustrated on the Plan Recommendations Map as the majority of the Town located west of Route 50. Traditionally, rural areas have been places where resource based economic activities have flourished. Rural areas typically have less demand for public services. Outside of the hamlets and the Village of Ballston Spa, agriculture has been the primary land use. Today, economic trends have reduced the vitality of agriculture in this area, but many working farms continue to exist. It should also be noted that the land, remains the primary asset of many landowners in this area.

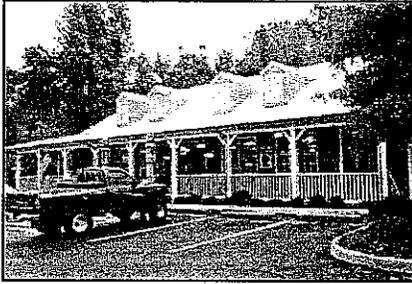
With its remaining agricultural businesses, undeveloped lands, and natural resources, this portion of the community is highly valued for its rural character and contributions to the Town's overall quality of life.

Residential development pressure is working its way into the rural areas with more frequency. However, with difficult soils and the lack of sewer and water infrastructure, much of the area will most likely not be intensively developed. On the whole, large public investments in such urbanizing infrastructure such as sewer and water are not likely in most of the rural area. The challenge in this area, therefore, is to provide options for rural landowners so that rural lifestyles, community character and economic opportunity can be maintained here over the long-term.

Revise zoning regulations for the Rural Area.

Maintaining a predictable and fair process for land use and development in this area will be beneficial to property owners, to potential developers, and to the community as a whole.

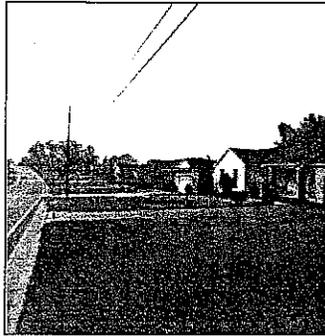
Uses: Typically, a rural area is home to a variety of uses, including agriculture, forestry, mining, appropriate scale commercial and light industrial activity, and low-density residential development. Revised zoning and subdivision regulations for this area must continue to provide a variety of options in terms of the use of land. Agricultural practices and affiliated agribusiness uses such as farms stands and small scale



processing of agricultural products should certainly be permitted. Flexible business opportunities should also be considered that offer economic benefit to existing agricultural uses. Additionally, low-density residential, home occupations, appropriate scale commercial or light-industrial uses, bed and breakfasts, and private recreational uses should be permitted. Appropriate-scale commercial or light-industrial establishments may be allowed under special use permit. However, most commercial should be limited to the major thoroughfares of Routes 50 and 67 (See Section 3.6 – Transportation Corridors) or the Mixed Use Centers (See Section 3.2 – Mixed Use Centers). Design guidelines should be developed to ensure that these small establishments fit appropriately into the Town’s rural landscape. (See “special use permit” discussion below).

Special Use Permit: Most non-residential or non-agricultural uses should require a special permit to ensure that they do not negatively impact the use and enjoyment of neighboring properties. Performance standards for noise, light, vibration, dust, odors, and so forth should be developed to guide the review of such projects. Broad design guidelines may also be appropriate to limit the negative environmental and visual impact of items such as paved parking areas, lights, and signs, or to improve the safety of items such as driveways, that are necessary for the operation of these uses. Sloped roofs, wood siding (or siding with a wood appearance), and stone siding are some of the broad architectural characteristics that could be encouraged to maintain town character.

Minor Subdivision: In terms of residential development, there should be options available to the landowners that reflect varying circumstances. In some cases, a landowner may simply wish to split-off a lot or two for a friend or relative, or to generate some needed cash. These types of small subdivisions should be easy to achieve through a conventional minor subdivision process. It is recommended that a minor subdivision be defined as one that results in the creation of four (4) or fewer lots (including the original parent parcel) over a five-year period. After the five-year period, additional minor subdivisions would be possible. Creation of five lots or more within a five-year would be considered a major subdivision. Current zoning regulations that allow the Planning Board to declare any minor subdivision as a major subdivision should remain.



Frontage development can create access management problems if individual driveways are permitted for each home (left). Frontage development is also inefficient – once the frontage is all developed (top right), developing the interior lands (bottom right) is very difficult because proposed new homes are likely to be in the “backyards” of the ones already built along the road frontage.

Because small subdivisions are typically created along the frontage of existing roads, such subdivisions can quickly have a negative cumulative impact on the safety and efficiency of the road (due to curb cuts). This type of frontage development can also quickly detract from the rural character of an area, because despite the abundance of undeveloped land behind these homes, the view from the roadway is dominated by homes. And finally, unchecked frontage development can negatively impact the future development potential of interior lands. Though the original landowner may have intended to develop these areas, they have unwittingly created opposition to such development because the interior lands are the “backyards” of the lots created in the original subdivision. To counter the negative impact of frontage development from minor subdivisions, the Town could allow well-designed flag lots with shared driveways (and cross-easements), as an alternative option to frontage lot development. This could be accomplished as the zoning and subdivision regulations are amended.

For minor subdivisions, a simple conventional subdivision approach, with a 2-acre minimum lot size, should be permitted.

Major Subdivision: A major subdivision would be the subdivision of five (5) or more lots over a five (5) year period. It is recommended that the density of development remain at 1 dwelling unit per 2 acres in the Rural Area.

The emphasis for the Rural Area should be on options for landowners. For a major subdivision, it is recommended the landowner have an option of utilizing a conservation subdivision design instead of a conventional subdivision. While a conventional subdivision is allowed, a conservation subdivision design approach should be encouraged for major subdivisions within the Rural Area. It is understood that a conservation subdivision may not be appropriate for all locations within the Rural Area and that is why options exist. The suitability of soils to support development (e.g., septic systems and wells) would be a determining factor in the density of a conservation subdivision. Water and septic systems must be located on individual lots unless public water and sewer are available. Community wastewater and well water systems should not be allowed.

It is recommended that a pre-application meeting be required with any applicant seeking to develop a major subdivision. During this time, the Planning Board should express its preference for a conservation subdivision as the default approach, when soil conditions allow. This early first step would ensure the developer/landowner understands the process and the options available. This serves to begin an open line of communication between the Town and the developer/landowner, which assist in streamlining the development process.

Over 78% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree the Town needs to change zoning to protect open space within new developments.

The use of Conservation Subdivision Design is one technique to accomplish this.

A description of the conservation subdivision design approach follows:

The Conservation Subdivision Design approach begins with the identification of open space resources present on the site to be developed (environmentally constrained land, agricultural land, historic or scenic views, significant woodlots, etcetera). This first step is what distinguishes the conservation subdivision approach from the more traditional clustering approach. A Town-wide map of open space resources or a Lands of Conservation Interest Map can be a useful guide for starting this identification process (Section 3.10). This resource identification will form the basis for designating conservation lands in the new subdivision. Once conservation lands are identified and designated, areas where development would be most appropriate are identified. Homes (the number based on allowable density for the zoning district) are then designed into the development areas of the site in a creative fashion. Flexible lot sizes and area and bulk standards facilitate this creativity. Identifying road alignments and lot lines are the final steps in the Conservation Subdivision Design process.

Conservation Subdivision Design (term coined by Randall Arendt)

Uses open space resources present on a site to be developed as the starting point for design (In the same way that a golf-course community is designed).

The **four-step conservation subdivision design process** is quite simple:

1. Identify conservation areas – potential development areas follow once the conservation areas have been "greenlined".
2. Locate house sites
3. Align streets and trails
4. Draw in the lot lines

Conservation easement – a legal tool that ensures that conservation lands set aside as a result of this process remain undeveloped.

Ownership options for conservation lands - an individual landowner or several landowners in the new conservation subdivision, a homeowner's association, the Town, or a land conservancy such as Saratoga PLAN.

See Randall Arendt's, *Conservation Design for Subdivisions: A Practical Guide to Creating Open Space Networks* (1996) and *Growing Greener: Putting Conservation into Local Plans and Ordinances* (1999) for more information.

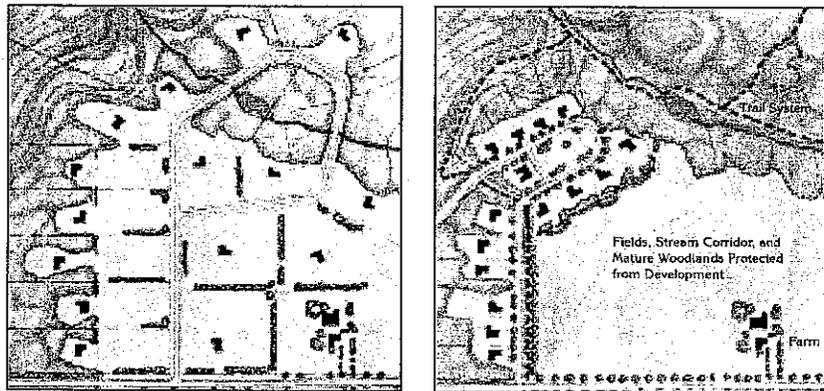
The density (number of lots) permitted in a conservation subdivision can be determined in two ways. One approach is for the applicant to develop a "yield plan" for the site. The yield plan is essentially a subdivision plan developed using a conventional subdivision approach. The Planning Board would review the yield plan to ensure that it is realistic (given environmental conditions, minimum lot size and other area and bulk regulations, etc.). Once the Planning Board determines that the yield plan is achievable, the number of lots shown becomes the number of lots allowed (the yield) for the proposed conservation subdivision. The second approach for determining the density in a conservation subdivision is to prepare a "density calculation". Under this approach, the applicant identifies all of the environmental constraints (wetlands, steep slopes, and flood plains) on the site to be developed. These constrained lands are removed from the overall acreage of the parcel. The permitted density in the area (1 home per two acres in the Rural Area) is then applied to the unconstrained acreage using a simple calculation. So if there are 50 acres of unconstrained land on a site to be developed, up to 25 lots could be created in the conservation subdivision. The applicant (landowner/developer) should be allowed to determine which method of determining density is most beneficial for them.

A required open space set aside for conservation subdivisions in the Rural Area should also be established. The minimum open space set aside should be 20-50% in this area. A recommended open space set aside would ensure meaningful open space conservation and still allow creative subdivision design. Meaningful open space should include some

buildable lands and could include offsite parcels. It is important to recognize that the required open space set aside does not affect the number of units allowed in the subdivision because the density calculation is based on the entire parcel to be subdivided. To make it easier to achieve or exceed the minimum open space set aside, and to promote housing diversity in the town, a mix of housing types should be permitted in conservation subdivisions.

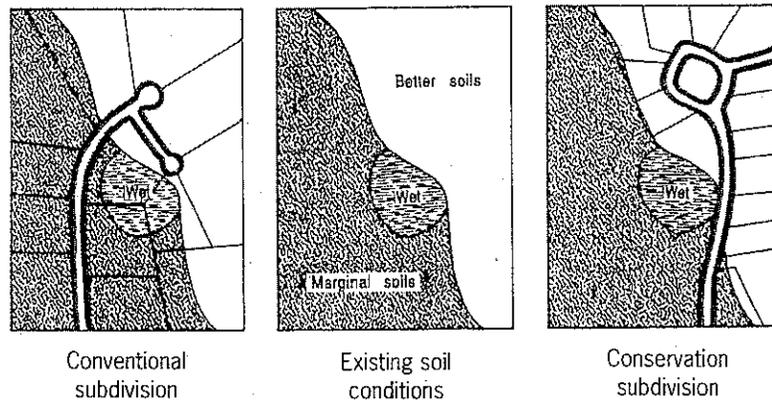
Advantages of the conservation subdivision approach include:

- > Farmland and open space conservation, recreational development and natural resource protection guide the subdivision design process. Because the area and bulk regulations used for conventional subdivisions are not applicable, the design process is creative and not driven strictly by arbitrary minimum lot size requirements.
- > Significant networks of open land are created through the development process – the value of homes within these subdivisions are enhanced as are the value of surrounding neighborhoods, and the quality of life of all town residents is improved.



A comparison of a conventional subdivision (left) with a conservation subdivision (right). In both cases, a total of 16 residential lots were created. A conservation easement ensures that the open land preserved as part of the conservation subdivision (right) cannot be further subdivided or developed in the future. Source: *Conservation Design for Subdivisions: A Practical Guide to Creating Open Space Networks* (1996) by Randall Arendt.

An additional benefit that is important in Ballston is related to soil conditions. Much of the land in the Rural Area of Ballston contains difficult soils for septic systems. As illustrated in the graphic above, the design flexibility provided in conservation subdivisions can be used as a means for ensuring that development occurs primarily on lands that are best



Among other benefits, the design flexibility permitted in conservation subdivisions allows development to occur on soils that are best suited for development. The conventional subdivision approach (with density defined by minimum lot size) forces lots to be spread across the site with less regard to soil conditions.

suited for such systems. It should be noted, however, that the maximum allowable density in Ballston's Rural Area might not always be achievable due to soil constraints. State Health Department approval of well and septic systems may be necessary prior to subdivision approval. State Health Department approval is typically required for realty subdivisions and alternative wastewater treatment systems.

Stream Corridor Protection: The Town should support protection of water quality, including the quality of Ballston Lake. Currently, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) regulates wetlands over 12.5 acres and has varying levels of protection for Class A, B and C streams. Trout streams have an additional layer of restrictions. Stream corridor protection can be accomplished in multiple ways including using an overlay zone or as part of the subdivision review process utilizing existing NYSDEC restrictions. The Town Board should consider appropriate stream buffers on classified streams. In addition, the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) also regulates waters of the U.S. and requires

protection of these waters. The Town Board should consider appropriate stream buffers on classified streams.

The Town should make certain that the controls and regulations set forth by the NYSDEC and the ACOE are followed appropriately. It is important to raise any potential issues early in the review process.

Consider reducing street width in new residential developments and encourage a connected street network.

Oftentimes, the required minimum residential street width is excessively wide. Wide residential streets inadvertently encourage speeding and, in areas with no sidewalks, can create an unsafe environment for pedestrians and bicyclists. This recommendation would require further discussion with various Town Departments, such as the Department of Public Works, and with emergency service providers in the area, to ensure safety. Information about the function, safety, and benefits of narrower streets has become available from transportation engineering organizations, such as the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), in recent years.

3.2 MIXED USE CENTERS

The Mixed-Use Centers provide a social and commercial core for a community. The districts embody the small town feel that many people seek, while also offering a wider variety of residential options. Often only a few blocks long, they host some conveniences and services for locals as well as specialized shops and restaurants that attract people from around the town. Since the buildings, parks and shops in the district become a focus for civic, commercial and recreational activities, layout and design must be emphasized.

In order for Mixed-Use Centers to create the kind of hamlet community and small town feel desired by residents, a balance between residential, office and retail, both within buildings and between buildings, is vital. Within this area, buildings would often have retail or commercial services on the first floor, and residences and offices above. These mixed-use buildings could be just steps away from two-family or multiple dwelling residential structures.

The ability of residents to walk around their community is a priority in a hamlet. Walking is an important form of exercise and socialization for

people of all ages. Residents should be able to safely walk from their homes to run an errand or for exercise. People from other parts of the town can park their cars and shop or simply have a safe place to stretch their legs and meet friends.

The housing developments within the hamlet areas are laid out in street grids with no dead ends. The preservation of open space within these areas is not a priority, though pocket parks, trails and other greenway connections are important.

The Town's need for housing diversity could be accomplished in the mixed use centers (and also in the Hamlet Residential Areas as described in Section 3.3). Greater housing diversity will be increasingly important as demographic trends continue to shift toward an aging population and smaller household sizes. As new hamlet-scale development occurs, the opportunity exists to create senior housing and also low to moderate income housing. Senior housing may be in the form of independent living options such as apartments or accessory units or in the form of senior housing facilities that provide various levels of care.

The Plan Recommendations Map illustrates a Mixed Use Center – North and Mixed Use Centers – South. The area bordering the Village of Ballston Spa has been designated the Mixed-Use Center - North. The Mixed Use Centers – South consist of the Burnt Hills and Ballston Lake hamlets. In addition, a new Mixed-Use Center could be designated in future in the residential area to the east of Ballston Lake to give the residents there a small neighborhood center.

It may be necessary to address differences in scale or intensity of development desired in the Mixed Use Center – North and the Mixed Use Centers – South. It is important to note that while the same basic characteristics of a mixed use center, such as walkability and a mix of uses, apply to both the Mixed Use Center – North and the Mixed Use Centers – South, the scale of these areas is different. For example, it might be acceptable to have a higher density of development and taller buildings in the Mixed Use Center – North. The exact requirements would be determined while revising the Town's zoning regulations.

The land use and design principles for the mixed-use areas are encompassed in the following recommendations.

Focus commercial and retail development in the Mixed Use Areas.

Commercial and retail areas provide services to residents and provide tax base revenues for the Town. Through public meetings, the community survey and other public outreach mechanisms, residents have identified the importance of the scale and appearance of commercial and retail development. Some commercial development within the Town has paid little attention to site organization, design or architectural design. Commercial and retail development, of all scales, should be developed in a manner that is more consistent with adjacent uses and the character of the community.



Commercial development typically includes a variety of development types including office and retail. However, due to a specific concern in the community regarding retail development, retail development should be considered separately from commercial development. While specific definitions of each should be identified as the zoning regulations are revised, a generic definition of retail and commercial might be useful. Retail may be defined as the selling of goods, wares or merchandise directly to the ultimate consumer without a resale license. Commercial may be defined as any activity conducted with the intent of realizing a profit from the sale of goods or services to others. The primary distinction is that commercial is more service oriented while retail is more product oriented.



New mixed-use development in Clarendon, Virginia

The majority of commercial development in Ballston is located within the Mixed Use Centers at the northern end of Route 50 just south of the Village of Ballston Spa near the intersection with Route 67, and at the southern end of Route 50 in the hamlet of Burnt Hills. While various commercial businesses are scattered along these transportation corridors and other locations throughout the Town, the Mixed Use Areas are logical locations to focus future commercial development due to their proximity to existing infrastructure. Commercial uses could include uses such office, restaurant, copy shop or beauty salon. Retail uses could include a variety of retail stores. When the Town revises its zoning regulations to be consistent with this comprehensive plan, it should identify specific uses to be permitted in the Mixed Use Areas. In addition, allowing higher density development in the mixed use areas increases the customer base for the shops and services in the district that results in a more economically viable center. Other suggested zoning revisions are described below.

Village-sized grocery store opens

In May 2005, Price Chopper Supermarkets opened a 37,000 square foot grocery in the village of Richfield Springs, New York. According to the publication, *Progressive Grocer*, the 24-hour store is a new prototype for the regional chain, with a size and design developed to cater to small communities and rural areas. As well as offering value-priced groceries and general merchandise, the store features "bright, colorful, and colossal produce, both exotic and fresh" and "a huge variety" of meats. Other features of the new store include fresh-baked goods, seafood, deli, and floral sections. The store employs about 150 full- and part-time associates.

Revise zoning within these areas.

The zoning regulations should address the form and function of development in these areas. Through public meetings, the community survey and other public outreach mechanisms, residents have identified the importance of the scale and appearance of commercial development and have also identified their concern with increased traffic in the community. Each of these concerns has the potential to negatively impact quality of life for community residents. There are several tools available that could address these concerns while still working to increase the tax base. These tools may be used separately or together to achieve the vision described for the Mixed Use Areas.

Design guidelines are one tool available to communities that can assist in shaping development. Design guidelines should illustrate appropriate site design, site organization and architectural guidelines. Appropriate scale commercial development should enhance character and an identity that reflects the community's vision. In addition, design guidelines could also soften the transition from the Town into the Village of Ballston Spa.

Site design should emphasize the pedestrian as well as the automobile and all modes of transportation. Prominent crosswalks should be located at appropriate signalized intersections and sidewalks should be developed along the roadway, especially as the areas continue to build out. The sidewalk should be separated from main roads with a wide planting strip. The planting strip would serve to buffer pedestrians from automobile traffic. Within the parking lots, substantial landscaping to reduce continuous areas of impervious surface, pedestrian walkways, and other such improvements should be required. Design themes for all buildings should be consistent and utility facilities should be placed in visually unobtrusive locations. In addition, site organization would address the placement of buildings and parking lots on the site to facilitate pedestrian safety, smooth traffic flow and appearance of the site.

The Town should make clear from the beginning of the development process what is expected of the developer regarding site and building design. This might assist in expediting the development process and the resulting predictability may also encourage development in these areas.

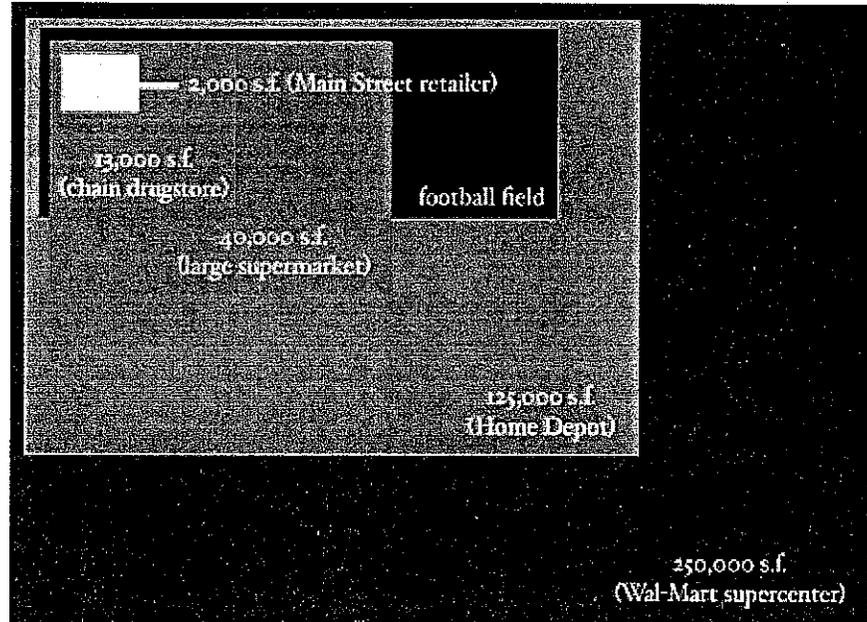
The Town should also consider a limit on the square footage of large-scale retail development, and should encourage multiple story structures in these areas. Various communities across the nation, such as Walpole,

New Hampshire and Coconino County, Arizona, have developed size limits based on total square footage (SF) and other communities, such as Gaithersburg, Maryland, have limited size based on the total footprint of a building, thereby encouraging vertical development. Vertical development must be considered closely as it relates to emergency service provisions. These communities have found this tool successful in maintaining community character and quality of life while still allowing for commercial development.

Additional research, perhaps in the form of a strategic plan for this area, will be necessary to determine an appropriate limit for retail development based on community desires, market conditions, and impacts on the transportation systems. Such a plan could include a market analysis and economic inventory as well. It is critical to ensure that future development can provide enough choices and variety to be successful. As future development occurs, it is also important to maintain community character and minimize the impacts on traffic and quality of life. Achieving a healthy mix of development could include an aggregate of various smaller shops that collectively offer similar economic benefits as that of one larger retail development. The suggested additional research would more clearly determine what size limit would be most appropriate for this area in Ballston and what could potentially be successful. As stated previously, the Mixed Use Areas are those areas where future growth should be focused. Therefore, growth should not be prevented in this area. However, the form of this growth can be shaped in a manner that further enhances the quality of life in Ballston, while also enhancing the tax base.

To provide a basis for conversation, it is important to understand typical store sizes. There are multiple sources from which information can be found regarding the average size of various forms of retail development including the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC). An organization called New Rules has developed an illustration that is useful in better understanding sizes and forms of development. The following information is for informational purpose only. The image below illustrates the various sizes of development in comparison to one another and to a football field. This enables a better understanding of square footage. Free-standing chain drugstores, such as CVS or Rite Aid, generally range from 11,000 – 15,000 SF. Border's, Barnes and Noble or a supermarket have a range of 25,000 – 45,000 SF. Bed Bath & Beyond or Lowe's, for example, fall

within the 60,000 – 140,000 SF range. Larger retailers or supercenters are typically housed in buildings of 180,000 to 250,000 SF.



Source: www.newrules.org/retail

Overall, development in this area should be sensitive to the scale and context of the community as well as to the potential negative impacts of large-scale development (e.g. traffic and quality of life). Simple design elements should be used to break up the appearance of larger building facades. Appropriate scale commercial should be placed at the street with parking in the rear. Commercial signage should also be addressed.

Development standards or performance standards should also be considered as another tool to make decisions about the impact of larger projects. Standards related to impacts from traffic, for example could be established.

Several reasons exist for recommending the above-mentioned tools. The community desires to maintain community character, address or alleviate traffic and pedestrian safety concerns, and enhance economic development in the Mixed Use Centers. Addressing traffic concerns in this area along Route 50 and Route 67, for example, is an important issue the Town currently faces. In fact a study is currently being conducted that begins to examine traffic along the Route 67 corridor. These transportation corridors are important because they not only carry Town

traffic, but also carry traffic from areas outside the Town. Specific recommendations for these transportation corridors are described in Section 3.6. In addition, by addressing the design, scale and performance of development in these areas, impacts related to crime and the additional need for public services might also be addressed.

All of these ultimately lead to an increased quality of life for the community residents and for the adjacent Village of Ballston Spa as well. For example, enhancing the Mixed Use Center North in a form that compliments the Village of Ballston Spa downtown could provide economic benefits to the Village and that area of the Town in the long term. A synergistic relationship should be formed between the Town and the Village that would benefit all.

Require new commercial development to be of an appropriate scale in Mixed-Use Districts.

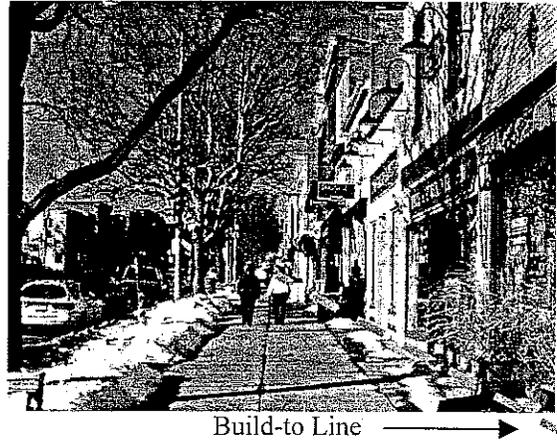
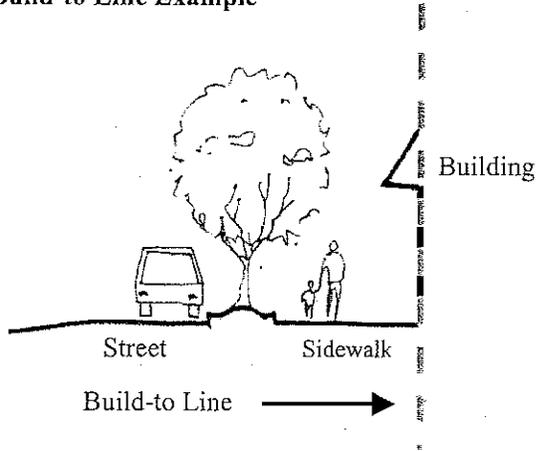
Communities need not sacrifice their small town character and identity to attract a commercial tax base. Design guidelines should be instituted to make sure that buildings, streets, sidewalks and parking areas are appropriately sized, landscaped and laid out. In the end, property owners and businesses find that creative planning to protect community character raises the value of their investment by making them stand out in the marketplace.

New commercial developments should be built with streets that connect to the surrounding community grid. Along with these vehicular ways, sidewalk networks should be extensive throughout commercial areas. Large parking lots should be discouraged. Parking should be scattered behind and on the edges of development parcels instead of facing an external street.

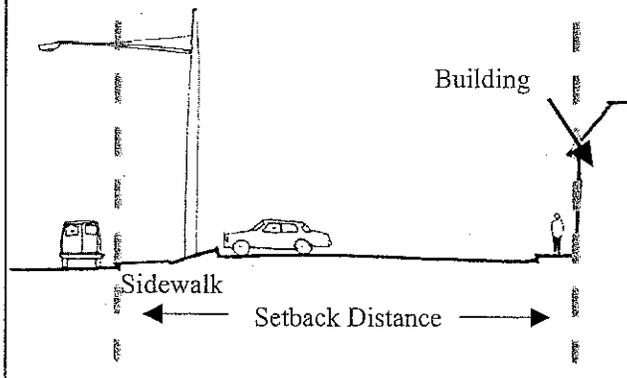
Create a “build-to” line for hamlet buildings.

Build-to lines force structures to line up along a sidewalk in commercial/retail areas or behind small lawns in residential areas. Creating a build-to line achieves several objectives. It makes walking more interesting for pedestrians when they pass retail windows and residential porches rather than parking lots. It also makes sidewalks more comfortable as the building facades close in one side of the pedestrian space. Retail space becomes more valuable as windows and signs become more visible. Shopkeepers and residents closer to the sidewalk have more “eyes” on the street protecting passersby, especially school children.

Build-to Line Example



Setback Example



Specifically, a “build-to” line requires bringing the building facade up to a particular point. The continuous and well-defined streetscape created by a build-to line provides for a more pleasant pedestrian experience and a more valuable retail environment. It also maintains the look-and-feel of a traditional New York hamlet or village. As illustrated below, a build-to line yields a very different result than a setback line. It creates a comfortable pedestrian envelope and enhances the retail experience by allowing shoppers to see window displays and move easily from store to store.

In comparison, a setback requires a building be pushed back from the road by a minimum amount. Often a setback promotes parking in front of buildings, which makes pedestrians feel less comfortable and safe, especially in retail or mixed-use areas.

Commercial/retail design guidelines should be developed to identify the appropriate location of the site development with respect to the road. The build-to line should be defined when zoning ordinances are revised. The final location of this line must respect both the form of development and needs of the adjacent road.

Allow denser and more varied housing development.

The Mixed-Use Districts offer the opportunity to vary the style and price of housing in the Town of Ballston. It increases the customer base for the shops and services in the district and provides for livelier hamlet areas. By controlling the size and design of the commercial establishments, less land need be wasted on buffering between uses; in fact, some housing styles will mesh nicely with the commerce at the hamlet's core.

These areas would provide an opportunity for senior housing in the form of apartments or multi-family housing. Located close to services and within a walkable center, seniors might find the Mixed Use Areas convenient and affordable. Allowing for a diversity of housing types, especially for seniors, will provide the opportunity for seniors to remain in the community and age in place. Senior housing facilities that provide additional levels of care may be allowed in these areas under a Planned Unit Development (PUD).

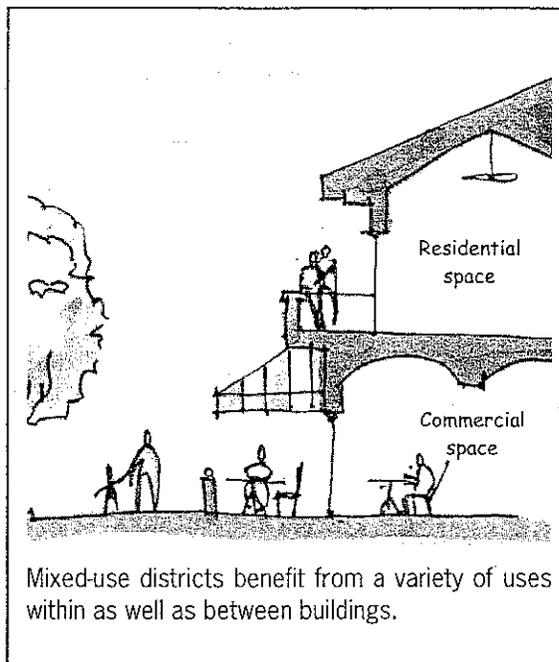
The Town may also consider the use of the Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning tool to allow more creative, higher density residential uses with a mix of other uses as well. Higher density residential uses would support the variety of businesses that might locate in the mixed use centers.

In addition, residences above storefronts and multi-family housing could also provide an affordable housing option for young professionals and families that desire to be located close to services. With increasing home prices in the community and the region, providing more reasonably cost alternatives become even more important. However, it should be noted that the increasing the density of development in these areas should be closely tied to the availability of public sewer and water infrastructure.

Residential development should include the following:

- > Allowing two and multi-family buildings, where public sewer and water are available.

-
- > Allowing residential units above stores.
 - > Encouraging the location of parking lots and parking garages behind buildings and adequately landscaped.
 - > Investing in sewer and water infrastructure within the hamlets.
 - > Designing small, neighborhood parks and interspersing them with the homes.



Prioritize pedestrians, not parking.

All portions of the Mixed Use Centers should be walkable. Sidewalks should line both sides of the streets and form a continuous network around the community. Along busier roads, sidewalks should be separated from traffic by a curb and planting strip.

Parking lots in front of commercial and larger scale residential buildings strip a community of the character found in its buildings. Large asphalt areas make it uncomfortable for pedestrians to walk from shop to shop. Parking lots should be behind buildings. Rather than demand minimum spaces for commercial/retail developments, parking regulations should discourage large parking lots that remain largely empty. The rules should also make shared parking mandatory whenever possible. Shared parking lots are crucial to reducing the number of curb cuts which create points

of pedestrian/vehicle and vehicle/vehicle points of conflict. Also reduce the need for spaces and therefore the amount of impervious surfaces.

Calm traffic within Mixed-Use Districts.

Slowing traffic in hamlets protects pedestrians; attracts potential customers and makes it easier for them to park and shop. Simple traffic calming measures could include:

- > Allowing on-street parking and constructing planted raised medians, where practical, to “visually” narrow the roadway and encourage people to slow down.
- > Building “bumpouts” at crosswalks to shorten the distance that pedestrians must cross streets.
- > Raising crosswalks or constructing them with brick pavers. The sound change and the feel of the wheels running over the pavers alerts drivers that they are entering a restricted speed zone.
- > Considering innovative intersection treatments to more effectively control traffic at intersections. Innovative treatments should enhance intersection safety as well as vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian movements and reduce the amount of pavement required at intersections.

Implement access management techniques within these areas.

These areas should function well, not only from a vehicular point of view, but also from a bicycle and pedestrian view as well. Access management techniques could be utilized to reduce traffic congestion and potential conflict points with pedestrians and thru traffic. Access management consists of a series of standards that manage (and minimize) the number of access points and curbcuts on the public road system. The purpose of access management is to allow for development to occur, while preserving the flow of traffic in terms of speed, capacity and safety (traffic includes pedestrians and bicyclists).

Avoid dead-end streets and establish interconnected street network whenever possible.

Creating a more hamlet-style road system by eliminating dead-ends serves many purposes. Walking is more interesting when pedestrians can vary routes. In this way, residents more quickly get to know those in their neighborhood. School children can find ways to schools, recreational activities and their friends homes on side streets without having to walk or bike along major arterials. An interconnected street

network tends to calm traffic in the neighborhoods as drivers slow down at repeated intersections. In cases of emergency, all buildings have more than one avenue of access in a street grid system.

Address lighting and noise concerns related to commercial development.

Spill-over lighting and noise are often concerns related to commercial development. Natural buffers are useful in absorbing sound as well as enhancing the visual appearance of commercial development.

Concentrate efforts to expand water and sewer services in Mixed-Use Districts.

It is very expensive to lay water and sewer pipes. Communities find they can maximize their investment in infrastructure by putting more people on shorter pipes, which can only happen in denser areas. Providing these services in certain areas makes it cheaper for developers to locate their homes and commercial developments there – and sends a signal that this is where the community wants to see growth.

3.3 HAMLET RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The Hamlet Residential Districts serve as transitions between the denser Mixed-Use Districts, which they surround, and the less densely developed areas of Town. Open space preservation is not a major goal, although trails and neighborhood parks are a priority as is the general pedestrian friendliness of the neighborhood streets. Walkability and street connections remain important.

Install sidewalks on major roads and busy side streets.

Walkability is a priority in the Hamlet Residential Districts. Install sidewalks on both sides of the streets. Sidewalks should be at least five feet wide with a planting strip separating pedestrians from the traffic. The Town may consider the creation of a sidewalk district to assist in the cost of building and maintaining sidewalks.

Lay out streets in village-style grids. Construct no new dead ends.

Creating a road system grid by eliminating dead-ends serves many purposes. Walking is more interesting when pedestrians can vary routes. In this way, residents more quickly get to know those in their neighborhood. School children can find ways to schools, recreational activities and their friends homes on side streets without having to walk

or bike along major arterials. A street grid tends to calm traffic in the neighborhoods as drivers slow down at repeated intersections. In cases of emergency, all buildings have more than one avenue of access in a street grid system. When dead-ends and cul-de-sacs are unavoidable, encourage pedestrian only connections between neighborhoods.

Permit housing densities from 2 to 4 units per acre.

Where public water and sewer is available, developers should be allowed to build at the higher density range if they agree to create small neighborhood parks and trail connections. Higher densities would allow for greater housing diversity.

Greater housing diversity will be increasingly important as demographic trends continue to shift toward an aging population and smaller household sizes. As new residential development occurs, the opportunity exists to create senior housing and also low to moderate-income housing. The Community Survey found that nearly 67% of respondent agree or strongly agree that the Town should encourage a diversity of housing types for single, families, “empty nesters” and seniors.

Locating senior housing in hamlet areas has major advantages. The increased ability to walk safely in hamlets gives seniors highly-desired exercise and activity options. It allows them to remain part of the community and does not isolate them in more suburban-style housing. This becomes particularly important as driving ability becomes limited. In hamlets, they may still be within walking distance of commerce and services. Finally, senior housing in hamlets provides closer to and emergency services (e.g. ambulances). Senior housing may be in the form of independent living options such as apartments or accessory units or in the form of senior housing facilities that provide various levels of care.

Allow two-family structures by special use permit.

Two-family structures would also serve to provide a mix of housing options. In allowing such development by special use permit, this simply requires an additional look to ensure this form of development is consistent with adjacent development.

Allow appropriate scale commercial uses.

Small commercial establishments could be allowed by special use permit in the Hamlet Residential Areas. Any commercial development should

fit with the scale and character of existing development. Design guidelines should also be developed to ensure that these small establishments fit appropriately into these neighborhoods.

Concentrate efforts to expand water and sewer services in Hamlet Residential Districts.

It is very expensive to lay water and sewer pipes. Communities find they can maximize their investment in infrastructure by putting more people on shorter pipes, which can only happen in denser areas. Providing these services in certain areas makes it cheaper for developers to locate their homes and commercial developments there – and sends a signal that this is where the community wants to see growth.

3.4 RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The primary goal of the Residential Area is to allow housing developments while preserving the rural character of the Town. This particular area of Ballston, located east of Ballston Lake is more conducive to higher density residential development given its access to infrastructure and proximity to the Northway.

Adjust the allowable density in this area.

The density of the district should be 1 unit for every 2 acres where public sewer and water are not present. This is necessary for safe and efficient operation of septic systems. In locations where public sewer and water do exist 1 dwelling unit per acre would be appropriate.

Density could be increased to 1 dwelling unit per 20,000 square feet if water and sewer are present and if the project developer agrees to provide a public open space benefit and perhaps utilizes a conservation subdivision design approach. Density could be increased still further if the developer agrees to provide a certain percentage of units as affordable housing.

Establish an Optional Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) through the Planned Unit Development (PUD) Process.

A Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) describes an appropriate scale residential development that includes pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, a mix of housing types and some small, neighborhood commercial services. This form of development would essentially serve to create neighborhoods similar to existing

neighborhoods and hamlets found throughout the Town instead of following a conventional suburban form of development.

The Town currently has a PUD tool written into its zoning that should be enhanced and expanded to allow for a TND approach in the Residential Area. The PUD regulation might include design elements such as site organization and site design as well as the mix of uses that should be included. This is an optional tool that would allow greater flexibility for a property owner or developer. If a landowner chooses to utilize this option, the proposed development would ultimately require Town Council approval. If a landowner chooses not to utilize this tool, the base zoning for the Residential Area would apply.

3.5 INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AREAS

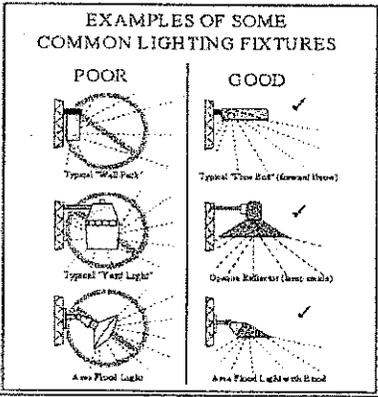
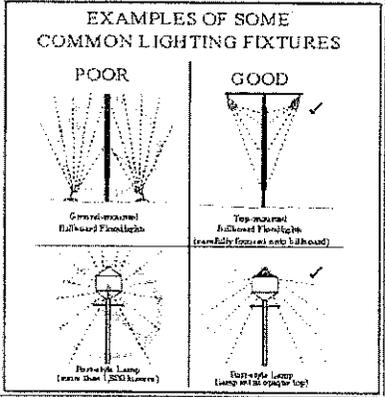
Industrial development within the Town of Ballston is currently focused in the northeastern portion of the community near the railroad line along Route 67 and Route 50. In general, existing industrial uses are placed well back from the roadway corridor and provide some natural buffering for those traveling past. There appears to be the opportunity to further develop the current industrial zone and add to the Town's tax base. The Curtis Industrial Park, for example, has room for additional growth and is home to a wide variety of businesses. In addition, possible regional growth in the future, such as the Luther Forest Technology Park, may increase opportunities for industrial growth within the Town's industrial areas.

Address lighting concerns.

Promote "good lighting" that does its intended job well with minimum adverse impact on the environment. Outdoor lighting is used to illuminate roadways, parking lots, yards, sidewalks, public meeting areas, signs, work sites, and buildings. It provides for better visibility and a sense of security. However, if outdoor lighting is not well-designed and properly installed, it can be costly, inefficient, glary, and harmful to the nighttime environment. "Good lighting", as described by the New England Light Pollution Advisory Group and the International Dark-Sky Association, has four distinct characteristics:

1. It provides adequate light for the intended task, but never over-lights.

According to the Community Survey, 58.9% of respondents agree or strongly agree that reducing light from commercial and industrial areas is needed.



2. It uses “fully-shielded” lighting fixtures, fixtures that control the light output in order to keep the light in the intended area.
3. It has the lighting fixtures carefully installed to maximize their effectiveness on the targeted property, and to minimize the area and/or point of illumination’s adverse effects on neighboring properties.
4. It uses fixtures with high-efficiency lamps, while still considering the color and quality as essential design criteria.

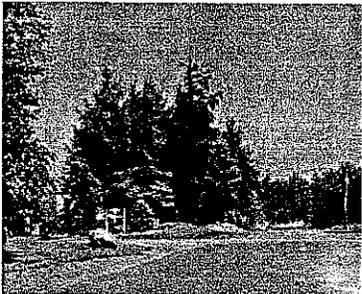
Promoting these “good lighting” characteristics in the Industrial Area and throughout the Town of Ballston would minimize the adverse visual impact of current and future development. This can be accomplished through the provision of information to property owners, and through the Site Plan Review process for new development.

Improve landscaping and buffer industrial uses from adjacent uses.

Improving the appearance of this area, especially along the frontage of parcels on Route 67, would significantly improve this important entrance to the Town of Ballston. Simple landscaping and signage improvements would go a long way. In areas where industrial uses adjoin residential areas or important environmental areas, buffers should be used to shield these areas from any adverse noise, light, dust, or odors that may be associated with certain industrial uses. The creation of buffers from adjacent trails and pathways could be the responsibility of the parties responsible for trail maintenance and should be coordinated with property owners.

Allow for office uses and establish design guidelines.

Office uses that may or may not be associated with industrial activity should be allowed within the Industrial Area. Well-designed architecture and site plans could allow industrial and non-industrial uses to co-exist. Buffering may be needed, but the requirements depend upon the kinds of industrial operations. Prime consideration should be given to linking facilities to the greater community to spur social interaction and greater economic development. Design guidelines for this area should focus on landscaped buffers and placement of parking behind or beside buildings when feasible.



This area has convenient access to major roadways and would be an appropriate location to encourage additional office growth, as well as industrial growth.

Utilize a Planned Unit Development (PUD) option to allow a mixed use approach in the Gateway areas.

The Town could consider allowing the PUD option in the gateways located in the Industrial Area to encourage a mix of uses and create a pleasant welcome into the community. The PUD option allows for greater creativity and flexibility and would be at the discretion of the Town Board. For example, the intersection of Route 67 and East Line Road is an important gateway into the Town. A PUD approach utilizing a mix of uses in a creative manner might be appropriate in this location.

3.6 TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS

Community character and transportation needs should be the priorities when making decisions that impact the town's roads. The needs of pedestrian and bicyclists should be considered in all transportation planning efforts. Despite the rural nature of much of the community, consideration mass transit options should be investigated and promoted. Mass transit, in areas that are not walkable, keeps seniors integrated in their community as their driving abilities become restricted. In addition, poorer families may be able to limit the number of automobiles in their household if mass transit is available to get them to work and commercial areas.

Funding programs offered through the Capital District Transportation Committee, such as the Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program, may assist in implementing recommendations for the Town's transportation corridors. The Linkage Program provides technical assistance to local communities for planning initiatives that link transportation and land use as well as support efficient land use development and effective transportation systems.

Promote access management along all state and county highways.

Access management is critical to the safety and function of the Town's roadway system. State and county highways are the main routes within and through town. As development occurs, new points of access are created at various points along these roads. Each new point of access creates the potential for additional turning movements onto and off of the highway. Individually, these curb cuts do not usually make a huge difference unless they are associated with a land use that generates many vehicular trips each day. However, the cumulative effect of many curb cuts, even from relatively small trip generators such as single-family homes, can diminish the safety and capacity of such highways.

Driveway spacing, shared access between adjoining uses, and consolidated access where uncontrolled access currently exists, are methods by which the Town can preserve the safety and function of these roads.

Enact a rural road standard along major highways and important thoroughfares.

The purpose of such a standard is to remind future public officials, the County and the New York State Department of Transportation, that certain roads need to maintain a rural character. Safety, however, is important in addressing any road standard. The following are some possible design aspects for a rural road standard.

- > Keeping trees, fences and fields close to the road.
- > Not installing streetlights except at dangerous intersections and in commercial areas.
- > Sidewalks are not necessary on rural sections of the road (e.g. outside of a commercial node and where residential density is less than one unit per acre). However, a shoulder could be maintained to allow for walking on appropriate roadways. The surface material should provide a stable, mud-free walking surface.

Provide adequate bicycle facilities and establish a signed system of bicycle routes throughout the Town.

Biking functions not only as a recreational activity, but also as an alternative mode of transportation. The Town should provide facilities to ensure the safety and convenience of bicycling. The addition of bike lanes, proper pavement markings and signage, and a map of bike routes in the Town should be encouraged. The opportunity exists for the Town to connect with regional bicycle routes. Route 50, for example, is a signed bike route and is an example of a well-kept shoulder for the purposes of bicycling. Programs through regional partners, such as the Capital District Transportation Committee (Bike and Pedestrian Task Force) and the New York Bicycling Coalition could assist the Town in identifying funding for the establishment of signed bicycle routes.

In areas where bicycle facilities are appropriate, guidelines established by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) should be used to improve accommodations.

Focus future development along Route 50 within the Mixed Use Districts.

The rural character of this main road is an important community amenity. The rural character along much of Route 50 should be preserved. Residential and commercial development that is allowed should conform to layout and design guidelines described in other portions of the comprehensive plan.

Existing structures and uses will be allowed to remain. Over time, with changes in ownership and use, along with growth, those structures that do not conform to design and layout standards can be retrofitted to do so.

While commercial development should be focused in the Mixed Use Centers, the Town should allow for appropriate scale commercial within the Hamlet Residential and Rural Areas along Route 50 and perhaps Route 67. Design guidelines should address the form of development and the Town should determine what is an appropriate scale of development along the corridor. The scale in the Rural Area, for example, should be reflective of the existing rural character.

Design guidelines are one technique a community can utilize to address the form of its development. A more prescriptive technique to address the form of development is the use of form based code. The Town could consider utilizing a form-based code in the Route 50 and Route 67 corridors. As illustrated on the Plan Recommendations Map, these corridors extend into the Rural and Hamlet Residential Areas of the Town.

Form based codes place less emphasis on use regulations than do conventional zoning documents. Instead, form based codes are more flexible about use, perhaps only prohibiting certain uses that are clearly inappropriate, while being very prescriptive about architecture and design. There are several approaches to form based code and the Town should consider which is most appropriate as the zoning regulations are updated.

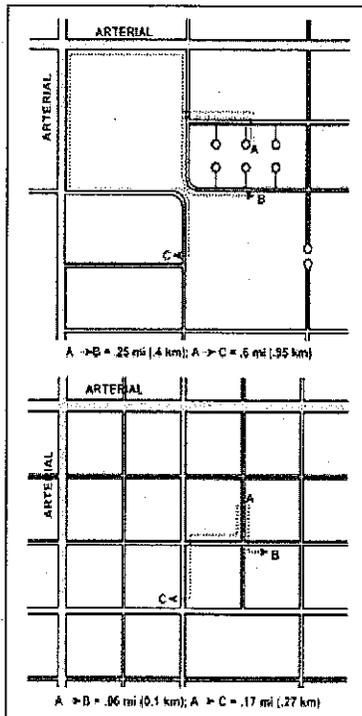
In the future, Route 67 might also be considered for commercial development nodes with design guidelines. This long-term opportunity could occur when the demand for additional commercial space within the community exceeds the supply. As with Route 50, focusing development along this corridor in nodes would assist in maintaining rural character elsewhere in the community.

Encourage the placement of parking lots behind buildings.

In order to emphasize the rural aspects of the community, parking lots should be behind buildings. Sideyard parking and limited front yard parking should be permitted also as long as the lot is screened from the road. The Town may consider creating a “build-to” line for buildings along the corridor. Design guidelines should be developed to encourage the appropriate placement of commercial buildings.

Maintain Street Grid in Mixed-Use and Hamlet Residential Districts.

New developments should recognize the need to connect, at some point, with a street grid and should reserve rights of way for these future connections. Where a vehicular connection is not possible due to physical conditions, a dead end can be connected to a greater grid using a pedestrian or bike trail.



As described in Section 3.2 and 3.3, creating a more hamlet-style road system by eliminating dead-ends serves many purposes. Walking is more interesting when pedestrians can vary routes. In this way, residents more quickly get to know those in their neighborhood. School children can find ways to schools, recreational activities and their friends homes on side streets without having to walk or bike along major arterials. A street grid tends to calm traffic in the neighborhoods as drivers slow down at repeated intersections. In cases of emergency, all buildings have more than one avenue of access in a street grid system. An open street grid system is also more efficient for auto, bike and pedestrian traffic. Travel distance is reduced since people do not have to travel in the wrong direction to reach a destination.

Design sidewalks according to anticipated use.

The Institute for Transportation Engineers recommends particular design guidelines for sidewalk installation depending on anticipated use. The following chart summarizes the minimum ITE recommendations relevant to the Town of Ballston. Where possible, wider sidewalks and planting strips should be installed. In Florida and Oregon, the state departments of transportation recommend six-foot wide planting strips to offer more separation between pedestrians and traffic, accommodate wider trees and provide more space for snow storage.

District / Area	Pedestrian Treatments
Commercial developments	In shopping areas, sidewalk width should be appropriate for their expected use or volume of pedestrian traffic.
Residential streets in the Mixed-Use and Hamlet Residential Districts	Install sidewalks on both sides of the street. Sidewalks should be at least five feet wide with a wide planting strip separating the pedestrians from the traffic.
Residential streets in the Residential District	Install sidewalks on both sides of the street. Sidewalks should be at least five feet wide with a planting strip separating the pedestrians from the traffic.
Rural Roads	Sidewalks may not be necessary on rural sections of the road (e.g. outside of a commercial node and where residential density is less than one unit per acre). However, a shoulder at least four feet wide (and preferably eight feet on primary highways) should be maintained. The surface material should provide a stable, mud-free walking surface. Sidewalks should be considered where large residential developments are proposed.
School Area	Where large developments are located within reasonable proximity to schools, sidewalks should be installed.

Establish a program to promote sidewalk maintenance.

While there are few sidewalks within the Town, those that do exist (primarily in the Burnt Hills and Ballston Lake hamlets and near the Village of Ballston Spa) should be well-maintained to encourage safe use. Sidewalk maintenance is typically the responsibility of the property owner. While most are aware of this responsibility, some property owners may not be aware of this. The Town could consider establishing

a program to inform property owners of their responsibility related to sidewalk maintenance. The program may be in the form of a brochure or recurring reminder in a newsletter or local newspaper for property owners to keep sidewalks clear of snow in the wintertime and to make sure that sidewalks remain largely free of trip hazards and drain well to avoid pedestrian puddle hazards. Furthermore, an inspection program or a sidewalk inventory could be conducted to assist the Town in identifying areas where repairs are needed or even where additional sidewalks might be appropriate. In addition, the Town might consider the establishment of a sidewalk district to assist in funding sidewalks.

Narrow residential streets.

Residential streets should be no wider than 28 feet. Narrower roads tend to slow traffic, discourage cut-through traffic and make it safer for residents, especially children, to cross. From a municipality standpoint, narrower streets mean less pavement to maintain. Snowplow drivers in particular appreciate being able to clear an entire roadway with a single pass in each direction.

Establish an Official Map for the Town.

New York Town Law (§270) permits a town to create an Official Map indicating the existing and proposed road, sewage and water infrastructure, and other public facilities. An official map is a map that must be adopted by the Town Council. Such a map can be an effective tool for implementing a community vision or master plan because it reserves future rights-of-way. For example, a community might show a future street connection – a message to developers to build their buildings and scale their developments accordingly. In addition, development cannot take place in a way that does not conform to the public facilities set forth in the Official Map. This aspect provides a rare level of certainty and stability to the development process. At the same time, the map does not lock in a specific future and can be amended by the Town Council as needs and desires change.

Conduct a transportation and land use corridor study along the Route 50 corridor.

The Town should conduct further study of this corridor. One option is to seek funding assistance through the Capital District Transportation Committee's (CDTC) Linkage Study Program. This program takes an integrated planning approach and recognizes the link between transportation decisions and land use decisions.

While many issues should be addressed in this study, several issues that could be examined include:

- > Traffic calming
- > Access management
- > Intersection improvements or creative intersection strategies
- > Managing the transportation impact of commercial and residential development both regionally and locally
- > Pedestrian and bicycle accommodations
- > Mass transit, including light rail
- > Park and Ride facilities

Once completed, the Town Council should consider adopting this study as an amendment to the comprehensive plan. It should also consider whether further zoning amendments impacting lands in the corridor are necessary to implement the refined land use recommendations resulting from the study.

Address roadway safety issues.

As part of the Inventory and Analysis (see Appendix, under separate cover), accidents at intersections along the state highway system in Ballston were examined. In a twelve-year period 425, or about 1/3 of reported accidents, were located at the 30 intersections along the state system. Of these 324 occurred at the ten major intersections with other state or county highways. Accident rates were computed and compared with average rates for different types of state highway intersections (the average rates vary based on whether intersections are three or four legged, signalized or unsignalized, and urban or rural).

Four of the signalized intersections were found to have accident rates below or not very far above the average for their intersection type. Two of these intersections, however, showed accident rates two to three times the average for their intersection type: State Route 50 and County Route 60 (Brookline Road) and State Route 146a and County Route 339 (Lake Hill Road).

Consider Improvements at the intersection of State Route 146a and County Route 339 (Lake Hill Road). At this intersection, there is a heavy northbound left turn movement of traffic destined for Burnt Hills. There is no left turn lane for northbound traffic. The addition of one may improve safety and operations. The reverse movement is controlled by a

blinking red light, requiring a stop. A number of violations (i.e. vehicles not coming to a complete stop, etc.) were noted at several observations. The reverse movement at this location is the right turn from eastbound County Route 339 (Lake Hill Road) to southbound State Route 146a.

Consider realignment of the skewed intersection at State Route 50 and County Route 59 (Middleline Road). Where practicable, skewed intersection in the Town should be corrected. At the intersection of State Route 50 and County Route 59 (Middleline Road), the county route meets the state route at an acute angle and is controlled by a stop sign. This skewed intersection alignment encourages violation of the stop sign by right turning traffic, which could potentially be a safety issue. This intersection has been defied as a high accident location, illustrating the safety concern is real. The Town should coordinate with the County to realign the intersection to allow County Route 59 (Middleline Road) to meet the state highway at a perpendicular angle in order to improve safety and operation. In addition, other skewed intersection in the Town may be considered for realignment such as the intersection at Underpass Road.

The intersection of State Route 50 and County Route 60 (Brookline Road) is being examined in more detail in the Route 67 Study currently being conducted. In addition, the Route 67 Study examines the so-called "V-Corners" areas, which is the intersection of Route 67 and Route 50.

A closer examination should be made of traffic and accident data at these three unsignalized intersections to see if modifications should be made to existing signs or traffic controls, including possible signalization.

Consider modifications to vertical alignments. A concern has also been raised regarding vertical alignments on certain roadways in the Town, such as County Route 59 (Middleline Road) and Courthouse Hill. The Town should work together with the County to identify possible modifications that can be made to improve safety in areas where vertical alignments exist. The Town could work together with CDTC and the NYSDOT to identify appropriate programs to provide assistance for such modification. For example, funding may be available through the CDTC or NYSDOT for such work.

Consider the appropriateness of additional transit along major roadway corridors.

Currently the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) operates a transit route between Saratoga Springs and the Village of Ballston Spa. As the Mixed Use Areas are more intensely developed, the density thresholds to support additional transit may be reached. The Town could work with CDTA to identify routes for increased transit in the Town and should consider all types of transit including bus, bus rapid transit, and light rail transit.

In addition, the Town could create an Official Map to reserve right-of-ways for future transit corridors or other infrastructure. This technique is described in Town Law §270.

3.7 BALLSTON LAKE AREA

Ballston Lake is approximately 3.5 miles long and 750 feet wide. The Ballston Lake watershed encompasses over 8,500 acres, primarily in the Town of Ballston. (A portion of the watershed is also in the Town of Clifton Park.) Uses surrounding the lake area are primarily residential, agricultural and undeveloped. The Town has recognized the importance of Ballston Lake and has recently addressed dock standards on the lake.



Ballston Lake

Protect water quality in Ballston Lake.

The scenic views of Ballston Lake and the adjacent areas can be attractive for many looking to reside within the Town. If or when agricultural land and undeveloped land is developed, the potential for the degradation of water increases due to runoff from impervious surfaces and improperly maintained on-site septic systems. Two primary actions would assist in protecting water quality. The first is to protect stream corridors within the Ballston Lake Watershed.



Fishing Pier on Outlet Road

The second method is to properly maintain individual on-site septic systems and fix any failing systems. The Rural Housing Commission of New York State may be a source of technical and financial assistance to the community in updating and maintaining individual septic systems.

If individual septic systems continue to fail, there is a real risk to the water quality of the lake and the health of residents. The Town may need to consider the option of a public sewer system in the vicinity of the lake if problems persist. The recently completed *Evaluation of Sanitary*



Ballston Lake

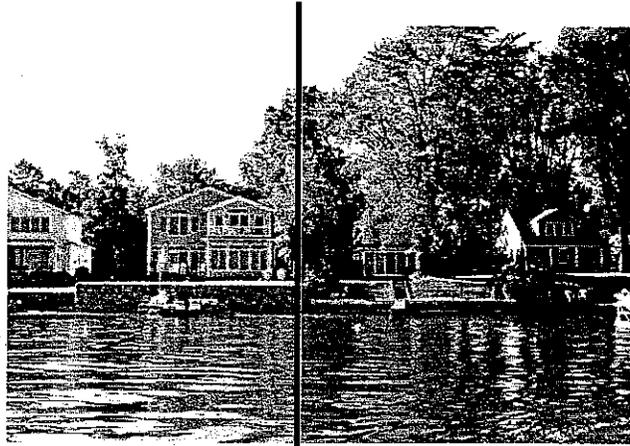
Sewer in the Ballston Lake Watershed indicates that if existing developed parcels were connected to the public sewer system, the current system would have enough reserve capacity to accommodate the additional peak flow. It is also estimated the current system would have enough reserve capacity to accommodate peak flow from developed parcels in the area even twenty years into the future. When considering the extension of public infrastructure, such as sewer, it is important to recognize the potential growth inducing impacts. The presence of public infrastructure can make an area more appealing for development. Therefore, zoning and subdivision regulations must be very clear about the location, type and form of development that is desired in such areas.

The cost and long-term maintenance associated with the extension of public infrastructure must also be carefully considered. Options, including the creation of a sewer district or developers providing for the installation of the infrastructure might be feasible. Technical and funding assistance may be available through entities such as the New York State Rural Housing Coalition (www.ruralhousing.org).

Require higher standards for development along Ballston Lake.

The intent of this recommendation is to address water quality and the visual environment of the shoreline. Design guidelines with natural buffers would serve to soften the view from the lake while still allowing for beautiful views of the lake. This type of approach to minimizing visual impact from the lake has been utilized in other lake areas in New York State including Lake George in the Adirondacks and Canandaigua Lake in the Finger Lakes. The Town could consider incorporating design standards into the zoning code to address future development along the shoreline of the lake.

To improve the condition of the Lake, it is strongly recommended that Ballston Lake residents with shore property provide the necessary protection to prevent the erosion of their property. The New York State Department of Environmental (DEC) Conservation regulates shore protection design and materials used. A permit from the DEC and Army Corps of Engineers is normally required for all types of work on shore locations.



Lack of natural vegetation makes homes very visible from each other and from the lake

Maintenance of natural vegetation screens homes from one another and reduces the visual impact from the lake of high density lakeside development

Identify additional public access points to the Lake.

Currently, most roads leading to the lake are private drives and public access to Ballston Lake exists solely on the north end of the lake off of Outlet Road. A fishing pier and boat launch allow public access, primarily for fishing. The Town should identify opportunities for future public access along the lake. Opportunities may be identified through the inventorying phase or Phase I of a Farmland and Open Space Protection Program (Section 3.11) or possibly through the creation of a Parks Master Plan (Section 3.12). It should be acknowledged that due to the nature of the lake, large increases in motorboat traffic would not be appropriate. Community meetings have identified the need to identify and pursue passive recreation opportunities near the lake.

Address Stormwater Management Concerns.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in an effort to protect and preserve the nation's water resources, has developed a stormwater management rule. Phase II of the Stormwater Rule is currently underway and is intended to institute controls on unregulated sources of storm water discharges that may cause environmental degradation. Municipal Separate Storm Water Systems (MS4s) located in Urbanized Areas (as defined by the U.S. Census) are automatically covered by a nationwide permit under the Phase II rule. Phase II represents an expansion of requirements set forth in Phase I. The MS4s are required to

develop and implement a stormwater management program by 2008. The Town is currently working with Saratoga County to comply with Phase II regulations to complete several reports and is continuing to developing its mapping for this effort.

Maintain current land use regulations to the Ballston Lake Area.

Due to the sensitivity of the Ballston Lake Area, it is recommended that the current density of 1 dwelling unit per 2 acres remain. Development within this area should carefully consider limiting the amount of impervious surfaces. An increase in impervious surfaces can lead to an increase in non-point source water pollution and has the potential to impact water quality in Ballston Lake. The actual boundaries of this area should be determined when zoning codes are revised and updated.

3.8 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES



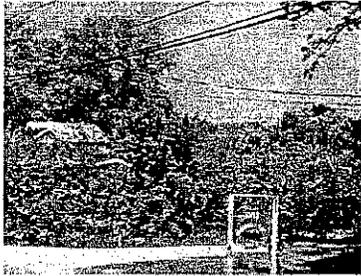
While not as numerous as they once were, the Town of Ballston continues to have active agricultural operations. Dairy cattle and horses roam pastures in the Town and apple orchards are scattered throughout. As a result, agriculture remains a component of the local economy and ensures a local supply of food and farm products for the community. Farmland is important to a community in many other ways as well. The character of a working landscape is very much a part of Ballston, and farmland and open spaces use fewer services than residential development, which in turn, reduces the cost of community services for all residents. To maintain the existing practices and encourage their existence, several recommendations have been formulated and are described below.

Survey Respondents identified the loss of farmland and agriculture one of the top three important problems facing Ballston over the next 10 years.

Level of traffic and congestion and loss of open land not in agriculture were problems number one and two, respectively.

Encourage participation in Agricultural Districts.

New York State established an Agricultural Districts Law - Article 25AA in 1971 in response to concerns that non-agricultural land uses were encroaching upon valuable farmland. Authorized at the state level, the Agricultural Districts Law is implemented at the county level. This program is voluntary and provides several protections to farmers including agricultural tax assessment; protection against unreasonable local regulations; special review of proposed eminent domain takings; required Agricultural Impact Statements for public projects; notification requirements to inform property buyers about surrounding farming practices; and limited protection against nuisance lawsuits.



Apple Orchard in Ballston

The Agricultural Districts Law specifically states that “local governments, when exercising their powers to enact and administer comprehensive plans and local laws, ordinances, rules or regulations, shall exercise these powers in such manner as may realize the policy and goals set forth in this article, and shall not unreasonably restrict or regulate farm operations within agricultural districts.” In short, land use regulations must not unreasonably restrict or regulate farm operations that participate in the agricultural district.

The Town of Ballston is currently located within Agricultural District 2 in Saratoga County. As described in the Inventory and Analysis (See Appendix under separate cover), all 49 parcels in Ballston that are classified as agricultural are located within this district.

Highlight the local right-to-farm provisions. With increased residential development, the potential exists for an increase in farmer and neighbor conflicts related to various items such as noise or odor. Right-to-farm laws are intended to strengthen the position of farmers legally when faced with private nuisance suits and to also protect farmers from unreasonable controls on farming operations. New York State’s Agricultural Districts Law Section 308 addresses the right-to-farm. Since the protections under the State right-to-farm law only apply to those farms within an agricultural district.

The Town of Ballston has a right-to-farm law, which has been crafted to include helpful provisions that are not available under the state’s right-to-farm provision. For example, a program could be established to work with local realtors to ensure that potential homebuyers are provided with early notification that the home they are purchasing is in an agricultural area; or the local right-to-farm law could create a mechanism for the mediation of disputes as an alternative to the courts.

The town should continue the practice of encouraging new development to construct buffers to separate proposed new development from existing agricultural uses.

Promote agriculture through education. Working in coordination with local elementary schools, the agricultural community could teach residents about the importance of agriculture to the local economy, the role of farmers as stewards of the land, and the contribution of farming to the overall quality of life in Ballston.

Initiate a “Buy Local” program and develop an agricultural economic strategy. Working with the local cooperative extension to formalize an agricultural economic strategy is one manner in which to encourage agri-business. Such a strategy could lead to the identification of niche markets in the area. A “Buy Local” program could include various levels such as farm stands or a farmer’s market. Such a program could also extend to partnerships with local schools, institutions and restaurants. In addition, “U-pick” operations should be encouraged to continue, such as the various apple orchards within the community.

Other ways to support agriculture

The following are other methods of insuring that agriculture remains an important part of the Ballston. The Town should...

- > Continue the practice of having farmers as members of the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals.
- > Make information available at Town Hall regarding the Cooperative Extension and other agencies that can assist farming operations.
- > Allow flexible business enterprises to be operated on farms to help ensure the viability of existing agricultural uses. Proposals should be reviewed under a special use permit.

3.9 GREENWAYS AND OPEN SPACE

The Town of Ballston is characterized by open spaces, trails, natural resource areas and working landscapes. Integrating these resources through a greenway concept would ensure a future network of resources that would potentially benefit wildlife and community residents. A town-wide greenway network would enhance Ballston’s quality of life, protect its working and natural environment, and provide recreation opportunities. A greenway can be a linear park, alternative transportation route (biking or hiking trail) or open space area that provides passive recreational opportunities and also habitat for wildlife. Greenways are often trails, which are limited to non-motorized uses such as walking,

biking and cross-country skiing. They often link natural features such as fields and lakes to commercial amenities and residential areas.

Farmland, open spaces and natural resources such as wetlands and stream corridors contribute to the quality of life in the community and also serve an important function in maintaining a healthy environment by providing wildlife corridors and protecting sensitive areas. Ballston faces increased development pressure. It must plan to make sure these important natural resources are protected since they add value to the community by maintaining its rural character and conducting important functions such as flood control and well-water recharge. Once these resources are lost, they are lost forever.

Communities across the country are beginning to look more carefully at the impact of growth on municipal budgets. Although an acre of land with a new house generates more total revenue than an acre of most cropland, the cost of community services required by residential development far exceeds that of any other land use. According to a recent study conducted by the Farmland Information Center the median cost – per dollar of revenue raised – to provide public services to residential development is over 30% higher than that of working and open lands. In fact, the cost of providing services for farmland and open space is only eight cents (\$0.08) more than that of commercial and industrial uses.¹

Cost of New York State Community Services, Revenue-To-Expenditure Ratios (Source: American Farmland Trust, 2004)			
Community	Residential including farm houses	Commercial and Industrial	Working and Open Land
Farmington	1:1.22	1:0.27	1:0.72
Hector	1:1.30	1:0.15	1:0.28
Reading	1:1.88	1:0.26	1:0.32
Red Hook	1:1.11	1:0.38	1:0.30

¹ Fact Sheet: Cost of Community Services. The Farmland Information Center, August 2004.
http://www.farmlandinfo.org/documents/27757/FS_COCS_8-04.pdf. Website accessed December 13, 2005.

Actual rates will differ from town to town, as evidenced by the chart above, and are dependent on the availability of public sewer and water infrastructure. However, similar studies conducted by individual municipalities nationwide confirm that residential development will not lower property taxes by increasing the tax base. Evaluating the net contributions of different land uses can be a helpful tool to ensure fiscal stability. Ultimately, of course, municipalities must weigh the public need for housing, jobs and resource conservation when planning for the future.

Survey results indicate that nearly 57% of all respondents would be willing to pay an increase in Town taxes for the conservation of open space or environmentally sensitive land.

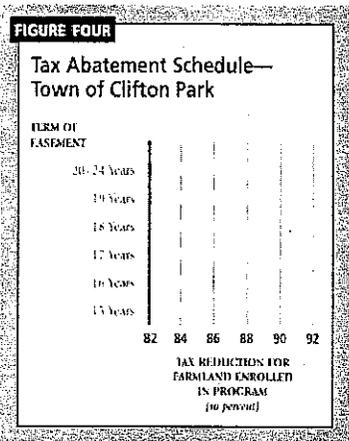
Establish a Farmland and Open Space Protection Program.

The Town should continue to work with the Land Conservation Committee to develop a Farmland and Open Space Protection Program to identify important resources to protect and determine feasible options for protection, including funding sources. Any open space and farmland protection tools identified in such a program would be voluntary and require close coordination and cooperation with property owners.

The Town should also coordinate with Saratoga County Open Space Program, Saratoga PLAN, and other interested organizations regarding open space preservation opportunities.

The Town of Ballston Farmland and Open Space Protection Program might consist of two phases. Phase I would provide the Town with a complete inventory of its farmland and open space resources, and create an open space vision for the community. Phase I also includes the creation of the *Lands of Conservation Interest* Map and would involve significant public outreach. Public outreach is important in the development of this inventory because it provides an opportunity for the Town, residents, stakeholders and property owners to not only work together to identify important resources, but also to learn about farmland and open space protection tools. A strong public education process should be included in the inventory phase of a Farmland and Open Space Protection Program.

The *Lands of Conservation Interest* Map illustrates the community's open space vision in an easy to understand format. It shows the location of various categories of open space in the community, how those resources relate to one another as a network of open lands, and the relationship to developed areas of the community. Opportunities for linkages in the form of paths and trails through the community are also



From *Action Guide: Agricultural and Farmland Protection for New York*

benefits of PDR

- PDR protects farmland permanently, while keeping it in private ownership.
- Participation in PDR programs is voluntary.
- PDR allows farmers to capitalize on undeveloped assets—their land.
- PDR can be implemented by state or local governments, or by private organizations.
- PDR provides farmers with a financially competitive alternative to development.
- PDR programs can protect ecological as well as agricultural resources.
- PDR removes the non-agricultural value of land, which helps keep it affordable to farmers.

From - *Action Guide: Agricultural and Farmland Protection for New York*

described. As a useful tool, the *Lands of Conservation Interest* map can assist the Town Planning Board, developers and the public in guiding growth in a manner consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan by providing improved knowledge about a site that will be developed: What are the open space resources on the particular site? Where are these resources located? And how do they relate to the larger open space and recreational vision for the Town? This information can be used to guide the project design and approval process in ways that are more sensitive to the unique features present on the proposed development site.

The *Lands of Conservation Interest* map can also help identify lands that should be protected for agricultural, recreational, and open space purposes through the purchase or donation of land or easements from willing landowners.

Phase 2 of the Town's Farmland and Open Space Conservation Program, if pursued by the Town Council, would focus on developing a local, long-term funding mechanism for farmland and open space conservation. Preservation can take place in a variety of ways including outright acquisition, purchase of development rights (PDR), transfer of development rights (TDR), and donation of land or conservation easements. Again, involvement in protection programs is strictly voluntary.

A Farmland and Open Space Conservation Program would serve multiple purposes:

- > A Farmland and Open Space Conservation Program, through the *Lands of Conservation Interest* Map, would provide the community with a detailed inventory of farmland and open space resources throughout the Town.
- > A Farmland and Open Space Conservation Program would provide recommendations and strategies to be used by the Town Council, Planning Board, developers and the public to achieve meaningful open space conservation even while growth and development occur.
- > Protecting farmland and open space is more cost effective from a public services standpoint than residential development.
- > Protecting these resources is essentially protecting the community character and quality of life.

As a result of the Farmland and Open Space Conservation Program, the Town of Ballston will be better positioned to work with developers to conserve significant open space areas while development occurs; apply for grant funding; and initiate other actions to achieve its farmland and open space conservation goals.

The Town should, as a first step toward establishing a farmland and open space protection program, create an inventory of its farmland, open space and natural resources through the creation of a *Lands of Conservation Interest Map*. It could initiate Phase I, development of an inventory of resources and a *Lands of Conservation Interest Map*, utilizing the inventory prepared during the development of this comprehensive plan as a point of departure.

One technique that could be used to accomplish the goals of the Farmland and Open Space Protection Program is the voluntary Purchase of Development Rights (PDR). Using PDR, the town would purchase the development value of specific parcels of land from *willing* landowners. The cost of doing this depends on the specific parcel. It is calculated by determining the current appraised value of the property, and its appraised value as open or agricultural land without development potential (development rights extinguished). The difference between these two numbers is the value (or cost) of the development rights to be purchased. Conservation easements are utilized to ensure that once the development rights have been extinguished, the land remains undeveloped in the future.

Local funds can be used to leverage state funding from the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. The department's farmland protection program will pay up to 75% of the cost of the development rights for exceptional proposals. It is important to recognize that given current funding levels for the state's program, demand for these grants statewide far exceeds the available funds. As a result, this is a very competitive grant program.

Other sources of grant funding for PDR should also be explored. These could involve other agencies of the state or federal governments, Saratoga County, or private foundations that work with land conservation organizations in the Capital Region. When ranking proposals for protection in the Town of Ballston, existing farm operations should be ranked higher than non-agricultural parcels.

In addition to PDR or fee simple acquisition, other techniques could be included in this program, such as: donation of conservation easements (perhaps through increased educational efforts in partnership with a local land trust), or a term easement / tax abatement program (a means of conserving for a period of years smaller "open space" parcels - the longer the agreed-to term of the easement, the greater the tax abatement). A Parks Master Plan might be coordinated through this process as well.

Even before reaching a decision about creating and funding a full Farmland and Open Space Protection Program, the public discussion about these issues may generate interest from a farm owner or other large property owner. In this case, the Town Council could consider pursuing such an opportunity as a demonstration project. Oftentimes, a well-conducted demonstration project can address the remaining concerns that some members of the community may still have about land conservation tools and techniques. It is important that ongoing operating and maintenance issues of selected projects are adequately identified and accounted for.

Consider the creation of a Town fund for land acquisition and preservation of open space and parkland. During development of this Comprehensive Plan, there was much discussion about the need to fairly compensate landowners if the community desired to conserve certain lands as permanently protected open space. In all cases, it has been understood that participation in such initiatives by landowners must be strictly voluntary.

It is important to note that the Community Survey indicated strong support in the community for land conservation. Seventy percent (70%) of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the town should buy land or purchase conservation easements to preserve open land. Approximately 57% of respondents said that they would be willing to pay (\$25 to \$50 per \$100,000 of assessed value) for the conservation of open land. However, 80% would like the town to pursue outside funding sources as well.

The results of the Community Survey demonstrate that the community should continue to explore opportunities for developing a local program to acquire special parcels of farmland and open spaces from willing sellers. It is clear that more information will be needed before the Town is ready to determine the best approach for funding such a program.

Important considerations would include the approximate amount of land to be protected, the anticipated total cost of protecting this land (through fee simple acquisition and/or conservation easements), the availability of grant funds from governmental agencies and private foundations, the average cost to town taxpayers, and the fiscal costs and benefits associated with such an initiative. Usually, communities will develop answers to these questions prior to reaching a decision about funding a local program, or in cases when voter approval is desirable or necessary. Building on the dialogue and understanding established through this comprehensive plan process, the Town of Ballston should continue to work toward a program, and a corresponding proposal for funding.

In terms of actual sources of local funding, several mechanisms used elsewhere in New York State, should be considered. The least complicated method is to set aside budgetary funds on an annual basis. Another option might be to develop a revenue bond to extend costs over a period of years. This option has proven successful in the City of Saratoga Springs, New York. In 2002, voters approved a \$5 million bond to fund open space conservation. According to the Saratoga P.L.A.N., if the entire \$5 million were spent in the first year, property taxes would increase an estimated \$0.27 for every \$1,000.00 of assessed value. At the time of the bond, the average assessed home value in Saratoga Springs was \$134,000. The tax increase would be \$35.75 a year over 20 years. (Note: These figures were developed based on extensive research and educational outreach that focused solely on the open space needs of the Saratoga Springs community. The City of Saratoga Springs first completed an Open Space Vision Map and an inventory of resources, including the identification of priority resources, prior to organizing the bond referendum that was ultimately approved. It is recommended the Town of Ballston complete Phase 1 of an Open Space and Farmland Protection Program to assist in determining what would be appropriate for the Town and then consider which funding mechanisms might be feasible for the Town.)

Some communities have discovered that an investment in farmland and open space conservation would cost less in the long term than the cost of providing residential services in those same areas. Ultimately, the most successful funding program may include a variety of funding sources, including grants.

Another opportunity exists to raise funds for parkland or recreational resources or to require land dedication. (Recreational resources could include passive recreation areas.) The dedication of recreation land or fees could be required through the subdivision regulations. A developer could be required to set aside a percentage of land for recreation purposes or put a set amount of money into a fund for recreation land acquisition. The percentage of land dedication or the fee could be determined by the planning board. The Town already has a similar provision in its current subdivision regulations regarding public sites and open places.

The planning board could also determine that if there is no suitable land for recreational purposes on site, the developer could have the option of reserving land in another part of the Town. This would require an examination of the needs in the community for recreation or open space. A plan or program that identifies recreational open space resources townwide would assist the planning board in making these decisions.

Encourage the protection of stream corridors. As described for the Town's Rural Areas in Section 3.1, the Town should encourage the protection of stream corridors throughout the community, and water quality in Ballston Lake. The Town Board should consider appropriate stream buffers on classified streams.

Promote best management practices in agriculture, forestry, and mining/extraction activities. There are many techniques available to manage these resources. Some techniques are more sustainable and could provide a better financial return than others. Property owners could coordinate with the Saratoga County Farm Bureau, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Saratoga County, the local Soil and Water Conservation District, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, as well as the Department of Forestry, and other local and regional organizations to promote sustainable agricultural, mining and forestry activities in Ballston.

Prioritize safe walking and biking routes to schools.

Encouraging children to walk or bike to school and recreational activities should be a priority in the Town of Ballston. Routes to schools should be prioritized for sidewalk installation and traffic calming. It is important to provide pedestrian linkages between schools, recreational areas and dense residential neighborhoods.

Establish recreational trails and develop mechanisms for of funding recreational trails. There are many mechanisms that communities and organizations can use to create trail networks and many ways in which to fund such networks. A conceptual network of trails and paths is illustrated on the Plan Recommendations Map. These potential trails follow corridors such as the former rail rights-of-way. The New York State Local Open Space Planning Guide suggests that linear corridors, such as railroad corridors, utility rights-of-way, and stream corridors are opportunities for the development of trail networks. The rail line is one example of a potential regional trail corridor in Ballston. The Town should work with Saratoga County to help move this project forward.

The proposed trails identified in the Plan Recommendations Map attempt to establish connections to existing recreational facilities, such as Jenkins Park in Burnt Hills or Shenantaha Park in Malta, or provide an opportunity for future connections. When looking at the Plan Recommendations Map, it is important to note that most of the lands through which proposed trails are illustrated are privately owned lands today. Therefore, they are not available for public use. Furthermore, the Plan Recommendations Map shows some of the most obvious possible connections. Additional trail connections could be identified later as part of the development of a more detailed *Lands of Conservation Interest* map.

Most of the trails developed as part of the Town's Recreational Trail System should be multi-use, providing options for hiking, walking, biking, in-line skating, cross-country skiing, and in some areas perhaps horseback riding. Wherever possible, trails should also be designed to provide handicapped accessibility. However, it is possible that some of the trails will not be able to accommodate the full range of uses described due to characteristics of the landscape or other limiting factors. The intent of this initiative is to create a well-connected, well-maintained network of trails and paths throughout the community.

The process for establishing a trail network should be community driven, and would benefit from the participation of a local group of committed advocates. Such a group could help with landowner contacts, with trail maintenance, and other long-term activities that are necessary for the success of this kind of system. The town could assist in the planning and design of these trails, help negotiate with landowners in some cases, help address liability, and coordinate maintenance and safety issues.

Addressing trail buffers and determining who is responsible for the maintenance of those buffers should be discussed at this early stage. Landowner participation must be completely voluntary.

Finally, when planning and designing specific trail segments, consideration should be given to appropriate mechanisms for ensuring that trail users are well-informed about any rules or regulations that apply to use of the trail. For example, if trail use is limited to non-motorized vehicles, special design elements (such as bollards or gates) should be utilized in addition to signage to make this clear; or if adjoining landowners are concerned about users leaving the trail and crossing their property, signs and/or design elements should be considered and implemented by the developer of the trail to make it clear that users must remain on the trail. Attention to such details will ensure that the town's growing network of trails remains a source of pride (not a source of concern) throughout the community.

In addition to funding open space preservation, local funding mechanisms can be established for trail development. The Town should explore appropriate funding mechanisms as a component of a Farmland and Open Space Protection Program (described above).

Coordinate with Saratoga P.L.A.N (Planning for Land and Nature) and other interested organizations in developing and maintaining a recreational trail system.

These organizations can assist with funding, creating and maintaining trail systems. Such organizations can also assist in educating landowners and the community about issues such as liability and maintenance.

Liability concerns are often expressed when considering recreational trails and there are mechanisms in New York State that provide landowners with some protection regarding liability. The New York State Recreational Use Statute (NYS General Obligations Law subsection 9-103) limits the liability of landowners that voluntarily allow access to their land for trails and other recreational activities. This particular law applies to landowners that permit (and also to those that do not permit) use of their property if the following conditions are met: the landowner does not charge fees and the landowner does not maliciously fail to guard against hazards. Landowners meeting these conditions are protected under this law and liability of those allowing access is no greater than those landowners who post their land against trespass.

Liability concerns can also be addressed through individual insurance policies or through liability insurance from trail partners. Oftentimes, an individual landowner's insurance policy will also assist in protecting the landowner against the risk of litigation. Many communities have partners in creating trails networks and the landowner may be added to the policy as an "additional insured."

3.10 HISTORIC, CULTURAL AND RECREATION RESOURCES



Scribner Home on Lake Road,
Town of Ballston.



Town of Ballston
Community Library

Continue to maintain, update and promote a town-wide inventory of historic and cultural resources. The Town Historian currently maintains a listing of historic markers and other historic resources within the community. The inventory is a good resource that can be broadened to include important cultural resources and should also identify sites that are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Perhaps some sites might be nominated for listing on the National Register if the owners of such sites are interested in this option. If a significant concentration or a number of historic places exists within the community, the Town Council could consider the establishment of a local historic district or historic standards. The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation could provide technical assistance for this action. Any involvement in the State or National Register of Historic Places, or in a historic district should be voluntary. The Town Historian could provide assistance to homeowners who would like to consider their property for listing. The historian could also educate the landowner regarding potential restrictions that could follow such designation. In addition, once several eligible property owners have voluntarily submitted their properties for historic designation and are placed on the Register of Historic Places, the Town should consider a local ordinance supporting historic preservation.

Continue to support the Town of Ballston Community Library.

The community library provides a great service to the community in many ways. Funding for the library is provided by the Town through a library district tax.

Establish a Park Master Plan. The Town should conduct a Park Master Plan to inventory existing parks and identify a community-based need for future facilities. The Level of Service approach recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) should be

utilized. This formula is based on a series of factors such as the number of users per day per facility, participation frequency, type of user, facility demand, population service requirements, and other factors.

As part of the Park Master Plan, the Town could clearly identify areas that need parks, the specific types of facilities that are needed, long-term maintenance requirements of existing facilities, and consider additional improvements. The community survey conducted during the development of this plan provides a starting point for this investigation. According to the survey, walking trails, restrooms, and bike trails are the most needed improvements to the Town's recreation areas.

A Park Master Plan might also consider programming needs and might assist in addressing the needs of youth in the community for additional places to gather. Investigating public-private partnerships related to recreation might also be appropriate through the Park Master Plan process.

This project could be accomplished in tandem with the development of the *Lands of Conservation Interest Map*, or as a separate activity.

The Town should continue to work with the Parks and Recreation Committee to lead the Parks Master Planning effort. This Committee should also coordinate trail development activities within the community.

3.11 GATEWAYS



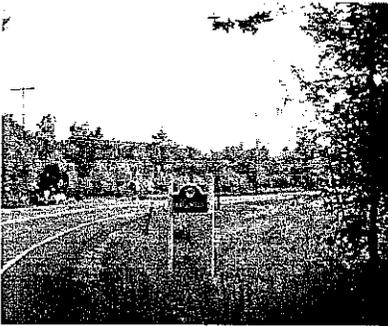
Example of volunteer efforts by the Burnt Hills Ballston Lake Rotary.

Gateways provide a sense of arrival to a community. Within municipalities, gateways can signal the arrival to or departure from particular districts, neighborhoods or hamlets.

The simplest form of embellishment is a sign welcoming visitors arriving by car, bike or foot. Signs, by their design, material and construction, can make a statement about the community's values. Landscaping around signage improves the look of the gateway and informs visitors that the community cares about its appearance. However, gateways can be more than well-landscaped signs. Street and sidewalk treatments can send a positive signal to visitors. Such improvements can also calm traffic and provide a pedestrian refuge on busy streets.

Place well-maintained signage at community gateways.

Many gateways within the Town do have signage welcoming visitors and residents to the community. However, there are locations where no signage exists or where existing signage should be replaced or repaired. The Town could be responsible for maintenance or could work with local businesses and volunteers. Volunteers within the community may be willing to assist in maintaining the signage and landscaping at community gateways. The Burnt Hills Ballston Lake Rotary, for example, has worked to beautify several areas within the community. Efforts such as this can greatly improve the Town's gateways.



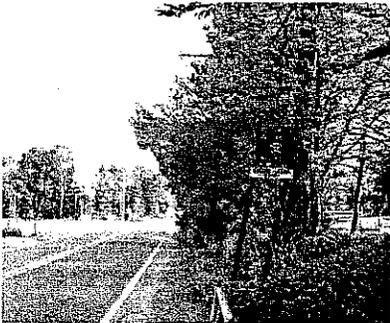
A pleasant rural gateway within Ballston.

Improve landscaping around gateways.

The degree to which a community takes care of this "first impression" can say a lot to visitors about the values of residents and businesses. Simple flowers and/or shrubs of appropriate size for the signs should be planted at their base. Other signs (e.g. billboards, "for sale", organizational) should be kept sufficiently far from the community welcome sign so as not to distract from it.

Create gateways for the hamlets.

The hamlets of Burnt Hills and Ballston Lake have their own identities within the town and should have appropriate signage within the overall theme of the towns' signs. As these areas contain commercial uses and higher density residential neighborhoods, the gateways should be designed to calm traffic and increase walkability.



Gateway signage in Ballston that is scheduled for improvement.

Maintain village look and feel just outside of Ballston Spa.

The area of the Town next to the Village of Ballston Spa, while not officially a village, has similar commercial and higher-density residential characteristics. Signage should signal the transition from Village to Town. However, there is no need to emphasize the transition; characteristics, such as sidewalk styles, tree lines and build-to lines, should continue across the boundary.

3.12 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Several areas of the Town have been identified as areas to focus economic development. These include the Mixed Use Centers and the Industrial Area (see previous discussions of each area above). The intent, when considering economic development opportunities in Ballston, is to integrate and connect commercial districts with the surrounding community, to create centers for economic and civic activity, and to diversify the Town's tax base.

Create an Economic Development Strategy for the Town.

As new, high technology markets emerge in the region; the competition to attract business and increase the local tax base becomes stronger. The potential exists for significant spin-off opportunities related to the future Luther Forest Technology Park should that initiative be successful in the coming years. In this plan, the Town has identified locations where industrial and mixed-use commercial activities are desired by the community. Now the Town should identify the type of businesses it hopes to attract and then develop a strategy to attract those businesses.

Among the important questions that an Economic Development Strategy should answer is what role the Town of Ballston could play in the region's growing technology sectors. It should also explore the potential of specific locations, such as the northern mixed-use area with its traditional village atmosphere, in terms of attracting such industries. The Town should partner with the Saratoga Economic Development Corporation (SEDC), the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce, the Saratoga County Industrial Development Agency, and perhaps others, in developing this strategy.

Revise zoning and development regulations to create a more predictable and fair development review process.

Streamlining the development review process is critical to promoting economic development in the community. Developers and potential developers want to understand early in the development process what is expected of them and what they can expect in turn from the Town regarding standards and time schedules. To assist in clarifying expectations, the Town should establish design guidelines for its commercial and mixed-use areas. As discussed previously, design guidelines could address building placement, the location of parking, pedestrian facilities and other design and functional aspects. The Town

can have high standards for development as long as the standards are clear and fair. Developers value predictability, and to the extent that the town's regulations can make the project review process more predictable, the town will be able to achieve beneficial economic growth while maintaining or improving the community's unique character.

When appropriate, consider locations for infill development and redevelopment activities instead of developing on greenfields.

At some point in the future, there may be locations within Ballston that would be appropriate for redevelopment or infill development. When that opportunity arises, the Town should work with incoming businesses to locate in these areas first. The Town could consider developing an incentive program with assistance from the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce to encourage the reuse or redevelopment of these areas if a significant number of parcels become available for redevelopment.

If brownfield sites exist within the community and the Town wishes to redevelop the sites, it could consider seeking funding through the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation or the New York State Department of State to assist in the redevelopment of such sites. A variety of technical and funding assistance programs exist that involve coordination between the property owner and the community. Brownfields are former industrial or commercial sites that are prevented from achieving their highest and best use as a result of perceived or actual environmental contamination. Currently, there are no sites within Ballston that are on the National Priority List (NPL).

However, a site does not be listed on the NPL to receive funding and technical assistance to redevelop. For example, a vacant or abandoned gas station or industrial site may be eligible for redevelopment assistance. Such sites may be perceived to have environmental contamination that could be prevent the reuse of the site. These sites could possibly be eligible for programs such as the NYSDEC Brownfields Cleanup Program and others. The NYS Department of State Opportunity Areas Program is another program available to assist in the redevelopment of brownfields as well.

Coordinate with the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber) and the Saratoga Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) to promote local businesses and quality employment.

The Chamber and SEDC seek to encourage planned economic development that supports local commerce and quality of life. The Town should also work with these organizations to retain the Town's younger population through the creation of quality employment.

3.13 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Continue to prepare for and comply with Phase II Stormwater Management Regulations.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in an effort to protect and preserve the nation's water resources, has developed a stormwater management rule. Phase II of the Stormwater Rule is currently underway and is intended to institute controls on unregulated sources of storm water discharges that may cause environmental degradation. Municipal Separate Storm Water Systems (MS4s) located in Urbanized Areas (as defined by the U.S. Census) are automatically covered by a nationwide permit under the Phase II rule. Phase II represents an expansion of requirements set forth in Phase I. The MS4s are required to develop and implement a stormwater management program by 2008.

Generally, a stormwater management program must contain six minimum control measures, according to the MS4 Phase II Permit requirements. Each minimum control measure must describe measurable goals as well as select and implement management practices to achieve the goals. The minimum control measures include: public education and outreach; public involvement and participation; illicit discharge detection and elimination; construction site runoff control; post-construction runoff control; and pollution prevention and good housekeeping. So, for example, the town could work with partners to provide educational services related to septic system maintenance and the prevention of illicit discharges into the Town's storm drainage system. Portions of the Town are located in an urbanized area, including the Ballston Lake and Burnt Hills hamlets as well as the Village of Ballston Spa and areas south of the Village boundary. Therefore, the Town should continue to work closely with the DEC and Saratoga County to ensure they are properly addressing the Phase II regulations.

The Town is currently working with Saratoga County to complete several reports and is continuing to developing its mapping for this effort. The Town is on target to achieve compliance in advance of the 2008 deadline.

3.14 INFRASTRUCTURE

Maintain existing systems.

The Town should continue to maintain existing water systems as needed. The expansion of water and sewer systems should only occur to support specific development opportunities that have been identified through this plan, or when necessary to protect the public health, safety and welfare. The Town should continue to work with the County to provide sewerage service where necessary.

Investigate the current condition of, and improve as necessary, the technology infrastructure available in the Town.

In previous decades, transportation, electricity, and water and sewer infrastructures were considered necessary ingredients for economic development. Today, in addition to these forms of infrastructure, the availability of technology infrastructure for high-speed communication is necessary for many technology based or technology dependent industries.

As physical improvements to commercial and mixed-use areas in the community are phased in over time, technology infrastructure should be provided in the areas currently lacking. Niagara Mohawk's Wired Building Grant Program and similar initiatives through New York State and at the federal level should be pursued.

3.15 ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Community Services:

Coordinate with fire and emergency service providers in the Town regarding service and long-term planning for facilities.

The Town could work with emergency service providers to establish an inventory and needs assessment for fire and emergency services. The Town should also encourage emergency service providers to consider the vision and goals of the comprehensive plan when preparing their own

long-range plans for facilities and for their ability to provide services to a growing community.

Energy Conservation:

Encourage the use of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards for new development and redevelopment of buildings and sites in the town.

The LEED Green Building Rating System® is the national standard for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings. Participation in LEED is voluntary. The standards have been developed by the U.S. Green Building Council through consensus by all members of the building industry. LEED standards address a variety of site design, building design and construction materials based on the long-term sustainability of the community. LEED information could be provided through the Building Department and distributed as potential developers seek information regarding building in the town. The following is a list of categories that LEED standards consider:

- > Erosion and sedimentation control
- > Site selection
- > Urban redevelopment
- > Brownfield redevelopment
- > Alternative transportation, public transportation access
- > Alternative transportation, bicycle friendly
- > Alternative transportation, parking reductions
- > Reduced site disturbance, protect and restore open space
- > Reduced site disturbance, maximize open space
- > Stormwater management, flow treatment and reduction
- > Landscape and exterior design to reduce heat islands, non-roof and roof surfaces
- > Light pollution reduction

Assist developers in understanding and identifying available funding opportunities supportive of sustainable design and construction.

The Town, the local Chamber and the Saratoga County Economic Development Council (SEDC) could coordinate with the New York State Energy and Research Development Authority (NYSERDA) to discover opportunities for developers regarding grant funding assistance and technical assistance. Programs available through NYSERDA include: the Energy Smart Loan Program which assists in the cost of installing

energy-efficient technologies, incentives for photovoltaic installers, a Renewable Resource Development Program, Renewable Energy Technology Development Program, and many more.

Regional Cooperation:

Continue to coordinate with neighboring municipalities, Saratoga County, the Saratoga Economic Development Corporation (SEDC), area school districts and emergency service providers, and regional entities such as the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC), the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA), and the Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC) in planning related activities.

The Town should encourage the coordination of long-term planning efforts with these regional partners. The impacts of growth do not stop at municipal boundaries. A coordinated effort to address issues such as transportation, waste management, and water supply would benefit all parties involved. In addition, this might be an opportunity to work with school districts and emergency service providers on related issues and to address long-term planning.

Section 4

Section 5

Section 5

The specific actions that will implement this plan are described and prioritized below. In each case responsibilities are suggested, guidance is provided for organizing the action, and potential sources of funding or technical assistance are identified (where applicable). Although the preference may be to implement all of the recommendations immediately, an incremental approach is likely to be more efficient and realistic based on the availability of staff, funding resources and volunteers. While the plan attempts to consider the Town's capacity to implement the various recommendations, it is recognized that there may be a need for additional staff or a reallocation of staff responsibilities to fully implement the plan recommendations.

To monitor progress in implementing the plan, and to identify and address new problems and changes that are likely to emerge in the coming months and years, there needs to be ongoing dialogue between the Town Council and the other official Boards and Committees (both permanent and temporary) that deal with land use and planning issues in the Town. To accomplish this, the Town Council could convene joint meetings between these boards and committees on a regular basis. As a starting point, these joint meetings should be held annually. The frequency could be adjusted as appropriate at the Town Council's discretion. The joint meetings could include the Town Council, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and any other permanent or temporary boards/committees that are involved in land use and planning issues for the Town.

Generally, each of these Boards/Committees could provide a brief report of their activities since the last joint meeting with an emphasis on any large projects, decisions, issues that they have addressed or are currently considering. The purpose of the meeting would be to provide a forum and collaborative environment for identifying and troubleshooting problems or emerging concerns. Of course, any such meetings must be open to the public, properly noticed, and should provide opportunity for public comment.

Ultimately, the Town Council is responsible for plan implementation. The joint meetings could assist the Town Council in monitoring progress and making adjustments as needed. The comprehensive plan itself should be understood to be a living document. As such, the plan may

need to be adjusted or updated from time to time in order to reflect the current conditions and needs of the community. The joint meetings could help future Town Councils become aware of when that time has arrived. However as a point of reference, the last implementation item described in this chapter suggests that within five or ten years the comprehensive plan, as a whole, should be updated.

The Town could consider a number of options to assist in funding those implementation actions that require additional funding. A portion of the Town budget could be set aside annually to implement these actions, grant funding could be sought from various governmental agencies or private foundations or the Town could establish a revenue bond to fund specific projects. The least complicated method is to set aside budgetary funds on an annual basis. Grant funding can be an effective way to supplement the Town's financial resources for specific implementation actions. However, grants are typically distributed on a competitive basis and often require a local match. Therefore, grants should be considered in conjunction with other funding sources.

Developing a revenue bond is a method of raising funds and extending the cost over a period of years. Many communities have found this a successful method to raise funds for specific projects, initiatives or programs. Voter approval is necessary for revenue bonds. It would be important for the average cost to Town taxpayers and the fiscal costs and benefits associated with such an initiative to be given strong consideration prior to reaching a decision about the appropriateness of this type of fund source.

5.1 IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (TO BE INITIATED UPON ADOPTION OF THE PLAN)

Update the Town's Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to reflect the recommendations set forth in this comprehensive plan.

Updating zoning and subdivision regulations is one of the most important tools a community in New York State has for ensuring future growth follows the vision and goals described in the comprehensive plan. The Town Council should initiate a process to update the Zoning Map and Text, as well as the Subdivision Regulations. To accomplish this task, the Town Council should establish a small working group that would be charged with developing draft amendments for Town Council consideration. Plan recommendations for the zoning and subdivision regulations include the following:

-
- > Revise zoning map in accordance with the Plan Recommendations map in this comprehensive plan. Note: the plan recommendations map is generalized and is not meant to convey the specific boundaries of future zoning districts. Zoning district boundaries will be determined in detail during the zoning phase, and should follow parcel boundaries whenever possible.
 - > Modify list of allowable and special permit uses in the Rural District.
 - > Modify minor and major subdivision definitions
 - > Incorporate the use of conservation subdivision design
 - > Create a new Residential District east of Ballston Lake as described in the plan. Incorporate TND consideration through a PUD process in this district.
 - > Establish Hamlet Residential District as described in the plan.
 - > Establish Mixed Use District(s) as described in the plan. More than one Mixed-Use District may be necessary to accommodate variations in the specific mix of uses, the scale of buildings, and/or the design features desired in these different areas of Town.
 - > Update site plan requirements.
 - > Establish a Ballston Lake District to provide special attention to the impact of development on the water quality of Ballston Lake.
 - > Establish design guidelines and/ or performance standards for the Mixed Use Districts, the Hamlet Residential District, and for commercial establishments permitted on major thoroughfares in the Rural and Hamlet Residential Districts. The Planning Board should be responsible for design review in these districts as part of special use permit and/or site plan review. An additional board (additional layer of review) is not contemplated.

Develop Strategic Plan for the town's northern Mixed Use Area.

The Town Council should take a proactive role in the future of the northern Mixed Use Area by developing a more detailed Strategic Plan. Working cooperatively with landowners, interested residents, and other stakeholders the Town should facilitate a public process that refines the appropriate mix of uses, and which establishes proposed future locations for streets and other public spaces (pocket parks, greens, and plazas). Location of streets and public spaces should be reserved through the establishment of an Official Map in conformance with Section 270 of Town Law. The Strategic Plan should also identify the desired urban design and architectural characteristics of future development sites,

determine the impact of various build out scenarios on traffic and on the feasibility of incorporating options such as public transit, and perhaps include a market analysis to encourage appropriate investment.

The Town may consider structuring the Strategic Plan to serve as a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS). The benefit of this approach is that it would allow the Town to determine up front the type and magnitude of investments that will be necessary to mitigate the potential adverse impacts of the proposed development, and to establish mitigation fees that would distribute these costs equitably between future developers in the area. Future investments in water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure, public spaces, and other items necessary to mitigate any potential impacts would not be borne solely by existing taxpayers; nor would they be borne solely by the unfortunate developer who happens to propose the last project that causes conditions to deteriorate beyond acceptable levels (while those who came before and contributed to those conditions bear no responsibility). The Town could even recoup the cost of preparing the Strategic Plan and GEIS as part of the mitigation fees that are established.

Complete Phase 1 of the Ballston Farmland and Open Space Protection Program (already underway).

The Town should continue to work with the Land Conservation Committee to develop a Farmland and Open Space Protection Program to identify important resources to protect and determine feasible options for protection, including funding sources. The Town should complete Phase I of a Ballston Farmland and Open Space Protection Program. Building on the natural resources inventory and other information collected for this comprehensive plan, this task involves identifying in detail the town's important categories of open space resources. Through additional research and fieldwork, and a series of public workshops, it would answer questions such as:

- > Where is the highest quality farmland in the town? Which are the most viable farm operations?
- > Where are the town's important gateways?
- > Where are the scenic vistas? Rural roadways?
- > What are the opportunities for linking these resources, and connecting different parts of the town to one another, and to adjoining municipalities and trail systems?

This project must be carefully designed to ensure that it is accomplished in a reasonable time frame. Once the Lands of Conservation Interest map is completed and endorsed by the Town Council, it will become a major guide to the town's Farmland and Open Space Conservation Program, and it will be a tool to assist the Planning Board and developers in the design of conservation subdivisions.

Consider recommendations of the Ballston/Malta Route 67 Corridor Study.

This detailed study of transportation and land use issues in the Route 67 Corridor has been underway at the same time as development of the Comprehensive Plan. Throughout the comprehensive planning process, the CPAC coordinated with the committee directing this effort to ensure general consistency with the comprehensive plan. As the Route 67 Corridor Management Plan is concluded, the Town Council should review and accept it as an additional guide to policy in the area that it covers. Furthermore, the Corridor Management Plan will suggest additional action items that the Town Council should consider implementing as appropriate.

5.2 SHORT-TERM ACTIONS

Establish Access Management Policies for primary transportation corridors in town.

As described in Section 3.6, access management is critical to the safety and function of the Town's roadway system. State and county highways are the main routes within and through town. As development occurs, new points of access are created at various points along these roads. Each new point of access creates the potential for additional turning movements onto and off of the highway. Individually, these curb cuts do not usually make a huge difference unless they are associated with a land use that generates many vehicular trips each day. However, the cumulative effect of many curb cuts, even from relatively small trip generators such as single-family homes, can diminish the safety and capacity of such highways. Driveway spacing, shared access between adjoining uses, and consolidated access where uncontrolled access currently exists, are methods by which the Town can preserve the safety and function of these roads.

The Town Council should organize a small working group consisting of Town staff from the highway and building departments, representatives from the County Departments of Public Works and Planning, and a

representative of the NYS Department of Transportation regional office to develop access management policies. The group should focus on all areas of the Town except the Mixed-Use Areas (the Mixed-Use Areas will be studied in detail as Master Plans are developed for each).

Implement Phase 2 of the Ballston Farmland and Open Space Protection Program.

Upon completion of Phase 1, the Town Council should consider a long-term funding mechanism for the ongoing implementation of the Farmland and Open Space Conservation Program. The most likely source of funding would be through a bond initiative approved by voters. Essentially, the Council would ask the community whether it could borrow a certain amount of money for the purposes of conserving valuable farmland and critical open space resources in the town. If approved, the town's dedicated fund would be used to fund projects outright, and/or to leverage other sources of funding (provide local match) that could be obtained for these projects. Current sources of funding include Saratoga County, the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets Farmland Protection Fund, and the NYS Department of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. The state programs are funded through the Environmental Protection Fund.

The Lands of Conservation Interest Map would be a guide for selecting acquisition projects under the town's Farmland and Open Space Conservation Program. The town should also establish additional criteria for project selection. These criteria might include: landowner contribution (donation), development pressure, and other items to be determined.

Permanent conservation of farmland and other open spaces through outright acquisition or Purchase of Development Rights will by necessity be limited to excellent quality projects. This Phase of the Farmland and Open Space Conservation Program should also establish other options for landowners. One could be a term easement/tax abatement program. Modeled on successful initiatives in Perinton, Clifton Park and other communities in upstate New York, this program would provide tax relief to large landowners who agree to keep their land undeveloped for a period of years -- the greater the period of years (the term) the greater the abatement.

A second initiative would be for the Town to partner with Saratoga PLAN to provide education to large landowners about their land stewardship options. There are potential income and estate tax benefits that can be generated through the donation of conservation easements to a municipality or land trust. By actively providing such education, additional conservation may be achieved.

Facilitate volunteer gateway improvement program.

As described in Section 3.11, entranceways along major roads into the Town could be enhanced to be more prominent and welcoming, and to improve the Town's self-identity or sense of place. While it is recognized that welcome signs do currently exist in some locations, there still are opportunities for simple improvements. Additional enhancements might include banners or flowers to improve the sense of arrival. The Chambers of Commerce or a local business organization (or perhaps in the future a Business Improvement District) might contribute to a streetscape beautification program in the identified entranceway areas. In addition, local volunteer groups might be willing to contribute their time and energy to assist in maintaining these areas.

Initiate design and source funding for expansion of Ballston's recreational trail system.

Working with Saratoga County and/or a regional organization such as Saratoga PLAN, the Town of Ballston should begin to plan and design future extensions of the Ballston Veterans Trail northward to both the Zim Smith Trail and to the Village of Ballston Spa, and southwesterly to the Hamlets of Ballston Lake and Burnt Hills. Funding for the planning, design, and construction of these expansions could come from a variety of sources including local, county, and state funds, and perhaps federal transportation dollars allocated through the Capital District Transportation Committee's regional transportation improvement program (TIP).

5.3 MID-TERM ACTIONS

Develop Strategic Plan for the town's southern Mixed Use Areas.

Based on the Town's success with the Strategic Plan for the northern Mixed-Use District (see short-term actions above), the Town Council could consider a similar project for the southern Mixed-Use Areas. This Strategic Plan could also serve as a Generic Environmental Impact Statement.

Establish a sidewalk improvement and maintenance program.

Throughout the comprehensive planning process, participants identified the need for additional pedestrian connections in certain areas of the Town. Primarily, sidewalks are desired along busy streets in the vicinity of the Village of Ballston Spa and the Ballston Spa Middle School/High School complex, and in the hamlets of Burnt Hills and Ballston Lake. In terms of plan areas, the focus of this program should be in the Mixed Use Districts and the Hamlet Residential Areas. A sidewalk improvement and maintenance program should include the development of a prioritized list of locations where sidewalks are needed, strategies for funding the construction and maintenance of sidewalks in the town (including cooperative arrangements between the Town and landowners), and policies related to snow removal and general upkeep. In addition to sidewalks, the program might include locations where off road pedestrian pathways are possible. Such paths could, for example, connect neighborhoods separated by cul-de-sacs or dead-end streets, or take advantage of certain rights-of-way or other unique features in a specific area. A small committee of Town staff and/or volunteers could be established to spearhead this effort at the Town Council's discretion.

Implement stormwater management program in compliance with U.S. EPA Phase II Stormwater Rule.

The 1972 Clean Water Act, enacted by Congress, established a policy to protect and improve the waters of the United States. In 1987, Congress amended this Act to require a program to address stormwater discharges. The United States Environmental Protection Agency developed a phased approach to implementing this program. Phase I went into effect in 1992 and permits were required for a number of categories of stormwater discharges including industrial activities, construction-related disturbances greater than 5 acres and large and medium size municipal separate storm sewer operators. In 2003, Phase II of the Federal Law required permits for construction disturbances of one acre or greater and small size municipal separate storm sewer operators. In addition, all areas with municipal separate storm sewer systems within an urbanized area must develop a stormwater management plan.

As required by the New York State Department of Environment Conservation, in March 2003, the Town of Ballston implemented a Stormwater Management Program including the six minimum control measures described in Section 3.13. The Town of Ballston plans to build and expand its Stormwater Management Plan through March of

2008 when the overall plan must be finalized. Currently, the Town is on track to be in full compliance in advance of the 2008 deadline.

Create an Economic Development Strategy for the Town.

As new, high technology markets emerge in the region; the competition to attract business and increase the local tax base becomes stronger. In this plan, the Town has identified locations where industrial and mixed-use commercial activities are desired by the community. Now the Town should identify the type of businesses it hopes to attract and then develop a strategy to attract those businesses.

Among the important questions that an Economic Development Strategy should answer is what role the Town of Ballston could play in the region's growing technology sectors. It should also explore the potential of specific locations, such as the northern mixed-use area with its traditional village atmosphere, in terms of attracting such industries. The Town should partner with the Saratoga Economic Development Corporation (SEDC), the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce, the Saratoga County Industrial Development Agency, and perhaps others, in developing this strategy.

5.4 ON-GOING ACTIONS

Continue to enhance capacity of Building Department and its information systems.

The Town should consider expanding the existing service agreement with the Town Engineer to provide professional planning services. As the Town continues to grow, and as it implements the many recommendations in this plan for managing its growth, the Town Council may wish to consider the addition of a professional planner to the town staff. Several area communities have found it useful to add one or more planners to their staff in recent years. The region is fortunate to have a graduate planning program at the University at Albany and an active section of the Upstate Chapter of the American Planning Association from which to find knowledgeable candidates if needed.

In addition to the possible need to add staff in the future, the Town should continue to enhance its information systems. Current information about the town's growth helps to form the basis for good decision-making. Ballston is a changing community and it is, therefore, important to be able to track information about this change. The Town has already made significant progress in this regard with the recent establishment of

a Geographic Information System (GIS) in the Building Department. The Town should continue to expand its GIS capability, and perhaps in the future, explore options for providing more of this information to the public via the Internet.

Encourage or require continuing education for board members.

The Town Council should encourage or require that all members of the Town's Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals attend educational programs in an effort to update their knowledge of planning and zoning techniques and laws on a continuing basis. Town Council members should also be encouraged, and planning staff should be required, to attend such programs as appropriate. This is of particular importance as the Town continues to change and as it considers the use of new planning tools in response to this change. Several organizations offer such programs and hold workshops and conferences or can come to local communities for this purpose. These organizations include, but are not limited to: the Saratoga County Planning Department, the New York State Department of State Division of Local Government, the New York Planning Federation, the Capital District Regional Planning Commission, the Upstate Chapter of the American Planning Association, and local colleges and universities such as Albany Law School and the University at Albany.

5.5 LONG-TERM ACTIONS

Consider additional initiatives to strengthen the business environment in the Mixed Use Districts.

Based on the results of the Economic Development Strategy, additional actions to enhance the success of the mixed-use districts (the Town's main commercial areas) may be warranted. A Business Improvement District (BID) could be established for one or more of these districts as appropriate. A BID provides a mechanism for property owners and business owners in a defined area to raise funds for street and sidewalk maintenance, beautification, prospecting, marketing, and business recruitment and retention.

Review this Comprehensive Plan in its entirety.

As the community changes, its needs and desires change. The comprehensive plan should be a flexible and adaptable document that reflects such changes. As a result, it is recommended that the Town review and update (if necessary) this comprehensive plan in its entirety within five to ten years.

Appendices
(Under Separate Cover)