

Comprehensive  
Plan Update for  
the Town of  
East Greenbush

**WELCOME**  
TOWN OF  
**EAST GREENBUSH**

*Est. 1855*

# East Greenbush

Our Vision. Our Community.



**DRAFT**  
**FOR PUBLIC REVIEW**  
**SEPTEMBER 2020**



Engineering and  
Land Surveying, P.C.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Hollie Kennedy, Town Board Member

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## IN MEMORIAM

Thank you to William "Bill" Perkins who served as Chair of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. Bill was always available to offer ideas and insight about ways to build upon the strengths of East Greenbush. Bill was a beloved father and husband, member of the Elks Club and practiced veterinary medicine at New Baltimore Animal Hospital. Bill was dedicated to his community and his contributions to the Committee and to the Town will be greatly missed.

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DRAFT





# I. Introduction



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## SECTION ONE - INTRODUCTION

In 2018, the Town of East Greenbush initiated an update to the Comprehensive Plan to address the current and future needs of the community. East Greenbush is a Town connected by distinct neighborhoods, nodes of commercial activity, abundant natural resources, residents and business owners who are active participants in the future of the Town. This Comprehensive Plan update seeks to enhance those connections and create a sustainable and inclusive community with major employers, quality housing options, successful activity nodes and a high quality of life. The Town has participated in a number of planning initiatives since its last update to the Comprehensive Plan in 2006. This plan incorporates key recommendations from those initiatives, offers new recommendations and provides a roadmap to the future development of East Greenbush.

### TOWN OVERVIEW

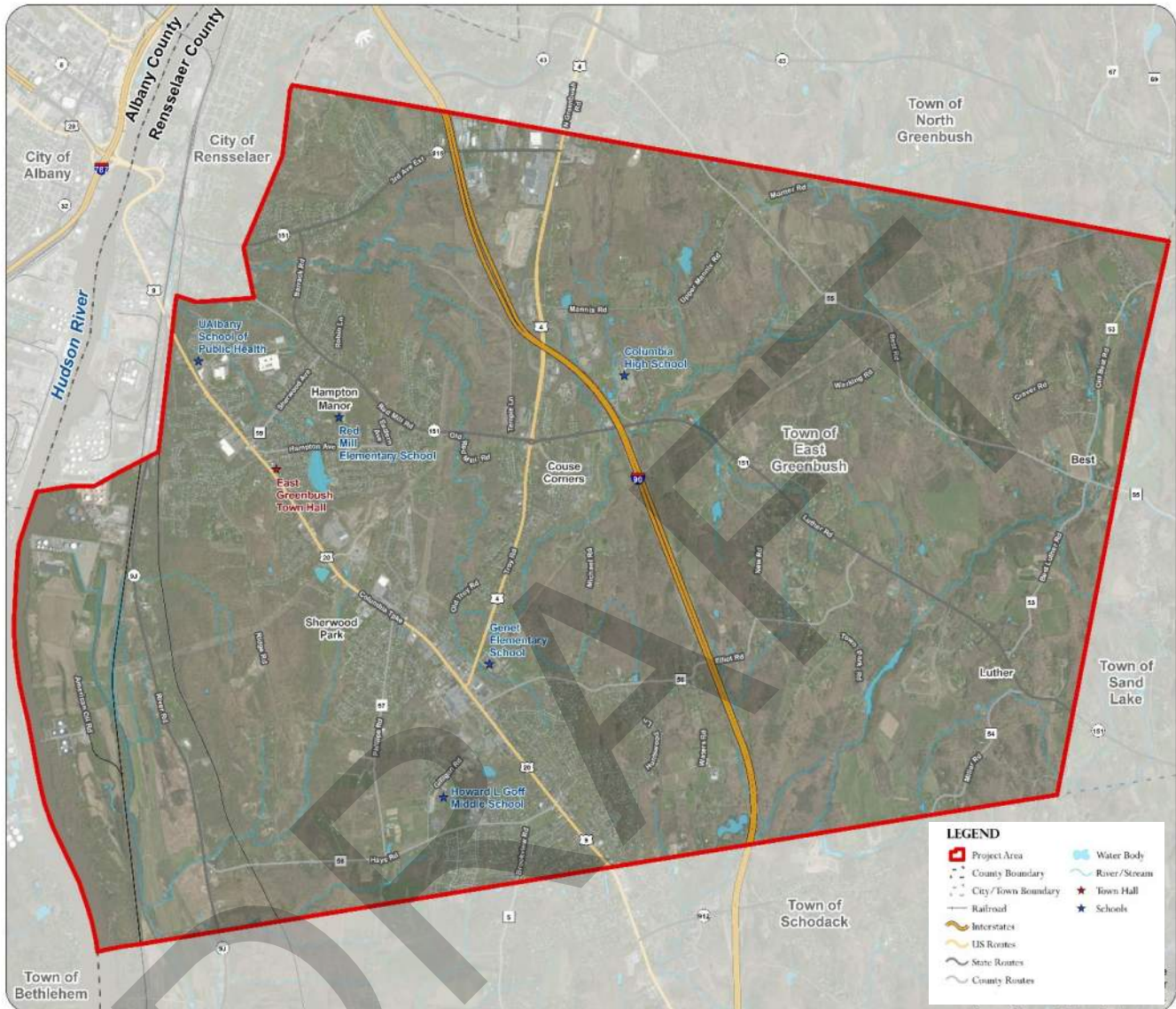
The Town of East Greenbush is situated in western Rensselaer County along the eastern shore of the Hudson River and borders the Towns of Schodack, North Greenbush, Sand Lake and the City of Rensselaer. Located in the heart of New York's Capital Region, the locational advantage of East Greenbush has allowed the Town to rise as an employment and commercial center. The Town offers a diverse landscape and includes historic neighborhoods, scenic vistas, Hudson River waterfront, bucolic rural and agricultural lands, quality schools and recreational resources that contribute to the Town's character and as a place for many to call home.

Over the past decade, the Town of East Greenbush has experienced extensive change, especially in the form of new commercial and residential growth. The Town's proximity to the state capital and accessibility via major transportation routes have contributed to the economic growth of the Town and region. Moreover, the region's emergence as a technology hub and the availability of developable land make the Town attractive for new commercial and institutional growth. With the extensive changes that have occurred over the last decade, the time is right to update the Comprehensive Plan and set a path forward for the success of East Greenbush.



East Greenbush Town Hall

Map 1: Project Area

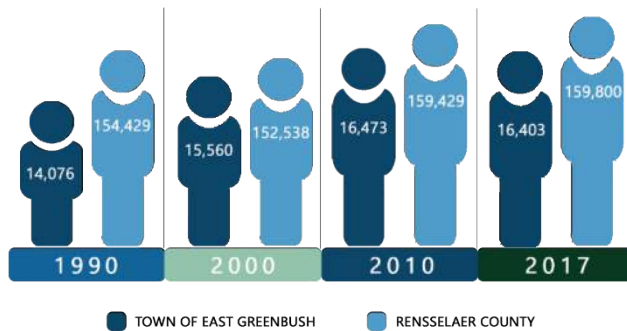




## COMMUNITY PROFILE

The following figures provide a snapshot of existing conditions in Town. For a full review of existing conditions, see **Appendix A** Community Profile.

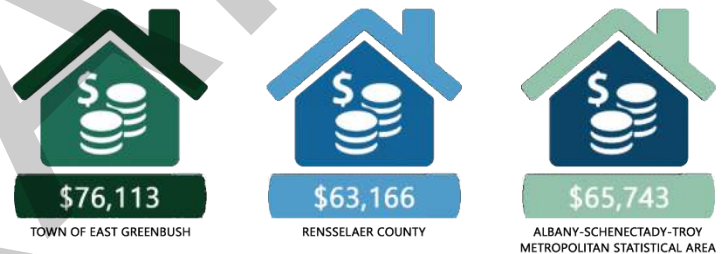
**FIGURE 1: POPULATION**



- The population of East Greenbush was 16,403 in 2017 and has increased 16% since 1990
- The Town accounts for nearly 10% of the Rensselaer County Population

**FIGURE 2:  
2017 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

- The median household income of East Greenbush is \$76,113
- The median household income is 17% higher than Rensselaer County and 16% higher than the Albany-Schenectady-Troy Metropolitan Statistical Area



**FIGURE 3: HOUSING TENURE**



- The Town has a high percentage of owner-occupied housing units
- Over 70% of housing in the Town is single family, detached homes

## THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Comprehensive Plan Update process began in March 2018 with the appointment of a nine-member Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (CPSC) whose role was to oversee the development of the Comprehensive Plan Update. The CPSC was appointed by the Town Board and comprised of various representatives from the Town of East Greenbush that represent local committees, land use boards and at-large community members. The CPSC held regular meetings over the course of the plan development, working closely with the community and relying on the assistance of staff from the Department of Planning and Zoning, local elected officials and the consultant team from M.J. Engineering and Land Surveying, PC. This plan represents the CPSC's effort to synthesize the diverse opinions it heard and respond to the issues facing the community.

Another component in the development of this plan was a review of past planning initiatives. The Comprehensive Plan Update is not separate from these plans, but rather incorporates and supports the recommendations that are still relevant today. Those plans include:

- Town of East Greenbush Comprehensive Development Plan Update (1993)
- Town of East Greenbush Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2002)
- NYS Route 151 Corridor Study (2004)
- Town of East Greenbush Land Use Plan Update and Zoning Study (2006)
- Route 4 Corridor Study (2006)
- Western East Greenbush Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (2009)
- Albany-Hudson Electric Trail Feasibility Study (2011)
- Corridor & Design Guidelines for Columbia Turnpike and Troy Road (2014)
- An Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan For Rensselaer County (2015)
- Town of East Greenbush Amenities Plan (2017)
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (2018-2022)
- Town of East Greenbush Natural Resources Inventory (2019)



## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

In the development of this plan, the Town placed a strong focus on engaging citizens throughout the decision-making process. Participation of residents, developers, landowners, business owners, appointed and elected officials, and other stakeholders throughout the community was paramount to the Comprehensive Plan Update effort.

A variety of public engagement methods were utilized throughout the development of this plan to engage community members. Following is a list of public engagement opportunities that have taken place with a brief description of each.

Public engagement included:

- Key Stakeholder Interviews
- Public Open Houses
- Student Outreach
- Online Community Survey
- Web/Social Media Outreach

In addition to these engagement opportunities, the CPSC and Town Board each held public hearings prior to the adoption of the plan in accordance with Section 272 of New York State Town Law.



Public Open House #1 Participants at the Red Barn

### Key Stakeholder Interviews

Key stakeholder interviews were a significant component to the development of this plan. The purpose of these meetings was to learn more about critical challenges and opportunities in the Town based on particular topic areas. Key stakeholders include property owners, business owners, Town staff, regional partners, community leaders and more. Over the course of several months, the Project Team led by M.J. Engineering and Land Surveying, PC, conducted nine stakeholder meetings and spoke with nearly 40 stakeholders. In some cases, a phone call or separate meeting was held to accommodate schedules of the participants. A summary of stakeholder input received is available in **Appendix C**.

**Stakeholder meetings included the following groups:**

#### Thursday, August 15, 2019

- Department Head Meeting

#### Tuesday, September 17, 2019

- History, Culture and Education
- Open Space, Recreation and Agriculture
- Infrastructure, Mobility and Transportation
- Economic Growth, Land Development and Business
- Health, Human Services and Emergency Services

#### Wednesday, September 18, 2019

- Regional Partners
- Service and Community Organizations

#### Monday, September 23, 2019

- Planning, Zoning and Land Use



Department Head Stakeholder Meeting, Facilitated by M.J. Engineering and Land Surveying, P.C.



## Public Open Houses and Workshops

Public open houses provide an opportunity to actively engage with the public to learn more about challenges and opportunities from the perspective of the community members. The information gathered from these events helped to inform the overall Vision, Guiding Principles and Goals of this plan. A summary of input received from each public open house is available in **Appendix D**. Following is a description of each open house event.

### Public Open House and Visioning Workshop #1

The first public open house took place on June 17, 2019 at the Red Barn at the East Greenbush Town Park with nearly 100 attendees. The main purpose of this workshop was to gather information about needs and opportunities and a vision for East Greenbush in the next 5, 10 or 20 years. The workshop included a variety of activity stations that provided information about the project and stations to collect information about the Town based on particular topic areas. The workshop also included a presentation from the Project Team and a welcome from the Town Supervisor. Additionally, participants had the opportunity to speak with Town staff, CPSC members and the Project Team and share written ideas on comment cards. Activity stations included:

- Station #1 – Project Overview
- Station #2 – Community Profile
- Station #3 – Community Vision
- Station #4 – Challenges and Opportunities
- Station #5 – Places We Gather
- Station #6 – Serving the Generations
- Station #7 – Mapping the Future
- Station #8 – Idea station
- Station #9 – Kid's Corner
- Station #10 – Take the Survey
- Station #11 – Other Thoughts and Ideas

### Public Workshop #2

The second public open house took place at the Red Barn at the East Greenbush Town Park on September 30, 2019 with over 70 participants. The format of this workshop included facilitated, topic-based speed round table discussions. Each table represented a different topic area and was facilitated by a member of the Project Team. Each group would then answer a series of questions based on that table topic and then switch tables after 10 minutes leading to a series of high energy and focused discussions. Topic areas for each table included:

- Transportation and Mobility
- Economic Growth
- Neighborhoods and Housing
- Recreation, Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Governance and Infrastructure



Public Open House #2 Speed Round Table Discussions led by M.J. Engineering and Land Surveying, P.C.



### Student Engagement

On October 2, 2019, the Project Team facilitated an activity to engage students at the East Greenbush Central School District. Student engagement included a meeting with the Student Advisory Council, which includes 36 student representatives (grades 5-12) from each of the district's seven schools. The purpose of this meeting was to learn about needs and opportunities in the Town of East Greenbush from the perspective of the younger generation of town residents and local community members. At the meeting, students had the opportunity to be Town Board members for the day and help plan the future of the community. Students divided into six discussion groups and were given a set of questions that discussed needs and opportunities in the Town. A representative was chosen from each group to take notes and report back to the full group about the discussions. A summary of input received is available in **Appendix C**.



East Greenbush Central School District Student Advisory Council Engagement, October 2, 2019,

### Online Community Survey

Online surveys provide a unique opportunity to reach a broad range of community members. For those that may not be able to make a public meeting or other events, an online survey can be a great way to collect public input about a variety of topic area. The purpose of the online survey was to gather input from community members, business owners and other stakeholders about East Greenbush. This information was used to help inform the overall Vision, Guiding Principles and Goals for the town and help shape the Comprehensive Plan. The survey was conducted using the Survey Monkey platform and went live on June 17, 2019 and was open to participants until November 1, 2019 with a total of 783 respondents.

The survey included 21 questions that covered the following topic areas:

- Demographic and Background Information
- The Way Land is Used
- Quality of Life
- The Future

A summary of survey results is available in **Appendix H**.



#### EAST GREENBUSH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

Be part of the East Greenbush Comprehensive  
Plan Update. We need your input!

Go to this link and take the survey:

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/EGCompPlan](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/EGCompPlan)

For more information contact:

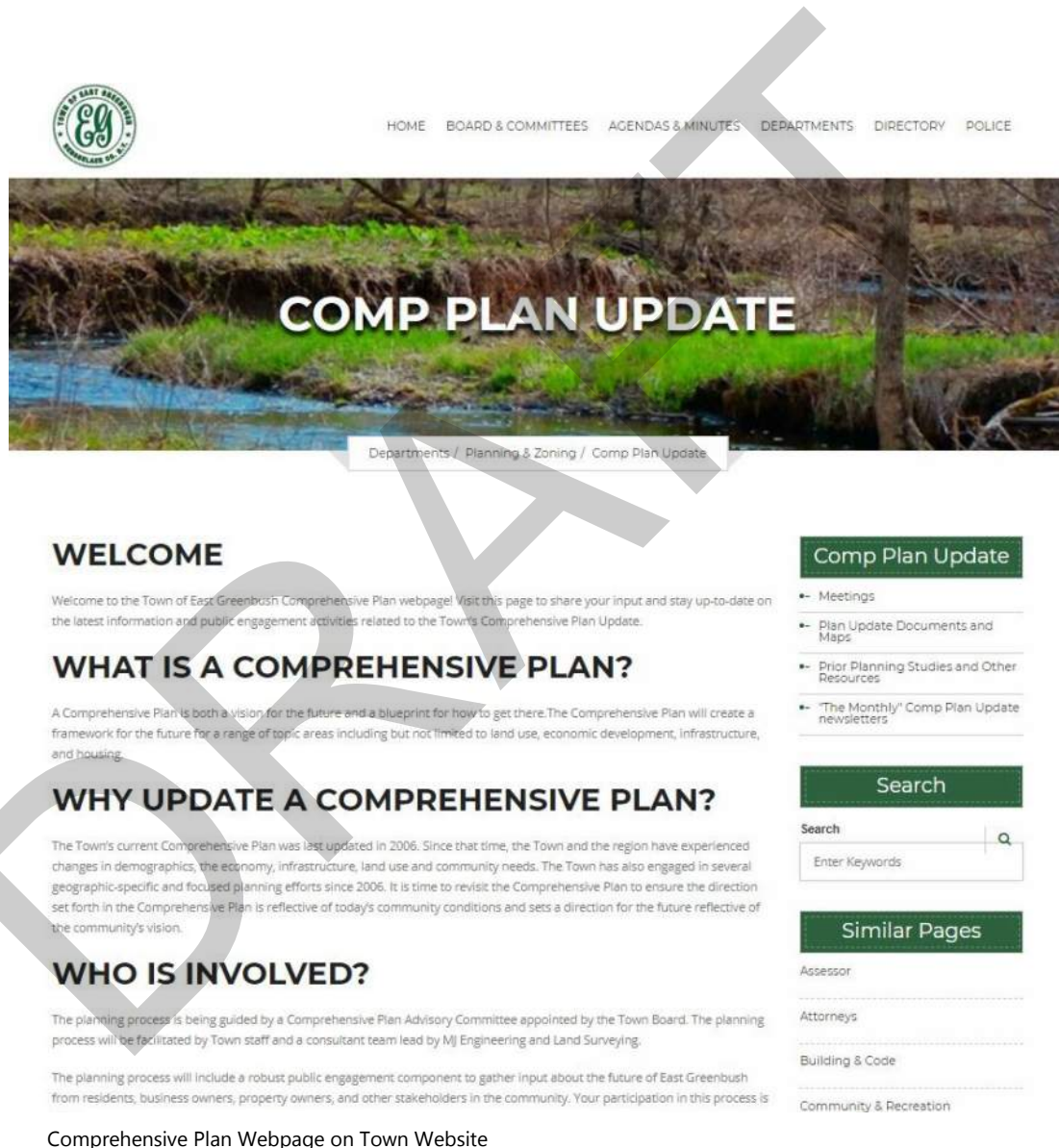
Adam Yagelski, Director of Planning and Zoning | [CompPlanUpdate@eastgreenbush.org](mailto:CompPlanUpdate@eastgreenbush.org)

Survey Information Card

## Web/Social Media Outreach

Members of the community were kept informed about the Comprehensive Plan via the Town's website and social media. The Town dedicated a page on its website to the Comprehensive Plan that included information about the project, CPSC, documents and key updates throughout the planning process.

The Town's social media was utilized to post information about public meetings, CPSC meetings and other updates throughout the planning process.







## PLACEMAKING



## ECONOMIC GROWTH

TRANSPORTATION AND  
MOBILITYNEIGHBORHOODS AND  
HOUSING

## RECREATION

NATURAL RESOURCES,  
AGRICULTURE AND THE  
ENVIRONMENTGOVERNANCE AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE

## PLAN ORGANIZATION

Comprehensive Plans create a future framework for a variety of topics areas and establishes a vision for the future and a blueprint for how to get there. The plan includes a Vision and Guiding Principles section, which sets the direction for the future of East Greenbush. Following the Vision and Guiding Principles, the plan is organized into seven recommended action sections that align with the Guiding Principles. Those sections include:

- Placemaking
- Economic Growth
- Transportation and Mobility
- Neighborhoods and Housing
- Recreation
- Natural Resources, Agriculture and the Environment
- Governance and Infrastructure

Each recommended action section includes an overview of that topic area, key challenges and recommended actions to address the challenges and enhance the Town. It should be noted that some recommendations may overlap with one another in different sections.

The plan then looks at future land use within the community and illustrates the Town's vision for future land uses. Finally, the plan discusses implementation of the recommended action items and includes an implementation matrix to guide East Greenbush in making this plan a reality. Each recommendation in the plan has a number identification. this number does not indicate the prioritization of recommendations. Instead, the prioritization of recommendations can be found in the implementation matrix.

The Appendices of the plan contains documentation and background information to support the recommendations. The appendices include an inventory a Community Profile, the Community Outreach Process and Plan, stakeholder meeting summaries, public workshop summaries, an overview of past planning efforts and Technical Investigation Memorandums.





# Vision, Guiding Principles and Goals



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## SECTION TWO – VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A vision statement establishes the direction of the community over the next five, ten or twenty years. It forms the basis for the Comprehensive Plan and all subsequent recommendations aim to achieve the established vision. The vision below was developed with input gathered from the public at public open houses, stakeholder meetings, CPSC meetings and input from the online community survey.

### VISION STATEMENT

The Town of East Greenbush is a desirable live/work community that encourages a thriving walkable central town area surrounded by historic hamlets, well-connected neighborhoods, rural lands and active agriculture.

Balanced, sustainable growth within the community maintains the small-town feel while providing a range of employment opportunities, supporting a diverse tax base, encouraging locally owned businesses and promoting emerging business sectors.

A range of quality housing options are available, and the town takes pride in its well-maintained streets, parks, businesses, and neighborhoods.

East Greenbush is a community aware and respectful of its important natural resources and the health of the environment.

This safe, welcoming town has a strong sense of community and is a place for multiple generations to call home.



McDonough's Farm, Gilligan Road, East Greenbush



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

To achieve the Vision, a series of guiding principles were developed. Taken together, these guiding principles present a sustainable framework for a healthy, productive and creative community.

These guiding principles are intended to be an overarching guide to the specific recommendations that will follow. A community is a series of interconnected systems and networks – each dependent on the success of the other. As such, these guiding principles are closely interconnected and interrelated.

### Placemaking

Encourage a strong sense of place and unique identity, including recognized town and hamlet centers with a mix of land uses, that attract residents, businesses and visitors and are supportive of all generations, while celebrating the Town's history and small-town feel.

### Economic Growth

Engage in sustainable, managed growth that balances community character and quality of life with tax-base generating opportunities and increased access to employment. Focus commercial growth along key corridors and support thriving town and hamlet centers with local businesses.

### Transportation and Mobility

Enhance walking and biking facilities to create better connections between neighborhoods, town and hamlet centers and encourage transit choices. Evaluate and apply methods to improve circulation for people and goods along key commercial and residential corridors.

### Neighborhoods and Housing

Preserve the character of existing neighborhoods and historic hamlets while creating new quality housing options. Provide housing options to attract new community members that may work in town or surrounding communities and retain existing residents while providing housing opportunities for residents of all ages.

### Recreation

Expand inclusive passive and active recreational spaces and programming of all scales throughout the Town. Create gathering places and activity centers which foster community-oriented activities and pride in the Town.

### Natural Resources, Agriculture and the Environment

Embrace, promote and celebrate important natural resources. Maintain and improve water and air quality as well as wildlife habitat. Support active farms, agribusiness, and agritourism.

## Governance and Infrastructure

Promote fiscal responsibility and enhance governmental efficiencies with a positive service approach. Ensure transparency and equity in decision making. Allocate adequate resources for the community to provide essential services. Upgrade infrastructure to support a growing community and its need to adapt to emerging technologies.



East Greenbush Town Park





## III. Placemaking

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## SECTION THREE – PLACEMAKING

### Guiding Principle:

*Encourage a strong sense of place and unique identity, including recognized town and hamlet centers with a mix of land uses, that attract residents, businesses and visitors and are supportive of all generations, while celebrating the Town's history and small-town feel.*

### Goals:

- Create vibrant, active, attractive and functional community gathering spaces within key nodes.
- Strengthen community identity by prioritizing and preserving historic resources.
- Manage new development in the Town's rural areas to protect resources and unique rural identity, create new places, and balance cost of providing public services.



### PLACEMAKING

### OVERVIEW

East Greenbush is a community strongly connected to its neighborhoods, scenic areas, parks, historic resources, local businesses and community organizations. All of these aspects of the Town work together to create a sense of place that creates not just a location where people live, but a place to call home. By encouraging placemaking, the Town can focus on enhancing the qualities that make the Town a desirable place to live, work and play.

### What is Placemaking?

Placemaking focuses on strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, known as the public realm. Placemaking is more than just promoting better urban design, it facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.<sup>1</sup>

Many suburban communities are centered around automobile dependent uses and development patterns that do not incorporate a significant amount of shared public spaces, resulting in a loss of sense of place that exists in cities and smaller villages.

A key hallmark of placemaking is to create destinations that draw in and encourage visitors to visit and spend time in the community. A destination might include a downtown square or town center, a main street, waterfront area, park, museum or community center. Each destination should have multiple places within it to encourage people to spend time. For example, a town center may have shops and cafés, a playground for children, sidewalks with benches for people to sit or a small park area. The key is to create comfortable spaces that encourage people to spend time. More broadly, a town or region should have destinations and each

<sup>1</sup>Project for Public Spaces - <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>

**PLACEMAKING IS:**

- Community-driven
- Visionary
- Function before form
- Adaptable
- Inclusive
- Focused on creating destinations
- Context-specific
- Dynamic
- Transformative
- Flexible
- Collaborative

**PLACEMAKING IS NOT:**

- Top-down
- Reactionary
- A quick fix
- Exclusionary
- Car-centric
- One-size-fits-all
- Static
- One-dimensional

Source: Project for Public Spaces

destination should have places or things to do to encourage residents and visitors to spend time in the community.

According to the [Project for Public Spaces](#), there are four key elements that create a great place. Those elements include:

**Access and Linkages** – Great places are accessible and well connected to other important places in the area. This includes places that are walkable, accessible to all people and abilities, conveniently located and connected via roadways, sidewalks, multiuse paths and public transportation where available.



East Greenbush Town Park

**Comfort and Image** – Great places should be comfortable and project a good image. This may include places to sit and congregate, displays of local art, a focus on historic preservation, improving building conditions, landscaping and overall aesthetic improvements to an area.

**Uses and Activities** – Great places attract people to participate in activities there. Having something to do gives people a reason to visit and return. A variety of activity areas can also encourage people to congregate at different times of the day. For example, a playground may attract young children and families during the day, while a band shell or concert space may encourage adult visitors in the evening.

**Sociability** – Great places are sociable environments in which people want to gather and return.

**Benefits of Placemaking**

There are many benefits to incorporating placemaking elements into a community. Listed below are some of the key benefits to placemaking.

- Promotes a sense of comfort
- Nurtures and defines sense of community
- Promotes health by creating more pedestrian friendly spaces
- Creates improved accessibility
- Builds and supports the local economy
- Fosters social interaction

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following discussion includes the major challenges to be addressed and opportunities to build upon to create a more vibrant, active, attractive and functional community.

### Activity Center Nodes

A key aspect of placemaking is to create centers of activity to draw residents and visitors. There are a number of places in East Greenbush where the development or improvement of activity centers are possible. The concept of activity center nodes is to develop vibrant and attractive destinations to live, shop, work and gather that are centrally located within the Town. These areas may include a mix of retail, commercial, high-density residential and offices in a compact, walkable area with multi-modal transportation options. These centers of activity can become destinations to attract visitors and encourage people to spend time in Town. Collaboration between public and private sectors is key for the success of these nodes of activity to create enjoyable physical environments that attract shoppers and encourage economic activity. Further details about specific locations for proposed activity centers are available in **Section Ten – Future Land Use**.

### U.S. Route 9 and 20

Improvements to the Route 9 and 20 corridor is a key focus of this Comprehensive Plan update. Much of the early development of the Town occurred along this corridor, as it was the main highway that connected Albany to Boston prior to the construction of I-90. This area developed primarily as an auto-oriented commercial strip that is often perceived as a sterile and non-descript environment. While this area has experienced economic downturns in the past, a resurgence is underway and there are still many active local businesses and opportunities to develop and redevelop this corridor.

One of the significant challenges to improving this area is the overall scale of Route 9 and 20. The roadway runs the entire length of the Town, approximately 4-miles from the boundary with the City of Rensselaer to the Town of Schodack boarder. While Route 9 and 20 essentially functions as the Town's



U.S. Route 9 and 20

"Main Street", the length and scale of the roadway makes it challenging to establish a sense of place along the corridor. To create that sense of place, the activity center node concept is being proposed to create smaller areas to focus redevelopment that are linked to existing neighborhood areas and are connected along the



corridor. Each of these nodes has the potential to develop over time into destinations that people can walk to from nearby neighborhoods, take a bus or drive to and spend time in the community.

#### U.S. Route 4

The Route 4 corridor is another area of Town where opportunities exist to enhance the sense of place and incorporate placemaking elements. From south to north, the corridor includes a diversity of land uses from residential neighborhoods with small-scale commercial businesses to large scale regional-commercial uses characterized by auto-oriented strip malls and big-box shopping plazas. Several areas along and adjacent to Route 4 present opportunities to enhance as centers of activity. The East Greenbush Public Library and Capital District YMCA located off Luther Road is a key community resource to focus placemaking design elements. These facilities currently serve as vital community gather spaces and provide a variety of community services. Recent improvements and the construction of a new sidewalk from Route 4 to Columbia High School have helped to establish this area as a walkable node that connects to nearby neighborhoods and businesses.



Greenbush Commons, Route 4

The commercial area in the northern portion of Route 4 that borders the Town of North Greenbush is another area of Town that presents opportunities to enhance the sense of place. This portion of Town is already a major destination for commercial businesses and retail shopping but is primarily auto-oriented and offers little to no public space for visitors to gather and spend time. Another consideration for this area is the increasing shift away from brick-and-mortar retail to more online shopping and e-commerce. As the demand for online shopping increases, the Town may need to consider a reimagining of this commercial area to adjust to changing economic and retail trends. This may include allowing for a greater mix of uses to create a more resilient economic base. Today's retail landscape is largely overbuilt due to the increasing shift to e-commerce leading many big-box retail establishments to reduce their number of brick-and-mortar establishments or go out of business entirely. In this economic climate, Town's will need to prepare for this shift and consider alternatives for the future.<sup>2</sup> Another consideration for the future is the reuse of big-box retail facilities as potential warehouse space. As e-commerce continues to expand, warehouse space will

<sup>2</sup> American Planning Association, "Retail Realities", <https://www.planning.org/planning/2018/jul/retailrealities/>

become more of a necessity to supply and ship orders to customers. It is anticipated that many bix-box retail spaces will be converted to warehouse space over the next decade with some of these spaces doubling as part retail storefront and small- to mid-sized warehouse facilities to accommodate online shopping orders.

### Placemaking by Design

Implementing the elements needed to create a sense of place takes time, planning and coordination to execute, particularly in an already developed area. Following is a list of tools available to consider to achieve the desired outcomes of placemaking.

- **Form Based Code/Hybrid Form-Based Code** - One of the ways in which placemaking can be implemented is through the adoption of a form-based code (FBC) as part of the Town's zoning code. A FBC is a type of land use regulation that places an emphasis on building form rather than building use. FBC fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form as the organizing principle.<sup>3</sup> Conventional zoning primarily focuses on the management and segregation of land uses and the control of building density and size (e.g. floor-to-area ratios, dwellings per acre, setbacks and parking ratios). FBCs address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks. Site design and architectural design are key elements.

A hybrid approach to FBC combines FBC with certain aspects of the traditional development review process, such as site plan review by the planning board. The hybrid approach still allows for the flexibility of form-driven projects with a greater mix of uses, but with some oversight and direction by the planning board.

- **Design Guidelines/Standards** - Design guidelines are a set of recommendations providing guidance to designers, developers and land use boards on how to achieve a desired look and feel for a defined area of the community. Design guidelines should be user friendly and graphic based to convey complex design principles. As new commercial development occurs, or redevelopment of existing properties occurs, design guidelines can help shape the development in a way that complements the community character. Building design guidelines may address building height, façade improvements, placement of doors and windows, use of materials and architectural elements. Site design guidelines may include placement of buildings near the street, parking areas located to the side or rear of lots, landscaping, site circulation and access management. Design guidelines are helpful for future applicants to

<sup>3</sup> Form-Based Code Institute



understand the Town's vision and creates predictability in the development review process creating a more efficient process. These design guidelines can be a stand-alone document or integrated into the Town site plan review regulations.

- **Incentive Zoning** – Incentive zoning is a process whereby a developer may be granted additional development capacity in exchange for the developer's provision of a public benefit or amenity as may be specified in the zoning code. An example of incentive zoning is when a developer may be granted to build additional housing units in exchange for additional open space protection, low- and moderate-income housing provisions, public plazas, playgrounds, etc.

### **Gateways**

A gateway is an important entranceway into the community providing a sense of arrival and can help to create a sense of community identity upon arriving in the Town. These areas can be enhanced to be more prominent and welcoming. Design standards as well as a well-placed sign with landscaping, banners or flowers can improve the sense of place in a community and indicates a transition from one municipality to another. Key gateways into the community include the following:

- Route 9 and 20 – North Gateway (Boundary with City of Rensselaer)
- Route 9 and 20 – South Gateway (Boundary with Town of Schodack)
- Route 4 – North Gateway (Boundary with Town of North Greenbush)

### **Historic and Cultural Resources**

The East Greenbush area was first colonized by Dutch settlers in 1628 and was settled by tenants of the Van Rensselaer Estate. The Town has its roots in agriculture with early settlements developing around the hamlets of Luther, Best, Couse Corners and East Greenbush. The hamlet of East Greenbush was the most developed of the hamlets due to its location along the Columbia Turnpike. Similar to the development patterns seen in the Town today, early development centered around the primary transportation corridors. Prior to the development of I-90, Columbia Turnpike was the main highway that passed through East Greenbush, leading to significant commercial and residential growth, concentrated on or near the roadway.

Agriculture was the primary pursuit of the Town until the end of World War II, when the prominence of the automobile gave way to the suburban settlement patterns prevalent today. One of the first suburban style settlements in Town was Hampton Manor which was constructed in the mid-1920s and included a grid pattern of development. In the late-1950s, I-90 was completed which spurred additional commercial and residential growth, particularly at Exit 9 where I-90 intersects with Route 4. While the interstate has spurred considerable growth along Route 4, it has had the adverse effect of diverting traffic and consumers away from Columbia Turnpike, resulting in a loss of commercial activity. Recently there have been a

number of investments along Columbia Turnpike, resulting in resurgence of economic activity along the corridor.

Historic resources within the Town provide a significant contribution to the overall character and sense of place within the community. Historic farms may represent opportunities for local tourism and serve as an attraction to draw visitors to the region. The Town's roots to the War of 1812 also presents an opportunity to showcase the resources available in East Greenbush. Most of the historic properties in the Town are privately owned and a challenge facing many of these sites is preservation and maintenance. Many structures in Town may be eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, particularly in neighborhoods like Hampton Manor and Clinton Heights which have contributed significantly to the growth of the Town in the early-mid Twentieth Century.

The East Greenbush Natural Resources Inventory, completed in 2019, identifies significant historical and cultural resources in the community. The report indicates a need for an architectural style guide that is oriented towards providing developers and property owners guidance when considering the appearance of buildings. This is important for maintaining and celebrating the historical buildings in Town and retaining the character of the community.

The historic hamlets and neighborhoods in East Greenbush represent the early settlement patterns of the Town and include Hampton Manor, Clinton Heights, Luther, Best, Couse Corners and East Greenbush. These are key areas to focus elements of placemaking and build off of the patterns of development already established there.

The preservation and maintenance of the Town's historic resources is overseen by the Town Historian. The Historian's office is located in Town Hall and contains a collection of documents, artifacts, photographs and more that have been curated and collected over many years. A challenge that has been identified is the space



available for the Historian's Office. Future improvements to Town Hall should include a larger space or local museum to make the Town's history more accessible to the public. A local museum or larger office space could also draw residents or visitors that may be interested in learning more about the Town's history. While the current space is too small to host programmatic activities, the Town Historian offers programs at schools, senior residences and civil organizations on a variety of topics, including prominent town figures, the Greenbush Cantonment and a history of the Hampton Manor neighborhood.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The following actions are intended to achieve the goals and vision of the community when implemented. The number associated with each action is for identification purposes and does not indicate a prioritization of recommendations.

- A1. Create walkable nodes with unique, identifiable character that have access to services, housing and commercial establishments.
- A2. Preserve the character of the Town's historic settlements, neighborhoods and hamlets, including Hampton Manor, Clinton Heights, East Greenbush, Best and Luther.
- A3. Enhance gateways into the Town and hamlets. Gateways can help to demonstrate community pride and define the character of a neighborhood.
- A4. Evaluate best practices to achieve desired community character, improve development expectations and create predictable review procedures for the U.S. Route 9 and 20 and U.S. Route 4 corridors. Best practices may include context appropriate land use tools such as form-based zoning, design guidelines and incentive zoning.
- A5. Formalize locally important historic districts and areas throughout the Town to establish a level of protection for historic buildings and properties.
- A6. Develop a local history museum and programs to display and showcase significant Town resources.
- A7. Work with the Town Historian to increase public awareness of historical resources.
- A8. Establish a town center area at the U.S. Route 9 and 20 and U.S. Route 4 junction that is walkable and connected to neighborhoods where residents and visitors can shop, eat and congregate.
- A9. Establish an outdoor music venue in a central location to host events and to create a local attraction.



- A10. Focus commercial development around key nodes along the Columbia Turnpike and Route 4 and ensure pedestrian and bicycle connections to those areas.
- A11. Create design guidelines to ensure that gateways to the Town along major roadways develop in ways that respect existing businesses, create opportunities for new enterprises and create aesthetically appealing entrances into the Town.
- A12. Publicize private sector investments in the community that improve commercial areas and create enjoyable physical environments that attract visitors from the region and beyond.
- A13. Promote public safety enhancements, including design improvements, to ensure that businesses, people, employees and customers feel secure in the Town's commercial areas to encourage economic activity.
- A14. Support the library as a local educational and community resource.
- A15. Foster an inclusive community through design by creating safe and inviting public spaces for all to gather.
- A16. Integrate public art into streetscape improvements (e.g., light poles, gateway signage, bus shelters, etc.) where appropriate.
- A17. Include public art in planning for parks, plazas and public buildings.
- A18. Work with community stakeholders, institutions, and neighborhoods organizations to encourage and enhance community activities and events to promote neighborhoods and a sense of community (e.g. block parties, neighborhood arts and cultural festivals, concerts, etc.).
- A19. Promote the use of historic tax credits, as well as green building related incentives to encourage rehabilitation and reuse of historic buildings.





## IV. Economic Growth

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## SECTION FOUR – ECONOMIC GROWTH

### Guiding Principle:

*Engage in sustainable, managed growth that balances community character and quality of life with tax-base generating opportunities and increased access to employment. Focus commercial growth along key corridors and support thriving town and hamlet centers with local businesses.*

### Goals:

- Develop and maintain a strong, diversified, and sustainable local economy.
- Promote investment and re-investment in key areas along the Columbia Turnpike and Route 4.
- Foster job growth by retaining existing businesses and attracting new businesses.
- Ensure growth occurs in a manner that preserves the quality of life and character of the community.



Economic  
Growth

### OVERVIEW

The economic development of a region centers on actions that seek to attract and retain businesses and residents to build the workforce, enhance and increase housing opportunities and encourage business growth. Economic development can also be described as targeted growth that influences all sectors, including employment and business development, housing, education and recreation.

The Town is centrally located in Upstate New York's "Tech Valley" and has experienced significant growth in the technology sector over the last 10-to-15 years. The expansion of Bio-technology research and development at the University at Albany Health Sciences Campus, Regeneron Pharmaceuticals and facilities at the East Greenbush Technology Park also continue to drive the economic development of the Town.

There are a number of entities that support and promote the economic development of East Greenbush and Rensselaer County, including the Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce (County Chamber) and the Rensselaer County Industrial Development Agency (IDA). The County Chamber is a member organization that helps to grow businesses and build a strong workforce in Rensselaer County. The organization provides access to an extensive network of business professionals and helps to promote business opportunities in local municipalities, including East Greenbush. The County IDA is dedicated to promoting economic development and vitality within Rensselaer County. Governed by a seven-member board, the IDA has the authority to offer sales and property tax incentives, grants and low-cost capital to attract and retain businesses. Industrial Development Agencies are public benefit corporations created under New York State General Municipal Law, Title 2, Section 914, to promote, encourage and attract businesses to a region. Working in conjunction with the County IDA, the Rensselaer County Capital Resource Corporation was created in October of



2018 in order to assist the County IDA by providing a mechanism to finance Civic Facility Projects with tax exempt bonds. Civic Facility Projects help increase employment opportunities for Rensselaer County residents and allow local not-for-profit corporations to construct and upgrade facilities at the lowest possible cost, bringing job growth and improved quality of life to Rensselaer County and the region.

Another regional entity that helps to drive economic development is the Rensselaer County Office of Economic Development and Planning (RCEDP). The RCEDP is an economic development agency dedicated to ensuring the long-term economic vitality of Rensselaer County. The office works to attract new businesses, assist existing companies with expansion efforts and create an environment that encourages businesses to stay in Rensselaer County. A range of programs are administered by RCEDP to assist businesses with land and building selection, financing, employee recruitment and training, and permit and regulatory issues. One such program is the Job Development Program (JDP) which is a revolving loan fund created to promote employment opportunities by assisting eligible businesses seeking to establish or expand in Rensselaer County.

### **Anchor Institutions**

Anchor institutions may include universities, hospitals, sports facilities, performing arts centers, libraries and large corporations. These institutions are often rooted to a location through an investment in land, facilities or to a particular clientele and provide significant employment opportunities to a region. Anchor institutions in the Town of East Greenbush include:

- **New York State Office of Children and Family Services Training Center** – Replacing the previous K-Mart on Columbia Turnpike the 97,000 square foot training center opened in April 2019. The facility hosts various trainings throughout the year and attracts hundreds of human services professionals each week for state training.
- **Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc.** – Headquartered out of Tarrytown, New York the biotechnology company was founded in 1988. The East Greenbush branch is located on Discovery Drive between Columbia Turnpike and Red Mill Road and currently employs approximately 2,600 people between the East Greenbush manufacturing complex and offices in North Greenbush. Regeneron also has an additional office building located in the East Greenbush Technology Park. With the help of the New York State Governor's Office, Regeneron is investing \$800 million in the next seven years with the addition of an 800,000 square foot second campus off Tempel Lane in East Greenbush and 1,500 new jobs.
- **University at Albany School of Public Health** – The University at Albany School of Public Health was founded in 1985 and is located at the University at Albany Health Sciences Campus on Discovery Drive. The faculty includes

approximately 40 university-based, full-time professors and over 125 faculty who have primary appointments at the Department of Health.

- **Integrated Liner Technologies Inc.** – Founded in 1993, the company employs a staff of 50. The company is a leading innovator and manufacturer of unique cap liners and septa and cap lining systems for a variety of industries including chromatography, headspace analysis, environmental testing, diagnostics, chemical packaging, and pharmaceuticals.
- **CSRA Inc.** – CSRA Inc. is an information technology company that was purchased by General Dynamics and is now part of General Dynamics Information Technology. The company works with U.S. government clients in national security, Department of Defense, Homeland Security, civil government, and health markets.
- **Garelick Farms** – Garelick Farms is one of the largest dairies in the northeastern United States, processing milk, cream, ice cream, sour cream, cottage cheese and juices. The company has a large processing facility in East Greenbush off 3rd Avenue Extension.



East Greenbush Technology Park

## **Industrial Resources**

Industrial resources are located in several areas through the Town. Heavy industrial uses are primarily found along the Hudson River waterfront and connected to the Port of Rensselaer. The Town's location along the Hudson River waterfront provides opportunities to take advantage of the port and river transportation opportunities. The primary industrial pursuits along the waterfront in East Greenbush include major oil tank storage and gypsum manufacturing. Light industrial and manufacturing resources are founding in several areas of Town and include companies like Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Garelick Farms, and FedEx.

## **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The Town of East Greenbush has a number of economic development related opportunities to grow the tax base. The Town's location near major employment centers, retail centers and transportation corridors create a locational advantage that is unparalleled to many communities in the Capital Region. Access to the services provided by organizations like the County Chamber, County IDA, and RCEDP create numerous opportunities for partnerships and the expansion of businesses to help strengthen the local tax base and support economic development activities.

### **U.S. Route 9 and 20**

One of the key areas of concern for the Town is the U.S. Route 9 and 20 corridor. This area is the traditional commercial corridor for the Town and was historically the primary location for local business growth in the community. Over the years, this area experienced a decline in business activity due to a number of factors, including the construction of I-90 which diverted development away from U.S. Route 9 and 20 and created more opportunity for growth along Route 4. While business growth shifted to U.S. Route 4, the U.S. 9 and 20 corridor remains a well traveled corridor with a high number of daily vehicle trips

A road reconstruction project in the early 2000s also had a negative impact on the look and feel of the corridor. The primary objective was vehicle safety and pedestrian safety enhancements were limited. While this project did improve traffic safety, it removed many of the aesthetic features that help to create a sense of place and encourage people to visit.

Despite past declines in economic activity, this corridor has experienced a resurgence of business growth and redevelopment over the last decade. There are a number of opportunities to target economic growth along U.S. Route 9 and 20. As mentioned in Section Three – Placemaking, there are opportunities to develop key nodes or activity centers along Route 9 and 20. The Future Land Use Map in Section 10 – Future Land Use, describes a primary activity center at the junction of Route 9 and 20 and Route 4 along with several secondary activity centers in key locations along Route 9 and 20 that create destinations for economic activity in the community. These areas may include a mix of retail, commercial, high-density residential and offices in a compact, walkable area with multi-modal transportation



options. It is important to note that these types of activity centers require a critical mass of both commercial and high-density residential opportunities to support economic activity and public transit options. Without a critical mass of residents and businesses, the sustainability of these types of activity centers is hindered and public transit options may be limited.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The following actions are intended to achieve the goals and vision of the community when implemented. The number associated with each action is for identification purposes and does not indicate a prioritization of recommendations.

- B1. Focus growth within key activity centers along U.S. Route 9 and 20 and U.S. Route 4 as proposed in **Section Ten – Future Land Use**.
- B2. Re-evaluate existing zoning of the Town’s key commercial areas to ensure placemaking goals are met but that requirements do not create unnecessary uncertainty in the land use regulatory processes, and continue to diversify and strengthen the Town’s employment and commercial centers in a balanced way that is compatible with existing neighborhoods.
- B3. Conduct site-specific cooperative planning with landowners to redevelop key parcels that can act as catalysts for future redevelopment.
- B4. Re-use existing buildings with creative, new uses and/or re-utilize/re-develop areas that have previously been developed or disturbed.
- B5. Support mixed-use buildings and develop form-based design standards along key commercial corridors and activity centers to help ensure high-quality places for the community.
- B6. Work with local and regional partners, including the Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce, Rensselaer County Industrial Development Agency, Rensselaer County Capital Resource Corporation and the Rensselaer County Office of Economic Development and Planning to find approaches to support local businesses and entrepreneurship.
- B7. Work with local business and other regional partners to identify creative, collaborative ways to address needs, such as funding of public infrastructure investments and supporting investment along Columbia Turnpike.
- B8. Develop a contemporary marketing and branding approach supporting comprehensive economic development in Town, and work to “tell the story” of successful investments and their contributions to the local economy.
- B9. Identify and support opportunities to spur growth in the dining and restaurant sector which contribute to a sense of place, provide residents expanded options, and which leverage and attract employees who may travel to Town for work but who are not residents.

- B10. Evaluate zoning regulations in light of emerging markets and/or businesses, such as the craft brewing sector, artisanal forms of manufacturing, and the creative economy, to create flexibility and a right-sized approach which still ensures neighborhood compatibility as well as advancing community goals.
- B11. Create incentives to encourage use and application of design guidelines.
- B12. Investigate whether current facilities (sites and buildings) meet the needs of the Town's industries, businesses and institutions (e.g. Regeneron, University at Albany, NYS Human Services Training Center).
- B13. Consult with area businesses and institutions to identify and facilitate additional opportunities for development in Town.
- B14. Initiate conversations and work with the major educational, medical and governmental institutions to develop master facility plans and address special requirements such as shared infrastructure improvements.
- B15. Maintain and market inventory of available properties.
- B16. Evaluate opportunities for parcel assembly to facilitate creating opportunities for redevelopment.
- B17. Use zoning and development regulations as tools to create incentives for business development.
- B18. Build the town center node residential population by incentivizing moderate to high density residential and mixed-use development/redevelopment that is compatible with existing adjacent neighborhoods.
- B19. Support the creation and operation of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) or other small business groups where appropriate to stimulate neighborhood business investment and encourage collaborative efforts to manage and market commercial areas.
- B20. Create economic resilience through diversity in the type, scale and variety of business, commercial and industrial activities in the Town.
- B21. Work together with Rensselaer County IDA to establish a comprehensive partnership for implementing and evaluating PILOTs and increasing transparency of the process.
- B22. Consider establishing a Town IDA.





# Transportation and Mobility

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## SECTION FIVE – TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

### Guiding Principle:

*Enhance walking and biking facilities to create better connections between neighborhoods, town and hamlet centers and encourage transit choices. Evaluate and apply methods to improve circulation for people and goods along key commercial and residential corridors.*

### Goals:

- Maintain a safe, reliable and efficient transportation system that provides multi-modal access while maintaining the character of East Greenbush.
- Support complete streets and encourage expanded bicycle, pedestrian and public transit options to improve and create connections between residential areas and key commercial centers.



### TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

### OVERVIEW

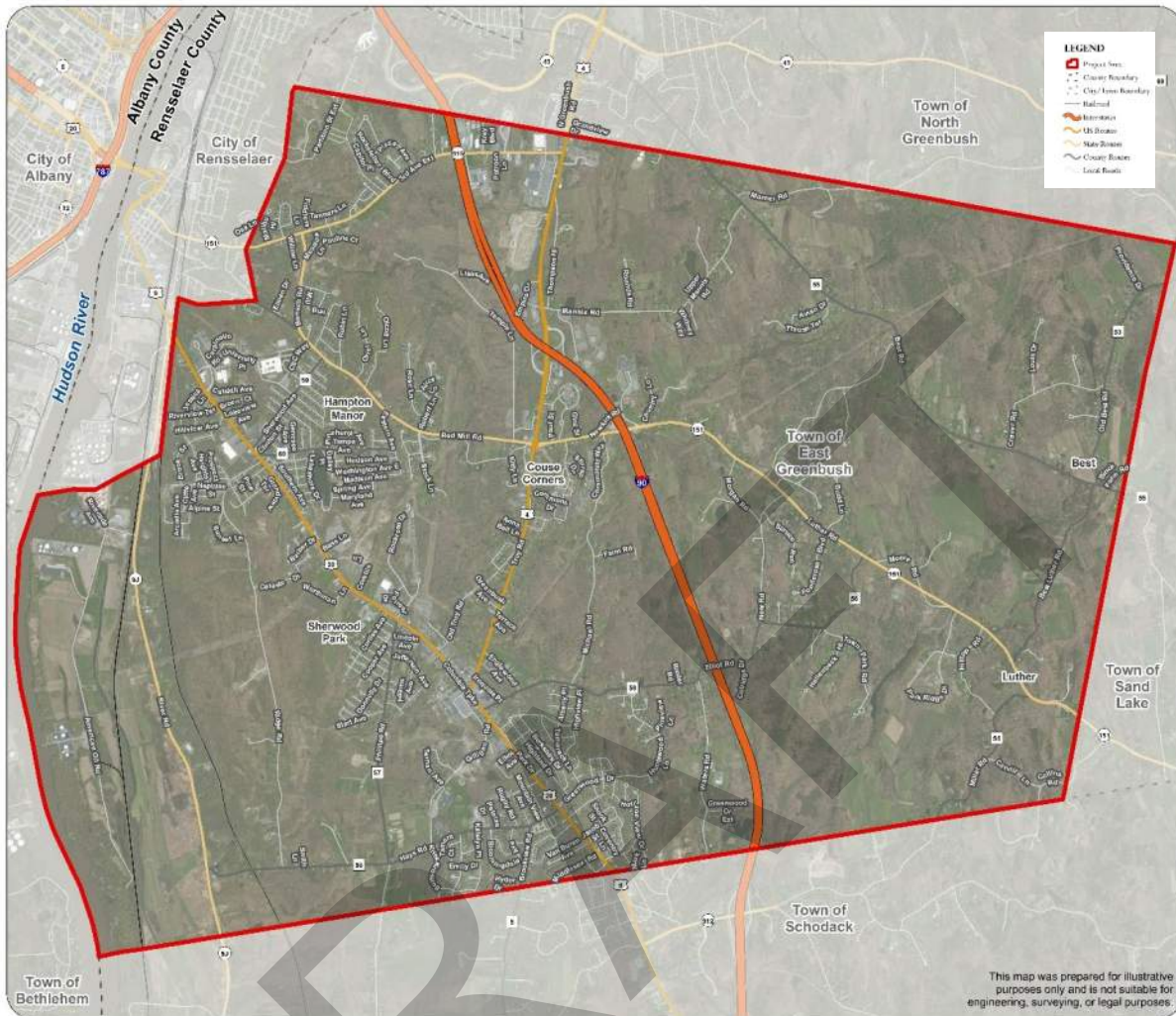
An efficient and effective transportation system is about more than just moving vehicles. It is about providing a system that works for all people and all modes in a safe and efficient manner. This section of the plan focuses on the transportation needs for the Town of East Greenbush and explores the challenges and potential solutions to developing a safer and more efficient transportation system. Several past planning efforts have been completed by the Town that offer ideas and recommendations that are still relevant today and are discussed in the subsequent sections of this report. It is important to note that the effectiveness of transportation systems closely correlates with land use. Many of the past planning efforts offer recommendations not just for the roadway, but for development and redevelopment of properties as well. The following discussion explores different modes of transportation including vehicular mobility, public transit, bicycle and pedestrian mobility, priority corridors in Town and a discussion of Complete Streets.

### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

#### Vehicular Mobility

The Town of East Greenbush is primarily an auto-dependent suburb where the use of a vehicle is needed for most activities and the availability of public transit is limited. The Town is comprised of a network of roadways that include I-90, a major interstate highway that travels east to west from Boston, Massachusetts, to Seattle, Washington. Direct access to I-90 creates a direct connection to countless destinations including entertainment and employment centers throughout the Capital Region. U.S. Route 4, and the Columbia Turnpike (U.S. Route 9 and 20), are two other significant roadways in the Town and form the corridors for which most commercial and residential development is located.

Map 2: Transportation



A significant number of vehicles pass through East Greenbush on a daily basis. Despite a decline in commercial activity, Columbia Turnpike still contains a significant amount of through traffic with an Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) count of 26,999 vehicles at its most highly traveled section between Route 4 and Sherwood Avenue. The most heavily traveled section of Route 4 is located between Route 151 and I-90 with an AADT of 23,973 vehicles. I-90 traverses the Town for a length of approximately 4.5 miles with an AADT of 54,458 vehicles. These corridors receive a significant amount of traffic flow, making East Greenbush a key link on the overall transportation system of the Capital Region.

Future vehicular trends include a more significant presence of electric vehicles (EV). As EVs become more prevalent, more charging stations like the ones located at the Residence Inn on Tech Valley Drive and Market 32 on Columbia Turnpike should be considered. As of March 2019, there were 345 EVs registered on the road in Rensselaer County and the number has been climbing since 2013 when Governor Andrew M. Cuomo launched Charge NY, a program administered by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority to encourage the use of more electric cars and trucks by providing rebates, incentives, tax credits and assistance with infrastructure installation. Future trends also include advancements in technology, such as self-driving cars, self-adjusting traffic signals, smart phone apps, ridesharing and carsharing. Rapidly changing technology will have impacts to transportation both in the short term and the long term and must be considered in developing transportation plans and projects.



Interstate 90, East Greenbush



### Public Transit

Public transportation is limited in East Greenbush, however, bus service is provided by the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) in several locations. CDTA runs three bus routes through East Greenbush, with two that stop directly in Town along Columbia Turnpike and one that stops along Route 4 at the Rensselaer County Plaza. Express Route 520 runs from Schodack to the Empire State Plaza in Albany with no direct stops in East Greenbush. Neighborhood Route 233 runs on Columbia Turnpike from Downtown Albany to the Schodack Park & Ride. The 233 route has approximately 20 stop locations along Columbia Turnpike in East Greenbush from Regeneron to Sussex Road. Route 214 connects East Greenbush with Downtown Albany and includes a stop at the Rensselaer County Plaza. Regeneron operates a shuttle service that travels between its various facilities in East Greenbush and North Greenbush. While public transportation is limited, the accessibility of ride sharing services, including Lyft and Uber have created more opportunities for those without a car or those who seek to use a car less often.

### Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility

A community's bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure are key public amenities that create walkable, safe and desirable places to live, work and play. Pedestrian infrastructure can also aid in the economic development of a community by creating connections to businesses and commercial areas. The Town has made a number of pedestrian improvements over the last several years, but significant gaps still exist in neighborhoods and commercial areas and the connections between them. In order to create a safer and more inviting community for residents and visitors, improvements to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure should be prioritized.



U.S. Route 9 and 20

### Sidewalks and Bike Lanes

Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure are limited in many areas of Town. Sidewalks are primarily located along U.S. Route 9 and 20, NY Route 151 between Couse Corners and Columbia High School, in some neighborhood areas, and along U.S. Route 4 in the northern part of the Town. Recent investments have been made to improve sidewalks along Route 9 and 20. In 2019, the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) began work on a nearly \$1 million project to add new and repair old sidewalks along both sides of the road up to Hays Road. The sidewalk project is expected to be completed by Fall of 2020. The long-term goal of NYSDOT is to complete the sidewalk connections through to Schodack along Route 9 and 20. These improvements have laid the groundwork to continue creating connections between neighborhoods, schools and recreation centers to major commercial areas in the Town. Additional sidewalk improvements have been completed through private investment as part of redevelopment efforts by Fucillo Ford and Pinecrest Commercial Park through the site plan review process.

There are currently no dedicated bike lanes in the Town, though certain roads have wide enough shoulders to accommodate bicyclists. State Routes 9J and 151 are State Designated Bike Routes, however neither have any bicycle amenities. Route 9J has significantly wide shoulders throughout the entire East Greenbush corridor making it a good option for bicyclists. Route 151 has wide shoulders throughout much of the corridor along Red Mill Road, but quickly narrows once it transitions to Luther Road. Areas with relatively narrow shoulders could be difficult for less experienced cyclists to safely and comfortably share the road with vehicular traffic.

The 2017 Town of East Greenbush Amenities Plan offers several recommendations related to improving bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Those recommendations include:

- **Fill in sidewalk gaps along Columbia Turnpike:** The Amenities Plan discusses two large gaps along Columbia Turnpike where no sidewalks exist: from the intersection of U.S. Route 4, south to Elmwood Drive and from the Rensselaer border south to Riverview Terrace. These gaps are approximately two-thirds and one-half of a mile, respectively. Segments of the road should be a priority as this is the primary corridor through the developed portion of East Greenbush and should serve as the spine for pedestrian connections, both along the corridor and to surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Complete sidewalks along Route 4:** This area serves as a major North-South connection in the Town and currently there are only isolated sections of sidewalk. A sidewalk or multi-use trail between Route 9 and 20 and Couse Corners would provide a critical link between many of the Town's neighborhoods.
- **Create a sidewalk linking Prospect heights and Hampton Manor:** Crossing at Columbia Turnpike could either be at the existing light at the intersection

with Sherwood Avenue, or perhaps a new pedestrian activated signal could be installed closer to Ridge Road.

- **Create a sidewalk linking Eckman Park to Columbia Turnpike and the Albany Hudson Electric Trail:** There is a short run of sidewalk on Gilligan Road off of Columbia Turnpike that could be extended to Goff Middle School allowing connections to the Turnpike, the future Albany-Hudson Electric Trolley trail, and the surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Improve signage/markings for bike routes:** The Town could work with NYSDOT to add bike route signs and pavement markings on Route 151 and 9J to improve bicycle safety and raise awareness to these important linkages within the state's bike route system.

### Multi-Use Trails

There are currently no existing multi-use trails in the Town. However, work has begun on the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail (AHET), a 35-mile, multi-use trail that will follow the right-of-way of the former Albany-Hudson Electric Trolley which connected the City of Hudson to the City of Albany and operated from 1899 to 1929. A significant portion of the trail will run through East Greenbush, parallel to Route 9 and 20. The completion of this trail will be a significant amenity to residents and will create new opportunities to attract visitors to East Greenbush. The trail will also create new transportation alternatives for residents to commute to employment centers like Regeneron and the SUNY Albany Health and Sciences Campus and to visit local businesses. The AHET project is part of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's Empire State Trail initiative and provides a key link between the Capital Region and the Mid-Hudson Valley. Construction of the AHET began in the Summer of 2019 with an anticipated completion date of November 2020.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the AHET, the 2017 Town of East Greenbush Amenities Plan offers several recommendations related to the development of multi-use trails. Those recommendations include:

- **Create a multi-use trail adjacent to Michael Road and Elliot Road:** A multi-use trail should be created along these important town roads that would link the primary commercial and residential areas of Town to the high school, elementary school, YMCA, Library and the Town Park.
- **Create a connection between the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail and the Town Park:** There are currently no trails leading to the Town Park. One potential trail could be created into the south end of the park. While the exact route would need to be determined, conceptually the trail could extend from the future trolley trail near Horizon View Drive, east along roads and easements to a right-of-way passing underneath I-90 at the end of Greenwood Drive,

<sup>1</sup> Albany-Hudson Electric Trail Feasibility Study, 2011



then along the edge of NYSDEC regulated wetlands located on private property and then north into the Town Park.

- **Create a multi-use trail loop around Hampton Lake:** A pedestrian loop path around the lake connecting to and/or through Hampton Lake Park is recommended. The Hampton Lake Loop Path would provide nearby residents with a safe and attractive walking and jogging path around the water, which would also serve to provide safe pedestrian access to the park. As a first step, the Town intends to evaluate a permanent change of traffic flow to one-way traffic around the lake.
- **Create a multi-use trail adjacent to Tempel Lane:** Possibly as part of a development amenity, a multi-use trail could be constructed along the length of Tempel Lane—linking the Couse Corners area to the town's northern neighborhoods. In addition, with potential bicycle improvements along Route 151, a bicycle loop trail would effectively be created. Such a trail would most likely be developed in cooperation with developers seeking to develop this site.
- **Create a multi-use trail connection between Papscanee Island and the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail:** The Rensselaer County trail vision map indicates a desired trail paralleling the Hudson River, which would incorporate existing trails located within the Papscanee Island Nature Preserve, and would eventually link up with the future Albany-Hudson Electric Trail. A trail connection north of the preserve could be completed along easements paralleling the active rail line and/or along existing road right-of-ways. The northern-most portion of this connector trail would be located within the City of Rensselaer and could be an opportunity for intermunicipal cooperation.

### Freight Mobility

Freight mobility refers to the transportation systems that contribute to the movement of goods into and out of a region. This may include truck transportation, rail transportation and water transportation. The Town of East Greenbush includes a number of industries that rely on a safe, efficient and reliable freight transportation systems. Facilities including the FedEx Distribution Center, Regeneron, the port area, shopping areas, as well as, residential package delivery and garbage pickup illustrate the diversity of freight and movement of goods in the Town. American Oil Road is a significant route that serves the industrial port area of Town and serves as a critical “last-mile” connector to businesses in this area. The Town has initiated outreach with involved agencies to designate the road as federal-aid eligible due to the significance of the road as a regional freight route. The expansion of Regeneron’s Tempel Lane Campus will have an impact on freight mobility with a significant increase of truck traffic into and out of the facility. This additional freight traffic is expected to be consistent with supply chains

involving high-value, time- and temperature-sensitive, including the importance of air cargo transportation for these commodities.

### Priority Corridors

There are several key transportation corridors that are in need of improvement in the Town, including Routes 9 and 20, Route 151 and Route 4. Each of these corridors experiences challenges related to traffic, walkability or a need for revitalization. Following is an overview of each of these areas along with priority recommendations from past planning efforts that focused on these corridors.

#### U.S. Route 9 and 20

Columbia Turnpike (U.S. Route 9 and 20) runs northwest to southeast from the City of Rensselaer line to the Schodack town line. From Rensselaer south, land use transitions from residential to small-scale commercial and large-scale commercial strip development. The corridor is primarily auto-oriented and has been described in past studies as “sterile, non-descript and unfriendly to pedestrians”.<sup>2</sup> Historically, this was the main commercial strip and transportation corridor from Boston to Albany prior to the construction of I-90 with most of the Town’s early development stemming from this roadway. Over the years as traffic was diverted to the interstate this area saw a decline in traffic and commercial activity.

In the early 2000s, a NYSDOT reconstruction project was completed along the corridor that improved traffic safety. The project included a widening of the road and a turning lane was added which helped to improve the flow and movement of traffic. While the project resulted in a number of vehicular safety improvements, less emphasis was placed on pedestrian and bicycle needs. Planning efforts since that time have focused on the overall corridor function to better serve all transportation modes, including vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle and public transit.

The 2014 Corridor Plan and Design Guidelines (Corridor Plan) report provided a series of recommendations and design guidelines to improve the physical form along Route 9 and 20 and improve safety from a vehicular, pedestrian and bicyclist standpoint. The following concepts were recommended for the Route 9 and 20 Corridor:

- **Access Management:** Adjoining lots should share access and provide internal vehicular and pedestrian access between lots whenever possible. Additional curb cuts along Route 9 and 20 should be avoided and eliminated whenever possible.
- **Walking, Biking, Transit:** Sidewalks and walkways should be constructed along public rights-of-way, internal parking areas, between pedestrian spaces, and to adjoining land uses. Walkways from sidewalks should connect to pedestrian oriented building entrances. Features such as crosswalks, pedestrian islands, and parking lot medians with sidewalks should be

<sup>2</sup> Corridor Plan & Design Guidelines for Columbia Turnpike and Troy Road, 2014

incorporated throughout a site design. All crosswalks and walkways should be distinguished from driving surfaces through the use of textured and painted surfaces. Bicycle racks and transit stop accommodations should also be provided where appropriate.

- **Landscaping and Greenspace:** Attractive and well-planned landscaping and greenspace should be incorporated into site designs. Street trees should be provided along the frontage adjacent to the sidewalk. Existing landscaping standards within the town's zoning should be revised to increase the number of landscape perimeter islands required within parking lots. Additional landscaping and greenspace should be considered in an effort to manage stormwater through low impact development techniques.
- **Parking:** Parking should primarily be located along the side and in the rear of buildings. A minimum amount of parking may be located between the building and street as specified in the guidelines for each transect zone. Existing off-street and shared parking standards within the town's zoning should be enforced. However, this plan recommends that the town provide additional flexibility to allow for a limited amount of parking in front of buildings. For larger parking lots, landscape median islands with sidewalks should be required for a select number of single parking bays. Medians with sidewalks should align with pedestrian site access and building entrances. Infrastructure for electric vehicle charging stations should also be considered for existing and new parking lots.

The Corridor Plan also recommends a more traditional network of walkable roadways and land use patterns to be developed in adjoining areas along Route 9 and 20. This type of network typically includes a system of parallel connectors that provide multiple and direct routes between origins and destinations.<sup>3</sup> The goal of this type of roadway system is to provide a high degree of connectivity and accessibility between neighborhoods and activity centers.

Advantages of a more traditional, walkable road network include:

- Reduced concentrations of traffic on a limited number of thoroughfares.
- Reduced vehicle miles of travel due to more direct routes.
- Increased pedestrian and multi-modal travel options along low and high-volume roadways.
- More direct walking routes to nearby transit systems.
- Increased densities and more flexible phasing for developers.
- Improved emergency vehicle access via redundant road networks.

<sup>3</sup> Corridor Plan & Design Guidelines for Columbia Turnpike and Troy Road, 2014



### U.S. Route 4

U.S. Route 4 (Route 4) runs north-south from the North Greenbush town line to the intersection with Route 9 and 20. Land uses vary greatly along Route 4 and transitions from residential to more commercial as one moves north from Route 9 and 20. Land uses include single-family residential, large apartment complexes, small scale offices, office parks and intense large-scale retail near the North Greenbush town line. The character of the roadway changes from north to south as well. In the southern part of the corridor the road is primarily a two-lane roadway with access to adjacent residential neighborhoods. North of Couse Corners, the road alternates between four and five lanes, similar to Route 9 and 20. This road generally serves vehicular traffic well but is not well suited to pedestrians and bicyclists. Traffic congestion at peak times has also become a challenge in the northern section of the corridor as one approaches North Greenbush. Rapid development along Route 4 in North Greenbush is a likely contributing factor to the increased traffic congestion.

The Corridor Plan offers a number of recommendations to improve the transportation system along Route 4. Much of these recommendations parallel the recommendations stated above for the Route 9 and 20 corridor, including improvements to access management, walking, biking and transit, landscaping and greenspace and parking.

Another study that looked at ways to improve the Route 4 corridor was the 2006 Route 4 Corridor Study, prepared by the Capital District Transportation Committee. The goal of this study was to develop conceptual transportation improvements and management actions for the Route 4 corridor.

Transportation related recommendations from this study include:

- Facilitate a multi-modal future and preserve and improve the capacity and safety of Route 4 through:
  - Good access management, including raised and flush medians
  - Providing inter-parcel connections and reductions in driveways
  - Innovative treatments at intersections, including signal coordination and roundabout designs
  - Pedestrian and bicycle treatments, including signalized crosswalks, sidewalks and bicycle lanes
  - Bus stops where the combination of bus service and safe pedestrian accommodation to a desired destination occurs
  - Traffic calming to promote vehicle travel speeds more appropriate for a multi-modal corridor

A number of improvements have taken place since this study, including the construction of roundabouts at Couse Corners and the intersection of Route 4 and Mannix Road.



Intersection of U.S. Route 4 and State Route 151, Couse Corners

### NY Route 151

NY Route 151 is a major collector road that extends west to Broadway in the City of Rensselaer and east to Route 150 in the Town of Schodack. The first section of Route 151 from 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Extension to Couse Corners, known as Red Mill Road, is a two-lane roadway with wide shoulders that can safely accommodate bicycle and pedestrian activity. From Couse Corners to Route 150 along Luther Road, the roadway transitions from a wide two-lane highway to a two-lane winding country road with narrow shoulders. The entirety of Route 151 is part of the NY State Designated Bike Route #5 which extends from New Lebanon in the east to Niagara Falls in the west. While Luther Road is part of this bike route, it poses safety challenges for bicyclists due to the narrow shoulders and blind curves along the roadway.

Past planning efforts for Route 151 have focused on improvements to pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular access as well as general safety improvements. The 2004 NYS Route 151 Corridor Study focused on the Luther Road area from Couse Corners to Columbia High School. The goal of the study was to identify recommendations that would improve pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular mobility in the corridor, with particular concern being pedestrian safety between the High School, Library and the YMCA.<sup>4</sup>

A significant amount of work has gone into the implementation of this plan since its development in 2004. Since that time, a roundabout was constructed at the Route 4 and Route 151 intersection. A sidewalk has also been constructed from Columbia High School along Luther Road to Route 4 creating an important

<sup>4</sup> NYS Route 151 Corridor Study, 2004

connection to the Couse Corners Roundabout. This sidewalk has improved walkability for those attending Columbia High School as well as those visiting the East Greenbush Public Library and YMCA.

### **Tempel Lane Corridor**

The expansion of Regeneron into the Tempel Lane area presents a number of challenges and opportunities for the Town. The project includes the construction of a new facility to support an expansion of its pharmaceutical manufacturing business, known as the Tempel Lane Campus. While the development of this campus on Tempel Lane is a significant change from the existing land use, major development here has been the subject of various planning initiatives over the last twenty years. This campus will also create significant changes to traffic flow through this area. Vehicular travel will increase due to the commutation of employees and there will be a significant increase in freight transport into and out of this area. A Traffic Impact Study (TIS) was developed in March 2018 which evaluated potential impacts to the transportation network and adjacent roadways. The TIS evaluated a number of intersections that may be impacted by the project and identified mitigation measures to reduce those impacts. Major impacts include a significant increase in vehicular and truck traffic on Tempel Lane and roads in proximity to the project and an overall decrease in the levels of service due to the increase in traffic. Mitigation includes the extension of Tempel Lane to 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Extension along the discontinued Town right-of-way and aligning with Cedar Crest Drive. This traffic mitigation effort also appears in the Mill Creek Commerce Park Planned Development District (PDD) State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) documentation, in the Tempel Farms PDD SEQRA documentation and in the 2009 Western East Greenbush Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (WGEIS).<sup>5</sup> This improvement is a necessary link to connect the Regeneron Project with the Tempel Farms PDD. Other traffic mitigation measures related to this project include:

- N.Y. Route 151/Tempel Lane Intersection - Monitor for the installation of a traffic signal (Phase I and Phase II). Construct an eastbound left-turn lane on N.Y. Route 151, a westbound right-turn lane on N.Y. Route 151 and a southbound left-turn lane on Tempel Lane (Phase III).
- U.S. Route 4/N.Y. Route 151 intersection - Expand the roundabout to two lanes northbound/southbound and modify the eastbound approach so that left turns can be made from both lanes (Phase III).
- U.S. Route 4/3rd Avenue Extension intersection - Optimize existing traffic signal timing (Phase III).
- U.S. Route 4/Grandview Drive intersection - Optimize existing traffic signal timing (Phase III).

<sup>5</sup> Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Tempel Lane Campus SEQR Findings: [https://www.eastgreenbush.org/application/files/8915/6294/2613/15-20\\_181120\\_Amended\\_Findings\\_Statement\\_11\\_12\\_18\\_4830-8386-6746\\_FINAL\\_SIGNED.pdf](https://www.eastgreenbush.org/application/files/8915/6294/2613/15-20_181120_Amended_Findings_Statement_11_12_18_4830-8386-6746_FINAL_SIGNED.pdf)



- U.S. Route 4/Hotel Access Road intersection - Construct a south-bound right-turn lane on US Route 4 (Phase III).
- 3rd Avenue Extension/Cedar Crest Drive/Tempel Lane intersection - Construct a two-way left turn lane for eastbound and westbound left-turn movements and provide a shared northbound left-turn/through lane and a separate right-turn lane. Monitor for the installation of a traffic signal (Phase III).
- Provide spot repairs on Tempel Lane from the Regeneron Site Driveway to N.Y. Route 151 where pavement is currently crumbling. (Phase I and Phase II).
- Provide a full depth pavement reclamation and/or new courses on Tempel Lane after build-out of the site and construction vehicles have finished using the road.
- Tempel Lane/Regeneron Site Driveway - Construct a southbound left turn lane.

### **Complete Streets**

Complete streets design is defined as roadway design features that accommodate and facilitate convenient access and mobility by all users, including current and projected users, particularly pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and individuals of all ages and abilities. Complete streets may also play a role in making a community healthier, reducing environmental impact, and leading to private investment in a corridor. The concept of Complete Streets encompasses many approaches to planning, designing, and operating roadways and rights of way with all users in mind to make the transportation network safer and more efficient. Complete Street policies are set at the state, regional, and local levels and are frequently supported by roadway design guidelines.

Several past planning efforts initiated by the Town have resulted in recommendations for a complete streets policy and design standards, including the 2006 Land Use Plan Update and Zoning Study, 2009 Western East Greenbush GEIS and the 2014 Corridor Plan and Design Guidelines for Columbia Turnpike and Troy Road.

In September 2018, the Town held a Complete Streets Implementation Workshop with support from CDTC, to inform the public and any interested stakeholders about Complete Streets. The workshop was focused on potential future project opportunities, design options and opportunities, and coordination opportunities developed through discussions with Town staff, and a review of prior studies.

In November 2019, the East Greenbush Town Board adopted a Complete Streets Policy which ensures that Town departments, including Planning and Zoning, and Public Works "shall consider the safe and efficient accommodation of bicyclists,

*pedestrians, transit users, and those involved in goods movement in all new street construction and street reconstruction undertaken by the Town of East Greenbush. In addition, where the need for bicyclist and pedestrian facilities has been established or is defined in Town planning documents, the Commissioner of Public Works shall consider the addition of safe bicyclist and pedestrian facilities in new street construction and street reconstruction undertaken by the Town of East Greenbush".<sup>6</sup>*

The guidelines recommended in the 2014 Corridor Plan and Design Guidelines described several elements that should be included when considering complete streets design for development and redevelopment projects. Those elements include:

- **Pedestrian and ADA Compliant Elements:** Sidewalks, crosswalks, curb ramps, accessible pedestrian signals, detectable tactile cues and warnings, and longer walk intervals at traffic signals.
- **Bicycle Elements:** Bicycle routes and lanes, signage and pavement markings, and bicycle racks.
- **Streetscape Elements:** Street trees, landscaping, rain gardens, permeable paving material and buffers between vehicles and people
- **Traffic Calming and Access Management:** Intersection bump-outs, curb extensions, textured material and center refuge islands. Driveway consolidations, modifications and closures and shared site access.
- **Transit and Parking Elements:** Accessible bus stops, shelters and pull-outs integrated with pedestrian enhancements. Delineated on-street parking spaces and curb/sidewalk bump-outs.

Complete streets guidelines should incorporate green infrastructure into the planning and design of new streets and street improvements. Green infrastructure uses natural design features to reduce stormwater runoff, promote infiltration and treat water quality. Many green infrastructure practices can be incorporated into the design of street and sidewalk improvements and may include bioretention basins, rain gardens, stormwater planters and pervious pavement materials. As a community with a municipal separate storm sewer system, incorporating green infrastructure into capital improvement projects also helps the Town meet the requirements of its MS4 Permit as require by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.

<sup>6</sup> Town of East Greenbush Resolution 243-2019, "A Resolution Adopting a Complete Streets Policy for the Town of East Greenbush"

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The following actions are intended to achieve the goals and vision of the community when implemented. The number associated with each action is for identification purposes and does not indicate a prioritization of recommendations.

- C1. Identify and develop new town-wide connections to help alleviate traffic pressures along Route 4 and connect the town's major nodes and destinations.
- C2. Work with the Capital District Transportation Authority to expand public transit options along Route 9 and 20 and Route 4 to help alleviate traffic and offer transportation alternatives for residents.
- C3. Provide alternatives for pedestrians including trail, sidewalks, and appropriate road crossings at intersections.
- C4. Infill missing sidewalk gaps and provide new sidewalk connections, particularly along Columbia Turnpike and Route 4, to link residential neighborhoods with schools, library and commercial establishments. The Town should also ensure that long-term maintenance costs and resources are factored into future sidewalk infrastructure investments.
- C5. Prioritize bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in future transportation improvement plans at local, county and state levels.
- C6. Leverage the investment in the Albany Hudson Electric Trail by identifying opportunities to create connections to the trail which can act as a key "artery".
- C7. Create pedestrian linkages between core activity centers such as residential areas, schools and businesses.
- C8. Standardize the approach to new roadway construction in Town to achieve community goals, reduce risk to the land development community, and ensure cost efficiency of installed infrastructure by, for example, adopting road standards and/or evaluating existing local codes.
- C9. Work with neighboring municipalities and CDTC to address vehicular traffic congestion and improve operations and reliability along Route 4 from a regional approach.
- C10. Implement a Safe Route to School program, which enables community leaders, schools and parents to improve safety and encourage more children to safely walk and bike to school. More information is available at [www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org).
- C11. Develop a program to fund regular maintenance of sidewalk infrastructure.



- C12. Use traffic calming measures to encourage walking and biking and improve safety. (e.g landscape medians, pavement treatments, bike lanes or sharrows, street trees and planters)
- C13. Coordinate transportation investments to support preferred land uses.
- C14. Consider new transportation modes in street improvements, such as electric cars, scooters, bike share, and connected and automated vehicles.
- C15. Incorporate green infrastructure as part of the Town's Complete Streets program, including porous pavement treatments, street trees, rain gardens, bioswales and other techniques.
- C16. Work to address existing drainage and MS4 issues as part of capital upgrades and proposed land development projects.
- C17. Develop Complete Streets Design Guidelines as part of the Town's Complete Streets Policy to ensure a consistent look and feel along the Town's roads.





VI.

# Neighborhoods and Housing

East  
Greenbush

Our Vision. Our Community.





## SECTION SIX – NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING

### Guiding Principle:

*Preserve the character of existing neighborhoods and historic hamlets while creating new quality housing options. Provide housing options to attract new community members that may work in town or surrounding communities and retain existing residents while providing housing opportunities for residents of all ages.*

### Goals:

- Provide a variety of housing options that are available to a range of income levels.
- Provide a variety housing options that meet the needs of multiple generations.
- Preserve and Enhance the character of existing neighborhoods and historic hamlets.



### OVERVIEW

The character and sense of place in East Greenbush are derived primarily from the unique and distinct neighborhoods of the Town. Many of these neighborhoods represent the historic settlement patterns of the Town and include such neighborhoods and hamlets as Hampton Manor, Clinton Heights, Couse Corners, Luther, Best and East Greenbush.

Over the last 10-15 years, the national and regional housing market has trended towards multi-family housing development while single-family detached housing has slowed. The quality and types of housing available in a community can have a significant impact on how the community functions. Communities with more single-family development may see a higher percentage of families with children, while renter-occupied multi-family units may trend towards young professionals and empty nesters.. Housing type can also have an impact on land use patterns and demographics as well. For example, multi-family residential units typically result in a higher population density. When located near a commercial center, a higher population density can help support local businesses and helps support public transportation options. Housing affordability is also a key factor that impacts the wellbeing of a community.

Housing data from the U.S. Census Bureau was analyzed over a series of time utilizing data from the 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census and American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. This includes current information about the Town's housing stock compared with neighboring communities. The neighboring communities that were included as part of this analysis include the Towns of North Greenbush, Sand Lake, Schodack, Bethlehem and City of Rensselaer. An overview of regional trends in the Capital Region and Rensselaer County was also explored as well as relevant housing related recommendations from past planning efforts.



### Residential Housing Units Over Time

As of 2018, the Town of East Greenbush had a total 7,217 housing units which represents a 15% increase in total units since the year 2000<sup>1</sup>. When compared to neighboring communities, East Greenbush was neither the highest nor lowest rate of increase in total housing units during that time. The Town of Schodack had the lowest increase in total housing units at 9%, while the City of Rensselaer had the highest increase in units at 26%. In terms of total units, the Town of Bethlehem had the highest number of housing units in 2018 at 14,830, followed by East Greenbush at 7,217 and Schodack at 5,394 units. Overall, East Greenbush developed housing units at a higher rate than Rensselaer County which experienced an increase in units by 10% during the same time period.

**Table 1: Total Housing Units 2000-2018**

	2000	2010	2018	% Change
Town of East Greenbush	6,281	7,006	7,217	15%
Town of North Greenbush	4,336	5,103	5,203	20%
Town of Sand Lake	3,277	3,673	3,713	13%
Town of Schodack	4,942	5,372	5,394	9%
Town of Bethlehem	12,459	14,029	14,830	19%
City of Rensselaer	3,713	4,695	4,684	26%
Rensselaer County	66,120	71,475	72,852	10%

Source: Decennial Census, 2000, 2010; American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2018

### Housing Type

Housing types are categorized based on the number of units in a residential building. This includes a single unit, both detached and attached, 2-units, 3-4-units and 5 or more units. The type of housing available can impact how the residential needs of the community are accommodated. American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates were utilized to examine housing types in East Greenbush from 2010 to 2018. It is important to note that these are estimates and not exact counts. The information gathered should be utilized to provide an overall representation of the type of residential development that occurred in the Town over a certain period of time and not an exact number of units of each housing type.

In the eight-year period from 2010 to 2018, multi-family buildings with two units increased by 20%. This is the highest rate of increase during this time period followed by buildings with 5-units or more at 9% and single-family, detached units at 7%. During this time period buildings with 3 or 4 units decreased by 36%.

<sup>1</sup> Decennial Census, 2000, 2010; American Community Survey 2018 5-Year Estimates

**Table 2: East Greenbush Housing Types 2010-2018**

	2010	2018	% Change 2010-2018
<b>1-Unit, Detached</b>	4,597	4,900	7%
<b>1-Unit, Attached</b>	618	615	-0.5%
<b>2-Units</b>	318	381	20%
<b>3 or 4 Units</b>	278	177	-36%
<b>5 Units or More</b>	1,042	1,139	9%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010, 2018

### Housing Tenure

Housing tenure describes renter and homeowner-occupied housing units. In 2018, 76% of occupied housing units in East Greenbush were owner-occupied and 24% were renter-occupied. East Greenbush has a higher rate of owner-occupied units and a lower number of renter-occupied units compared to Rensselaer County. East Greenbush is similar in housing tenure to neighboring towns like Bethlehem, Schodack and North Greenbush. The only neighboring community to have more renter-occupied units than owner-occupied is the City of Rensselaer. However, urban areas commonly have more rental units available than homeowner-occupied units.

**Table 3: Housing Tenure 2018**

	Owner Occupied Units	Renter Occupied Units
<b>Town of East Greenbush</b>	76%	24%
<b>Town of North Greenbush</b>	71%	29%
<b>Town of Sand Lake</b>	88%	12%
<b>Town of Schodack</b>	79%	21%
<b>Town of Bethlehem</b>	75%	25%
<b>City of Rensselaer</b>	39%	61%
<b>Rensselaer County</b>	63%	37%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2018

### Housing Affordability

Housing affordability is a complex issue that many communities across the country continue to try and address. In today's world, many segments of the population face challenges making ends meet and paying for housing related costs. It is not only low-income workers who face affordability challenges. It is also young professionals with student debt and seniors on fixed incomes.

Affordable housing includes many different housing types and may include workforce housing or subsidized housing. Workforce housing refers to housing that is affordable to the average worker. This may include owner or renter-occupied housing units and can be located in single-family or multi-family units.

The Federal Housing and Urban Development Department guidelines for affordability is that housing costs should consume no more than 30% of household income. Households spending more than 30% of their income on housing are considered cost-burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care.<sup>2</sup>

The following table shows the percentage of households spending 30% or more of their household income on monthly housing costs. This has been separated into three categories, including Owner-Occupied with a Mortgage, Owner-Occupied without a Mortgage and Renter Occupied units. In 2018 25% of owner-occupied units with a mortgage and 7% of owner-occupied units without a mortgage were spending 30% or more of their household income on monthly housing costs. At this time, 41% of renter occupied households were spending 30% or more of their household income on monthly housing costs. When compared to other peer communities and Rensselaer County as a whole, East Greenbush has a similar breakdown of housing affordability

	Table 4: Percent Households Spending 30% or More on Monthly Housing Costs		
	Owner Occupied with Mortgage	Owner Occupied without Mortgage	Renter Occupied
Town of East Greenbush	25%	7%	41%
Town of North Greenbush	23%	13%	39%
Town of Sand Lake	23%	13%	40%
Town of Schodack	21%	7%	38%
Town of Bethlehem	20%	10%	44%
City of Rensselaer	13%	15%	46%
Rensselaer County	25%	13%	47%

Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, 2018

<sup>2</sup> Capital Region Indicators, CDRPC 2016



## HOUSING TRENDS

### Capital Region Trends

The Town of East Greenbush is influenced by trends in housing both locally and across the Capital Region. The Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC) provides yearly updates of building permit activity and housing market trends for the Capital Region. This information can help to provide context for individual municipalities to gain a better understanding of what is taking place in and around their communities.

In both the Capital Region and across the Country, both sales and inventory of existing homes are down. Over the last few years, a lack of home inventory has led to high home prices and fewer homes available on the market. This type of trend makes it more difficult for first-time home buyers to purchase a home. The lower inventories and increased demand for homes may increase demand for new residential construction in the region.

According to the most recent data provided by CDRPC, there was a slight decrease in building permit issuance and a decline in the share of multi-family permits issued from 2017 to 2018 across the Capital Region. Overall, permit issuance, particularly for multi-family permits, have continued to decline since a 15-year high in 2015. Since 2012 single-family permit issuance has increased by 7.8%. While overall permit issuance is below levels seen in the early 2000s, current levels are still higher than in the early 2010s.<sup>3</sup>

When evaluated by county, Rensselaer County issued the smallest number of building permits from 2007-2018 when compared with Saratoga, Albany and Schenectady Counties. During this time Rensselaer County made up 11.8% of the total share of building permit issuance in the four-county Capital Region. Of that, 7.1% were single-family and 4.7% were multi-family.

### Generational Trends

Beyond trends in the regional housing market, communities should take into consideration the needs of individuals and families across generations. Different age cohorts may seek different types of housing depending on family size, employment, or lifestyle. According to 2015 National Association of Realtors survey, young professionals and baby boomers desire similar amenities and housing types.<sup>4</sup> Communities that succeed in attracting and retaining these groups are ones that focus on the quality of place and access to amenities. This includes access to restaurants, shops within walking distance, entertainment and public transportation. Those in the baby boomer generation may be empty nesters looking to downsize from a large single-family home to a more maintenance-free lifestyle. Young professionals may be looking for transitional housing while saving

<sup>3</sup> Capital District Regional Planning Commission, 2018 Building Permit Update

<sup>4</sup> American Planning Association PAS Report: "Downtown Revitalization in Small and Mid-sized Cities"

to buy a home or start a family. A community should include a range of housing options that allow individuals and families to remain in the community through each stage of their lives.

Housing in East Greenbush is primarily oriented towards single-family, owner-occupied units. There are some areas of multi-family, apartments, and senior living communities, and most of these housing options are not located within walking distance to commercial and activity centers. There are significant opportunities to attract and retain young professionals and baby boomers in East Greenbush by providing additional housing opportunities in key locations of town.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

A significant challenge related to neighborhoods and housing in East Greenbush is the preservation of existing character that the community wishes to retain. This is particularly evident in the rural areas of Town east of I-90, east of Route 9J and along Ridge Road. These areas of Town are characterized by low density residential lands, scenic views, rolling hills, active agriculture and areas of ecological importance. A lack of water and sewer infrastructure has helped to preserve this character, but some development has occurred over the last several decades. In the future, a focus on preservation of these areas should be a priority and any development that does occur should not impede with the rural character of the Town.

Maintaining and upgrading the Town's older housing stock is another challenge to consider, particularly in historic neighborhoods, such as Hampton Manor. Maintaining the Town's older housing stock helps to preserve the character of neighborhoods, enhance property values and ensure quality housing opportunities for new and existing Town residents.

Opportunities exist for higher density residential and mixed-use development along the U.S. Route 9 and 20 corridor in key locations in proximity to businesses and services. Higher density housing options are critical for supporting walkable commercial centers and to justify the need for increased public transportation service. Senior housing should also be prioritized in higher density areas that are walkable to nearby services.

The population of the Town has increased by approximately 16.5% over the last 30 years. During that same time, major employers like Regeneron have continued to expand and locate in East Greenbush. As the population continues to increase and major employers expand, housing options will need to diversify to meet the needs of a residents of all ages, income levels and lifestyles. To ensure that the needs of existing and future residents are being met, a variety of housing options will be necessary, including affordable, workforce and market rate housing.

Workforce housing is a type of housing that is affordable for middle income earners and may include such professions as police officers, firefighters, teachers,

health care workers, retail clerks, etc. Over the last 20 years, wage stagnation combined with an increased cost of living has led to challenges of housing affordability for middle income earners that may not qualify for subsidized housing.

There are opportunities to diversify housing in East Greenbush by focusing on the development of mixed-use activity nodes in key locations in the Town. Mixed-use activity nodes may include a mix of retail, commercial, medium to higher-density residential and offices in a compact, walkable area with multi-modal transportation options. This type of development not only creates new housing opportunities, it also helps to support and build the local economy. Higher density mixed use zones help to create a sense of place and can become a catalyst to spur business growth and creates a critical mass of people needed to support public transportation options. The ideal location for these mixed-use activity nodes in East Greenbush are along U.S. Routes 9 and 20 and U.S. Route 4. These corridors contain the necessary infrastructure needed for additional growth, are located along existing public transit routes, and are primary gateways into the community.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The following actions are intended to achieve the goals and vision of the community when implemented. The number associated with each action is for identification purposes and does not indicate a prioritization of recommendations.

- D1. Extend the pattern of existing residential neighborhoods in adjoining new residential development.
- D2. Create a mix of high-quality residential development in town, with diverse offerings for families and households of all sizes, ages and abilities.
- D3. Model new neighborhoods upon pedestrian friendly, traditional neighborhood patterns that include appropriate public amenities.
- D4. Ensure new residential development is located in areas with existing sewer and water infrastructure and designed with connected streets and cross-connections to ensure adequate circulation.
- D5. Actively pursue enhancement, revitalization and reinvestment in existing neighborhoods, particularly the older, more established neighborhoods of town, such as those located along Route 9 & 20.
- D6. Attract high quality housing project proposals offering contemporary amenities and conveniences attractive to people of all ages, such as maintenance-free amenities, multi-modal transportation options, alternative energy solutions, and integration of natural resource feature protection into development plans, and ensure these land development projects are constructed to Town requirements.



- D7. Establish a housing program to update and improve existing homes, particularly in historic areas to maintain the stability of neighborhoods.
- D8. Encourage higher density housing options and senior housing in key areas along Route 9 and 20 in proximity to services and local businesses.
- D9. Use zoning as a tool to incentivize a diverse housing stock. This may include inclusionary zoning, density bonuses and streamlined development review to maintain and increase housing diversity, promote mixed-income neighborhoods and make homeownership more affordable by reducing development costs.
- D10. Use building and zoning code enforcement to improve housing quality.
- D11. Encourage a diversity of housing options that creates opportunities for residents at different stages of life. (e.g. students, couples, families with children, seniors, etc.)
- D12. Encourage developers to design senior housing that is integrated into existing neighborhoods.
- D13. Provide opportunities for assisted living, supportive housing and shared services where appropriate.
- D14. Adopt design guidelines focused on scale, design and density to ensure that new housing is sensitive to surrounding neighborhood context.
- D15. Utilize energy-efficiency and renewable energy technologies in construction and rehabilitation projects to reduce the Town's greenhouse gas emissions, and as a means of increasing the long-term affordability of housing.
- D16. Identify alternative housing types that allow increased densities, while limiting neighborhood impacts.





## VII. Recreation



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## SECTION SEVEN – RECREATION

### Guiding Principle:

*Expand inclusive passive and active recreational spaces and programming of all scales throughout the Town. Create gathering places and activity centers which foster community-oriented activities and pride in the Town.*

### Goals:

- Expand active and passive recreation opportunities for the health and enjoyment of all residents and visitors.
- Maintain and upgrade existing parks and recreational facilities.
- Create or pursue recreation opportunities which connect residents and foster community engagement and identity



### RECREATION

### OVERVIEW

Recreation amenities in Town consist of a mix of Town-owned areas as well as those provided by other organizations. The Town itself owns and operates six public recreation areas and provides multi-function space at Town Hall. In addition, local schools also contribute facilities. The Department of Public Works maintains the parks and other Town facilities while the Community and Recreational Services Department provides recreational programming opportunities to youth and senior residents. Long range planning for the Town's parks and recreational resources is guided by a Town wide Parks and Recreation Master Plan that was first adopted in 2002 and most recently updated in 2017.

The Town owns and operates the following parks and recreational facilities:

- **East Greenbush Town Park** – Located on Town Park Road, East Greenbush Town Park is a scenic 120-acre park with a pond that opens to the Moordener Kill. The park offers trails for biking, hiking and cross-country skiing in the winter. Other offerings include scenic waterfalls, a fenced in dog park, baseball field, basketball court, and playground. The dammed Moordener Kill was used for a swimming area until 2009 when it was closed due to an E.coli contamination from an unknown source. On the northern edge of the park on Luther Road is the Jaime M. Adams Field, home of the Capital Region Miracle League and the first multi-sport facility in the United States designed specifically for special needs athletes. The field opened in 2009 and was designed to easily accommodate special needs athletes with wheelchairs, walkers and other physically assistive devices. The Red Barn facility was completed and opened in October 2017. The construction of the facility was funded through a recreation fee from developers through the WGEIS. The Community and Recreational Services Department rents the building year-

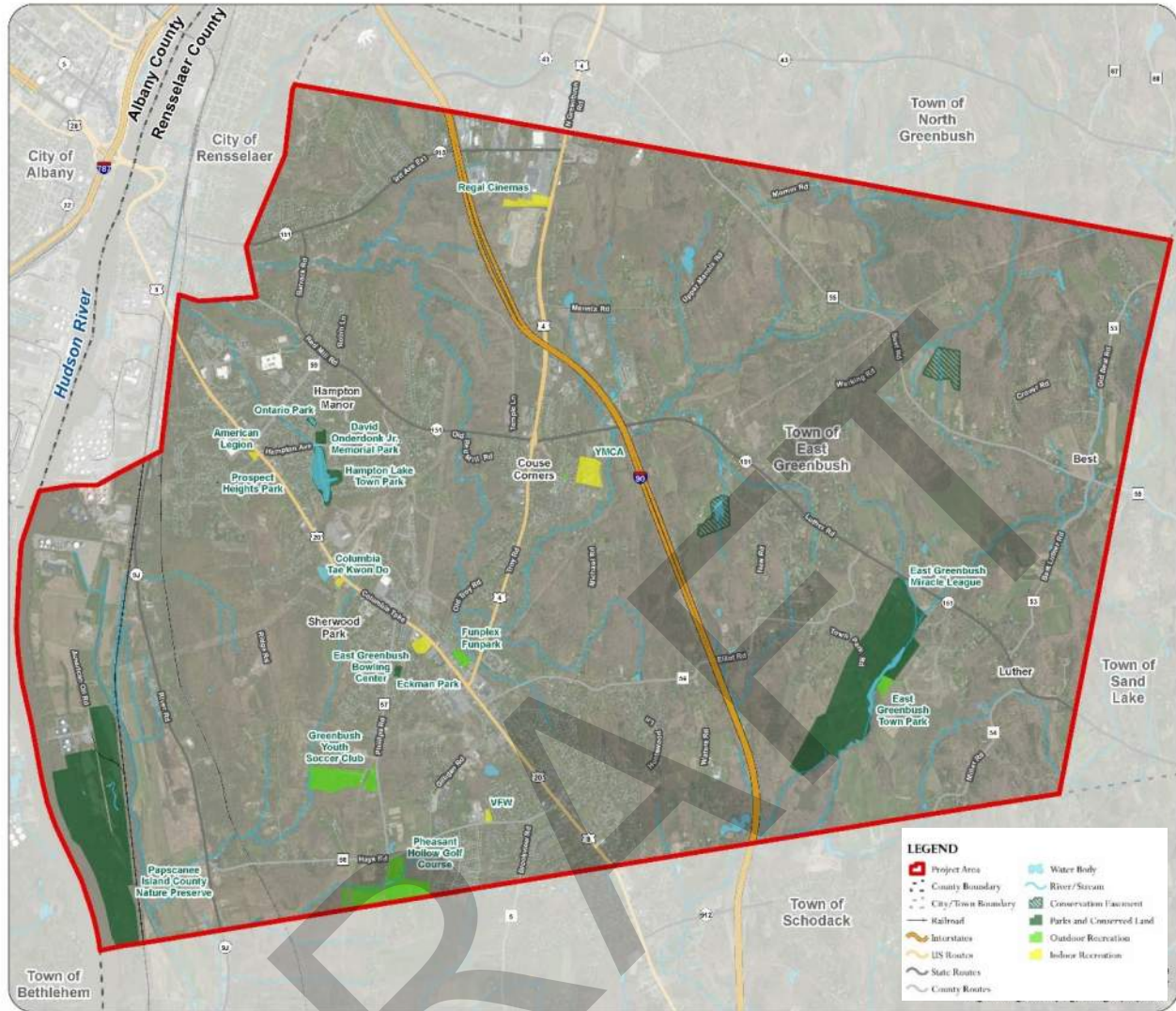


round and offers a large community gathering space with kitchen space, WiFi connection, projector and screen and surround sound.

- **David Onderdonk Jr. Memorial Park** – David Onderdonk Jr. Memorial Park is located off Hampton Avenue and contains a putting green, shuffleboard court, horseshoes, two bocce courts and a pavilion with restrooms. This is the newest park that has been opened by the Town.
- **Hampton Manor Park** – Hampton Manor Park is located off Lake Shore Drive and offers beachfront access to Hampton Manor Lake. The park contains two asphalt tennis courts, a basketball court, playground equipment, bathrooms and a small gazebo for residents. In the winter the frozen lake can be used for ice skating but due to algae growth residents can no longer swim.
- **Woodlands Eckman Park** – Woodlands Eckman Park is a small park on Philips Avenue with two fenced in tennis courts, a paved basketball court, playground equipment and open lawn area.
- **Prospect Heights Park** – Prospect Heights Park is located between Neptune Street and Highland Street and offers a single basketball court and greenspace in a residential community.
- **Ontario Park** – Ontario Park is located between New York Avenue and New Jersey Avenue and offers a small single Basketball court with adjacent picnic space. Historically, the park area contained a small pond that served as a water source for the East Greenbush Cantonment, the headquarters for the American Army Division of the North during the War of 1812.

The Open Space Institute (OSI) and Rensselaer County own and manage the Papscanee Island Nature Preserve, a 150-acre preserve located in the western part of the Town along the Hudson river. This is an important ecological and recreational resource that offers access to the Hudson River and opportunities for hiking and other passive recreational activities.

Map 3: Parks and Recreation



## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The parks and recreational resources in East Greenbush present a number of opportunities that contribute to the quality of life in the Town. The Town's parks along with other resources like the Papscanee Island Nature Preserve and private recreational facilities create significant opportunities for residents, but also serve as an attraction for outside visitors and those looking to relocate to East Greenbush. Parks and recreation are essential public services because they provide economic value, health and environmental benefits and social importance. Local property values tend to increase when located near parks and recreational facilities and the preserved land associated with parks provides a number of environmental benefits including stormwater retention, groundwater recharge and can greatly improve local air quality.

A challenge identified by the public is that there are no swimming opportunities available in East Greenbush. The lake at the Town Park and Hampton Manor Lake used to be open to the public for swimming, but water quality issues have led to the closure of these facilities.

Another key challenge in East Greenbush and many other communities is ensuring that recreational resources in Town are accessible to people of all ages and abilities. Improving accessibility ensures that all members of the community can enjoy the amenities that the Town has to offer. This may include improve walkways with consideration given to slope and paving material, facilities that can accommodate wheelchairs, adequate handicapped parking and accessible picnic facilities among other techniques.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- E1. Implement recommendations from the Town of East Greenbush 2017 Amenities Plan and continue to update the Amenities Plan as projects are completed and new needs are identified.
- E2. Work in cooperation with future development projects to establish a larger Town-wide multi-use path and trail network which will eventually link many neighborhoods and destinations together for walking, biking, jogging or cross-country skiing.
- E3. Continue to work with residents in Hampton Lake neighborhood to identify a pedestrian loop path around the lake.
- E4. Work with property owners in key areas such as Tempel Lane and along the Hudson River to develop plans which integrate attractive public spaces, walking paths or other recreational activities for the enjoyment of all.
- E5. Improve and increase outdoor recreation opportunities and access to natural and scenic areas Town-wide.



- E6. Consider expanding recreational programming and the addition of staff to support programs.
- E7. Establish or expand partnerships, such as the East Greenbush Youth Baseball League, the Girl Scouts, YMCA, East Greenbush Library and East Greenbush Central School District to expand recreational opportunities.
- E8. Maintain and enhance existing Town-owned recreation facilities.
- E9. Carefully consider and strategically develop new recreational opportunities.
- E10. Update Town-wide Parks and Recreation Master Plan to evaluate recreation needs and incorporate into Amenities Plan.
- E11. Improve connections between neighborhoods and recreation locations.





# VIII. Natural Resources, Agriculture and the Environment

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## SECTION EIGHT – NATURAL RESOURCES, AGRICULTURE & THE ENVIRONMENT

### Guiding Principle:

*Embrace, promote and celebrate important natural resources. Maintain and improve water and air quality as well as wildlife habitat. Support active farms, agribusiness, and agritourism.*

### Goals:

- Preserve and protect key natural resources.
- Protect farmland and support an agricultural economy.



### NATURAL RESOURCES, AGRICULTURE & THE ENVIRONMENT

### OVERVIEW

The natural setting of East Greenbush is one of its greatest assets and has enticed many people to live in Town. Scenic views rolling hills, streams and river access, forests and farmland are just some of the Town's many natural assets.

### Natural Resources and the Environment

The Town has completed a Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) which was formally adopted by the Town Board in June 2019. The project was a collaborative effort carried out through a partnership with Cornell University and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Hudson River Estuary Program with funding from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund. The information presented below is a summary of information from the NRI report.

### Topography

The Town of East Greenbush has a maximum elevation of 672 feet in the northeast corner of the Town and decreases to an elevation at sea level on the western boundary of the Town along the Hudson River. Topography has historically been a defining feature of the development of the Town and changes drastically from the rolling hills in the eastern part of the Town to the low-lying marshy areas in the western part of the Town.

The area along Route 9J is generally flat and marshy with elevations from sea level to approximately 10 feet. East of 9J, the land rises abruptly and in many areas, exceeds a slope of 20%. Continuing east in the area along the Columbia Turnpike, the land is more level and forms a plateau with elevations ranging from 200-300 feet. This area of Town is generally the best suited for development and was historically and still is where most of the population resides. The eastern part of the Town rises to elevations over 600 feet with many areas of steep slopes and is less suitable for development.

The elevation of the Town affects the layout of site improvements, stormwater drainage, and the suitability of land that can be developed. Low-lying areas can



be prone to flooding, and understanding the absolute elevation as well as elevation change across a site can provide insight into the potential for the existence of floodplains, wetlands, and other sensitive environmental features. Disturbance of areas with steep slopes is regulated under the Town's Comprehensive Zoning Law and Subdivision Regulations.

Within East Greenbush, the steep bluffs east of Route 9J and ravines located in the northwest corner of the Town bordering the City of Rensselaer may be vulnerable to landslides. Land disturbance to steep slopes with lacustrine glacial deposits should be avoided when planning and permitting new development in the Town.

## **Geology and Soils**

### *Geology*

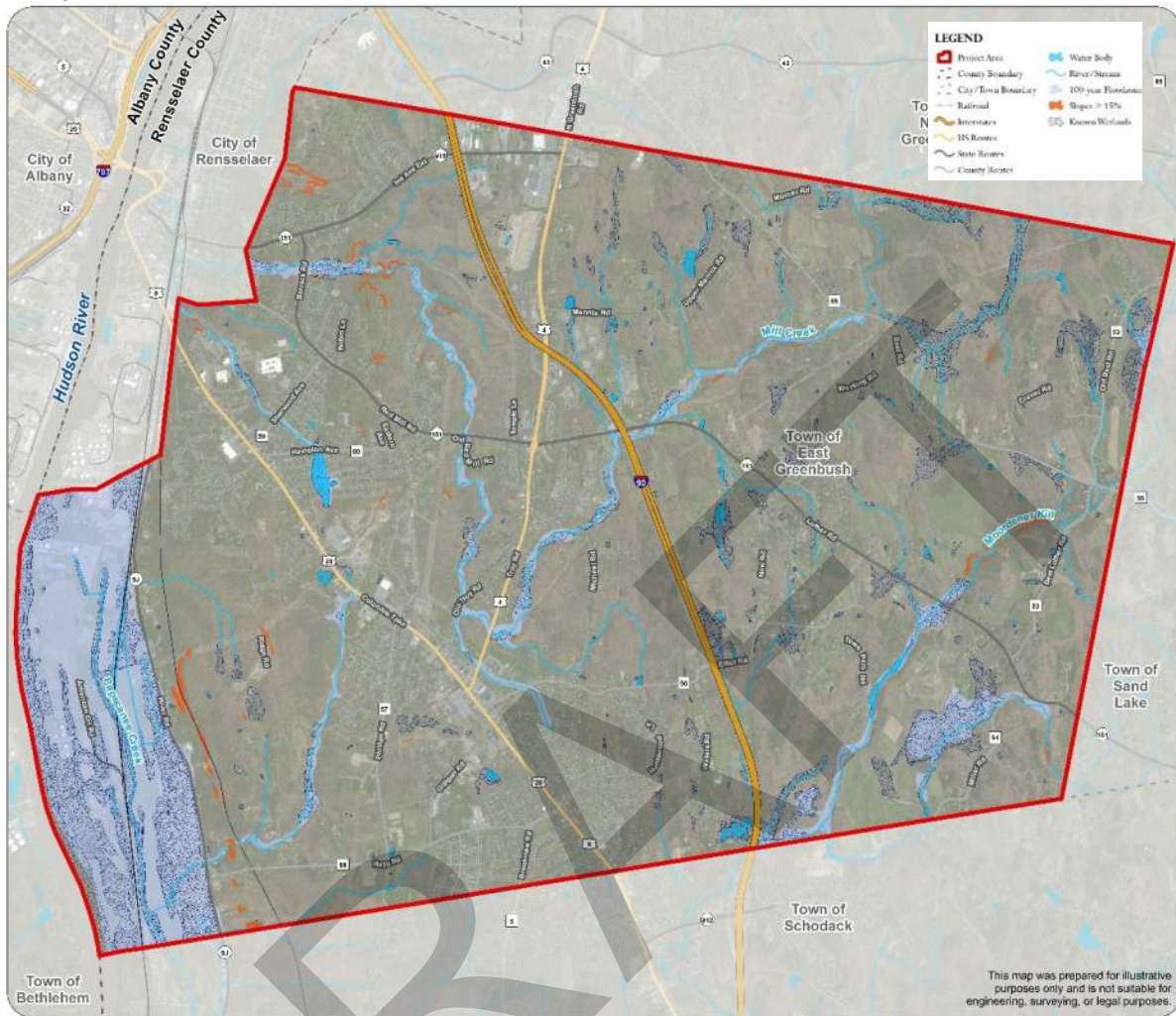
The eastern and western portions of the Town are roughly divided into two bedrock groups. Underlying the eastern portion of Town are the remnants of ancient mountains and glacial till with a mixture of metamorphic and sedimentary rock types. Underlying the western part of Town is a foundation of sedimentary rock which are remnants of an ancient seabed.

The surficial geology of East Greenbush largely reflects the retreat of glaciers following the last ice age. Glacial ice, as much as 5,000 feet thick, scoured the landscape and deposited boulders, sand, and gravel in its path. The eastern part of Town is dominated by glacial till with a mix of sand, gravel and boulders.

The geological features of East Greenbush are significant because the underlying bedrock and surficial geology impact the location and types of development that can occur in terms of slopes and ground stability to support structures. The geology of an area also impacts the location of major aquifers and groundwater availability. This is particularly important for areas of Town that are not connected to the public water system and rely on private wells.



Map 4: Environmental Resources



### *Soils*

Soils are the foundation for both the establishment of natural communities and for determining suitability for land uses including agricultural uses and the types of development that can occur. Consideration of soil properties is important for planning and designing drainage systems; siting of structures; evaluating the potential for septic systems; assessing requirements for constructing foundations, basements, and roads; and determining the feasibility of excavation; among other uses.

The Town of East Greenbush has an abundance of prime agricultural soils, particularly in the areas along Columbia Turnpike, Route 4, Route 9J and scattered across the eastern portion of Town. Prime agricultural lands also tend to be prime lands for development. Much of the land where these soils are located have been developed for residential and commercial uses.

For a full description of soils in East Greenbush, refer to the Natural Resources Inventory in **Appendix xx**.

## **Water Resources**

### *Surface Water*

Surface waters include all streams lakes rivers and tributaries that make up a particular watershed. All land within East Greenbush ultimately drains to the Hudson River Estuary. Key surface water resources in East Greenbush include:

Mill Creek – Mill Creek enters East Greenbush from the Town of North Greenbush and flows southwesterly near U.S. Routes 9 & 20 and then turns northerly before draining into the Hudson River. The Mill Creek watershed drains 11.7 square miles in the center of the Town and is classified as a C(TS) stream, capable of trout spawning.

North Branch Moordener Kill – The North Branch Moordener Kill enters East Greenbush along the eastern boundary of the Town at the Hamlet of Best and flows southeast before entering the Town of Schodack where it enters the Hudson River. This stream drains five square miles of land and is classified as a C(T) stream, capable of supporting a trout population.

Hudson River – The Hudson River is the largest water resource in the Town of East Greenbush. The river forms the western border of the Town from the border with the Town of Schodack to the City of Rensselaer.

Papscanee Creek-Hudson River Watershed – The Papscanee Creek-Hudson River watershed drains 6.9 miles of land from U.S. Route 9 & 20 westward to the Hudson River. Papscanee Creek is a tidally influenced creek that flows from the eastern shore of the Hudson River and forms the marsh habitat and island that provides habitat for man plant and animal species.

Quackenderry Creek-Hudson River Watershed – The Quackenberry Creek flows near the northwest portion of the Town along the border with the City of



Rensselaer. While the creek does not flow directly within the Town, much of the watershed lies within the Town.

Hampton Manor Lake – Hampton Manor Lake is a man-made lake, 11.7 acres in size. The lake is an important scenic and recreational resource for residents and accepts runoff from the surrounding areas and provides habitat. The lake is primarily spring-fed and is classified as a class C waterbody.

Understanding surface water resources is critical to land use decision making and development considerations. Development can lead to an increase in impervious service cover, resulting in an increase in stormwater runoff, flooding and water pollution.

#### *Groundwater*

The Town shares a major aquifer with the Town of Schodack known as the Schodack Terrace and runs primarily along the Moordener Kill near the Town's eastern border and along both sides of Routes 9 & 20, south of Route 4. The southern section of this aquifer where it crosses I-90 is classified as high yield (>100 gallons/minute), while the more developed portion of the aquifer is classified as low yield (<10 gallons/minute). Another major high yield aquifer is located between Route 9J and the Hudson River and runs from the City of Rensselaer south to the Town of Schodack.

All properties located outside of the East Greenbush General Water District rely on individual private wells, drawing from aquifers and other groundwater sources. There is a single active public water supply in East Greenbush serving facilities at the Town Park located on Town Park Road.

#### *Floodplains and Drainage*

Floodplains are low-lying areas, often next to streams and rivers, which are inundated during heavy precipitation or snowmelt. Flooding is a natural process and is one way that rivers and streams react to an increase in water and provides the space needed to expand and recede. Building in flood plains increases the risk of property damage and loss of life and should be avoided when planning for future development. If development in a floodplain cannot be avoided, measures should be taken to mitigate potential damage.

In East Greenbush, streams east of Route 4 and north of U.S. Routes 9 & 20 are mostly in rural areas where there has been less development in the floodplains. In other areas of the Town, the streams are in narrow valleys and the floodplains are mostly narrow and close to the stream bed. The exception to this is the Hudson River-Papscanee Creek floodplain, which is covered by the "100-year" floodplain from Route 9J to the river. The Town's floodplain management law meets the NFIP requirements and gives the Town's code enforcement office the authority to regulate floodplain development.

### *Wetlands*

Wetlands are areas saturated by surface or groundwater sufficient to support distinctive vegetation adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. There are many types of freshwater wetlands in East Greenbush, including wet meadows, emergent marsh, forested and shrub swamps, vernal pools, floating and submerged vegetation, and open water.

Wetlands at Papscanee Island and Creek are both freshwater and tidal and are considered to be globally rare. In addition to providing critical habitat for many plants and animals, wetlands help to control flooding and reduce damage from storm surge, recharge groundwater, filter and purify surface water, and provide recreation opportunities. The upland area surrounding a wetland is essential to its survival and function; both may diminish when a wetland is surrounded by pavement, buildings, and pollution-generating or other incompatible land uses. Wetlands are found throughout the Town, but primarily located along the Papscanne Creek in the western area of Town, and along Mill Creek and the Moordener Kill.

### **Agriculture**

Agriculture played a significant role in the development of East Greenbush through the early-to-mid-20th century. Just before and after World War II, rapid growth took place along the Town's major transportation corridors, including the Columbia Turnpike and later, Route 4 and Interstate 90. Although much of the agricultural land in the Town has been developed for commercial and residential uses, the Town still retains much of the rural character of its agrarian past. Several farm operations still exist today which contributes to the local economy and help maintain the community's rural character.

Currently, there are two areas in the Town zoned as Agricultural-Residential Districts (A-R) in the East Greenbush Comprehensive Zoning Law where agricultural land uses are permitted by right. These zoning districts are located along Route 9J in the eastern portion of the Town and on Best Luther Rd in the western portion of the Town. There are several other farms throughout the Town including areas along Philip's Road, Best Road, Columbia Turnpike and Route 151. Many of these farms are located within Rensselaer County Agricultural Districts, including District 6 and District 2. The County Agricultural Districts were established to protect and promote the availability of land for farming purposes. The ability for counties to establish agricultural districts originates from the New York Agricultural Districts law, Article 25-AA of the Agriculture and Markets Law, enacted by the State Legislature in 1971. The law provides for a locally initiated mechanism at the county level in the creation, modification and approval of Agricultural Districts.

East Greenbush has prioritized the protection of the farming industry by adopting the Town of East Greenbush Agricultural Economic Development Plan Right to Farm Law (Right to Farm Law) in 2005. The purpose of the law is to maintain and preserve the rural traditions and character of the Town, to protect the existence

and operation of farms and to encourage the initiation and expansion of farms and agri-businesses. The law protects farmers and the farming industry by limiting the circumstances under which farming may be deemed to be nuisance and to allow agricultural practices inherent to and necessary for the business of farming to proceed and be undertaken free of reasonable and unwarranted interference or restriction.

The following is a list of agricultural resources and active farms in East Greenbush:

**Becker's Farm and Garden Center** – Becker's Farm and Garden Center is located at 420 Columbia Turnpike and has been an operating family farm since 1875. The farm has two state of the art greenhouses with computer enhanced environmental controls and computer assisted watering. The total growing area of all greenhouses is currently 75,000 square feet with an additional 35, 000 square feet of outside growing area.

**Best Berry Farm** – Best Berry Farm is a family owned farm established in 1979, specializing in jams, flowers, and berries and is located at 1078 Best Road.

**East Greenbush Library/Greenbush YMCA Farmer's Market** – The Farmer's Market is located in the parking lot between the East Greenbush Community Library and the Greenbush YMCA.

**Garelick Farms** – Garelick Farms has a processing plant located in East Greenbush on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Extension. Garelick Farms processes and manufactures dairy products, including milk, cream, ice cream, sour cream, cottage cheese and juices. Raw milk is purchased from local dairies in the region. The Company supports over 1,000 farms in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Vermont and Maine.

**Gold Crest Farm** – Gold Crest is located on River Road and has been a family owned farm for 78 years specializing in a variety of vegetables.

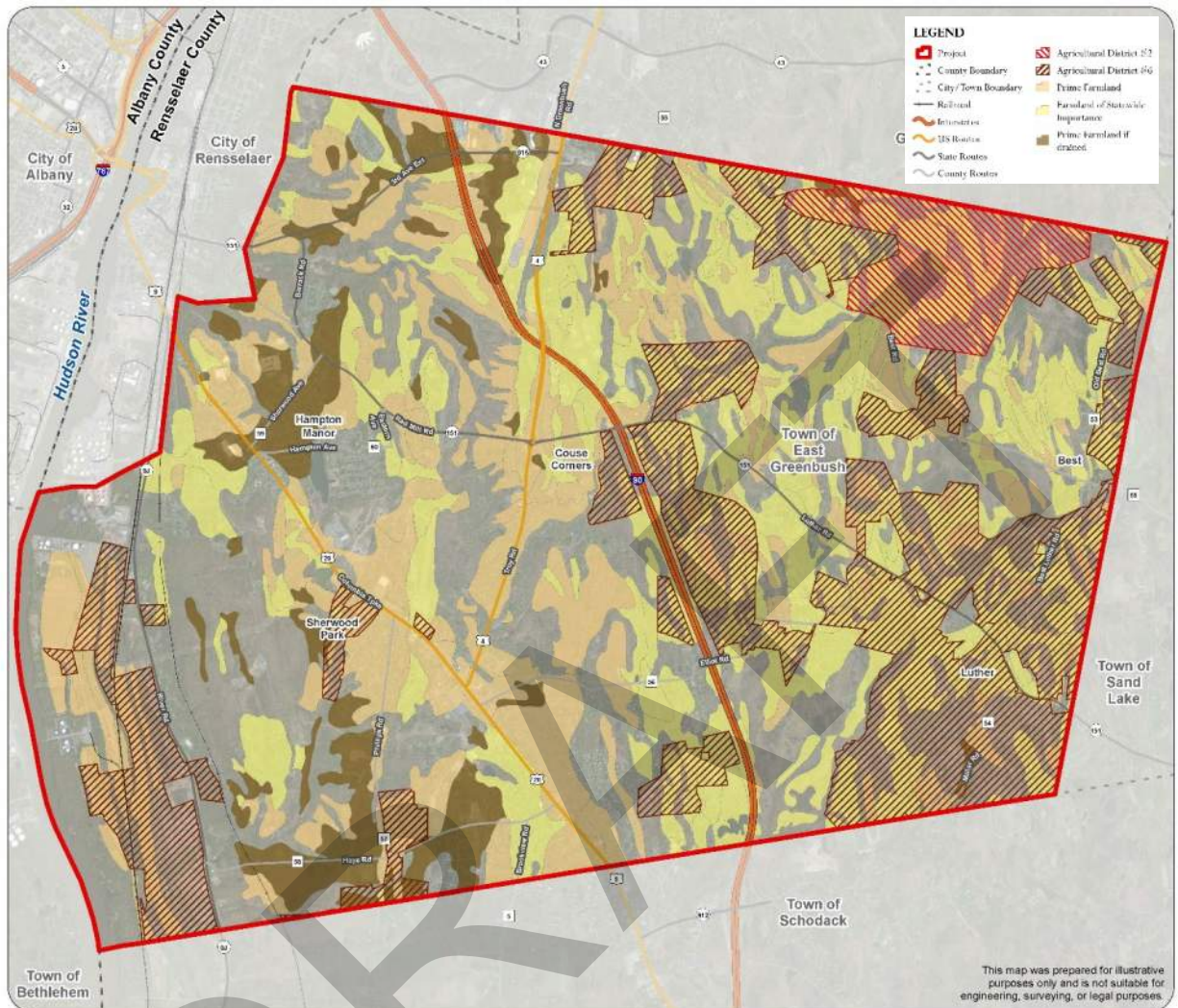
**Hewitt's Garden Center** – Hewitt's Garden Center opened in 1964 and currently has eight stores located in the Capital Region and is the fifth largest independent retail garden center in the country. The East Greenbush location is located on Route 4 and Mannix Road.

**McDonough's Farm** – McDonough's Farm is a third-generation farm growing Christmas trees and flowers located on Gilligan Road.

**Island Park Wholesale Nursery** – Island Park Wholesale Nursery is located off American Oil Road and grows a variety of tree and shrub species for wholesale distribution to landscapers and garden centers.



Map 5: Agricultural Resources







## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### Natural Resource and the Environment

The Town's natural resources present a number of opportunities, including significant ecosystems that contribute to the health and wellbeing of the human and natural community. The National Wildlife Federation defines ecosystem services as any positive benefit that wildlife or ecosystems provide to people. These benefits can include clean air, water, food, soil production and recreational benefits. While these benefits can often be difficult to quantify, the loss of these services can be detrimental to the physical and economic health of the community.

The topography of the Town is a significant factor in determining developable land. Steep slopes associated with the Taconic Mountain Range in the eastern portion of the Town and areas off Ridge Road presents a number of challenges that have hindered development. Those areas that have a slope greater than 15% may be best suited to open space protection to protect hillsides from erosion and for purposes of biodiversity and water resources protection.

Certain areas of Town, particularly those associated with the Hudson River, Mill Creek, and the North Branch of the Moordener Kill present potential flooding hazards. Due to the potential for flooding, these areas of Town may be better suited for agriculture or open space protection.

Conservation subdivision design is a tool that allows a community to protect and preserve the Town's scenic rural lands while allowing for development to occur. Conservation subdivision design uses open space resources present on a site to be developed as the starting point for design.

Another conservation tool is the use of conservation easements. A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust organization or government entity and is tied to the land in perpetuity. Future owners are bound by the terms of the conservation easement that have placed on the property. A typical conservation easement prioritizes conservation values while deemphasizing the value of the development potential of a given land area.

### Agriculture

While a number of active farms continue to operate in East Greenbush, much of the land area suitable for agriculture is being converted to residential and commercial uses, specifically along the Columbia Turnpike and Route 4 corridors. The Town has a significant amount of soils that are conducive to farming and are a valuable asset for present and future farming operations. Conversion of these soils should be carefully considered when development proposals are considered to ensure that prime farmland is retained for future needs. Agriculture is a significant part of the history and character of East Greenbush and provides an economic benefit to the community. Agriculture generally requires less community resources than other land uses and may operate as a business that sells goods and contributes to the local economy. To protect the rural and agricultural character of the Town, conservation measures could be utilized to protect existing and future



farmland. According to American Farmland Trust, the protection of farmland is vital to protecting the food supply and properly managed farmland can support wildlife and biodiversity, recharge aquifers, clean water and sequester carbon.

Agriculture can be a driver of local tourism by creating attractions to draw visitors. Farm to table restaurants, breweries and wineries are a growing market and have seen great success in attracting visitors in other parts of New York State. Agritourism is a growing market with significant opportunities for economic development.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The following actions are intended to achieve the goals and vision of the community when implemented. The number associated with each action is for identification purposes and does not indicate a prioritization of recommendations.

- F1. Support creation of a Conservation Advisory Council as outlined in local law **X** of 2020
- F2. Develop a strategic approach to protecting natural and agricultural resources through actions, including:
  - a. Create an open space plan for the Town of East Greenbush that prioritizes open space areas
  - b. Protect and improve water resources for people and wildlife
  - c. Protect and enhance forest resources and urban trees to protect wildlife and water quality and help mitigate impacts of heat waves
  - d. Protect the Town's unique plants, animals, and habitats
  - e. Recognize the importance of agriculture, and promote innovative practices among farmers that enhance viability of ag business while protecting water, soils conducive to farming activities etc.
- F3. Encourage smart growth and development to protect resources while boosting the economy and increasing the efficiency of project review.
  - a. Adopt development review procedures that consider natural resources
  - b. Update local zoning laws and develop incentives to promote the protection of natural resources
  - c. Engage local businesses in partnerships to help promote the goals of the CAC
- F4. Position East Greenbush to be prepared and resilient in a changing climate

- a. Plan ahead for more frequent extreme weather events and sea level rise in the Hudson River corridor by conducting a climate vulnerability assessment.
  - b. Promote climate conscious practices, including obtaining Climate Smart Certification<sup>1</sup>, which provides a framework for actions that help reduce risks and costs associated with a quickly changing climate and mitigate emissions.
- F5. Improve outdoor recreation opportunities and access to natural and scenic areas.
- F6. Conserve the rural landscape character, especially in the eastern, rural portion of town, and along rural roadways and farmsteads.
- F7. Protect and conserve viewshed and rural character along scenic roadways as identified by the 2006 Land Use Plan and Natural Resources Inventory. Provide for vegetation buffers as part of future development.
- F8. Develop rural design and conservation design guidelines for development in this of Town to be protective of the rural character during site layout and design.
- F9. Explore future creative land uses at the Hudson River shoreline within the Coastal Industrial District. Any future uses should include a significant component to enhance public access.
- F10. Encourage and support landowners that are interested in voluntarily conserving all or some of their lands.
- F11. Establish a voluntary conservation easement program.
- F12. Evaluate zoning and other land use regulations relative to farm viability to allow compatible value-added production, small-scale or artisanal manufacturing, and other activities to increase overall farm income and promote diversification. Work with local and regional partners to develop, expand and/or strengthen farm supporting infrastructure, such as local ag product processing facilities as well as business strategy-related resources, such as marketing and direct sales technical assistance.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://climatesmart.ny.gov/>





# IX. Governance and Infrastructure

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## SECTION NINE – GOVERNANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

### Guiding Principle:

*Promote fiscal responsibility and enhance governmental efficiencies with a positive service approach. Ensure transparency and equity in decision making. Allocate adequate resources for the community to provide essential services. Upgrade infrastructure to support a growing community and its need to adapt to emerging technologies.*

### Goals:

- Ensure the availability of public facilities, infrastructure and services that adequately serve the present and future needs of East Greenbush.
- Maintain fiscal responsibility among all Town departments.
- Continue operating a transparent Town Hall that seeks active community involvement.



### GOVERNANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

#### OVERVIEW

Towns are units of local government that are responsible for providing the practical needs of its citizens. Those needs include a variety of functions, such as highway maintenance, police services, recreational services, property assessment and providing sewer and water infrastructure to protect public health. The Town of East Greenbush strives to provide these services in an efficient and streamlined manner with a focus on customer service to meet the needs of the community.

Local government functions in East Greenbush are carried out and directed from Town Hall located at 225 Columbia Turnpike and is open to the public for a variety of needs and functions. The Town Hall facility also houses the Town Court and East Greenbush Police Department.

Infrastructure related to stormwater, wastewater and the drinking water supply are critical for a community's health and wellbeing. This infrastructure is also directly related to the pattern of development and types of land uses that occur within a community and also imposes a maintenance cost on the Town and future generations. The following includes an overview of the Town's existing stormwater, wastewater and drinking water supply, an identification of challenges now and in the future and recent upgrades that have been undertaken by the Town.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### Land Use

Development in the community is directed by the Town's Comprehensive Zoning Law (CZL). The CZL was adopted to promote and effectuate the orderly physical development in the Town in accordance with the Town's Comprehensive Plan. The law addresses the use of property, whether residential, commercial or industrial, including but not limited to buildings, additions, parking areas, driveways, signs, sheds, garages, swimming pools, decks, gazebos, and major landscaping. The local law is administered daily and enforced by the Department of Building and Codes. All interpretation questions, and petitions for relief, such as area and use variances, are addressed by the Zoning Board of Appeals. The existing Zoning Law breaks down the community into 14 districts, plus two overlay districts. The districts include:

- Residential Districts
  - A-R – Agricultural-Residential District
  - R-OS – Residential-Open Space District
  - R-B – Residential-Buffer District
  - R-1 – Residence District
  - R-1A – Residence District
  - R-2 – Residence District
  - R-3 – Residence District
- Commercial and Industrial Districts
  - PPB – Personal/Professional District
  - B-1 General Business Mixed-Use District
  - B-2 General Business District
  - O – Corporate Office Only District
  - OC – Corporate Office/Regional Commercial District
  - OI – Corporate Office/Light Industrial District
  - CI – Coastal Industrial District
- Overlay Districts and Floating Zones
  - WMO – Watercourse Management Overlay District
  - PDD – Planned Development District

The development of the community is carried out through the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals. The Planning Board is tasked with reviewing various land use applications to ensure the orderly development of the community and includes such functions as site plan review, subdivision review and the approval of special use permits. The Planning Board is guided by the Town's Comprehensive Plan and local ordinances like the Town Comprehensive Zoning Law.

Another tool implemented by the Town to manage the growth of the community is the Western East Greenbush General Environmental Impact Statement (WGEIS). The WGEIS was adopted by the Town in July 2009 to evaluate the cumulative

impacts of potential future development in the Town in order to plan for and mitigate impacts due to growth. A GEIS is an environmental assessment/planning tool available under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). A GEIS allows for the evaluation of broad land areas or developments affecting quality of life and/or the environment and is commonly used for the adoption of land use plans. Unlike a project-specific Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which evaluates the known and probable impacts associated with a specific action, a GEIS is, by design, a more flexible evaluation tool. A GEIS provides a hypothetical exploration of potential development scenarios and a plan to address the associated cumulative impacts within the prescribed study area. The WGEIS was limited to the western portion of East Greenbush due to the concentration of new development primarily in that area and the availability of sewer and water infrastructure. The WGEIS excludes some portions of western East Greenbush, including area along 9J and American Oil Road corridors. The WGEIS allows the Town to sufficiently evaluate the cumulative impacts of growth in the Town and provide suitable mitigation to minimize the effects of development and clearly defines mitigation responsibility for developers. One such tool established through the WGEIS is the creation of a system of mitigation fees. Mitigation fees provide an equitable means of distributing the cost of improvements identified in the WGEIS. Developers are able to contribute to their fair share of the development impact, without carrying an unnecessary burden often associated with capital improvement costs necessitated by multiple waves of development.

## **Infrastructure**

### **Stormwater**

The Town manages stormwater through a Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System (MS4) in accordance with the MS4 Permit issued by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). The MS4 consists of infrastructure designed to convey (e.g., pipes and ditches), treat (e.g., stormwater management "retention" ponds), and discharge (i.e., "outfalls") stormwater to receiving waters. The Town's MS4 is comprised of a combination of privately and publicly owned and operated facilities. The MS4 Permit regulates the discharge of stormwater in an attempt to both reduce the amount of stormwater discharge and reduce the amount of pollutants entering nearby water bodies. All MS4 communities located within the boundaries of a Census Bureau defined "urbanized area" are regulated under the Environmental Protection Agency's Phase II Stormwater Rule, which requires adherence to the MS4 Permit.

Stormwater runoff is generated from rain and snow melt that falls on impervious surfaces such as parking lots, paved streets, roof tops, and compacted bare soil. When water flows over impervious surfaces it may collect and transport pollutants that are harmful to the environment and drinking water supplies. The increase in runoff generated during such precipitation events is directly related to the increase in impervious surface and, therefore, to land development activities which increase



impervious surfaces. Adherence to the MS4 Permit includes the implementation of control measures to reduce the amount of pollutants entering a water body.

To meet these goals, East Greenbush is working to develop a Town-wide Geographic Information System (GIS) for all utility systems and stormwater outfall locations. Education and outreach programs administered by the Town have included, among other topics, information on general stormwater management practices, pet waste management, and lawn and yard waste management. All proposed residential development and commercial construction projects that disturb more than one acre of land are subject to the NYSDEC's stormwater pollution prevention regulations and are required to develop a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to control run-off during construction and minimize off-site discharges following project completion, as applicable.

The Town is actively working to inspect existing stormwater structures to determine the overall condition and areas where repairs and/or rehabilitation is required. Limited camera inspection has been conducted to date; however, the Department of Public Works (DPW) expects to expand the program in the future to provide video documentation of existing catch basins, storm drainage systems, and culverts. Recent inspections have located and identified problems with failing corrugated steel culverts and pipes. A program to proactively slip line failing culverts has been established; however, funding is limited at this time. In addition, the Town DPW recently purchased a vac truck to facilitate cleaning and inspection of catch basins and pipes.

The Town DPW is also focusing on stormwater issues within the community in those areas most prone to flooding. Areas along Philips Road from U.S. Route 9 and 20 continuing to California Avenue within the existing Sherwood Park development are continually experiencing stormwater issues resulting from inadequate and undersized drainage systems. The Hampton Manor neighborhood has also experienced issues with stormwater where approximately twenty-two (22) separate outlets currently discharge into Hampton Manor Lake. Major improvements and replacements to the stormwater piping in the Hampton Manor area have now been completed.

To minimize and prevent future issues from occurring, the Town will be instituting more stringent stormwater design standards for all new developments, both commercial and residential, coupled with greater field supervision during construction to ensure future systems are designed and built correctly in accordance with plans and specifications. Because land development and growth are directly tied to stormwater issues, the Town will be exploring alternative mechanisms to fund the cost of maintaining stormwater infrastructure. These mechanisms include stormwater utility districts for new developments and the use of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) process to identify stormwater impacts of new development and link to mitigation projects and costs.

### Wastewater Collection and Treatment Systems

The Town DPW is responsible for the Town's four sewer districts, comprised of the Third Avenue Sewer District, General Sewer District, Couse Sewer District, and the Hampton Manor Sewer District. Wastewater for the Town is treated at a secondary treatment facility located on the south side of U.S. Routes 9 and 20, near the border with the City of Rensselaer. The Town intends to begin consolidating the four districts into a Town-wide district by the end of 2020.

As with the water supply system, the wastewater collection system currently only serves the most densely populated areas of the Town, parallel and adjacent to U.S. Routes 4, 9 and 20 and NYS Routes 151, terminateing roughly at its intersection with I-90, and NYS 915 (Third Avenue Extension). Expansion of the collection system into the rural areas of the community is not anticipated at this time.

Recently, \$15 million dollars of improvements were completed to increase the capacity and upgrade treatment operations. The wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) has a capacity to treat approximately 4.3 million gallons per day (MGD) but the facility is currently only permitted to process 2.7 MGD. The average daily flow to the treatment plant is currently 2 MGD. Under storm conditions, the flow to the plant can increase by a factor of 2-3 times. Under normal rainfall events the flow will average 2.5 MGD. Recent improvements to the WWTP have included a system designed to inject substances into the effluent in order to address odor issues at the plant. Odor issues have been a recurring issue, and the Town has also been working with industrial dischargers, under the Town's industrial user permit, to address constituents in their discharges that exacerbate odor issues. There are also planned landscaping and signage improvements at the WWTP facility, located at a key gateway into the Town on U.S. Route 9 and 20.

Wastewater is conveyed to the treatment plant through a piping network consisting of approximately 80± miles of gravity sewer lines and force mains. The Town maintains fourteen (14) separate pump stations located throughout the system to direct the wastewater to the WWTP. Major improvements are currently underway or proposed to increase the capacity of the collection and pumping systems.

The overall sewer collection system is reported to be in good condition and capable of accommodating increased flows from future development. The principal deficiency with the piping network is inflow and infiltration (I&I) into the system resulting in excessive flows to the WWTP during storm events.

Another issue contributing to excessive flows is stormwater drainage from sump pumps in residences discharging into the sewer collection system.

In addition to wastewater collected from the Town sewer districts, the Town has an existing agreement with the Town of Schodack, located immediately south of East Greenbush. Through the agreement the Town will accept 45,000 gallons per day of domestic waste from Schodack for treatment at the East Greenbush WWTP. At this

time Schodack only produces 30,000 gallons per day but they are currently negotiating with East Greenbush to increase their daily limit. Schodack operates six Pump stations, including one on U.S. Route 9 & 20, one on Empire Boulevard, two on Miller Road and one on Isabella Court / Waters Road to direct the wastewater through force mains into the East Greenbush collection system. The flow is metered at the Town line between East Greenbush and Schodack off of Horizon Veiw Drive West in a metering vault. The Town is also working with industrial users situated within Schodack but discharging to the Town's system to address flow constituents which cause odor issues and ensure compliance with the Town's industrial user permit.

### Drinking Water Supply

The Town's public water supply is purchased from the City of Troy and provided to the East Greenbush General Water District. The sourcewater is the City of Troy's Thomhannock Reservoir, a 5.5 mile-long artificial reservoir located in the Town of Pittstown capable of storing 12.3 billion gallons of water when full. The General Water District extends from the City of Rensselaer to the Town of Schodack paralleling Routes 9 and 20 and running north between the City of Rensselaer and Route 4 to the Town boundary with North Greenbush providing potable water to the most densely populated areas of the community. Rural areas of the Town, east of Interstate 90 (I-90) and along the NYS Route 9J corridor, are presently not interconnected or served through the water district. The City of Rensselaer water department provides water supply to a portion of the American Oil Road corridor approximately 1,200 feet south of the Town line.

The Hampton Manor neighborhood was previously supplied by the Hampton Manor Water district through a separate well supply. In 2018 this district was shut down due to aging infrastructure and merged into the Town's General Water District to enhance water quality to Hampton Manor residents. The Hampton Manor wells have been decommissioned and the existing water tank was demolished in July 2020. Improvements within the former district are continuing with the installation of new meter pits and individual meters are expected to be complete by the end of 2020.

The existing water mains, hydrants, and system components throughout the Town are all reported to be in good condition. The town-wide system maintains approximately 90± miles of mostly ductile iron transmission and service mains.

The Town DPW is continually providing improvements throughout the District to increase flow and system pressures and to provide redundant service within neighborhoods in the event of a main failure or related problem. Work is continuing to loop and interconnect isolated water mains and to remove dead ends.

New water transmission mains to remote areas of the Town are not proposed at this time. However, sufficient water is available from the City of Troy to allow for future residential and commercial development within the Town.



### **Infrastructure Considerations**

The development of a community is often controlled by the availability of sewer and water infrastructure. Extending this infrastructure to rural areas can have negative consequences and contribute to unsustainable suburban sprawl if careful planning is not instituted. New water transmission mains to remote areas of the Town are not proposed at this time. However, sufficient water is available from the City of Troy to allow for future development within the Town. Extensions of water and sewer infrastructure should only be extended to areas deemed appropriate for additional commercial and residential development. Based on current trends in commercial and residential growth in the community, infrastructure extensions would be most appropriate in specific areas of Town, including Luther Road (NYS Route 151) just east of Columbia High School and Mannix Road.

Another consideration with regard to infrastructure expansions is the process for individual sewer and water extension requests. Current trends have indicated an increase requests for sewer and water extensions to properties outside the existing sewer and water districts. Currently, the Town does not have a formal process to guide decision making with regards to sewer and water extensions. This presents an opportunity to establish a formal process for individual sewer and water extensions to control the growth of the Town more efficiently. All infrastructure expansion projects should coordinate with the Town Department of Public Works' Pavement Condition Inventory to ensure that extensions are planned in coordination with ongoing roadway improvements.

### **Local Government Efficiency**

Efficiency of local government is a significant priority for the Town of East Greenbush. The Town strives to provide services to its citizens with a customer service approach to meet the needs of all members of the community in a fiscally responsible manner.

The emergence of COVID-19 in the first half of 2020 has been a considerable challenge for all communities. The Town has continued to provide basic Town functions in the midst of the pandemic and has taken a number of steps to mitigate impacts to citizens and Town staff. Measures taken to mitigate impacts include closing Town hall to the public except by appointment only, holding various board meetings virtually and having staff work from home for those who are able to. The lessons learned through the COVID-19 pandemic will set in place plans and procedures to better prepare for future public health crises to protect the lives of all East Greenbush citizens.

Additionally, the Town is striving to streamline internal department processes through digital upgrades and increased coordination and also look at energy efficient approaches to reduce municipal costs.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The following actions are intended to achieve the goals and vision of the community when implemented. The number associated with each action is for identification purposes and does not indicate a prioritization of recommendations.

- G1. Cultivate a customer service culture within town government to ensure that officials and policies support the needs of the community and those investing in East Greenbush.
- G2. Evaluate options for relocating Police Station and Town Court to a new location that meets the needs of an expanding police force and current regulatory requirements.
- G3. Work to ensure that all areas of the community are adequately serviced by fire, police and emergency medical response.
- G4. Work with emergency service providers to recruit and retain qualified volunteers.
- G5. Encourage the use of green infrastructure to address stormwater management and function as streetscape enhancements.
- G6. Continue to maintain and upgrade sewer and stormwater infrastructure and plan for future maintenance needs.
- G7. Continue to assess current municipal staffing needs, planning for hiring additional staff, evaluating business process improvement strategies, including use of automation, and balance these needs with financial capacity.
- G8. Continue to comply with the MS4 program and update stormwater GIS database.
- G9. Build on recent e-government initiatives, such as modernizing the Town website, holding remote meetings, virtual public participation and live-streaming board meetings, and to continue to use technology to improve service delivery and stakeholder access to information. Prioritize completion and maintenance of a comprehensive code update and migration to an online platform.
- G10. Coordinate school facility planning and use with community and neighborhood needs.
- G11. Form a public-private partnership that bridges Town leaders, East Greenbush Central School District, institutions and the business community to share information, advance research and policy discussions and support innovative education programs.
- G12. Support relationships between the police department and community leaders and neighborhoods in areas where crime is an issue.

- G13. Encourage diversity in the workplace that supports all cultures, races and genders.
- G14. Utilize Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) to increase public safety.
- G15. Modernize data systems and integrate interactive opportunities for public access to digital information. Begin to invest in data as a local asset.
- G16. Work with neighborhood groups and stakeholders to develop a network of social media, contact lists or other interactive web-based forums to serve as a mechanism for residents to communicate general information, such as current events or public safety concerns.
- G17. Continue to use social media and other interactive web-based tools for sharing information and engaging the public.
- G18. Reduce energy consumption in municipal operations and develop a Municipal Facility Energy Efficiency Plan that includes energy audits and a funding plan to retrofit municipal buildings with green building practices.
- G19. Incorporate green building practices in all new construction and renovation projects for municipal buildings.
- G20. Explore all options for renewable energy systems in municipal buildings and properties.
- G21. Develop lighting standards that promote energy efficiency and reduce light pollution, while providing adequate lighting for safety.
- G22. Update Building codes to reflect the latest energy-efficient building code standards for new and rehabilitated housing (e.g. International Green Construction Code) and ensure that staff are fully trained and supported to implement.
- G23. Consider developing green building incentives, such as height and density bonuses to projects that meet specific building and sustainable site standards.
- G24. Formalize the process for the Town to evaluate requests for extensions of public sewer and water infrastructure.
- G25. Develop a capital asset management plan and program to fund projects.





# Future Land Use



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## SECTION TEN – FUTURE LAND USE

### OVERVIEW

The Town of East Greenbush has experienced many changes over the last several decades from a rural agricultural community to a suburban town with an active commercial and retail base, distinct neighborhoods and a center of employment in the region. To successfully plan for the future, the Town must develop land use regulations that provide the flexibility to accommodate the changing needs of business, commerce and residents while maintaining and enhancing the physical, cultural and social amenities that make East Greenbush an attractive place to live, work and play.

To maintain and improve upon the community's current position, a close look was given to future land uses across the Town. The Future Land Use Map at the end of this section sets the direction for future land uses within the Town. The map is not zoning; however, the zoning must follow the direction set forth in the comprehensive plan in accordance with General Town Law §272-a. The zoning ordinance is the regulatory document that addresses densities, area and bulk standards and permitted uses.

The various land use categories shown represent the intended uses desired or anticipated for the community in the future. A number of important points about these land use categories and recommendations related to land use include:

- The land use categories on the Future Land Use Map are not zoning districts. The land use categories are broader and more general than zoning districts.
- The boundaries for each of the land use categories are intentionally non-precise and are meant to be fluid. The boundaries of zoning districts are far more specific and detailed and are to be determined during a zoning update process that is separate from the Comprehensive Plan Update process.
- The land use categories are general guides to future zoning or other regulations. State law mandates that zoning must be in conformance with the policies of the comprehensive plan.
- The land use categories reflect a vision for the community in the future. It may take many years for the proposed changes to occur. The vision is something to aim for and work towards. Since zoning is the primary tool to implement this plan, the zoning for an area may be changed or updated in an effort reflect community input.
- Implementation of the future land use recommendations in the community would be required to follow a zoning amendment procedure in accordance with Town law.

A key factor in developing the Future Land Use Map for this plan is to ensure the map reflects the community vision and guiding principles. That vision includes the

most intense uses between Route 9/20 and I-90, with uses becoming less intense as one moves east and west to maintain the remaining rural character, scenic areas and natural resources of the Town. The vision also includes reactivating the historic Columbia Turnpike (Route 9/20) by creating mixed-use centers of activity and allowing for more flexibility in the types of development that can occur along the corridor. The character of neighborhoods are maintained while walkability and connectivity to activity centers are improved. Following is a description of each future land use category.

## FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

**Primary Activity Center** – The intent of the Primary Activity Center is to create a vibrant and attractive destination to live, shop, work and gather that is centrally located within the Town. This area includes a mix of retail, commercial, high-density residential and offices in a compact, walkable area with multi-modal transportation options.

The Primary Activity Center is characterized by mixed-use buildings and/or blocks with architecturally interesting facades, streetscape design, sidewalks, benches and other amenities that make the streets pedestrian friendly and create spontaneous opportunities for community interaction. A transit-oriented development (TOD) approach is encouraged in this area whereby moderate and high-density housing concentrated in mixed-use developments are located along public transit routes. The location, design and mix of uses in a TOD emphasizes pedestrian-oriented environments and encourages the use of public transportation.

This area can evolve over time with the redevelopment of large shopping plazas into a more attractive mixed-use commercial center of activity. In order to realize this vision, a form-based zoning approach is encouraged to establish a desired form and appearance for development. A form-based zoning approach can also help to streamline the development review process, reducing the cost to the project applicant and ensuring development that is consistent with the community's vision.

**Secondary Activity Centers** – The Secondary Activity Centers are areas that are intended to be smaller in scale than the Primary Activity Center and provide opportunities for a mix of uses, including retail, restaurants, office space and community gathering spaces. The Secondary Activity Centers differ from the Primary Activity Center in that they place a stronger emphasis on connectivity between neighborhoods and areas of commercial activity.

The Secondary Activity Centers are characterized by a higher density of development that includes a mix of uses. The scale of buildings for these areas is smaller than that of the Primary Activity Center to match the character of surrounding neighborhoods. A transit-oriented development approach is encouraged in these areas.



Following is a description of each secondary activity center:

- A. **The Heights** – This area is an existing residential, commercial and high-tech employment center. A small and mid-sized mix of retail stores, professional offices and apartments should be encouraged in this area with connections to surrounding neighborhoods and employment centers. The redevelopment of large shopping plazas should also be considered to infill underutilized space currently being used for parking.
- B. **Philips Road Center** – The Philips Road Center includes the existing Columbia Plaza and Becker Farms area. This area is intended to be a center of activity to support surrounding neighborhoods and local agriculture. The Philips Road Center should prioritize the development of sidewalk infrastructure to improve walkability and connections to surrounding neighborhoods and regional trail networks.
- C. **East Greenbush Hamlet Center** – This area represents the historic hamlet of East Greenbush that developed as an outpost along the Columbia Turnpike. The East Greenbush Hamlet Center reflects the traditional and walkable hamlet center. Uses are intended to provide opportunities to activate the street level and provide religious, cultural, commercial and retail activity in a concentrated area. Design guidelines and form-based zoning should be considered in this location to maintain the historic layout of the hamlet and encourage street-level activity.
- D. **Couse Corners Center** – This area centers around Couse Corners at the intersection of Route 4 and Route 151. The focus of this area is improving walkability and connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods and encouraging uses that are compatible with the surrounding Neighborhood Mixed-Use area.
- E. **East Greenbush Commons** – This area will continue to serve as a regional commercial hub with shopping and entertainment plazas, but with an emphasis on improving walkability, traffic congestion and streetscape improvements.

**Commercial Mixed-Use (CMU)** – CMU includes linear areas along Route 9/20 and serves as a connecting corridor between activity centers. The CMU allows for a variety of uses with an emphasis on commercial and some residential uses. These areas are primarily auto oriented but are connected via sidewalks and may connect to regional trail networks. Design guidelines and form-based zoning are encouraged along these corridors to create a consistent character along Route 9/20 over time. A transit-oriented development approach is encouraged in these areas to allow for a mix of uses that emphasize pedestrian-oriented environments and encourage the use of public transportation.

**Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMU)** – NMU includes areas located along the southeastern portion of 9/20 and Route 4. This area is intended to allow for a mix

of uses with a stronger emphasis on residential with supportive commercial uses. Commercial uses might include small office buildings or former residences that have been converted into office or retail. The scale of the NMU is less intense than the CMU to be consistent with the character of neighborhoods adjacent to Route 9/20 and Route 4. Design guidelines and form-based zoning are encouraged along these corridors to create a consistent character along Route 9/20 over time. A transit-oriented development approach is encouraged in these areas to allow for a mix of uses that emphasize pedestrian-oriented environments and encourage the use of public transportation.

**Neighborhood Residential (NR)** – The Neighborhood Residential designation includes areas of high to moderate density residential and community-supported commercial uses. These areas are located primarily between Route 9/20 and I-90 and contain a mix of single family and multi-family. The NR areas are intended to be pedestrian oriented with an attractive streetscape and an emphasis on developing better connections to commercial activity centers.

**Residential Transition (RT)** – The Residential Transition includes low to moderate residential uses and represents a transition from the moderate to high uses characterized in the NR areas to the low-density and rural character of the eastern and western portions of town. The conservation subdivision design approach is encouraged in this area to protect agricultural, open space, environmentally sensitive and scenic resources present, while allowing for residential growth. Density bonuses are also encouraged in this area in exchange for open space protection, recreation amenities or public improvements.

**Office Commercial (OC)** – The Office Commercial areas are designated for areas with pre-existing suburban-style office parks and commercial complexes. These areas are intended to encourage office uses that are easily accessible by major transportation corridors and are more auto oriented.

**Regional Commercial (RC)** – The intent of the Regional Commercial area is to encourage a grouping of office and commercial uses, easily accessible by major roads. The uses include corporate office centers, tourist accommodations, convention centers and regional level commercial uses such as a regional shopping centers and are more auto oriented. The redevelopment or infill of large parcels is encouraged to allow for a mix of uses and create more pedestrian friendly commercial plazas.

**Education (E)** – The Education areas include uses related to primary, secondary, and college level educational institutions and vocational training centers. The character of these areas are intended to encourage campus style developments.

**Rural/Low Density Residential (R)** – The intent of the Rural/Low Density Residential area is to encourage agricultural, rural, open space and low-density residential uses designed to retain the open space and rural character of the community. This area also This area includes most of the eastern portion of the town and the area

between Route 9J and Ridge Road and contains sensitive natural resources. Development should address those resources where appropriate through techniques such as conservation subdivisions. Conservation subdivision design is encouraged in this area, but density bonuses would not be permitted.

**Research, Development and Technology (RDT)** – The intent of the Research, Development and Technology areas are to encourage uses that are engaged in research and development, testing and manufacturing of goods to build upon the high-tech employment areas in Town. The RDT areas are also intended to allow for a mix of uses that encourage high-density residential development and businesses that support employees and residents.

**Light Industrial (LI)** – The Light Industrial areas are intended to encourage the development of moderate and small-scale light manufacturing, high tech companies, research and warehousing uses along and adjacent to the Route 9J corridor. Uses in this area would be designed in a manner that is respectful of existing agriculture and residential properties.

**Waterfront Industrial (WI)** - The Waterfront Industrial area is intended to encourage the development of light manufacturing uses appropriate along the waterfront. Access to the river should be encouraged for future development or redevelopment of land in this area.

**Agriculture/Open Space (AO)** – The Agriculture/Open Space area is intended to permit agricultural, rural and open space uses. This area may include farm operations, nature preserves, parks, scenic areas and low-density residential uses.

### **Amendments to and Review of the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulations**

Significant decisions and actions affecting the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the State and its communities are made by local governments. The legislative body in each community has the authority to modify the community's comprehensive plan and land use regulations.

Among the most important powers and duties granted by the legislature to a municipal government is the authority and responsibility to undertake comprehensive planning and to regulate land use for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens. This is outlined in General Town Law §272-a. Pursuant to General Town Law §272-a, all land use regulations must be in accordance with a comprehensive plan.

As the community changes over time, its needs and desires change. The comprehensive plan should be a flexible and adaptable document that reflects such changes. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the Town review and update, if necessary, the comprehensive plan. An assessment of the progress



achieved on the implementation actions would also be beneficial. It is recommended that this comprehensive plan be reviewed every five years and updated as needed.

DRAFT





# TOWN OF EAST GREENBUSH Comprehensive Plan

## DRAFT

Future Land Use

### LEGEND

- Primary Activity Center
- Secondary Activity Centers
- Commercial Mixed-Use (CMU)
- Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMU)
- Neighborhood Residential (NR)
- Residential Transition (RT)
- Office Commercial (OC)
- Regional Commercial (RC)
- Education (E)
- Rural/Low Density Residential (R)
- Research, Design & Technology (RDT)
- Light Industrial (LI)
- Waterfront Industrial (WI)
- Agriculture/Open Space (AO)
- Recreation-Based Destinations

**DRAFT**  
For Discussion Purposes Only  
Not for Public Distribution



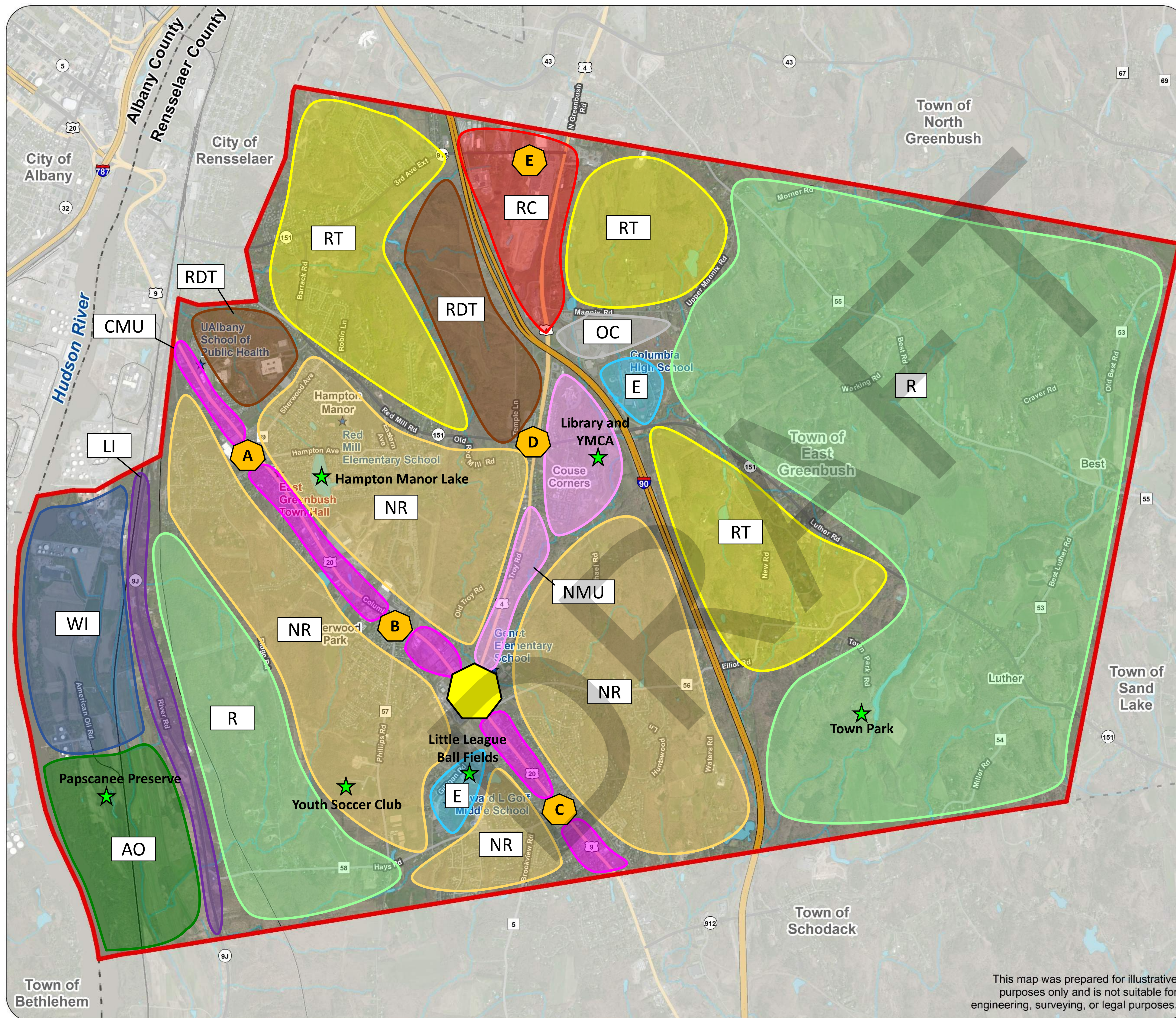
Sources:  
Esri, NYS ITS,  
Town of East Greenbush

0 0.225 0.45 Miles



Engineering and  
Land Surveying, P.C.  
1533 Crescent Road - Clifton Park, NY 12065

This map was prepared for illustrative  
purposes only and is not suitable for  
engineering, surveying, or legal purposes.







# XI. Implementation



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## SECTION ELEVEN – IMPLEMENTATION

### OVERVIEW

Following adoption of this comprehensive plan update the first step in the implementation process is to evaluate the zoning and subdivision regulations in East Greenbush for consistency with the plan and update the zoning to be consistent with the comprehensive plan. This plan is the result of considerable effort on the part of the Town of East Greenbush, Town Board, Town staff, the CPSC, residents, business owners and concerned citizens. An active implementation process will be necessary for the plan to have a lasting impact. Working with a range of public, private and nonprofit implementation partners, the community can accomplish the recommended actions and continue striving toward its vision. It is recommended that the Town evaluate the Comprehensive Plan in its entirety at least every five years to ensure that the document meets the needs of the community and addresses changing trends in the future.

### PRIORITIZATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The implementation table that follows represents the prioritization of recommendations based on the input from community members and members of the CPSC. Each recommendation has been categorized as a short-, mid- or long-term goal to give guidance to Town and Village staff as to which recommendations to implement in the near term versus the long term.

In addition to a timeframe for implementation, the table also includes an identification of the recommendation lead and potential partners to assist in implementation. Potential funding sources are also listed to support implementation.

Finally, a recommendation status column has been included to allow for easy tracking and review of comprehensive plan implementation progress related to each recommendation. The recommendation status column can be translated into an annual reporting to the Town on progress of the recommendations.

### IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

The following recommendations are priority actions to be completed immediately following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

- H1. Review and evaluate the community's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to ensure consistency with this comprehensive plan. Specific considerations should include:
  - a. Illustrate zoning standards and guidelines graphically. Greater use of design examples and guideline graphics will help the public and applicants visualize the desired development, which will also assist land use boards in their review.

- b. Update and revise definitions in the Comprehensive Zoning Law to reflect current needs.
  - c. Review and update sign regulations in the Town's Comprehensive Zoning Law.
  - d. Update existing zoning districts and boundaries to reflect the purpose and vision of the proposed future land uses
  - e. Evaluate and update for consistency with New York State Town Law
- H2. Review and evaluate the WGEIS to ensure consistency with this comprehensive plan.
- H3. Establish a Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee to guide the plan implementation effort and provide a status report of plan implementation to the Town Board on an annual basis.
- H4. Provide and/or support training opportunities for land use board members to keep up to date on current planning and zoning practices and laws and meet the minimum four-hour training requirement as per Town Law §271.7-a.
- H5. Continue enforcing existing land use regulations.
- H6. Create a Citizen's Guide to Land Use and Development Regulations.
- H7. Work with the Project Review Team to foster a development review process that considers the direction set forth by the comprehensive plan vision.
- H8. Identify locations for future development and extend public utilities as needed and in keeping with smart growth principles, recognizing the balance between new development and the cost of providing new services to support that development.