



*Final Draft
January 2024*



Town of Colden, NY Comprehensive Plan

Planning Consultant services provided by the design team of:



Funding of this plan was provided by the Town of Colden and supplemented by Erie County Dept. of Environment and Planning

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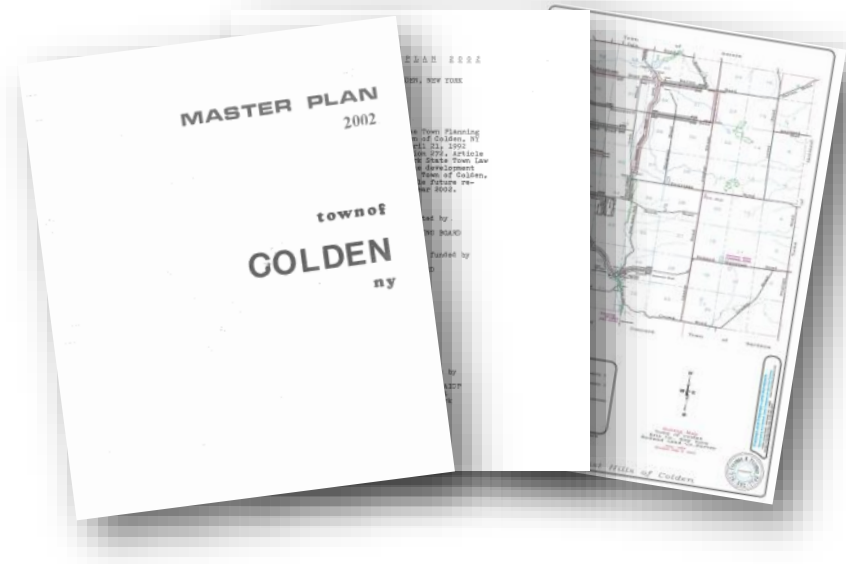
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INTRODUCTION

A community's comprehensive plan outlines a vision for the future and is used as a guide for the development and enhancement of a community. Taking a proactive approach allows communities to define for themselves what they would like to see and what they would like to be in the future. The plan serves as a policy document to guide and inform decision makers, whether they are community members, businesses, or government agencies.

The Town of Colden has a history of planning, with the last comprehensive plan having been completed in 1993. The Master Plan, as it was called, was created as an effort to guide the “orderly development of the Town of Colden now and in the future...” The plan had an outlook of about ten years, taking the Town to the year 2002. Through careful analysis of the demographics and conditions of the time, the Master Plan provides a valuable snapshot of the time. Though many of the Town's physical aspects have remained much the same, shifts in demographics, economic dynamics, and other social factors have changed.

This comprehensive plan will provide a new vision for the Town, reflective of today's community. The plan will guide planning and development in manner that will promote the health, safety, and overall quality of life of those within its borders.



WHY A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A Comprehensive Plan is a proactive policy document that defines a community's vision for the future and acts as a roadmap for how to get there. While the plan itself is not a regulatory document, it is a tool that should be used by local and regional officials in their decision-making processes. Further, it communicates to residents and businesses the opportunities that exist within the Town.

The authority and power to develop a comprehensive plan is established in New York State Town Law (TWN § 272-a), and is noted as being, “among the most important powers and duties granted by the legislature to town government.” The Comprehensive Plan sets the foundation for local land use regulations and is required if zoning laws are to be adopted.



PLAN INTENT AND PURPOSE

A comprehensive plan gives a community a roadmap for the future. It serves as a way to formulate and document the community's vision, values, and goals in a way that helps to guide regulations, programs, and development. Whether actions are public or private, they should be carried out in a way that is consistent with the community's comprehensive plan. It informs other government entities, such as County or State agencies, on what the Town sees for its future. These agencies are required to consider local plans when proposing projects and activities within a municipality's boundaries.

"Among the most important powers and duties granted by the legislature to a town government is the authority and responsibility to undertake town comprehensive planning and to regulate land use for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens."

- NYS Town Law

As mentioned previously, the plan also serves as a foundation for zoning and land use regulations. These regulations should align, and serve as a tool to implement the comprehensive plan.

Beyond this, an adopted comprehensive plan provides a number of other benefits:

Guidance: The Plan gives guidance to Colden's elected leaders, appointed Board and committee members, regional officials, federal and state agencies, community organizations, businesses, and even residents.

Collaboration: The Plan gives the community an opportunity to work together, discuss ideas, and establish and work toward a collective vision for the future.

Marketing/Education: The Plan can act as a marketing and educational tool for the Town, outlining the assets found in the community and the opportunities for development and preservation.

Capital Improvements: The Plan can act as a tool for identifying capital programs, projects, and initiatives that benefit and are prioritized by the community.

Funding Support: Having a comprehensive vision and strategy for the future demonstrates to grantors that the Town has thought through the projects and initiatives it will pursue. This increases the chances of these projects and initiatives being supported and funded.



PLAN PROCESS AND OUTLINE

The planning process begins with an inventory of information on the physical resources of the community, as well as the demographic and social aspects. This provides the baseline for what **we have to work with**. Input from residents, business owners, and other local stakeholders is also included at this stage, and throughout the planning process.

From there, a future community vision statement is developed. This provides the overall direction of **where we want to be**. Individual core values and goals are then identified, providing a narrower scope for dealing with opportunities or challenges.

An action plan is the capstone of this process. It builds upon policies and goals by detailing specific actions to be undertaken to achieve the vision – **how do we get there**. This portion of the plan

focuses on implementation and identifies priorities, partnerships, and strategies moving forward. This section also includes a future land use plan, which provides a graphic representation for areas of the community to be developed and conserved, physical changes, and investments. This provides the framework for any potential future zoning changes.

The Town's Comprehensive Plan was directed and managed by a Steering Committee made up of members of the Town's Planning Board. The Steering Committee's role is to provide direction and feedback to the Town's planning consultant, tasked with developing the plan.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is a critical component of the planning process. Obtaining feedback from residents, business owners, and other stakeholders is the only way to determine what the community wants, values, and sees for the future of Colden.

All public meetings were advertised through a variety of avenues in order to reach as many residents as possible – including the use of the Town website, a dedicated website for the plan, newsletters, announcements, and newspaper advertisements. A full summary of public outreach and feedback can be found in *Appendix A*.

- *Steering committee meetings:* Meetings were held throughout the process to provide direct interaction with community representatives. These meetings were held by the Colden Planning Board and were open to the public.
- *Public Meeting #1:* A public meeting was held on December 1, 2021 to introduce the project to the community, to give insight into the process, and to gather initial feedback. Approximately 52 people were in attendance and participated in small group conversations to identify opportunities, strengths, core values, and a vision for the future.
- *Online community survey:* Following the public meeting, an online survey tool was created and distributed. The survey was intended to gather additional feedback from those who were unable to attend the public kickoff meeting. Approximately 47 people completed the survey. A summary of the survey and its findings can be found in *Appendix A*.

- *Public Meeting #2:* This meeting was held on September 27, 2022 with the primary goal of providing an update to the community on tasks undertaken to date, including the various avenues for public outreach and more specifically the results of the community survey.



Approximately 60 people attended this meeting in which the draft vision and core values were shared. The other goal with this meeting was to ensure that the development of the plan was on the “right track” and that no other key issues or opportunities were overlooked. Generally, the community agreed with the draft information and provided further clarity and/or ideas.

- *Public Meeting #3:* : The last of the public meetings was held on April 25, 2023 with the intention to provide a glimpse of the final draft of the plan. Approximately 30 people attended this meeting, which provided descriptions of recommended action items, allowing each attendee to participate and mark which items were of highest priority to them. This identified areas of consensus amongst the attendees with priorities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of the Town of Colden’s Comprehensive Plan was guided by the work of the Town’s Planning Board, which functioned as the plan’s steering committee. These committed volunteers were essential in providing knowledge and information on the community; suppling valuable insight and feedback; and, bringing enthusiasm into this effort.

Planning Board Members:

Andrew Gow

Walter Kammer (Chairman)

Jacqueline May

George Reinhardt

Robert J. Walker

Cheryl Schenne

Dakota Forgione

Peter Newsom **past member*

In addition to these members, the committee and Town Board would like to thank community members, especially those that were able to attend meetings and events, and those who provided feedback and comments throughout the process.

Town Board

Supervisor James Depasquale

Councilman Jesse Hrycik

Councilman Gerald Pietraszek

Councilman Dennis Robinson

Councilwoman Patricia Zurbrick

Councilman Dave Arcara **past member*

Erie County Department of Environment and Planning

Sarah Gatti

Timothy German

Western New York Land Conservancy

Rachel Chrostowski



Source: All Pictometry

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COMMUNITY PROFILE

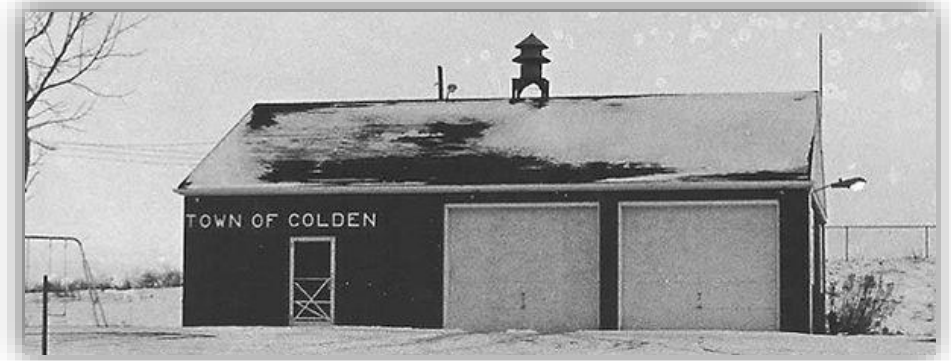
COLDEN'S PAST

The story of Colden, as with many communities in Western New York, began with the migration of New Englanders westward looking for available land. The Holland Land Company, through its agent Joseph Ellicott in today's Batavia, was willing to sell such plots to people like Richard Buffum, who left his Smithfield, Rhode Island, home and arrived in what is now Colden in 1810.

Originally, Buffum was to scout out land with available water for other potential settlers from Rhode Island, but no others followed and he remained with his family and hired hands on the 2,000 acres he bought on the hillsides and flat banks along today's Cazenovia Creek.

Shelter was needed and so the first structure built was a 20-by-40-foot log cabin to house the Buffum party members who made the approximately 450+ mile trip on existing trails and other trails they hacked through the forest themselves. The cut-down trees meant that one of the first commercial ventures was a sawmill that Buffum easily operated as the creek water rolled and roiled down the hills and provided the necessary power. As other families gradually joined the small settlement to farm and do business at the saw mill and grist mill, it naturally came to be known as Buffum's Mills.

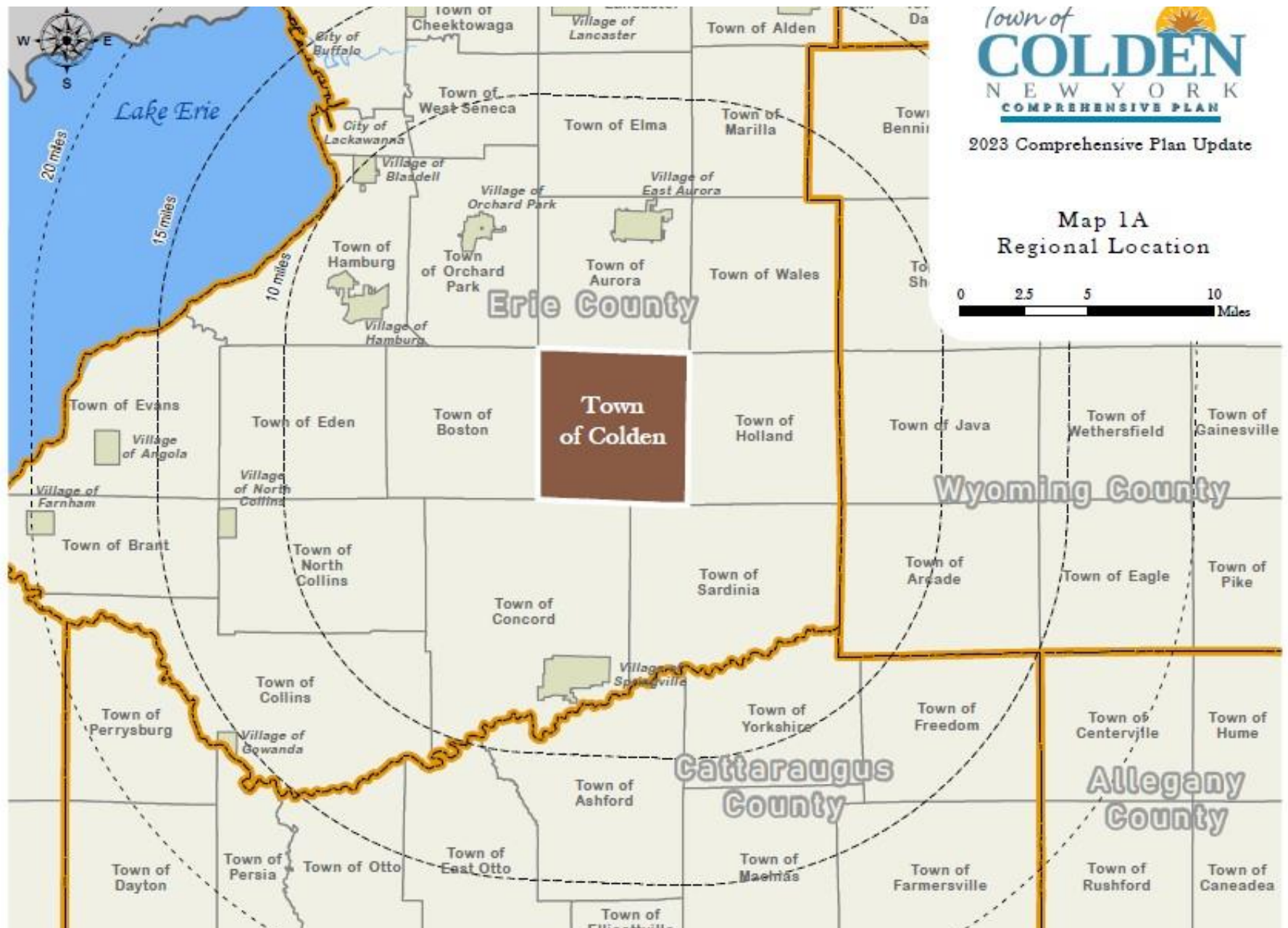
The 22,704 acres (36 square miles) broke away from the Town of Holland (which had been set aside from the Town of Willink in 1818) on April 2, 1827. The new town needed a post office and it

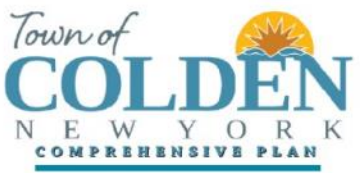
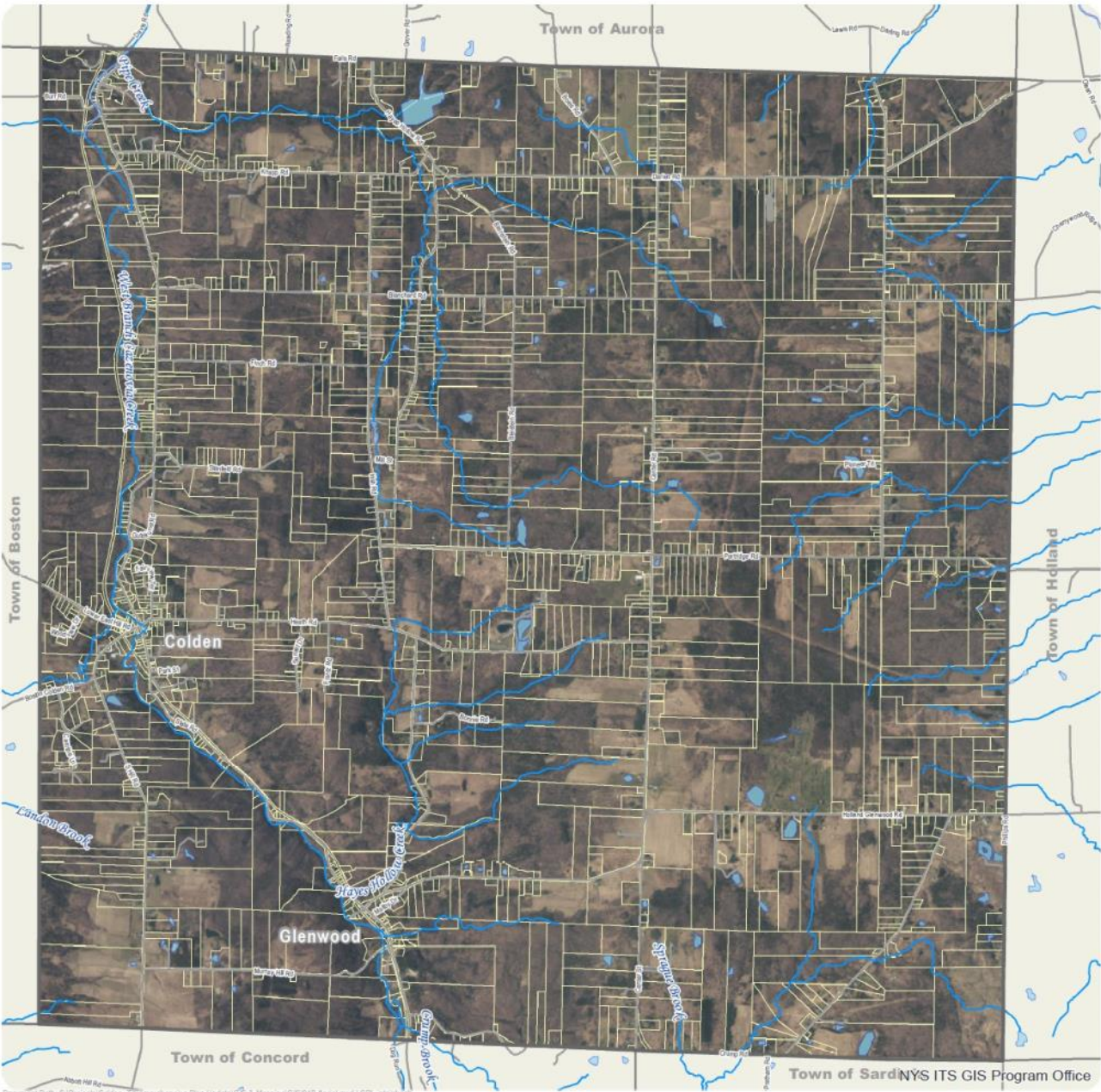


Source: Colden Fire Company

got one in 1830 when Leander Roberts set one up in his home, which was in the hills about a mile away from the main settlement. The post office was named for Cadwalder Colden, a prominent state politician at the time. When Buffum became postmaster in 1833 the post office was moved from Roberts' home to Buffum's Inn (which still stands today) in the main settled area of the town. The name Colden moved with the post office and Buffum's Mills subsequently became a part of history.

With the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, more people gradually settled in Western New York and the town and surrounding area grew. Samuel Love and Benjamin Maltby from Colden and Stephen Osborn of Newstead bought 15,000 acres in the southern end of town and established what they called New Buffalo. They had mills and stores but land sales were slow and eventually the hamlet changed its name to Glenwood. Today, this is part of Colden.

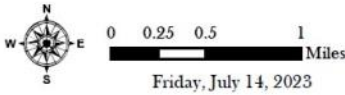




2023 Comprehensive Plan Update

Map 1B
Aerial Imagery

- Legend
- Municipal Boundaries
 - Parcels
 - Waterbodies
 - Creeks & Streams



Businesses that dominated the 19th and early to mid-20th centuries in Colden were asheries (wood ashes processed into ingredients for soap), charcoal works, dairy farms, tanneries and mills. A plank toll road (the Cattaraugus & Buffalo Plank Road) was built in 1849, but there wasn't enough capital to keep it viable. It eventually fell into disrepair. A brick road replaced it in 1912 and that evolved into today's Route 240. There was also a line run by the Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh Railroad that served the residents and businesses in town (including a brewery).

COLDEN TODAY

Today, Colden is known for being a part of the Western New York's "Ski Country", as its topography and winter climate make it a premier location for winter sports. Winter sport resorts, both inside and outside of the Town's boundaries, bring recreational and economic opportunities to Colden.

Colden is a "Southtowns" community, located in southern Erie County. It is bordered by the Town of Aurora in the North, the Town of Holland in the east, the Towns of Sardinia and Concord in the South, and the Town of Boston in the west (see *Map 1A - Regional Context* and *Map 1B - Aerial Image*). It encompasses about 35.6 square miles in size and is defined by its rural characteristics. It is primarily a bedroom community and is known for its beauty and recreational opportunities.

There are two main hamlets in the town: Colden Center and Glenwood. The main business district is centered at the intersection of Route 240 (north/south) and Boston-Colden Road (east/west). This area houses a post office, the Town Hall, an elementary

school, local churches, and a Town park – as well as other community amenities. Glenwood, the smaller of the two hamlets, contains a post office and several local businesses.



ABOUT US

The last comprehensive plan was adopted in 1992 and intended to cover a ten-year period. The plan relied primarily on the 1990 U.S. Census to reflect the state of the Town at the time and projections for the future. Similarly, this document utilizes more up-to-date information to provide a picture of the Town today and identify potential trends for the future. This information will help to inform decision makers and will form the basis for the recommendations set out in this plan.

The demographic and community data on the following page gives a snapshot of the makeup of the town and implications for the future. More detailed information can be found in *Appendix B*.

TOWN OF COLDEN COMMUNITY PROFILE SNAPSHOT

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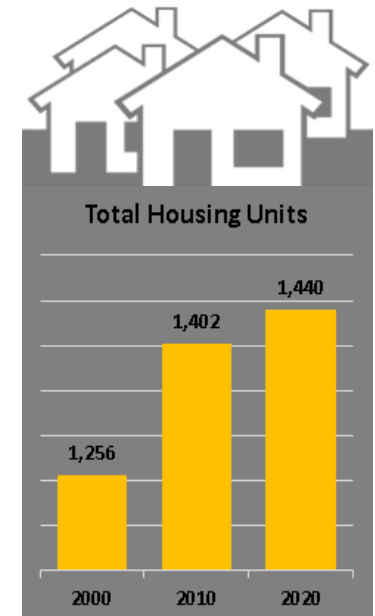
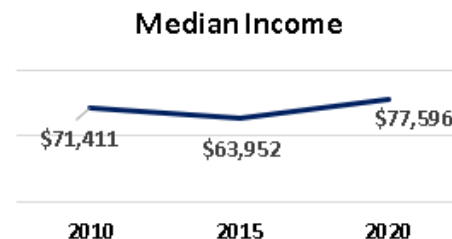
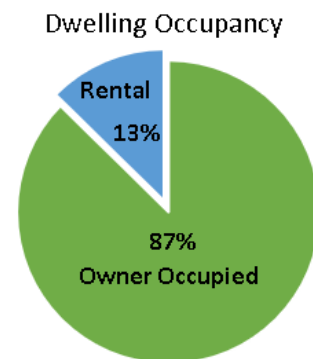
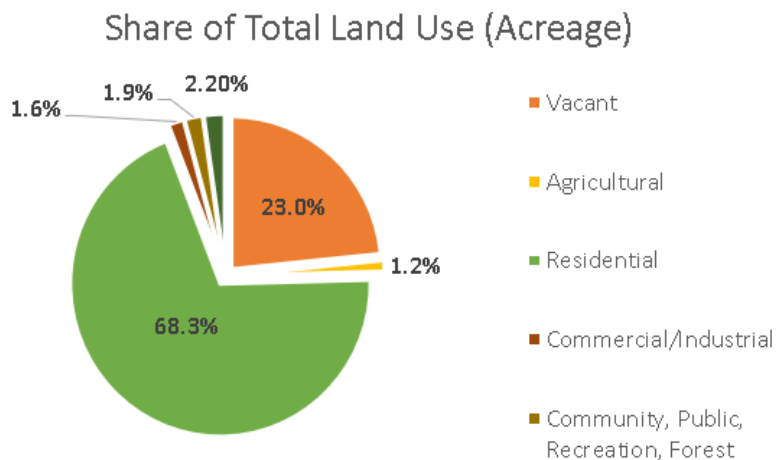
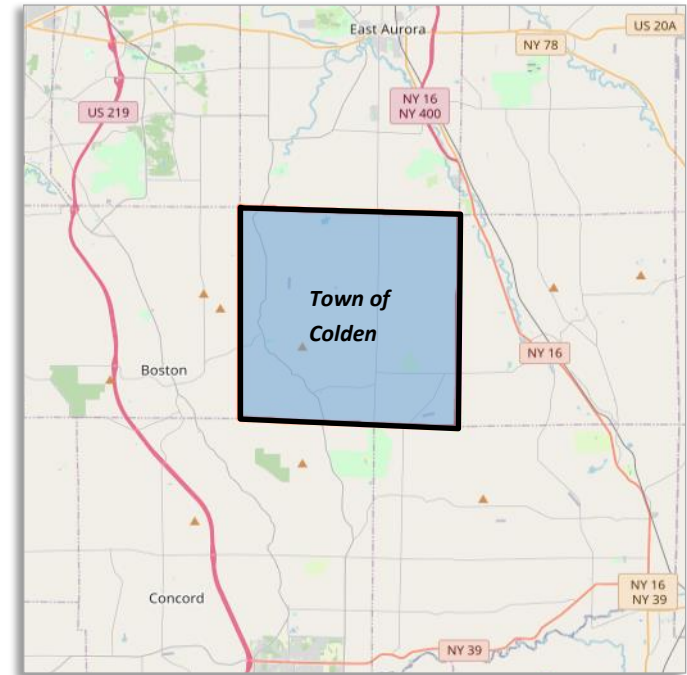
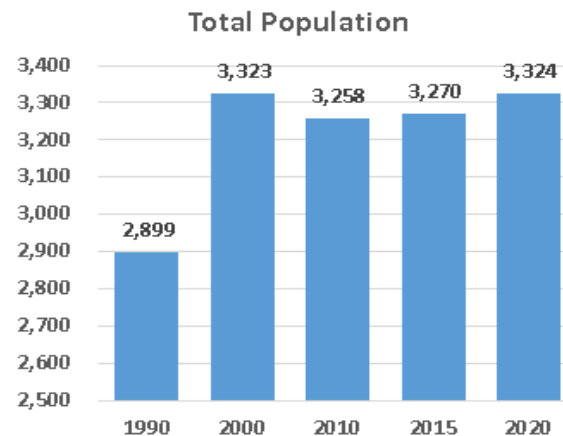
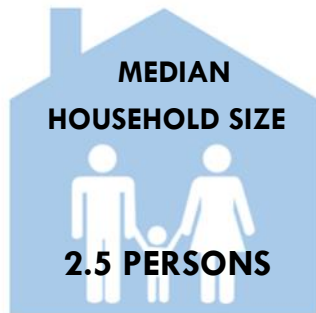
**SQUARE
MILES**

3,324

**TOTAL
POPULATION**

93

**PERSONS PER
SQUARE MILE**



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- Population has been stable but has been slowly declining since 2000.
- The average size of households & families has increased slightly within the decade.
- Not unlike other communities, median age has increased in the last decade, rising from 39.9 to 47.8 since 2010.
- Though the community overall is aging, the number of school aged children (ages 5-19), has increased slightly.
- Housing is predominately owner occupied, & mostly single-family dwellings.
- The housing stock is mixed; however, most homes are over 50 years old. Fewer homes are being built, with only about seven built between 2010 & 2019.
- Home values have been steadily increasing in the past decade.
- Median household income has increased in the last decade (6%), while median family income has decreased by 11%.
- The size of the workforce has remained stable since 2010.
- Most residents commute to work, with an average commute of 27 minutes.

Demographics are more than just numbers; they provide a window into future trends and provide insight into potential community issues or priorities. The implications of the demographics for the Town of Colden include:

- While population has decreased, projections show **stability for the future**. This indicates a need for attracting new residents and families. Population decline can have negative impacts on community services, elementary school enrollments, and housing conditions.
- **An aging population** indicates that additional community services, health services, affordable housing options, and alternative modes of transportation will be needed in the future.
- Increases in household and family sizes indicates that the **number of school aged children will increase**, which is positive for long-term community sustainability.
- An aging housing stock can have impacts on maintenance needs, affordability, and overall housing variety. This can have implications on code enforcement and population retention. **Balancing the housing stock** with newer homes can increase the tax base and attractiveness of the Town.
- Increasing housing variety and options will help to attract new residents and provide options for current residents as they age. Currently, about 92% of homes are classified as single-family homes. **Diversifying housing options** will help keep seniors in the community as they look to downsize and help young professionals find viable housing options.

- An **increase in median household income** is typically seen as an indicator that there is more **spending power** in the community. However, this can be overshadowed by inflation and expenses. Further, **decreases in family income** suggest that families within the town will have less disposable income to spend on local goods and services.
- Having a well-educated workforce can **attract potential high-wage employers**. With most residents commuting to other communities for work, **expanding business development opportunities locally** could be advantageous.



OUR COMMUNITY

In addition to the demographic makeup of the community, physical attributes also have a significant impact on the Town and its quality of life. These assets include natural features (waterbodies, forests, open spaces, etc.) as well as man-made features (roads, trails, buildings, etc.) as noted in the following maps. This section provides a brief overview of the various elements highlighted on each of the maps.

Existing Land Use (Map 2/2A)

Land uses within the Town are predominantly residential in nature, consisting of larger tracts of land due to the topography and constraints associated with development; smaller lots are typically found in the vicinity of the hamlets of Colden and Glenwood as well as along State or County roadways. Agricultural uses are scattered throughout the town where more level land is found. In general, there has been little change in land uses since the completion of the previous Master Plan with development primarily found around the hamlets or State Route 240, traversing the town from north to south.

Along with Map 2 and 2A, the land use table shown on the following page provides a breakdown of the various land classifications throughout the town; the codes are based on local assessment of properties for their primary use and utilize the NYS Real Property Service classification system. As noted, the largest use in the town is residential in terms of number of parcels, acreage,

and assessed value, highlighting the fact that Colden is a bedroom community similar to other Southtown towns. Vacant lands represent the next significant use in terms of parcels, acreage and assessed value, likely due to the topography and the natural limitation that it puts on development potential. It should be noted that some of the lands categorized as residential or vacant may, in fact, be agricultural or have an agricultural component as a secondary use as in the case of large acreage, rented lands. *For example, several properties in the Town consist of tree farms or forestry/silviculture that may be considered “vacant,” but the true use is not accurately portrayed in the classification.*

The true picture of agriculture in Colden is that there are far more parcels than noted in the land use table and Map 2; the Town’s

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan indicates that as of 2023, there are approximately 93 parcels and over 2,300 acres dedicated to various agricultural pursuits.

Regardless of this data clarification, outside of residential and vacant land uses, agricultural lands remain the third highest in terms of acreage and number of parcels in the town; the remaining land uses constitute a much smaller proportion. Some of the largest land holdings in Colden are recreation and entertainment uses, namely the Buffalo Ski Club, Colden Tubing Center (associated with Kissing Bridge), and Holland Hills Country Club. The 76 (four percent) parcels that do not have a classification represent an opportunity for the town to classify these accordingly and ensure that they are accounted for appropriately in the Town’s assessment.

Code	Property Class	No. of Parcels	% Total	Acreage	% Total	Assessed Land Value	% Total	Assessed Total Value	% Total
100	Agricultural	22	1.2%	1,535.14	6.9%	\$905,400.00	3.9%	\$2,224,200.00	1.8%
200	Residential	1,284	68.3%	12,791.32	57.3%	\$16,108,851.00	69.3%	\$107,878,899.00	85.8%
300	Vacant	432	23.0%	6,575.69	29.4%	\$4,999,760.00	21.5%	\$5,502,860.00	4.4%
400	Commercial	29	1.5%	88.79	0.4%	\$358,200.00	1.5%	\$2,021,950.00	1.6%
500	Recreation & Entertainment	8	0.4%	594.58	2.7%	\$365,198.00	1.6%	\$934,263.00	0.7%
600	Community Service	17	0.9%	43.86	0.2%	\$325,500.00	1.4%	\$3,032,300.00	2.4%
700	Industrial	2	0.1%	34.31	0.2%	\$23,100.00	0.1%	\$35,200.00	0.0%
800	Public Services	10	0.5%	150.82	0.7%	\$128,839.00	0.6%	\$4,029,739.00	3.2%
900	Forest, Parks & Conservation	1	0.1%	20.91	0.1%	\$24,700.00	0.1%	\$52,900.00	0.0%
0	No Data available	76	4.0%	495.60	2.2%	\$0.00	0.0%	\$0.00	0.0%
	TOTAL	1,881	100.0%	22,331.02	100.0%	\$23,239,548.00	100.0%	\$125,712,311.00	100.0%

Source: Erie County Department of Real Property Tax

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The distribution of land uses impacts not only a community's character, but also on the tax burden and economic development. Cost of community services studies in rural towns, such as Colden, have shown that the revenue generated by residential uses by taxes end up being less than the cost born by the Town to supply and maintain needed public services (water, sewer, fire, etc.). By comparison, commercial/industrial and working and open lands typically require fewer public services and, therefore, have a greater payback with tax revenue. Creating a greater balance of residential to non-residential land use will provide a more sustainable environment for the Town and yield greater tax revenue.

Cost of Community Services

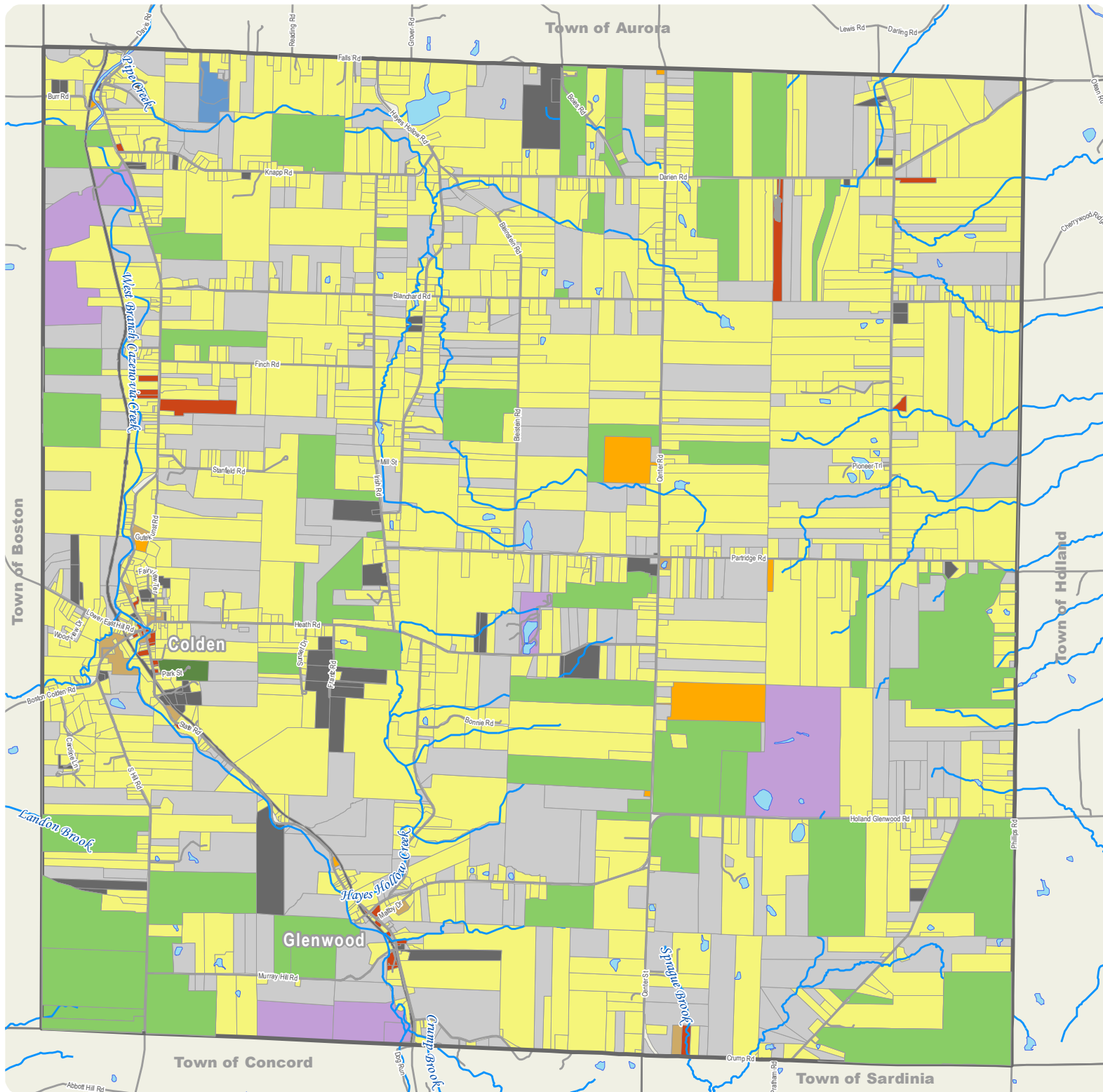
"Cost of Community Services (COCS) studies are a case study approach used to determine the fiscal contribution of existing local land uses. COCS studies are a snapshot in time of costs versus revenues for each type of land use. They do not predict future costs or revenues or the impact of future growth. They do provide a baseline of current information to help local officials and citizens make informed land use and policy decisions."

- Excerpt from the American Farmland Trust "Cost of Community Services Fact Sheet"



Median cost to provide public services for each dollar of revenue raise

Map 2 Existing Land Use *



Legend

- Municipal
- No Parcel
- Agricultural
- Residential
- Vacant
- Commercial
- Recreation & Entertainment
- Community Services
- Industrial
- Public Services
- Conservation & Parkland

**Land use as defined by primary use per the NYS Real Property Service classification system. "No Parcel Data" indicates no use assigned.*



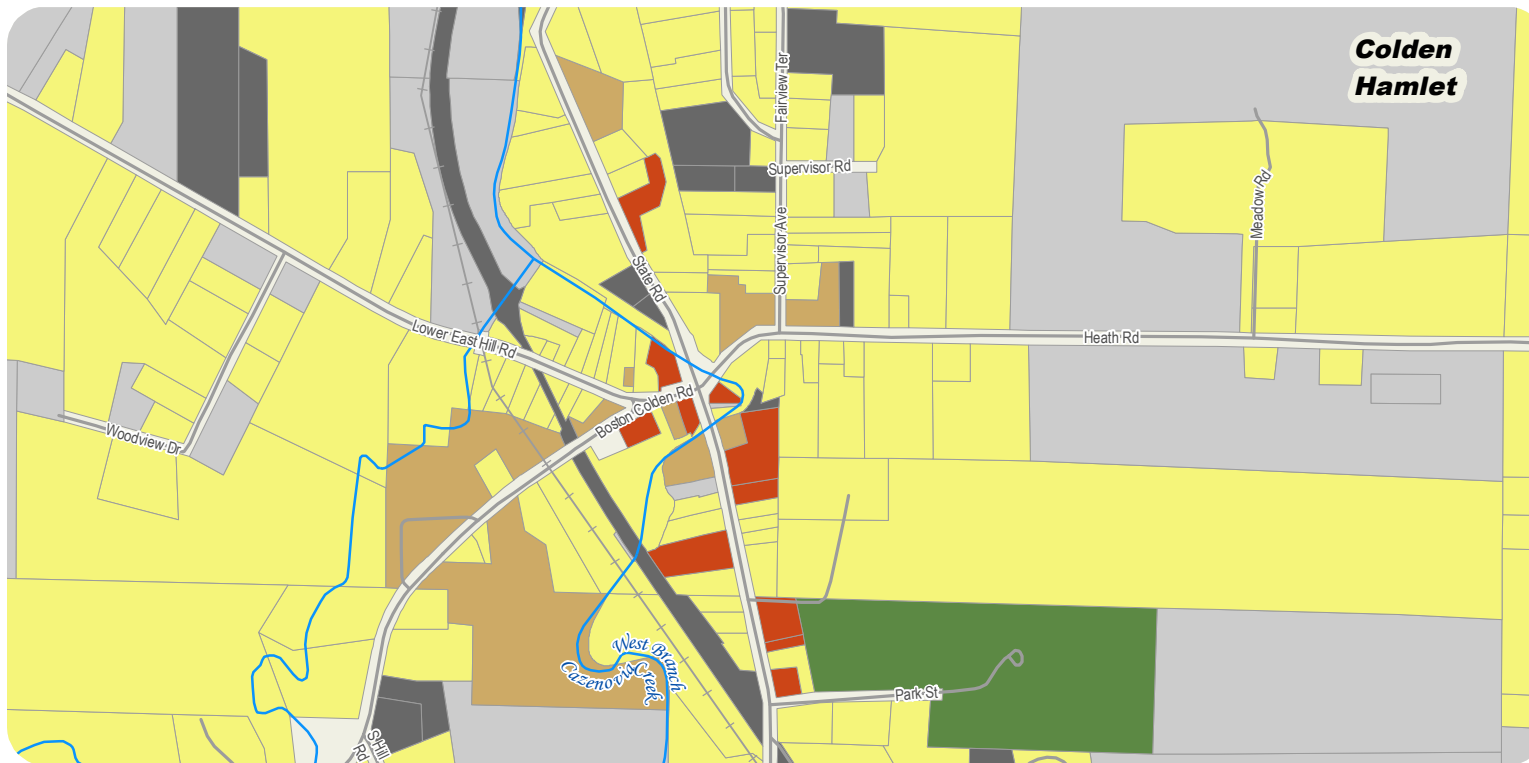
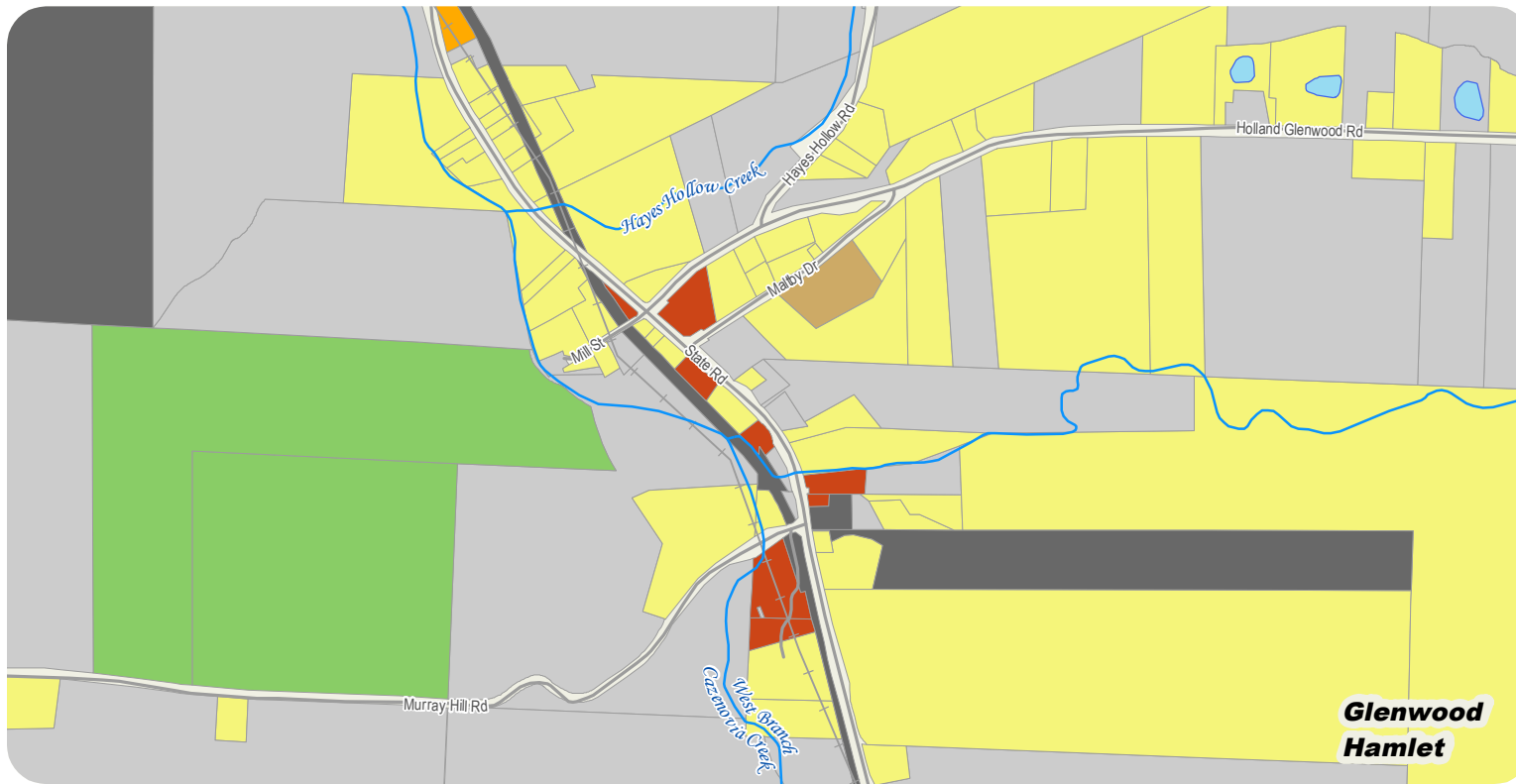
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Miles

Friday, July 14, 2023

Map 2A
Existing Land Use
(Hamlet Detail)

Legend

-  Municipal Boundaries
-  No Parcel Data
-  Agricultural
-  Residential
-  Vacant
-  Commercial
-  Recreation & Entertainment
-  Community Services
-  Industrial
-  Public Services
-  Conservation & Parkland



Community Assets (Map 3)

Resources provided by the local government and community-at-large contribute great quality to the life and general prosperity of the Town. Community resources range from municipal assets, to recreational assets, to significant private assets. Together, these resources contribute to the quality of life in the community as well as the local character. The majority of these assets are found in and around the hamlets of Colden and Glenwood, a smaller hamlet in the southern portion of the Town in the vicinity of Kissing Bridge Snow Sports. Most municipal facilities are located in the hamlet of Colden, including the Town Hall, the senior center. The Buffum Homestead, the first settler in the Town, is also in the hamlet along with the Elementary School, several churches, and the Bread of Life Outreach Center. The center is a Christian-based facility that contains a thrift shop, food pantry, and seasonal farmers market, serving the needs of residents throughout the Town of Colden.

Walter Kummer Town Park is a widely used and important recreational asset to town residents. The park contains several athletic fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, a pickle ball court, hiking trails, playgrounds, bathrooms, and a covered pavilion. The park features an 18-hole disc



Source: Springville Journal

golf course that will be equipped to be part of champion circuits. This course will be unique in that it will feature a combination of both forested and open lands. It is designed to be used as a hiking trail when not in use as a disk golf course.

Beyond the Town Park, several other recreational-based resources are found in Colden including the Buffalo Ski Club, a members-only ski resort on the northern portion of Route 240; the Colden Tubing Center in Glenwood, adjacent to Kissing Bridge; Colden Lakes Resort, and semi-private camping facility; and Holland Hills Country Club, an 18-hole public golf course. Two regionally-significant recreational uses are found adjacent to Colden in the neighboring Town of Concord – Kissing Bridge Snow Sports and Sprague Brook County Park. Though they are not in Colden, they are significant regional draws that have a economic impact on the town and contribute to the overall character of the community.

The town has two fire halls with one located just north of the hamlet of Colden and a second, smaller station in the center of town. The West Falls fire hall is located in the Town of Aurora, but serves a northern portion of Colden. Two post offices serve the town in each of the hamlets as there are several zip codes that cover the town – 14033 covers the majority as well as 14025 and 14069 in the south, 14080 to the east, and 14170 to the north.

There are three primary school districts that provide K-12 education to residents with Springville/Griffith Institute CSD on the western portion and Holland CSD on the eastern portion; East Aurora CSD covers a very small portion to the north. Colden Elementary School includes grades K-5th with grades 6-12th housed at the Springville Middle and High School in the Village of Springville (Town of

TOWN OF COLDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Concord). Students on the eastern side of the town are bussed to the Village of Holland where the districts elementary, middle and high schools are found. Colden Elementary School is the only school within any of the districts that sits within the Town's boundaries. Over the past ten years, enrollment has steadily decreased from 247 students during the 2011-2012 school year to 157 students in the 2020-2021 school year (-36%). However, the 2020-2021 school year saw a 12% increase in enrollment from the previous school year, rising from 140 students to 157.

The Springville-Griffith CSD is currently installing a multi-use trail at Colden Elementary School. This path will give students a safe way to bike and walk to school. A connection to the Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail is also planned, integrating the path with other Town recreational assets.

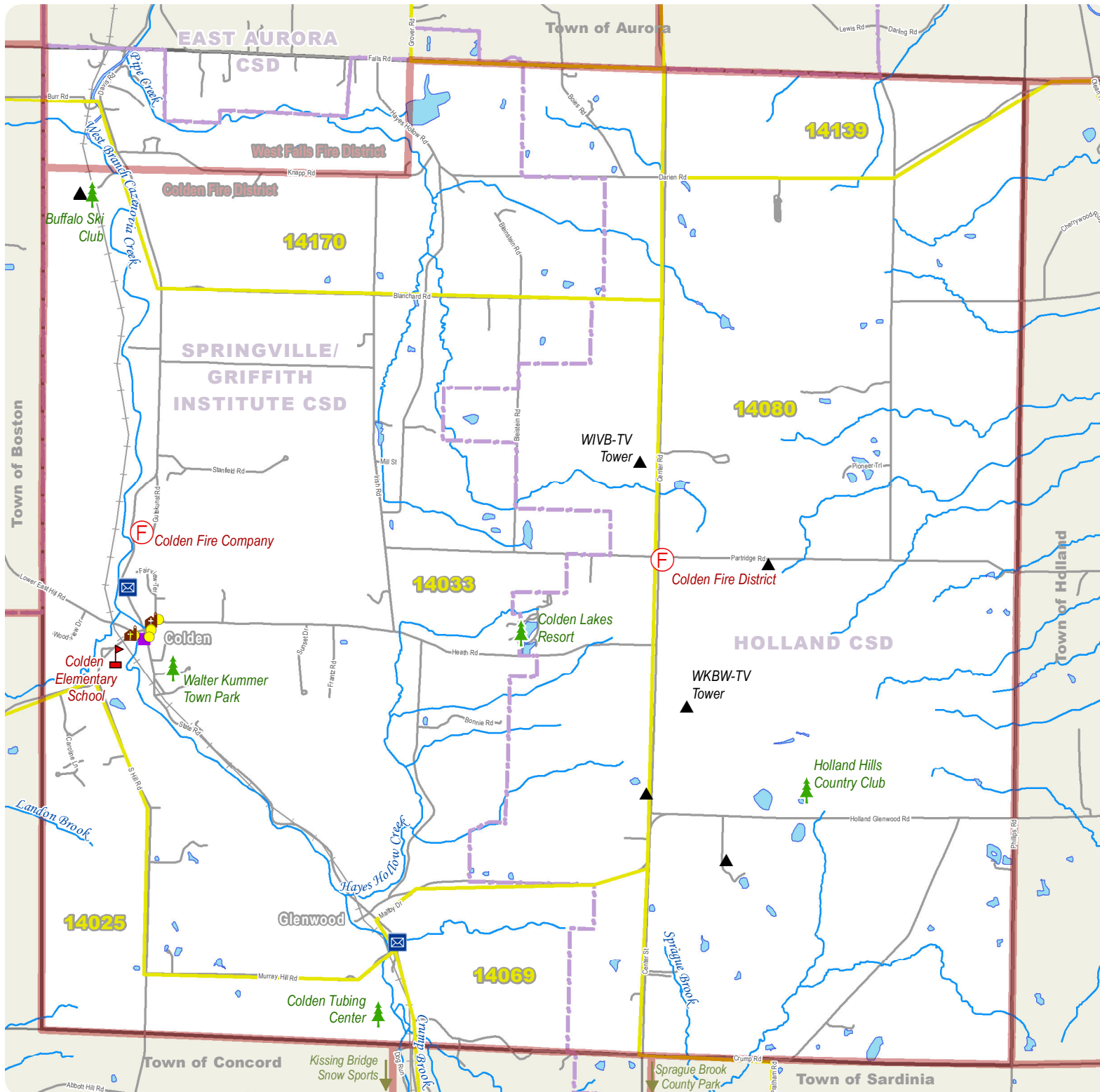
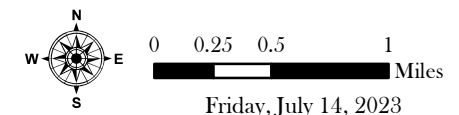
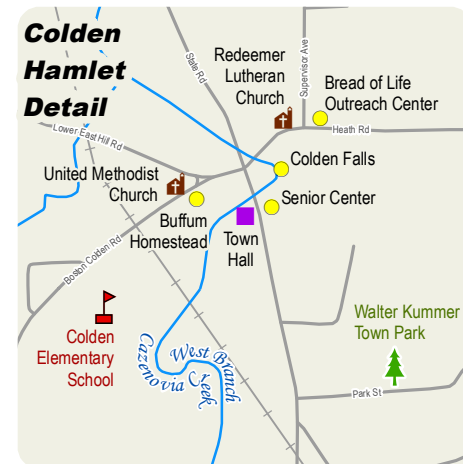


Source: Springville Griffith School District

Map 3 Community Resources

Legend

- | | | | |
|--|----------------------|--|-----------|
| | Municipal Boundaries | | School |
| | School Districts | | Fire Hall |
| | Fire Districts | | Church |
| | Zip Codes | | Town Hall |
| | Local | | USPS |
| | Recreation | | Towers |



Local Zoning (Map 4)

The Town of Colden follows a traditional Euclidean zoning model. Euclidean zoning divides an area into distinct districts that specify what uses are, and sometimes are not, allowed in that district. Typically, these codes are organized in a hierarchical structure, with each subsequent district building on the uses of a previous district. While this type of zoning has its benefits, it also comes with drawbacks. Zoning in this way can limit the potential of a property to a limited number of specific uses.

The Town of Colden's zoning is made up of only five districts – two residential, one commercial, one split residential/commercial, and agricultural. With the exception of the agricultural district, which encompasses the majority of the town, most of the districts line the Route 240 corridor extending 300 feet beyond the frontage road centerline; zoning districts outside of Route 240 exhibit a similar pattern. The Town's zoning was enacted in 1980 and amended in its entirety in 1997; subsequent minor amendments have been made over time with the last zoning map change noted as 2004.

Agricultural District (AG)

The agricultural district allows for a variety of agricultural uses as well as single-family, two-family, institutional uses, community services, recreational, and limited business uses. Lot sizes in the AG district are a minimum of 3 and 6 acres depending on use.

Commercial District (C)

A variety of commercial uses are permitted in this district along with residential, institutional, community services, and recreational

uses; some permitted commercial uses require fencing or operations within an enclosed building. Uses require between 1-3 acres (minimum) with two and multi-family uses requiring more depending on the number of dwelling units proposed.

Single Family Residence District (R-1)

Single family homes, community service, and other low intensity uses on lots between 2-3 acres (minimum) depending on availability of utilities.

General Residence District (R-2)

Similar to the R-1 district, this district also includes two-family and other multi-family dwellings as well as other institutional uses. Lot sizes are between 1-3 acres (minimum) depending on utilities with two and multi-family dwellings requiring larger lots depending on density.












Residential -Restricted Business District (R-RB)

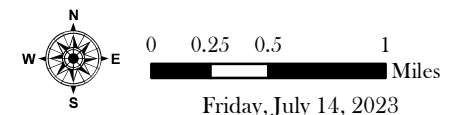
Building off of the uses in the R-1 and R-2 districts, this district also allows a variety of commercial uses primarily associated with professional offices; lot sizes are similar to R-2.

Zoning affects community character and future development by being regulatory. Making changes to the purpose, boundaries, dimensional requirements, site standards, and uses and all set the stage for growth or protection where the community would like to see it in the future.

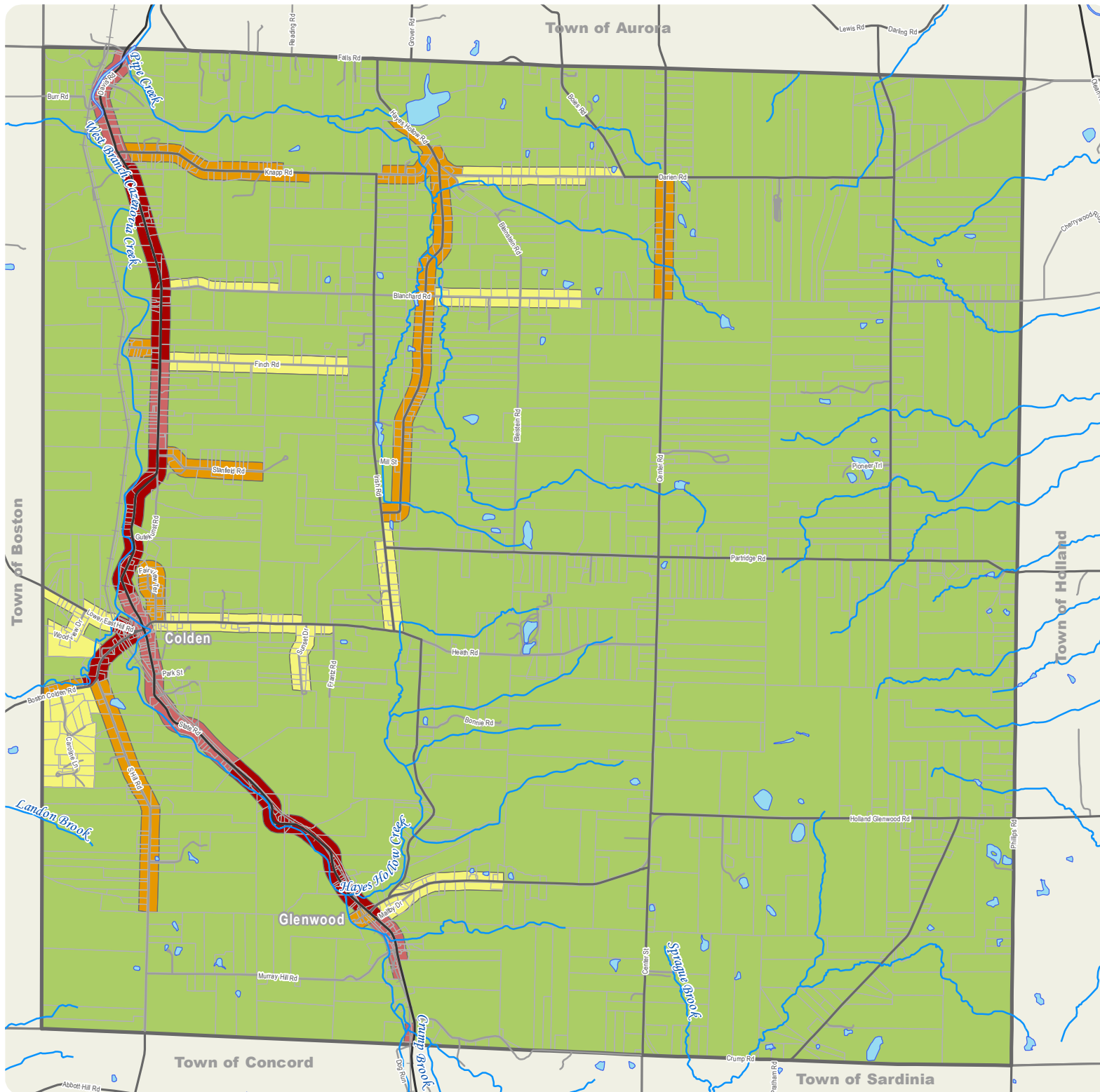
Map 4
Town Zoning
(2004)

Legend

-  Municipal Boundaries
-  State Routes
-  County Roads
-  Local Roads
-  Railroad (Aband.)
-  Parcels
-  Agricultural (AG)
-  Commercial (C)
-  Residential 1 Family (R-1)
-  Residential 2 Family (R-2)
-  Residential-Restricted Business (R-RB)



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Environmental Features (Map 5)







As previously noted, the Town of Colden is characterized by its topography, with significant hills framing valleys cut by major creeks/streams. Numerous gullies and steep slopes dot the hillsides, predominantly on the western portion of the town along Route 240 and Cazenovia Creek. Within the hamlet of Colden, in addition to the creek, Colden Falls is a well-known local feature consisting of a 15-foot cascade that flows year-round, though with seasonal fluctuations, and is easily seen from the roadside. Blanchard Hill is

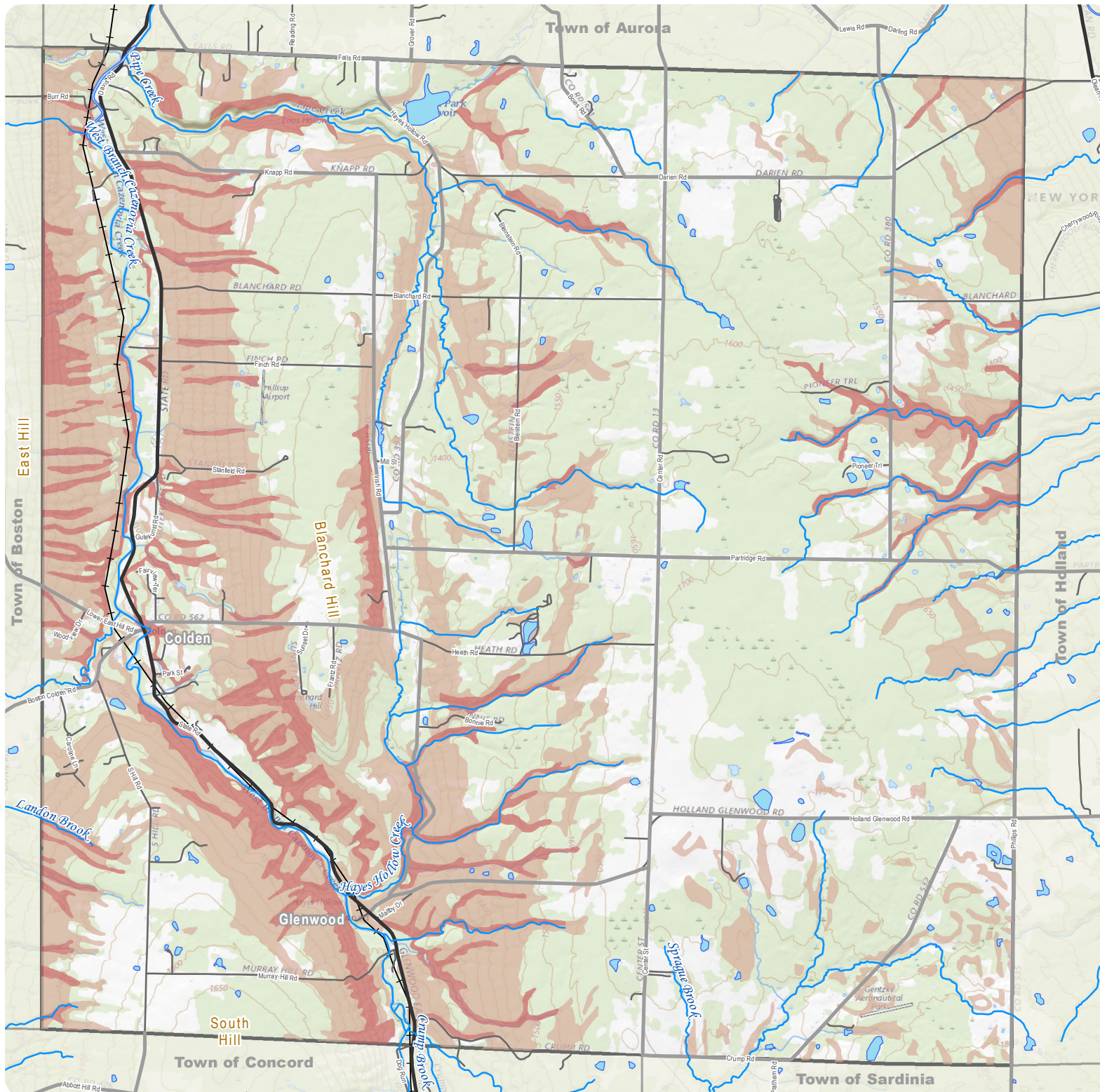
the prominent hill in the northern part of the town (peak height of 1579 feet) with South Hill in the southern portion and where Kissing Bridge Snow Sports is located. East Hill, located in the Town of Boston, frames the western edge of Colden. The eastern portion of the town, while steep in select areas, tends to increase in elevation more gradually before dropping down to meet the East Branch of Cazenovia Creek in the Town of Holland.



Map 5 Environmental Features

Legend

-  Municipal Boundaries
-  State Routes
-  County Roads
-  Local Roads
-  Slopes 10-25%
-  Slopes over 25%



Water Features (Map 6)

As noted, the West Branch of Cazenovia Creek is the main waterbody that traverses the town, forming the natural valley in which Route 240 is found as well as the hamlets. The creek is part of the Buffalo River watershed, connecting with the East Branch of Cazenovia Creek in Aurora before connecting to the river in Buffalo and emptying into Lake Erie. Several other minor tributaries to the creek are found in the town including Crump Brook, Hayes Hollow Creek, and Pipe Creek; Sprague Brook, in the southern portion of town, flows south into the Town of Sardinia. Other waterbodies, including ponds or lakes, are much smaller in size and limited in their extent, with the largest being the Orchard Park reservoir as an impoundment along Pipe Creek.

Floodplains, areas adjacent to major waterbodies that are subject to periodic flooding from storm events due to water holding soils and topography, are limited to select areas along Cazenovia Creek.

These areas are categorized by 100- and 500-year (1% and 0.2% annual chance respectively) floodplains with 100-year zones in Colden noted as A, AE, or AH/AO.


In addition to floodplains, wetlands are another key water feature that are found throughout the town. Depending on their regulatory jurisdiction at the Federal or State level, there may be limited development or, in the case of State-regulated wetlands of 12.4 acres or larger, prohibited development. Wetlands are an important resource not only for plants and animals in terms of habitats, but they also act as “natural sponges” for stormwater and can provide an opportunity for recreation and tourism to the community and visitors.


Map 6 Water Features

Legend

 Municipal Boundaries

 State Routes


 County Roads


 Local Roads

 Creeks/Streams

 NYSDEC Wetlands

Federal Wetlands

 Freshwater Emergent Wetland

 Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland


 Freshwater Pond

 Riverine


 Floodway

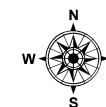
FEMA Flood Zones

 Zone A (no

 Zone AE (with

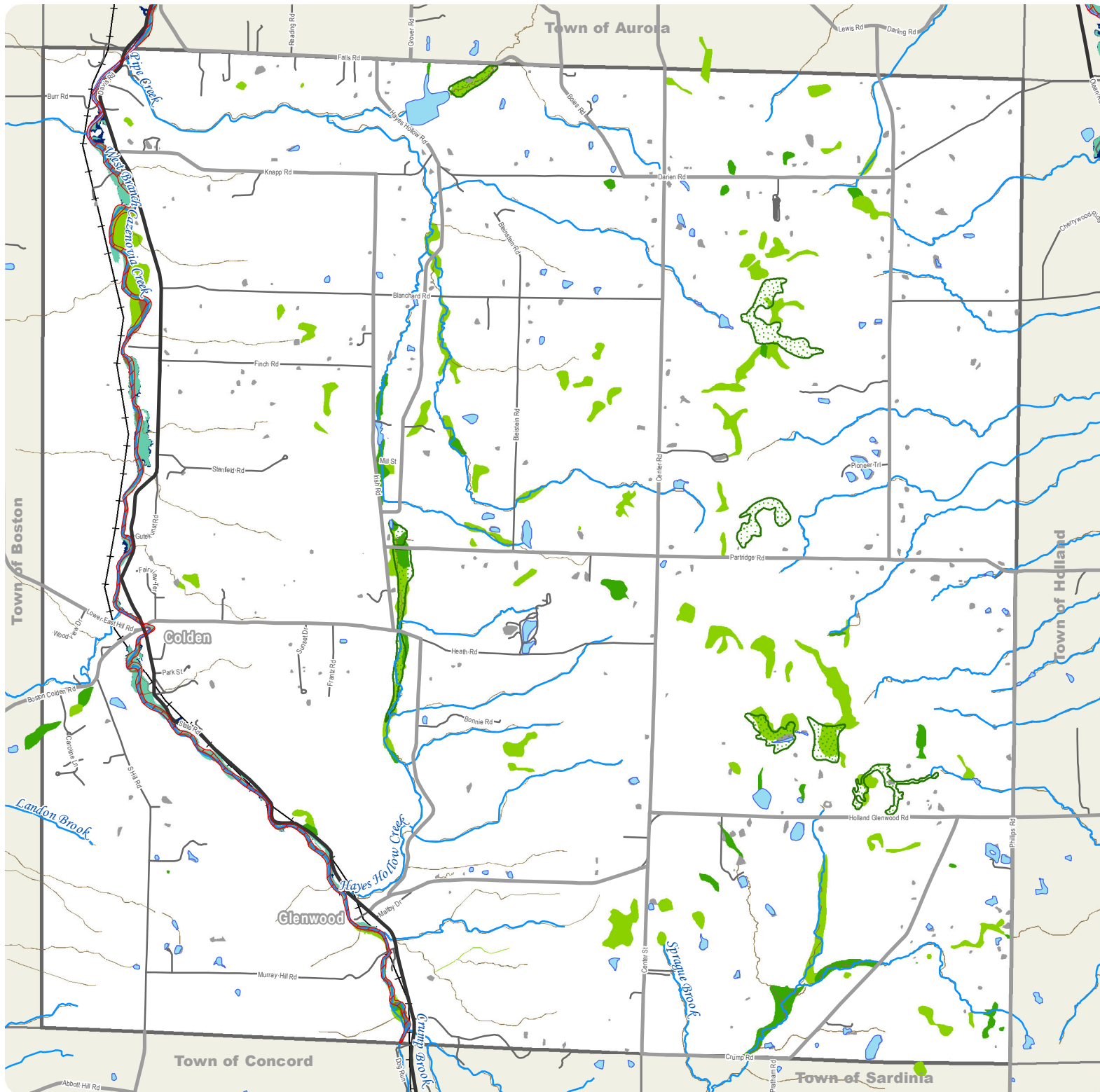
 Zone AH/AO (1-3

 0.2% Annual Flood Hazard



0 0.25 0.5 1
Miles

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Transportation Network (Map 7)

State Route 240 (Route 240), under the jurisdiction of the State Department of Transportation (NYS DOT), is the primary thoroughfare in the town connecting Colden to points north and south. This roadway all the way north to Sheridan Drive in Amherst and south to Route 242 just outside of the Village of Ellicottville. Several NYS DOT bridges are also located in the Town of Colden, with the bulk of them found in the hamlet of Colden where several County roads converge with Route 240 and cross over the West Branch of Cazenovia Creek or other tributaries.

Route 240 is also part of the WNY Southtowns Scenic Byway, a multi-roadway scenic corridor that includes portions of US 219, Routes 20A, 47, 242, and 277, running through several towns and villages in both Erie and Cattaraugus Counties. County roads make up the majority of the roadways in Colden with local roads making up the remainder.

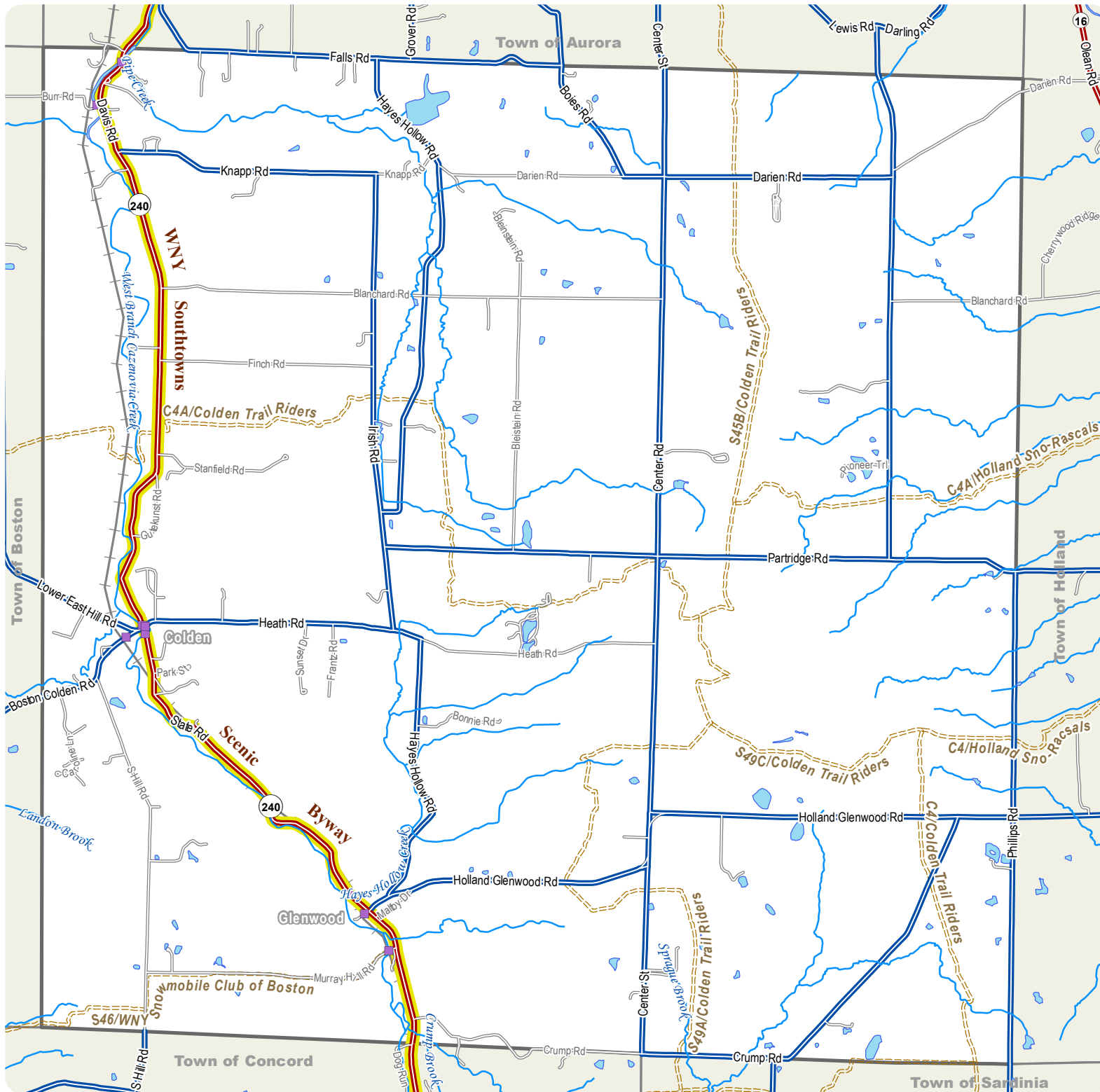
In addition to surface transportation, several NYS snowmobile trails traverse the town, maintained by local organizations including the Colden Trail Riders, Snowmobile Club of Boston, and the Holland Sno-Rascals and part of a larger regional and statewide system of trails. The former Buffalo & Pittsburgh Railroad railline runs parallel to Cazenovia Creek, though the rails have since been removed and only the trackbed remains. The Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail, a 27-mile section of the larger 80-mile Southern Tier Trail, is proposed for the former railbed with sections under development or already open, with the 2-mile section in Orchard Park opened most recently. Once completed, this trail will link the Town of Colden with the Towns of Orchard Park to the north and Ashford to the south, providing a significant recreational feature and active transportation link for residents and visitors alike.



Map 7 Transportation Network

Legend

-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Creeks/Streams
-  State Routes
-  County Roads
-  Local Roads
-  State Scenic Byway
-  NYS Bridges
-  Railroad (Aband.)
-  NYS Snowmobile Trails



Local Utilities (Map 8)











The majority of the Town of Colden is serviced by private water (well) and sewer (septic) systems; the only water district in the town is in the hamlet of Colden and extends north to Finch Road. The neighboring Towns of Aurora and Boston each have dedicated water districts through Erie County Water Authority (ECWA) with the Boston district providing the connection to Colden. Residents along Falls Road bordering the Town of Aurora are also serviced by the water district though these properties are considered “out of district” users. Two major electric transmission corridors run through the town (east-west and north-south), serviced by NYSEG, with a substation (South Colden) located just north of Glenwood. In addition to electric, a gas transmission corridor is found in the northwestern portion of Colden, running north and west into the town’s of Boston and Aurora. There are a number of active gas storage wells with additional storage wells along Heath Road and Lower East Hill Road; few active gas-producing wells are found in Colden.

Though not a utility, several small dams are noted throughout the town, all of which are classified as Class “A” or low hazard indicating that any failure is unlikely to result in damage other than to isolated or unoccupied buildings, undeveloped lands, and minor roads, with unlikely interruption to utilities. These dams are associated with impounded waters near the country club, resort, and the Orchard Park reservoir along Pipe Creek.




Four FCC-registered telecommunications towers are also found in Colden, with the largest two being those associated with WIVB-TV (#1006689, 1,056 ft) and WKBW-TV (#1001756, 1,076 ft) providing television and FM broadcasts throughout the southern tier. NYS Energy and Gas (NYSEG) maintains a 362 ft tower (#1320693) near the WIVB and WKBW towers while a 199 ft privately maintained tower is located on the Buffalo Ski Club site. Two emergency communications towers are also located in the Town with the first off of Partridge Road (121 ft) and the second south of Glenwood Holland Road (260 ft).

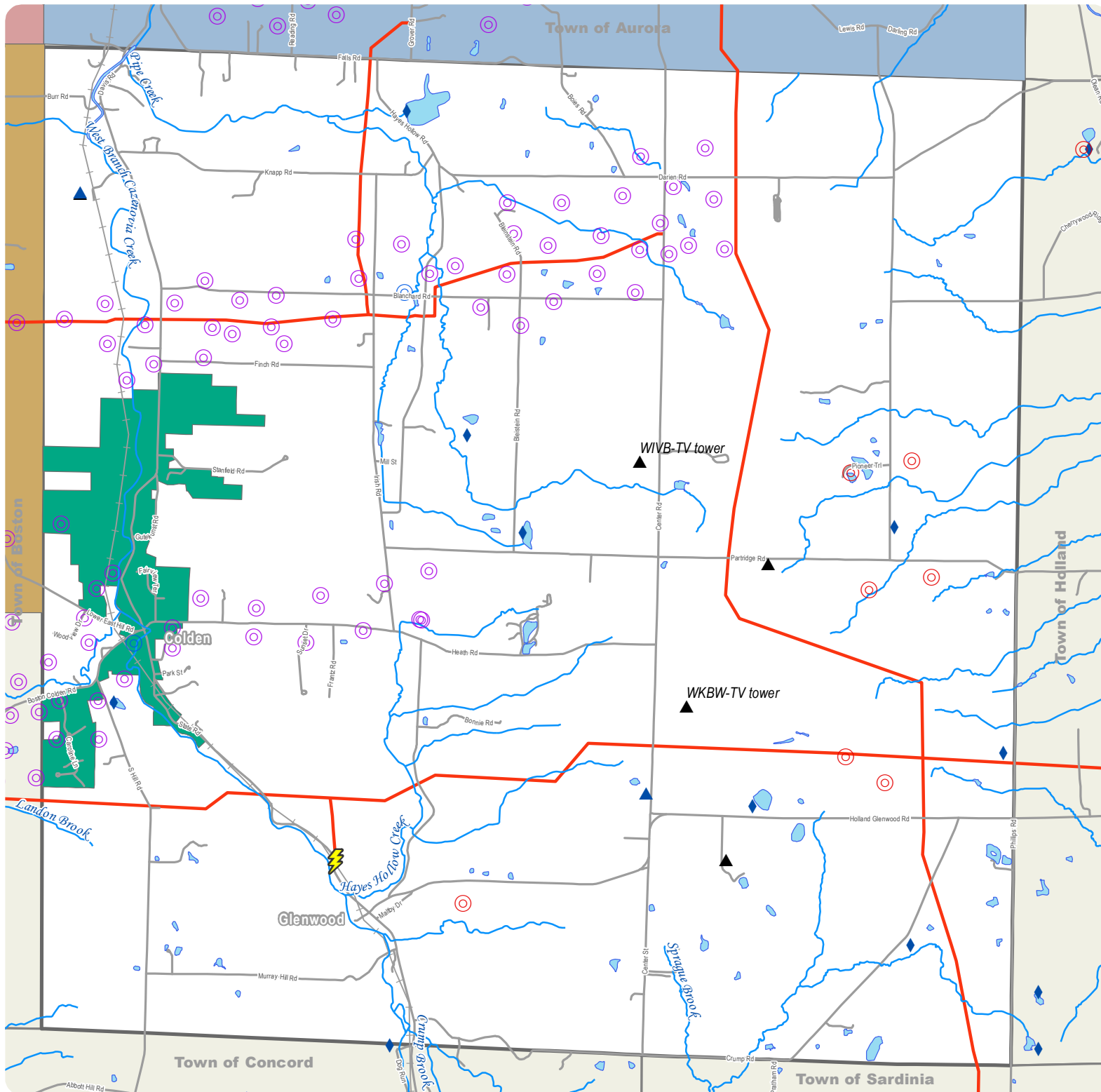
Map 8 Local Utilities/ Other Infrastructure

Legend

-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Gas/Electric Transmission Corridors
-  Colden Substation
-  NYSEG Tower
-  Communications Tower
-  Orchard Park Water Dist 17
-  Colden Water District 1
-  Boston Water District 3
-  Aurora Water District 18
-  Local Dams

Active Wells (non-water)

-  Gas
-  Storage
-  Monitoring








Agricultural Districts (Map 9)

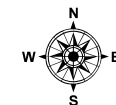
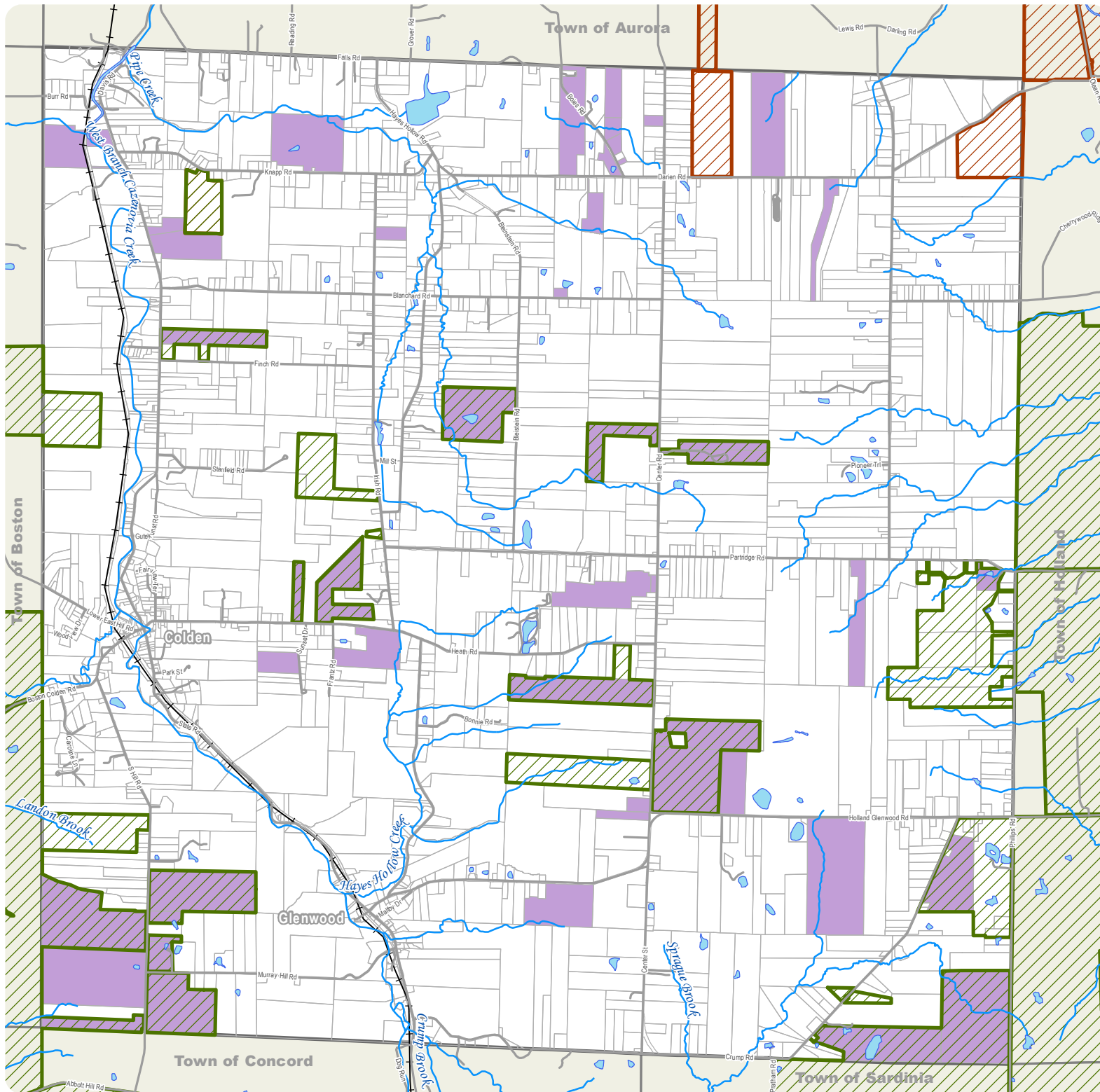
County-adopted, State-certified agricultural districts, which differ from local zoning districts in that they provide an additional level of protection in line with State and local right to farm laws, are not as extensive in Colden compared to the actual use of land for agricultural pursuits. County Ag District #15 (Southwest) covers the southwestern portion of the county, which includes the Town of Colden and neighboring communities; property owners can submit applications to the County for inclusion into the district with proof of active farming operations. While the agricultural districts in Map 9 provides one perspective on the extent of agricultural lands within the Town, there are additional land use-related data that further expands on the makeup of agriculture in Colden. Map 9 also highlights those parcel that currently (2021) receive an agricultural exemption for buildings/structures and/or land in which more than \$10,000 annual income comes from agricultural pursuits.



Map 9 Agricultural Districts

Legend

-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Parcels
-  Parcels with Ag Exemption
-  Erie County Ag Dist Central #5
-  Erie County Ag District SE #15



0 0.25 0.5 1
Miles

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Other Planning Initiatives

While this plan provides direction and strategies for the future, it is important to understand and acknowledge other local and regional initiatives and long-term planning efforts at play. These efforts, while important on the larger scale for development and conservation consistency within the County and greater region, do not replace local, community-developed plans as New York's Municipal Home Rule Law allocates that responsibility to incorporated municipalities. Facilities that are owned and operated by County, State, and Federal agencies, however, are obligated to adhere to their developed plans while also incorporating goals and recommendations set forth by local communities in their comprehensive plans.

A more in-depth assessment of these regional plans is provided in *Appendix B* – the following general implications were derived from these plans where they pertain to Colden. Those not summarized below, while still pertinent to Colden, were determined to have less relevance to this effort by comparison but still referenced and integrated where appropriate. Several of the other plans provide general goals that mirror those found in the documents below as well as increasing avenues for sustainability, addressing climate-resiliency in development and regulations, creating more livable communities, increasing mobility and accessibility, and broadening economic development opportunities.

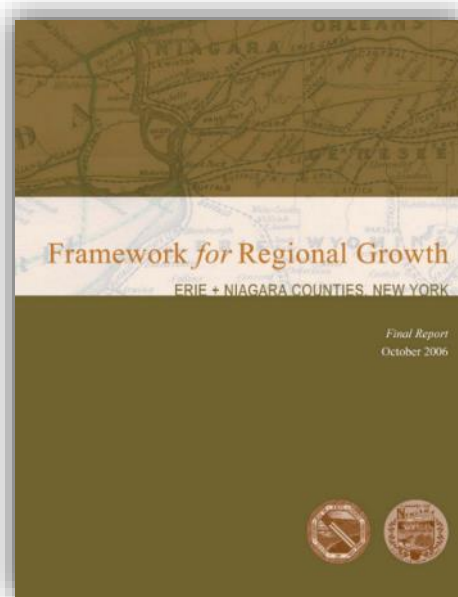
The following plans were reviewed and incorporated into this plan where appropriate. The Town should continue to reference and coordinate efforts with the following plans and initiatives (full links provided in *Appendix C*):

- ◇ [Framework for Regional Growth: Erie Niagara Counties - 2006](#)
- ◇ [Western New York Regional Economic Development Council Strategic Plan - 2011](#)
- ◇ [Erie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan - 2012](#)
- ◇ [Western New York Regional Sustainability Plan - 2013](#)
- ◇ [One Region Forward: A New Way to Plan for Buffalo Niagara– 2015](#)
- ◇ [Initiatives for a Smart Economy 2.0 - 2017](#)
- ◇ [Healthy Niagara Initiative](#)
- ◇ [Niagara River Watershed Management Plan - 2014](#)
- ◇ [Regional Niagara River Lake Erie Watershed Management Plan - 2017](#)
- ◇ [GBNRTC Moving Forward 2050 - 2018](#)
- ◇ [GBNRTC Bike Buffalo Niagara Master Plan - 2020](#)
- ◇ [Southern Tier Trail Feasibility Study](#)
- ◇ [Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail](#)

Framework for Regional Growth: Erie Niagara Counties - 2006

The *Framework* acts as the regional comprehensive plan for Erie and Niagara County. As a “rural center,” this document outlines several policies and strategies for the communities such as Colden and its hamlets, including:

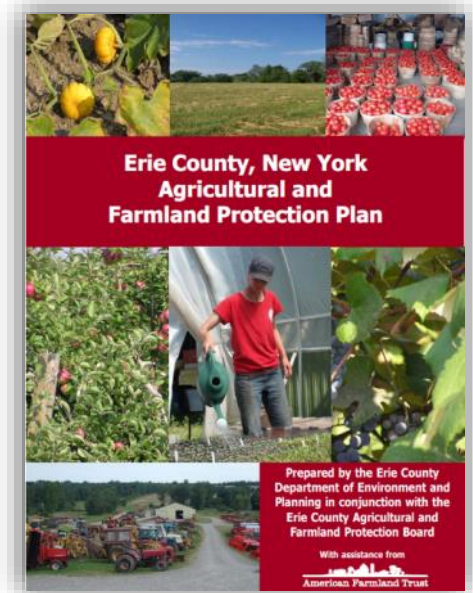
- Strengthen the rural economy through avenues that support conservation of agriculture, rural character protection, and targeted economic development
- Encourage development adjacent to existing rural centers, such as hamlets, rather than outlying areas
- Encourage smart development practices such as infill and adaptive reuse of older/historic buildings and vacant/underutilized buildings where public utilities exist
- Discourage “strip” commercial and industrial development along major roadways
- Encourage transportation improvements such as access management and increased alternative or active transportation to enhance mobility



- Determine appropriate locations for public utility extensions based on development pressure and desired growth patterns; restrict connections to utilities where land is designated for conservation
- Continue to identify and support intermunicipal agreements for public services

Erie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan – 2012

The County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan was developed to coordinate and guide County efforts among the various communities for encouraging and sustaining an agricultural economy now and in the future. In general, this plan encourages protection and preservation of active, viable farmlands, especially on lands that have suitable soils, while discouraging conversion of these lands to non-agricultural uses. The Town of Colden is embarking on the development of its own Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan which will incorporate and expand on the goals and strategies of the County-based plan while formulating local goals and strategies for protection and preserving agriculture.

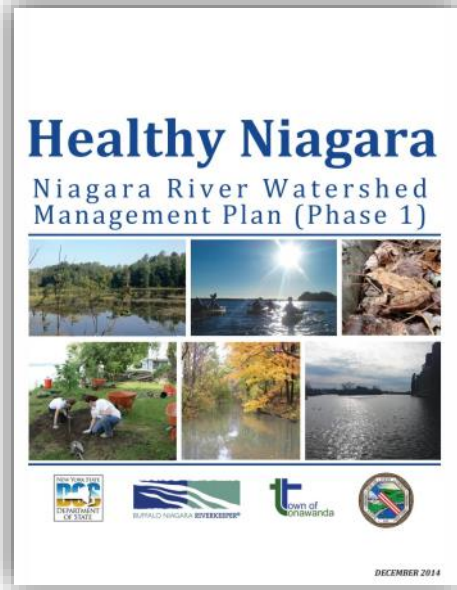


TOWN OF COLDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Healthy Niagara Initiative – 2014 & 2017

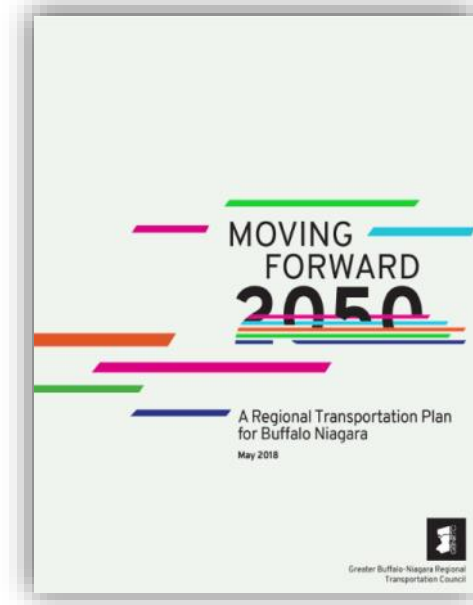
The *Healthy Niagara Initiative*, developed in 2014 with a follow-up document in 2017, was focused primarily on water quality within the Niagara River/Lake Erie watershed, which Colden is included by way of the Buffalo River subwatershed. This plan called out several key strategies for the Town including:

- Stormwater management regulations and practices to reduce runoff and sedimentation/erosion
- Establish conservation practices for protection of sensitive habitats, especially adjacent to waterbodies (i.e., riparian areas)
- Balance development of land with respect to steep slopes, heavily forested areas, and general rural character



and continue to tie regional assets together through various transportation avenues. These strategies include:

- Enhancing local roadways to support agriculture
- Targeted streetscape improvements in hamlets and other rural centers to support economic development
- Connecting communities through alternative means such as biking and walking trails
- Incentivize and encourage construction and rehabilitation of infrastructure to maximize longevity, minimize short-term deterioration, and balance impacts to habitat and wildlife



GBNRTC Moving Forward 2050–2018

As the long-range transportation program for GBNRTC, this document guides investment by the agency throughout the region. As a rural community, Colden does not have as robust of a transportation network compared to other urban areas; the primary focus is on strategic improvements that seek to support rural centers

GBNRTC Bike Buffalo Niagara Master Plan - 2020

This plan assesses the current availability of and desired connections within Erie and Niagara Counties in the form of on-street and off-street pathways, greenway trails, and other facilities. While the primary focus is on the more urbanized areas of the region, due to higher density and availability of connections, it does provide goals and general guidance for the development of trail connections to communities throughout the region.



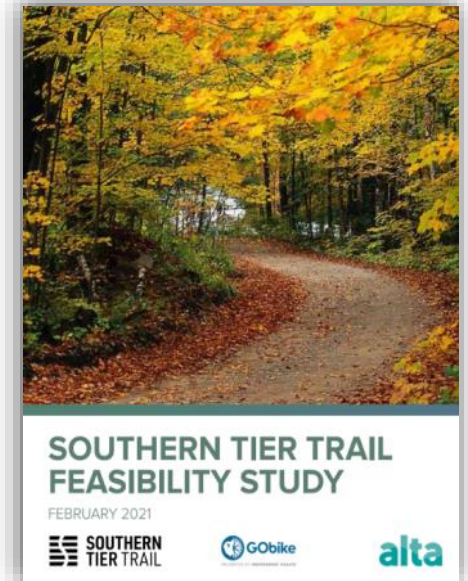
Specifically for Colden, it supports the development of Southtown trail connections as part of a broader “Allegheny Niagara Greenway” and eventually led to further feasibility and more detailed analysis through the *Southern Tier Trail Feasibility Study*.

Southern Tier Trail Feasibility Study - 2021

Building off the GBNRTC Bike Master Plan, this document assesses the feasibility of and provides conceptual-level details, including alignments and estimated costs, for an 80-mile trail connector between Buffalo (via Shoreline Trail) and Hinsdale, forming a loop

connection to the larger Empire Trail (via the Genesee Valley Greenway). Within Colden, two specific trail alignments are provided, using the former railbed of the abandoned Buffalo & Pittsburgh Railroad.

Within the context of the Southern Tier Trail, the *Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail* was formed in 2009 as an outside, not-for-profit organization to help build financial and community support for trail, specifically the section between Orchard Park and West Valley. This group seeks to help develop and manage this 27-mile portion, including liability protection, maintenance, and coordination of emergency/security issues with local police and first responders.



VISION FOR COLDEN



A comprehensive plan acts as a roadmap for the community, outlining the direction and course for the future. Beginning with a vision statement, the plan identifies where the Town sees itself in the future. From there, distinct goals, objectives, and actions are outlined to bring the Town closer to their vision.

A vision statement describes the aspirational goals of the community and sets a target for what they would like to see for the future. It is a broad statement that outlines the community's values and sets a path forward. It forms the foundation for the goals and objectives set forth in the action plan. All actions undertaken by the Town should relate back and support the vision.

The following vision statement was created with the help of the community, stakeholders, and steering committee:

Vision Statement

The Town of Colden values its rural character, strong sense of community, and natural beauty. Colden's natural assets and open spaces enhance opportunities for recreational pursuits, agricultural innovation, economic vitality, and community wellbeing.

The Town seeks to balance these assets while encouraging sustainable, strategic growth to create a more prosperous, healthy, and attractive place for present and future generations.

OUR CORE VALUES

Throughout the planning process, several themes emerged from the conversations and thoughts shared by the Town's community members. These shared characteristics give insight into what the residents of Colden value and prioritize in their community.

While the vision statement sets a target for the future, the community's core values will inform the goals and objectives that will help to achieve the vision. In conjunction with the vision statement, these values provide a framework for the goals, objective, and actions in the following sections.

Staying true to Colden's rural, small-town character

Colden takes pride in being known for its rural and small-town character. Friendly neighbors, open spaces, and its unique charm are a draw for both residents, newcomers, and visitors alike. The community desires to maintain and preserve this character and charm but is also open to smaller-scale, strategic development and growth. Colden's atmosphere allows for a peaceful, private lifestyle but is close enough to neighboring suburbs to meet the needs of its residents.



Embracing and appreciating natural assets

Among the members of the community, it is clear that the natural beauty and environmental assets of the Town are held in high esteem. From its waterfalls, majestic hills, and many waterways, Colden's landscape contributes to its allure and character in many ways. Community members take pride in the natural beauty of the Town and see it as a way to connect with those outside the area, capitalizing on opportunities that promote and support the economic health of the community. Further, with much of the Town relying on private water supplies, there is both a strong desire and need to ensure that ground and surface water sources are protected.





Source: Google Streetview (Penfield, NY)

Supporting local economic growth

Economic activity is primarily clustered in the hamlets of Colden Center and Glenwood. The two “Town Centers” provide residents with community services and business outlets to meet most of their daily needs. While maintaining its rural character remains a key core value, the community does support commercial growth that is more local and contributes to small town nature of the community. Any growth is encouraged within the hamlets, and residents would like to see more vibrancy and connectivity between these centers.

Build Upon Recreational and Community Opportunities

Colden is in the heart of ski-country and draws in activity from far beyond its borders. While the winter months bring a wealth of recreational activities for the area, Colden has recreational opportunities for all four seasons. In tandem with values supporting natural features, the Colden community seeks recreational opportunities to better explore and appreciate the outdoors with trails, parks, and recreational programming oriented toward embracing the Town’s natural beauty and developing connectivity with neighboring towns.



Source: Town of Colden

Encourage Long Term Sustainability and Versatility of Agriculture

Colden can trace its roots back to being a dairy farming community and there is no doubt that the open spaces that support agriculture and operations involved with it have contributed to the Town's rural character. While the agricultural landscape has changed and transitioned over time, the community continues to value agricultural pursuits of various scales and have a desire to support local foods. Supporting and promoting agriculture and support businesses will help to encourage its long-term sustainability and continuance in the Town.



GOALS

Building on the core values, in order for a plan to be actionable, it needs to include targeted goals and objectives that further outline direction for the future. These goals and objectives will help the community to strive toward their vision and work towards

“benchmarks” for measuring results. Using the community survey results, feedback from public meetings, and an analysis/assessment of the physical, demographic, and socioeconomic conditions of the Town, the following goals were identified within each core value.

Core Value #1: Staying true to Colden's rural, small-town character

1. Cultivate a Town identity that continues to foster a sense of place.
2. Maintain a high quality of life for residents.
3. Work towards Colden as a community for all ages.
4. Ensure development is appropriately scaled and aesthetically consistent with the Town's character.
5. Enhance opportunities for community engagement and local pride.
6. Promote and support the Town's cultural, social, and historical organizations.
7. Encourage diversity within the housing stock to meet the needs of current and future residents.
8. Deter development away from working landscapes and natural assets.

Core Value #2: Embracing and appreciating natural assets

1. Protect important local natural features from development that could degrade them or cause negative environmental impacts.
2. Promote environmental stewardship among residents, business owners, farmers, and landowners of Colden.
3. Explore strategies to ensure resiliency and sustainability in response to a changing climate.
4. Enhance and maintain relationships with regional and local partners engaged in environmental protection efforts.
5. Preserve areas that contribute to the Town's rural character and natural beauty.
6. Support the conservation of wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas.
7. Improve access to natural assets and spaces.
8. Support and encourage efforts related to ecotourism.

Core Value #3: Supporting local economic growth

1. Focus on foundational improvements, such as infrastructure, to help build economic development especially within existing developed areas.
2. Address vacant/dilapidated/underutilized sites and buildings.
3. Encourage small business development within the hamlets.

4. Support home-based business ventures or expansions where compatible with surrounding uses.
5. Strengthen Colden's ability to capitalize on tourism avenues that exist inside and outside of the Town.
6. Foster support for small businesses to grow, for new ones to be formed and for new sectors to emerge.
7. Create a vibrant, attractive, and walkable atmosphere in the Town's hamlets.
8. Improve and maintain existing public infrastructure.

Core Value #4: Build upon recreational and community opportunities

1. Explore opportunities for collaboration with the schools and other recreational organizations related to outdoor experiences.
2. Encourage additional active transportation opportunities, i.e., sidewalks, trails, bike paths, etc. as alternatives to automobiles.
3. Expand recreational opportunities linked to the Town's natural and cultural assets.
4. Collaborate with neighboring communities and organizations to promote regional networks and destinations to encourage recreational tourism.
5. Encourage programs and recreational resources that promote a healthy and active lifestyle.

6. Explore the range of opportunities for the Town's parks and future programming.

Core Value #5: Encourage long term sustainability and versatility of agriculture

1. Support current and future agricultural ventures, including non-traditional ones, that support local farmers.
2. Collaborate with regional organizations to support and promote agriculture in a comprehensive way.
3. Encourage a variety of educational opportunities for residents, new and beginning farmers, and for current farmers.
4. Support efforts that connect residents and farmers.
5. Promote regional, state, and federal programs and incentives available to agricultural operators.
6. Conserve important agricultural lands and encourage keeping farmland in production.
7. Adopt and carry out the recommendations included in the Town's Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan.

ACTION PLAN

Previous sections of this Plan have examined the community's assets, opportunities, challenges, and the desired vision for Colden's future. Building off this information, this section creates a "roadmap" for how the Plan is carried out. Various tasks, including policies and physical actions, are outlined in this section to guide the Town through successful implementation.

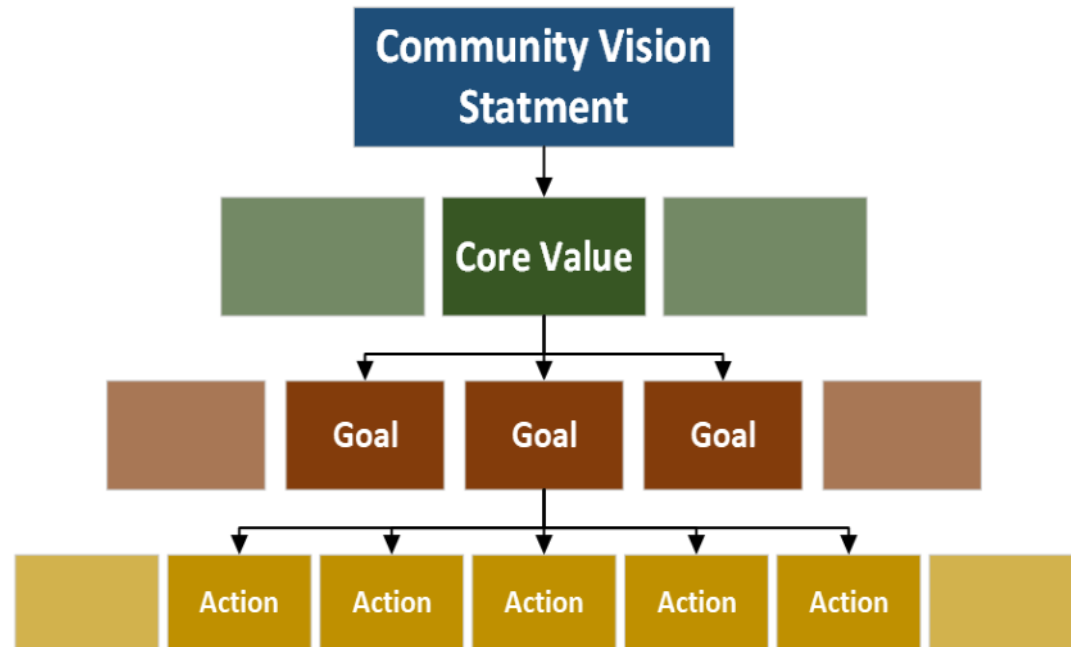
Within this section, the following tasks are described in detail:

- ***Future Land Use*** - Where and how we encourage growth or conservation in the community
- ***Plan for Action*** - Recommendations for policies, regulations, programs, etc.
- ***Implementation*** - Tools and strategies for how the plan gets used.
- ***Funding Opportunities*** - Avenues for grants and outside funding and an overview of the general process

FUTURE LAND USE

What do we want Colden to look like in the future?

In addition to community opportunities and challenges, the Comprehensive Plan also addresses where the community would like to see growth and where it would like to see preservation. The future land use section provides a graphic illustration of preferred land use patterns. This gives residents, business owners, and developers direction and a framework of land use patterns for the future.



While existing land use patterns, extent of public utilities, and environmental features serve as the physical foundation for the future land use map, other factors contribute to its development including, but not limited to demographics, economic health, and general community support. This mix of elements helps to provide a more realistic view of potential trends and opportunities within the Town of Colden, considering the core values that the community has outlined within this document. The future land use map may outline key areas of growth, but it does so in a way that reflects the values of the community, maintains rural character, and protects valuable natural and cultural resources that both contribute to the Town's identity and can serve as economic catalysts.

Through the planning process outlined in the previous sections, the overall desire of the community is to continue to maintain the rural character of Colden while encouraging development to appropriate areas.

The hamlet of Colden, acting as the pseudo-"village core" for the community, is viewed as the primary area for any potential non-residential development due to its already dense nature and the presence of public utilities to support such growth. The hamlet generally consists of the area in and around the intersection of State Road/Route 240 and Boston Colden Road.

This serves two purposes: balancing rural character by concentrating development, thereby creating a more attractive and walkable central business area and taking advantage of existing infrastructure. Development opportunities are limited within the hamlet due to geographic constraints as well as smaller parcels, a



The hamlet of Colden (above & below) exhibits many "village" qualities.



lack of parking, and generally the high occupancy rate of already existing buildings. However, any new construction, adaptive reuse, or redevelopment that may occur should continue to reinforce and reflect the local character found in the hamlet as well as promote a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Outside of the hamlet of Colden, lands will likely continue to be geared towards low-density residential development (i.e., larger lots) and agricultural uses with commercial uses found primarily along the frontage of the Route 240 corridor. The hamlet of Glenwood to the south (generally the intersection in and around State Road/Route 240 and Holland Glenwood Road), will continue to be a smaller developed area supporting local residential uses in the vicinity as well as offering potential opportunities geared towards recreational and entertainment uses that build off of the Colden Tubing Center and Kissing Bridge Snow Sports and Sprague Brook County Park in the neighboring Town of Concord.

Regarding the latter two recreational resources, Concord recently updated their own Comprehensive Plan (2018/2021) and noted this area as being a *tourism and recreational* area that has regional and local importance. Though not specifically noted, the corridor between Glenwood and the Colden-Concord border could be considered for similar uses in the future to tap into these regional resources.

While a future land use map illustrates areas for general land uses, one item to keep in mind is that it is NOT a zoning map - it merely provides guidance on long-term decision-making about land uses, including zoning changes, that implement the goals, policies, and

objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Changes that occur to existing zoning districts in the Town, whether regulatory edits/updates, district intent descriptions, or actual boundary changes, will need to be consistent with the Plan. This is a critical connection that is supported and upheld by the courts.

Zoning and the Comprehensive Plan

“Where a community, after a careful and deliberate review of ‘the present and reasonably foreseeable needs of the community’, adopts a general developmental policy for the community as a whole and amends its zoning law in accordance with that plan, courts can have some confidence that the public interest is being served”

-*Udell v. Haas* (1968)

Land Use Categories

The land uses shown on the future land use map following this section is broken down into the following categories:

Rural Residential/Agricultural

Encompassing the bulk of the Town of Colden, this area continues to be more rural in nature, providing the “country character” that is attractive in the community and contains a mix of residential and agricultural lands/farms. Residential uses are intended to be larger lots (lower density) and may include secondary uses of the land, such as agricultural, which may be leased or rented to local farmers. In addition, agricultural uses may range from larger field crop operations and sustainably logged woodlands to smaller hobby and niche farms, reflecting the diversity that makes up Colden.

Home-based businesses are also found throughout this area, offering additional commercial activity beyond what is found along the corridors and the hamlet(s), though in a less intensive/obtrusive manner as it tends to be interspersed with residential uses. Private water (wells) and sewer (septic) will continue to be commonplace throughout this area which will be the primary driver on parcel sizes to provide adequate space for these systems.

Hamlet Mixed Use

The hamlet of Colden is the primary activity area of the Town which includes a mix of commercial, institutional, educational, community service, municipal, recreational, and residential uses. The intent of this area is to continue to encourage development and



The rural character of Colden exhibits rolling hills, woodlands, agricultural fields, and interspersed homes throughout the community.

uses that create a more traditional “downtown” for residents and visitors in a pedestrian-oriented environment. Other common characteristics of this area include:

- * Slightly higher density compared to outlying rural areas of the Town (smaller lots and/or 2-3 story structures)
- * Infill development and redevelopment of underutilized buildings/lots
- * Focus on pedestrian activity and design
- * Mix of uses – vertically and within a single parcel
- * Hub for community and social events with gathering spaces

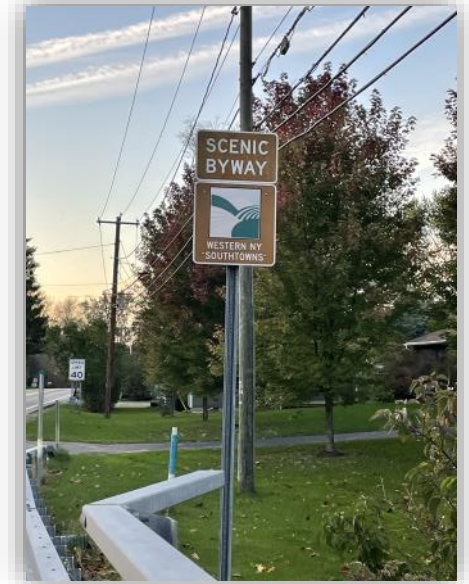
- * Community services
- * Retail and other commercial needs to increase vitality of the area
- * Creating a “sense of place” in the hamlet as an easily identifiable destination
- * Emphasis on building quality including design, activity, and aesthetics that reflects and complements the existing character

Depending on opportunities as they may arise in the area between the hamlet of Glenwood and the Colden-Concord border, these same elements could be carried over into this area as well, though likely geared more towards the commercial-recreational characteristics found there; however, it is likely in the immediate future that the area will continue to primarily reflect the rural residential category.

Commercial Corridor

This land use category is catered more towards automobile-oriented commercial uses taking advantage of traffic and volumes along the Route 240/State Road corridor. Quality building, site, and landscaping design are still important elements that are to be provided with new and redeveloped uses to convey a sense of pride and improve visual integrity of existing uses. This is especially important along this corridor as it also is part of the 108-mile long WNY Southtowns Scenic Byway, which affords the Town additional resources for regional marketing and awareness, tourism,

technical assistance, and transportation-based improvement opportunities. Utilizing the *WNY Southtowns Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan* available from the NYS DOT in addition to this community-based plan will provide further guidance on these elements. For any new commercial development that may occur along the corridor, design standards should be considered to minimize off-site impacts, such as parking, drive-throughs, access management, and buffering for adjacent non-commercial uses (especially residential).



Residential Corridors

Similar to the commercial corridors, higher density residential uses will continue to be seen along select corridors within the Town, mainly in areas currently zoned as such. Uses in these areas are limited in intensity, mainly due to the restricted development depth, as well as the desire to provide a transition between the busy thoroughfares and the rural countryside.



Sensitive Environmental Features & Scenic Viewsheds

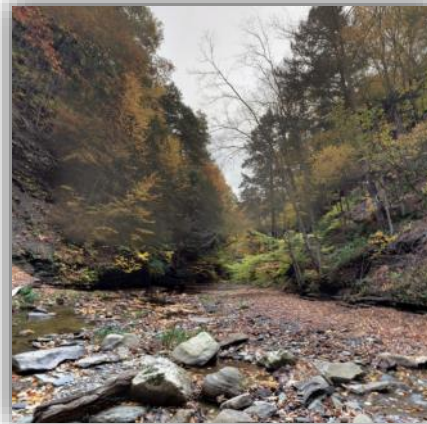
As development may occur, particularly in the more rural agricultural areas where a wealth of environmental resources exists, but throughout the Town in general, care should be taken to protect and preserve these resources for a variety of reasons, including, but not limited to:

- * General rural character, an overwhelmingly important value identified by the community
- * Unique habitat or natural communities
- * Geologic attributes
- * Presence of endangered, threatened, or rare species
- * Groundwater quality
- * Soil stability
- * Prominent vistas or scenic attributes
- * Old growth forest

Although this is not a dedicated land use category, there are several key areas within the Town that should be considered as higher priority environmental features in which development should be more tightly regulated/reviewed in order to protect and preserve them for future generations. The regulatory structure could entail greater setbacks, less land disturbance/greater vegetative buffers, or other avenues to ensure greater resource protection.

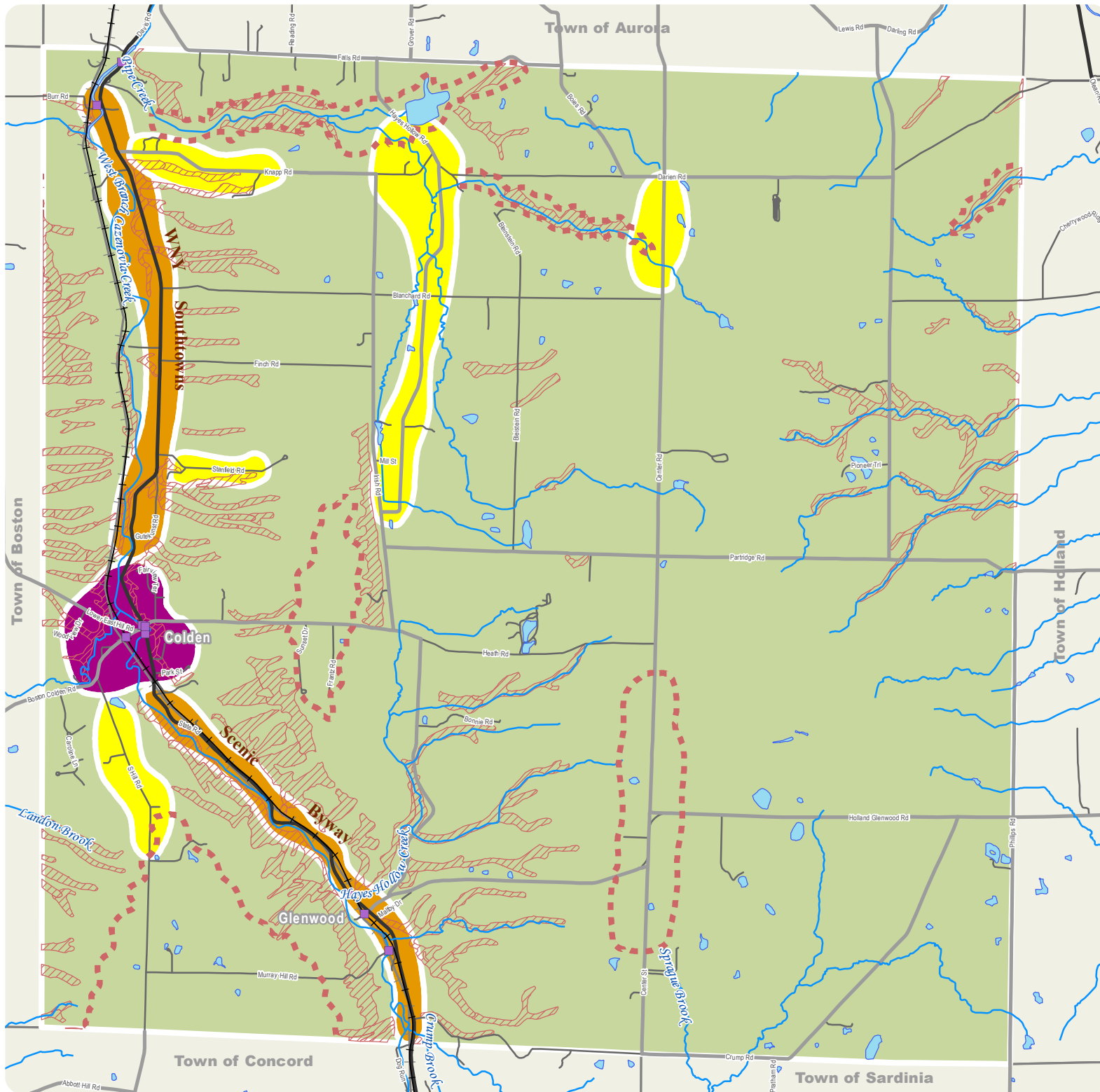
While the specifics of these areas would be determined in future implementation actions by the Town, the following areas could be considered as a starting point and are subsequently identified on the future land use map for guidance

- * WNY Southtowns Scenic Byway (properties immediately adjacent to/fronting the roadway)
- * Steep slopes (greater than 25%) and prominent ravines (e.g., Pipe Creek)
- * Ridgelines and/or named hilltops, especially on public roadways (e.g., Heath Road or South Hill Road above 1,500 feet)
- * Named creeks/streams (e.g., Pipe Creek and Haynes Hollow Creek) and other waterbodies (e.g., Orchard Park Reservoir)



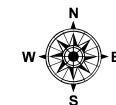
Colden is fortunate to have numerous natural features including waterfalls (top) and gullies (bottom) that are not only valuable habitats, but tourism draws as well.

Map 10 Future Land Use



Legend

- Municipal Boundaries
- State Routes
- County Roads
- Local Roads
- Railroad (Aband.)
- Commercial Corridor
- Hamlet Mixed Use
- Residential Corridor
- Rural Residential/Agricultural
- Sensitive Environmental Features & Viewsheds
- Slopes over 25%



0 0.25 0.5 1
Miles

July 14, 2023

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Early sections of this Plan focused on the background of the community and identified demographic trends, core values, and goals for the future. This portion of the Plan outlines specific recommendations the Town can take to achieve the vision and goals of the community.

These recommendations do not reflect every action that is required, nor the exact method for carrying them out. Rather, these recommendations provide a general roadmap and guidance for action. The Comprehensive Plan acts as a guidance document for local leaders, boards, and the community as a whole; how the Town ultimately fulfills these recommendations are within their own discretion.

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to be an active, working document, addressing the core values and goals set in the previous section. To assist with implementation of the plan, several components are included within the action plan to help move these recommendations forward:

Core Value

These columns tie the recommendations back to the core values of the community. Each recommendation corresponds to at least one core value, but in many instances may overlap between values.

Recommendations (Action Item)

This is the specific recommendation, or action, to carry out the goals of this plan. These recommendations can include policies, programs, regulations, projects, and/or planning tasks.

Partners

This column identifies those who have a stake in the action, or have the potential to influence the action through funding, review, permitting, technical assistance etc. This includes both internal and external entities. This may not include all of those who could be involved, but gives a preliminary idea of those needed “at the table” to coordinate the effort.

Estimated Cost

Costs for implementing actions are dependent on available local funds, the use of grants and other outside sources, consultants vs. internal manpower, and other variables. In order to give some general reference to level of expense, this category provides the Town with an idea of future financial need using the following scale:

- \$ Low cost (up to \$20,000)
- \$\$ Moderate cost (between \$20,000 and \$100,000)
- \$\$\$ High cost (over \$100,000)

Timeframe

Some actions can be achieved right away, some will be ongoing efforts, and some may span over a multi-year time frame. Categorizing these actions will provide the Town with a preliminary idea of the level of effort and timeframe needed to achieve certain actions. As a part of the annual review of the plan (outlined in later pages), this may change based on funding and/or other initiatives. Timeframes include:

- **Short Term** (1 to 2 years)
- **Mid-Term** (2 to 5 years)
- **Long Term** (5 to 10 years)
- **Ongoing**

Priority

“Where do we start?” is always one of the key questions that gets asked with implementation, especially if there are numerous recommendations that are outlined. Some of these are more critical in order to set a foundation for future changes (such as zoning regulations) while others may take time to assess, secure funds, or are otherwise not as critical to achieve in the immediate term. One avenue for helping to prioritize is by leveraging community input to identify those more highly desirable, needed, and/or critical recommendations.

Though a recommendation may be noted as being higher priority, this does not necessarily translate to immediate action as various factors come into play, including several already mentioned such as funding or additional study; the benefit of this category is to give the

community a starting point for implementation. This column in the matrix on the following pages reflects the general thoughts from the community on those items that are “higher on the list” of actions to undertake. The number of stars correspond to those that took part in the third public meeting and provided their feedback.

“He who fails to plan is planning to fail.”

- Sir Winston Churchill

★ = Priority based on community input from Public Meeting #3.

Core Value

Recommendations

Rural Character	Natural Assets	Local Economic Growth	Rec. & Comm. Opportunities	Encourage Agriculture	Action Item	Partners	Estimated Cost	Timeframe	Priority
X	X	X	X	X	1 Develop a dedicated implementation committee to assist the Town Board, Planning Board and other committee/boards within the Town on carrying out recommendations within any existing or future planning documents.	Town Board, Planning Board	N/A	Short	
X	X				2 Identify strategic areas or locations within the Town that are key viewsheds and develop specific protection measures for them including, but not limited to limits on clearing, density, grading, ridgeline development, and vegetation.	Town Board, Environmental Board	None/\$\$*	Short/Mid	★★★
X		X			3 Provide opportunities for mixed use development, such as flexible or mixed-use zoning, around Colden's commercial center and the hamlet of Glenwood.	Town Board, Planning Board	None/\$\$*	Ongoing	★
X		X			4 Develop more specific hamlet revitalization plans as necessary for design and land use guidance.	Town Board, Planning Board, consultant	\$\$	Mid	
X		X	X		5 Support new residential uses such as short-term rentals, VRBOs, accessory dwelling units, senior housing, and other housing types through code updates as needed.	Town Board, Planning Board	\$	Short/Mid	★★★
X		X		X	6 Coordinate or encourage a local Agricultural Committee with representatives from other groups/agencies to identify issues and opportunities on the future of agriculture in Colden.	Town Board, Planning Board	N/A	Short	★★★

* If consultant utilized. No cost if internally done.

DRAFT

Core Value

Recommendations

Rural Character	Natural Assets	Local Economic Growth	Rec. & Comm. Opportunities	Encourage Agriculture	Action Item	Partners	Estimated Cost	Timeframe	Priority
X	X			X	7 Encourage environmentally sound agricultural practices.	Town Board, Planning Board	N/A	Ongoing	★★★
X		X		X	8 Promote and implement the recommendations of the Town's Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan	Town Board, Planning Board	N/A	Ongoing	★★★★★
X	X				9 Consider the development of specific regulations pertaining to other sensitive environmental features including, but not limited to wetlands, floodplains, ravines/steep slopes, extensive woodlands, waterfalls, etc.	Town Board, Environmental Board, Planning Board	None/\$\$*	Short	
		X			10 Identify avenues for providing enhanced electric charging infrastructure in public locations.	Town Board, Environmental Board, Planning Board	\$\$	Mid/Long	
X		X			11 Continue to actively enforce property maintenance regulations (local and State-level) to ensure properties are kept safe and in good condition.	Town Code Enforcement	N/A	Ongoing	★★
			X		12 Coordinate with the school districts on opportunities for recreational and community programming as well as joint use of facilities where feasible and practicable, including interconnection with multi-use trails or other regional systems.	Town Board, School Districts	None/\$\$*	Ongoing	★★★

* If consultant utilized. No cost if internally done.

Core Value

Recommendations

Rural Character	Natural Assets	Local Economic Growth	Rec. & Comm. Opportunities	Encourage Agriculture	Action Item	Partners	Estimated Cost	Timeframe	Priority
X	X		X		I3 Explore other avenues for active transportation expansions, including but not limited to multi-use trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, shared traffic lanes, and walking/hiking trails, especially where they connect to regional systems.	Town Board, Planning Board, Recreation Department, Erie County Planning, NYS Parks	\$\$\$	Mid/Long	★★★ ★★★★ ★★★★
X					I4 Evaluate the need for a local noise regulation that is above and beyond the State regulations pertaining to noise.	Town Board, Planning Board, Code Enforcement	N/A	Mid	
X	X	X			I5 Encourage and expand climate friendly initiatives that can reduce consumption and greenhouse gas emissions throughout the Town. Participate in programs to open up the Town to additional funding streams and further protection of natural assets.	Town Board, Environment Board, Planning Board	\$	Ongoing	★★
X					I6 Support the development of housing for various ages, especially affordable housing for seniors and young people, in a way that discourages sprawl and uses existing infrastructure efficiently.	Town Board, Planning Board, Senior Services	N/A	Mid	★
X			X		I7 Work towards developing/revising/ updating regulations and programs that make Colden an age-friendly community, utilizing such resources such as the AARP Livable Communities or other similar initiatives, especially for housing and walkability needs.	Town Board, Planning Board, Senior Services, Erie County Senior Services	None/\$\$*	Mid	

* If consultant utilized. No cost if internally done.

Core Value

Recommendations

Rural Character	Natural Assets	Local Economic Growth	Rec. & Comm. Opportunities	Encourage Agriculture	Action Item	Partners	Estimated Cost	Timeframe	Priority
X	X		X		18 Continue to enhance existing public parks.	Town Board, Recreation Department	\$\$	Ongoing	★ ★
X		X	X		19 Explore opportunities to expand community events, festivals, and other activities that build closer intergenerational relationships among residents, advertise local businesses, and help to attract new residents and businesses.	Town Board, Senior Services, Youth Services, Library, Community Organizations	\$	Ongoing	
X	X		X		20 Work with other local/regional entities on conservation of local lands, especially those with important recreational and/or scenic characteristics, among other attributes.	Town Board, Environment Board, Planning Board, NYS Parks	\$\$	Mid/Long	★
		X	X		21 Encourage seasonal businesses to expand opportunities to multi-seasonal use and help connect them to available resources.	Town Board, Business Owners, NYS Small Business Development Center	N/A	Mid	
X	X		X		22 Where public lands have connections to local waterways, explore recreational opportunities for connections to the water where feasible.	Town Board, Environmental Board, Recreation Department	\$	Mid/Long	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
X	X	X			23 Examine County and State regulations pertaining to wellhead protection to determine if local regulations or guidance is needed.	Town Board, Environmental Board	None/\$*	Short/Mid	

* If consultant utilized. No cost if internally done.

Core Value

Recommendations

Rural Character	Natural Assets	Local Economic Growth	Rec. & Comm. Opportunities	Encourage Agriculture	Action Item	Partners	Estimated Cost	Timeframe	Priority
X	X	X	X		24 Ensure that Colden is adequately represented, promoted, and advertised in publications or associated information related to the Scenic Byway.	Town Board, Environmental Board, WNYSSB	N/A	Mid	
X		X	X		25 Explore opportunities for expanding multi-seasonal trail access on existing snowmobile trails.	Town Board, Recreation Department, Erie County Planning Department, Colden Trail Riders Club	\$	Mid	★
X		X		X	26 Create a directory of local businesses and farms open to the public to foster local support.	Town Board, Business Owners	\$	Ongoing	★★★★★
X	X	X	X		27 Explore the development of a “Friends of...” organization to support the small businesses within Colden, contribute to beautification efforts within the hamlet, and to promote new and existing businesses.	Business Owners, Planning Board	\$	Mid/Long	★★
		X	X		28 Create connectivity between Colden’s central business district and the surrounding resorts to support local businesses.	Town Board, Planning Board	None/\$*	Mid/Ongoing	★★★

* If consultant utilized. No cost if internally done.

Core Value

Recommendations

Rural Character	Natural Assets	Local Economic Growth	Rec. & Comm. Opportunities	Encourage Agriculture	Action Item	Partners	Estimated Cost	Timeframe	Priority
X		X			29 Identify grant opportunities for both businesses and property owners that will help them to make improvements to building facades and necessary repairs.	Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer	\$*	Ongoing	★
X	X				30 Plan and implement green infrastructure and natural stormwater runoff projects that will improve water quality and reduce localized flooding for Cazenovia Creek and its tributaries.	Town Board, Environmental Board	\$\$	Mid/Long	★
X	X	X	X	X	31 Develop interpretive signage throughout the Town's public areas to educate visitors and residents on the Town's unique historical, agricultural, and environmental characteristics.	Town Board, Planning Board	\$*	Mid/Long	
		X			32 As underutilized or vacant buildings become available, proactively engage with owners (e.g., school district and/or County) to discuss adaptive reuse opportunities, especially those involving housing for seniors and other key groups in the Colden community.	Town Board, Town Assessor	N/A	Ongoing	
X		X			33 Review land use and building regulations to ensure there is flexibility for existing buildings and properties within the hamlets to be revitalized with a mix of uses (vertically) to support the character and vibrancy of these areas.	Town Board, Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer	None/\$*	Short/Ongoing	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

* If consultant utilized. No cost if internally done.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The Town of Colden's Comprehensive Plan serves as the policy and guidance document for a sustainable future that balances rural character with growth and investment. This includes implementable actions such as, but not limited to local decision-making, zoning, budgeting, grants, and coordination with other entities. Making the vision for the Town a reality will take time, but it cannot be done without a plan for how to implement it. This section outlines various strategies, tools, and implementation actions that need to be considered moving forward not only local government and elected officials, but also other boards, groups, organizations, and the community-at-large.

STRATEGIES...

- ◆ **Daily use** - The plan should be used on a regular basis by the Town government as well as local boards (Planning, Zoning Board), committees, and other Town departments to evaluate plans, prioritize initiatives and projects, encourage investment, seek grants, and other related actions. Continued use and dialogue helps to ensure that service and delivery of actions are in line with the goals of the plan.
- ◆ **Alignment** - This plan will not be the only one that guides the community on land use, community policies, investments, projects, and other initiatives/efforts. As a result, there will likely be some overlapping elements or additional details that build on other plans. The Town should continue to reference and coordinate long-term efforts and actions with current or new planning documents to ensure consistency between planning them, working towards realizing the community vision and identifying the most appropriate actions to achieve goals.
- ◆ **Community Engagement** - All local government boards and committees act as “cheerleaders” for the plan, emphasizing its importance, building capacity and community support, and, more importantly, keeping the community engaged in the process. Although Colden residents and other stakeholders were involved in the development of the plan, involvement should not stop there. Maintaining an open dialogue and interacting with the community is key for successful implementation.



- ♦ **Plan review/evaluation** - Annual reviews of the plan should be undertaken with respect to progress, completion of actions, current conditions, and setting priorities for the coming year. This review can be done by a number of entities, including the Planning Board, Town Board, or even the creation of a special implementation committee (see *Tools...* section). To keep the plan fresh and in use, a progress report to the community should be considered as part of this that includes at a minimum:

- ☑ A list of implemented projects/programs/initiatives that have been completed during the previous year.
- ☑ The status of any actions that are currently underway and not yet completed and an evaluation as to whether the action is working or not.
- ☑ An evaluation of potential changes to be made to any actions not working and the identification of ways to make it better.
- ☑ Recommendations for priority action items to be considered for implementation for the next year.

- ♦ **Amendments** - A comprehensive plan is a “living document;” it is intended to guide the community, but also respond to changing needs and conditions over time. As changes occur and new issues arise, the plan should be reviewed and revised as necessary, taking into account a thorough analysis of immediate needs and long-term effects of any revisions.

In some cases, a slight modification to an action item could be all that is required while the overall goal still applies.

TOOLS...

- ♦ **Plan Adoption** - One of the first actions that the Town must undertake is the official adoption of the plan. This will ensure that the Town fully supports the goals, objectives, and actions contained within it and can begin to implement it using a variety of approaches as outlined on these pages.
- ♦ **Implementation Committee** - As outlined under *STRATEGIES... Annual review/evaluation*, various entities can be responsible for “leading the charge” on plan implementation, review, and evaluation. One such method is through the use of an implementation committee (as pointed by the Town Board), which can be made up of past/present board members, residents, stakeholders, and/or other community volunteers who can assist the Town in the process.

In addition to an annual review of the overall status of the plan, smaller, individual committees could be formed to tackle certain topics, providing a more fine-tuned approach and spreading responsibility out to the broader community. Ultimately, the Town Board will be responsible for determining the best course of action for implementation; this is just one example among many.

- ♦ **Local Regulations** - One of the most effective means of implementing the objectives of any plan is through zoning

and other local regulations. Following adoption of the plan, the Town should perform a thorough review of the existing zoning code, subdivision regulations, site plan, and other development standards for consistency, paying attention to specific actions within the plan that pertain to regulations, and considering amendments to carry out the goals of the plan as appropriate.

- ◆ **Town Budget** - From the perspective of the Town Board, reference to the plan when developing the budget and capital expenditures is one of the more critical connections to carrying out the goals and strategies. Communities have a variety of sources of revenue for community improvement projects, primarily from local property taxes, but also other tax funds, County apportionment of sales tax back to the Town, grants, receipts, fines, and other fees.

When developing the budget, the Town budget should coordinate its efforts with the Comprehensive Plan as it provides a framework for decision-making and identifies specific actions that could be incorporated into the budget each year.

- ◆ **Capital Program** - As with many efforts, the plan identifies a number of projects/actions that relate to public improvements that can only be carried out by the Town. Financial resources will always be limited and public dollars must be spent wisely; therefore, the use of a capital improvement program allows the Town to prioritize their long-term spending for public improvements, typically over a

3-5 year timeframe, for the most desirable or effective projects/actions that while remaining within budget constraints. The objectives and action items in the plan should be referenced when/if developing a capital improvement program to ensure higher priority projects are incorporated where appropriate.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES...

In addition to local funding, various other sources exist for the Town to carry out the projects, programs, and other actions contained within the plan. The current nature of grant funding in New York State changes yearly, though the grants listed below are generally available each cycle, beginning in late spring. As these funding sources become available, the Town should review the list of action items and identify the potential grants that could be utilized.

Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) & Grants Gateway

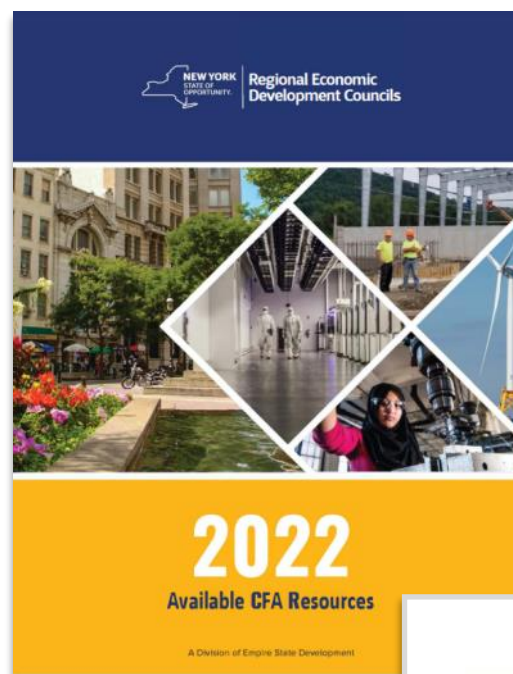
- ◆ Empire State Development – Strategic Planning and Feasibility Studies, Grant Funds, Restore New York, NY Forward
- ◆ New York State Homes and Community Renewal - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, New York Main Street Program
- ◆ NYS Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation – Environmental Protection Funds, Recreational Trails Program

- ◆ Department of State – Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, Local Government Efficiency, Smart Growth Community Planning and Zoning, Brownfield Opportunity Area
- ◆ Environmental Facilities Corp. – Wastewater Infrastructure Engineering Planning Grant, Water Infrastructure Improvement Act, Green Innovation Grant Program
- ◆ Department of Environmental Conservation - High Hazard Dam Program, Climate Smart Communities Program, Water Quality Improvement Program
- ◆ State Council of the Arts – Arts and Culture Initiatives
- ◆ Department of Agriculture and Markets - Agricultural Planning Grants, Agricultural Implementation Grants
- ◆ NYS Department of Transportation - Consolidated Local Street & Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS), Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), BRIDGE NY, Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP)

Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC)

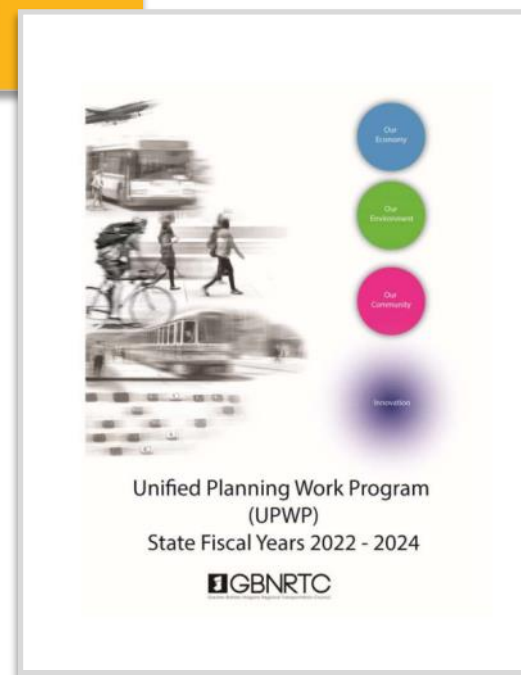
- ◆ Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- ◆ Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

In addition to the above State and regional sources of funding, the Federal government also provides avenues for grants and loans through several agencies as well as Congressional bills and



Each year, the State comes out with a guidance document (left) that outlines available funding, priorities, and other requirements associated with each funding opportunity.

GBNRTC develops a three-year work program that describes funding for various planning and work activities related to surface transportation, aligned with Federal transportation funding authorizations.



earmarks. Though these sources can provide much higher funding levels by comparison, they are also much more competitive, intensive to complete, and variable depending on the political environment in Washington, D.C.

Some of the more common sources for funding at the Federal level include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ US Department of Transportation (USDOT)
- ◆ Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- ◆ US Forest Service *through Rural Development*
- ◆ US Department of Energy (DOE)
- ◆ US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- ◆ US Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Submitting grant applications requires significant effort by the Town and any consultants utilized in preparation and delivery. The plan provides the important first step in laying out the goals, objectives, and desired actions that can easily be used to support any application. In fact, many applications provide additional scoring points to those communities that have updated plans as they clearly show direction for actions. In addition, highlighting partnerships for each action identifies potential joint efforts and application, which can also increase scoring for grants.

Prior to any grant application, the Town should:

- ◆ Discuss joint opportunities with other communities and/or organizations

- ◆ Ensure adequate funding can be dedicated to the project - some grants require the Town to front the entire project cost and then submit the final project to be reimbursed a percentage. Local matches range from none to 75%, with a 50/50 match most common, and a certain amount in the form of cash.
- ◆ Discuss and involve any stakeholders, especially if it involves non-Town owned lands. Formal letters or memorandums of understanding should be prepared.
- ◆ Reach out to local representatives, community organizations, regional groups, and other influential entities for letters of support for the project.
- ◆ Solicit a grant writing consultant if applicable (service fee may apply).
- ◆ Assemble background information including finances and government organizational structure.
- ◆ Prepare a resolution of support noting dedication of local funds.
- ◆ Begin outreach of the project to the Regional Economic Development Councils (REDC) and other influential organizations to increase visibility.

While this information is not required for all grants, understanding the level of effort and documentation puts the Town on solid footing and better prepared to write a successful grant.



Appendix A

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PUBLIC MEETING #1

On December 1, 2021, the Town of Colden held a public kickoff meeting for the update of the comprehensive plan and for the development of the agricultural and farmland protection plan. These efforts are being undertaken by CPL and WWS Planning, the planning consultants retained by the Town. Members of the community were invited to hear a brief presentation on the planning process and were asked to provide their input on three main categories: land use and zoning; community resources and assets; and, agricultural uses and considerations. Participants were divided into three groups, each lead by a facilitator from the planning team. Approximately 51 people were in attendance.

Public Kickoff Meeting and Response Summarization

Responses were collected by the planning team through collective notetaking. In addition to the feedback collected in the focus group discussions, community members were encouraged to make notations on the maps provided, and by providing written comments. These responses were then compiled and individually noted. Notes and responses from previous Planning Board meetings were incorporated into this analysis. The planning team analyzed and summarized these responses into common thoughts, values, and concerns. From this, seven thematic elements were identified: community character; business and development; natural assets; outdoor recreation; utilities; land use and zoning; and agriculture.

Below is a summarization of the feedback received, categorized by the emergent themes. This feedback will be used to help determine what the core values of the community are, and what the vision is for the future.

Community Character

In each of the group discussions, it was clear that the participants valued the rural characteristics of the Town and its close-knit feel. Many indicated that they'd like



WHAT WE'VE HEARD FROM YOU...

Summary of common themes...

- ❖ Community prioritizes rural/small-town character
- ❖ Natural features and open space are best assets
- ❖ Resources are a draw to those outside the Town
- ❖ Desire to build upon recreational activities
- ❖ Support limited growth in key areas
- ❖ More local, small businesses



their community to stay as is and would like to see growth managed in a way that maintains its rural nature. Many suggested commercial growth be contained to the hamlet areas to mediate any development concerns and suggested developing design standards for character consistency.

In our group conversations, participants were asked about community resources and what assets they valued. Several identified the Colden Elementary School, Bread of Life, and the Town's Fire Department as community assets. Senior services were indicated as an asset, including an active seniors' group and the senior center. The Town's heritage was also noted as an asset.

Business and Development

In our group conversations, many participants indicated that they would like to see any future commercial growth directed toward the hamlets. Many residents said that they would like to encourage and support local businesses, and preferred local over chain-store developments. They emphasized revitalizing the hamlet of Colden as a walkable, village like Town Center.

Some noted that there are constraints to expanding growth in the hamlets, noting the ageing commercial building stock and utility capacity. Colden hamlet, in particular, has little land area available

for growth and expansion. It was suggested that business growth should likely be extended along Route 240, connecting the hamlets. It was also noted by some that parking in the Colden hamlet is needed, with vehicle parking often blocking the sidewalks.

Natural Assets

The Town's natural features were discussed at length and touted as a valued community asset. There was a common desire to conserve and protect the Town's natural features and open space. Many residents suggested that they would like to see these assets be recognized and accessible. Several participants mentioned providing accessible spaces, like scenic pull offs, to promote these natural features.



Several participants also expressed a desire to be a climate friendly community. It was mentioned that mitigation to hazards, such as increased flooding, may be a concern for the future.

Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor recreational opportunities were emphasized as a highly valued asset. Community members appreciate and support the recreational opportunities that currently exist, such as the Town's park and snowmobile trails. Many also expressed excitement for the Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail that is currently in development and hoped to see trail connectivity to businesses within the hamlet.

Many expressed an interest in expanding upon the Town's current recreational opportunities, which were cited as a draw to the area to be promoted. Some encouraged the development of equestrian trails, indicating that there are equestrian users who desire to use the trails and are losing riding opportunities to land development. There was also a desire to increase outdoor recreational facilities and opportunities in areas that highlight the topography and natural features (woodlands) of the Town – a few citing Emery Park in Aurora as an example.

Utilities

Some community members expressed a desire to expand water services within the town, primarily in the northwestern area. With most of the Town serviced by private water, it was emphasized that protection of groundwater should be prioritized. Several expressed an opposition to actions that would possibly disturb water supplies, such as fracking. There were also concerns expressed regarding chemical contamination by utility companies.

While some expressed an interest in expanding water services, the addition of sewer services was generally opposed.



Land Use/Zoning

Community members were asked to provide their thoughts on land use and zoning in the Town. A general suggestion was that the zoning code should be updated. It was mentioned that improvements are needed to make the code clearer and easier to use, specifically in relation to permitting. Improvement with communication and transparency in regard to land use changes and decisions was also mentioned as a need. Further, there was some discussion and question on definitions such as: defining agriculture; defining home businesses; defining dwelling types and uses; and, defining types of businesses in general.

There was also discussion on residential development and the regulations surrounding them.

It was suggested that bulk regulations for residential developments be reviewed. It was noted that newer homes are large in size and may be too large for the lots they are located on. Generally, community members indicated that they opposed the development of subdivisions. Additionally, concern was expressed regarding “split” zoning and the potential to land lock agricultural lands.

Agriculture

In an effort to inform the development of the Town’s Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan, participants were specifically asked to provide their thoughts and input on agricultural opportunities and constraints. Collectively, there was a desire to encourage and support farming and agricultural uses.

While the Town historically has been a dairy farming community, that no longer seems to be the case. With dairy on the decline, other agricultural uses have emerged. When asked about the different agricultural entities, residents pointed to several diverse operations, ranging from commodity crops, to forestry, to livestock operations and more. Agriculture in the town is versatile, and a desire was expressed to have a comprehensive definition and understanding of agriculture.

A few residents and farmers expressed concerns regarding balancing residential and agricultural uses, citing the need for harmonious land use and concerns related to potential road damage by heavy vehicle use and manure. Further, it was noted that neighbor relations may benefit from education on agriculture and local foods, and from direct discussions between residents and farmers.

Many residents agreed that they support and encourage the production of local foods and expressed an interest in community supported agriculture (CSA). Some expressed a desire in developing community gardens as an opportunity for some to learn about agriculture and grow their own foods. The farmer’s market was noted as a community asset, but it was acknowledged that there is competition between other local farmer’s markets, including the one in East Aurora. There was some interest expressed in having agritourism opportunities located in the Town.

A few land-use concerns related to agricultural practices were mentioned. For one, it was mentioned that with further residential development, agricultural parcels may be at risk of becoming landlocked. The segmentation of agricultural lands for the use of residential development was

also cited as a concern. Conversion pressures related to the development of renewable energy facilities was noted as an emerging pressure. Generally, it was agreed that farmland should be preserved and protected.

Summarization of Responses

Agriculture

Accessibility issues with ag located behind residential

Agriculture support entities are located outside of the Town's boundaries (Springville/Arcade)

Balance residential and agricultural uses

Challenges related to timber

Concerns around renewable energy projects/pressures

Concerns regarding ag. uses and road damage

Concerns regarding competition of other farmer's markets

Concerns about utility companies use of chemicals and interference with agricultural operations/wells

Definition of farming is needed

Education needed on ag. and local foods

Encourage and support agriculture

Encourage community supported agricultural uses (CSAs)

Encourage/expand community gardens

Farming is constrained by topography

Few roadside stands

Increase agricultural tourism

Need representative picture of agriculture

No dairy farming anymore

Only way to preserve farmland is through conservation easements and PDR

Protect Farmland

Residential/agriculture conflicts exist

Segmentation of ag. lands for residential uses

Strengthen farmers market

Welcome incoming farmers

Business and Development

Aging of commercial building stock

Concerns regarding demands for fire/emergency services as a consequence of growth

Concerns regarding parking on sidewalks in the hamlets

Contain commercial growth to hamlets

Encourage locally owned businesses

Focus on growth of tourism, not the community in general (residential development)

Hamlet commercial growth is constrained

Increase economic tourism

Keep development to hamlets

Local businesses are an asset

Need high speed internet

Not in favor of chain developments
Open to development
Revitalize hamlet as the center of the community
Slow speed on 240
Utilize current commercial building stock

Community Character

Add rest stop areas along State Rd.
Attract more families
Bread of Life is an asset
Concerns regarding transportation options for seniors
Create a walkable village feel in the hamlets
Develop design standards for character and consistency
Elementary School is an asset
Local community heritage is an asset
Maintain rural character
No transportation problem areas
Property maintenance
Senior Center is an underutilized asset
Senior's Group is an asset
Strong Fire Department is an asset

Value close knit community

Land Use/Zoning

Accessibility issues with agricultural lands located behind residential

Align home size limits with State Uniform Code

Improve bulk regulations for housing

Clarity on what home based businesses are

Communication of land use changes needed

Concerns regarding flag lots

Concerns regarding safety and noise of target shooting

Define types of businesses in the zoning code

Explore alternative housing types/uses

Favor small scale renewable energy (single family)

Improve clarity and access of zoning code – update the code

Need more transparency in land use decisions

New homes being developed are not starter homes (too large)

Notify neighbors when business changes

Opposition to subdivision developments

Restrict development to lots within the water district

Revise home occupations to reflect current issues (i.e., Bitcoin?)

Segmentation of agricultural lands for residential uses

Natural Assets

Access to natural features (e.g., scenic pull offs)

Be climate friendly – mitigate climate issues

Conservation of resources

Incentivize preservation of open space

Natural beauty is an asset

Protect natural assets

Protect open spaces

Recognize natural assets

Topography constrains development

Value open space and parkland

Outdoor Recreation

Develop more parks

ECRT trail is an asset

Expand equestrian trail opportunities

Explore and grow recreational uses/opportunities

Increase recreational tourism

Increase trail connectivity to hamlet

Losing equestrian opportunities to land development

More recreational opportunities for young people

Outdoor recreational opportunities are an asset

Promote outdoor recreational opportunities

Snowmobile trails are an asset

Town recreation programs are well attended

Would like to see pool/wading pool/splash park

Utilities

Concerns about utility companies use of chemicals and interference with agricultural operations/wells

Expand Water District (focusing on north/western area of the Town)

Oppose fracking, due to water supply concerns

Oppose public sewer

Protect water and sewer

Wastewater unlikely

PUBLIC MEETING #2

On September 27, 2022, the Town of Colden held a second public meeting for the update of the Town's comprehensive/master plan and for the development of the agricultural and farmland protection plan. The Town advertised the meeting through several different means, including direct mailings to landowners; advertisement on the Town's website, postings on a separate website dedicated to the planning projects; and through social media posts. Members of the community were invited to hear a brief presentation on the planning process and were asked to provide their input on the proposed vision statement, core values, and goals. Participants were further prompted to give insight into their

thoughts for future land uses in the Town. Attendees were divided into three groups, each lead by a facilitator from the planning team (CPL & WWS Planning). Approximately 60 people were in attendance.

Response Summarization

In each of the three groups, community members were prompted to give feedback on the proposed core values and goals. Below is a listing of the topics discussed within each group and the takeaways:

Diamond Group

- Predatory animals (coyote, mink, bobcat, etc.) are a concern for agricultural ventures.
- There is a desire to have more *Right to Farm* signs posted at the Town entrances.
- Realtors should be educated on *Right to Farm* laws.
- Utility companies are using pesticides on leased lands. This causes concern for soil contamination and water quality.
- There is a desire to see more local agricultural workshops held. Potential topics discussed included hobby farming and conservation easements.



- Form an agriculture citizens group that can develop a “clearing house” of information and resources to be posted on the Town’s website.
- Development in the hamlet is constrained by small, narrow lots.
- There isn’t any space or infrastructure for new development in the hamlet.
- There is limited population to support activities/businesses.
- Better promotion of activities and services, such as the senior center, could help.
- Community members would like to see the senior center utilized more.
- Love the hamlet, and Town, the way it is – no need for change.
- There are no vacancies in the hamlet, all buildings are used for either commercial or residential uses.
- Design standards could help the hamlet retain its rural character.
- Trail development could include interpretive signage for birding.
- Hiking/cross country skiing could be developed alongside of the disc golf course coming to the Town’s Park.
- Senior housing could be developed in the form of in-law apartments and/or elder cottages.
- Colden Elementary School could be rehabilitated for senior housing, priority is to house seniors that are citizens of Colden.
- Residential development could be explored near Kissing Bridge.

Circle Group

- Don’t want to be like East Aurora.
- Keep Colden as it is.
- Colden is simple and quaint. Community members want to retain old-fashioned feel.
- The small community and beautiful landscapes are a draw to the Town.
- Residents do not want to see subdivisions or new roads.

- Any growth should be slow and incremental. Single family homes are preferred over other residential developments.
- Commercial growth should be contained to where it is currently located. Keep it condensed and contained – no leapfrog development.
- In line with keeping the commercial areas contained, community members expressed a desire to have a location where you could park your car and walk to all of the businesses.
- Glenwood area used to have more businesses, but that is no longer the case. Community members reminisced about old businesses but did not foresee similar businesses returning.
- Discourage industrial growth and development that would negatively impact the picturesque landscape of the Town.
- There was support for senior housing in the form of accessory dwelling units and development styles that would allow and encourage seniors to remain in the area. Senior living in the form of apartments was discouraged.
- Community would like to see senior center utilized more and additional programming/services for seniors.
- There was a strong desire to encourage and promote ways to bring the community together and build social connections within the community.
- Expressed appreciation for community events, such as festivals and music in the park. Encouraged having gathering spaces where community members can come together, like the former Colden Kitchen.
- Create resources to help new and beginning farmers, and farmers looking to expand their operations.
- Develop a local directory of farms and businesses that sell to the public.
- Design standards might be too prescriptive, but beautification efforts in the hamlet can help enhance curb appeal.
- Flooding is a concern for some residents already. Future development should be carefully considered to avoid negative impacts to waterway courses and levels.
- Community members shared mixed feelings about trail development, some encouraging trails and connectivity while others were concerned about trail maintenance. Some expressed concerns that trail development might be counter to the Town's rural character.
- Recognized that in order for local businesses to survive, they must attract customers from inside and outside the Town. Community members support having small, local businesses.

Square Group

- Do not want to see high density development.
- Accessory dwelling units are acceptable but should be allowed on larger sites.
- Height limits should be considered to keep to the Town's character.
- Patio homes may be an avenue to address senior housing needs.
- Design guidelines for commercial areas will help to keep the rural character and feel.
- Public parking is needed in the hamlet of Colden. Alternatively, providing shuttles during special events might help alleviate parking needs.
- Encourage agriculture and businesses but keep consistent with the character of the area.
- Continue to support Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) models.
- The Town has adequate park and trail facilities, more could be developed but the Town is not lacking.
- Water quality and quantity are issues that should be addressed.
- Community members support hobby and small-scale farms. These should be encouraged and expanded.

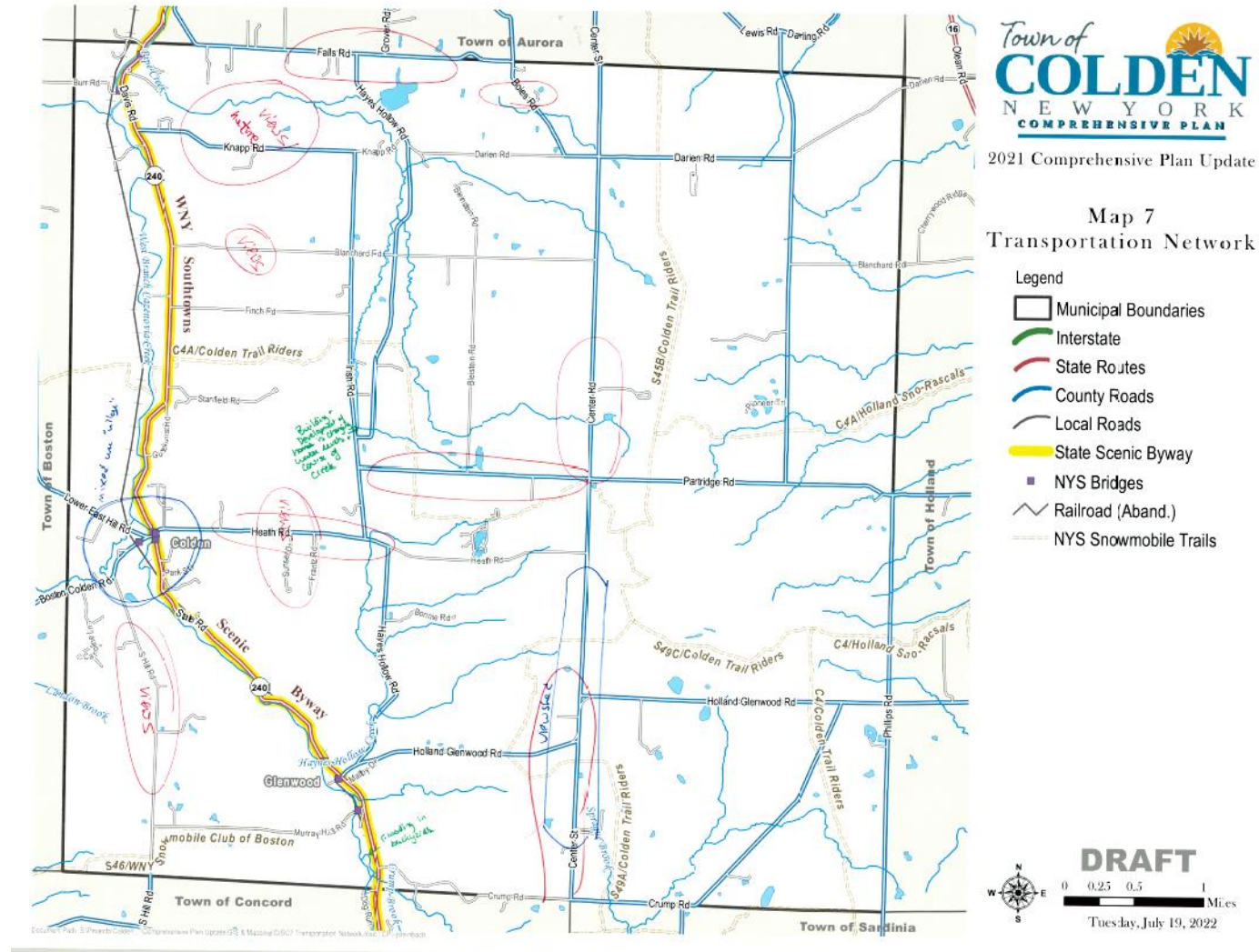
In each of the groups, community members were prompted to indicate whether they agreed with the core values and goals proposed for each plan. Consistent with previous public meetings and the earlier public outreach survey, residents and landowners agreed with the values and goals presented.

Building off of the responses received in the survey, conversations provided additional detail on the community's desire for future land use. In the survey, senior housing was indicated as a priority for some. Further discussion within the groups maintained a consistent desire to see small scale development to meet the needs of an aging community, such as accessory dwelling units, patio homes, and modifications to keep seniors in their own homes. Senior living facilities were also discussed but encouraged to be of a smaller scale and retain the rural nature of the community.

In relation to commercial development, the hamlet of Colden was discussed as the Town's primary business area. Each group emphasized the desire to retain small, local businesses and ensure that the area continues to reflect the rural, traditional nature of the Town. When discussing

potential growth, residents noted the physical and infrastructure constraints to growth within this area and noted a lack of parking availability. Any future growth was encouraged to take place and be contained within in existing commercial areas.

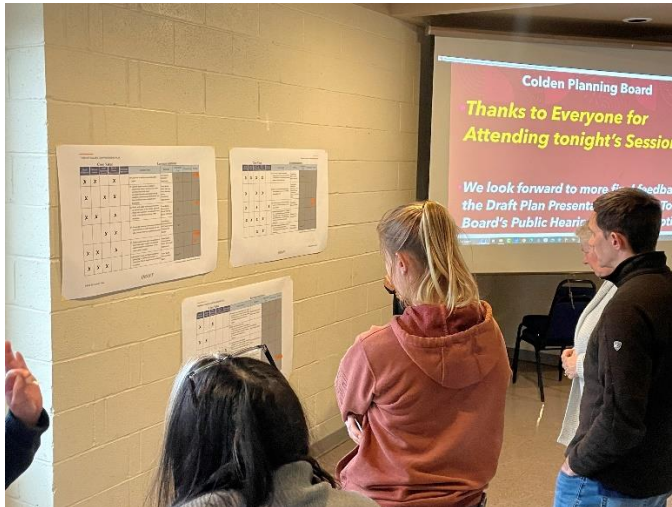
When discussing agriculture within the Town, community members consistently expressed their support for farming at any scale. As seen in past outreach efforts, residents and landowners expressed interest in workshops and educational efforts geared toward learning about agricultural topics. Participants expressed a desire to support local agricultural businesses but noted that they are not necessarily aware of what farms are selling to the public. Promotion and encouragement of agricultural enterprises was consistently noted.



PUBLIC MEETING #3

The final public meeting for the Comprehensive Plan was held on April 25, 2023 at the Colden Fire Hall. The intent of this meeting was primarily to give the community a view of the plan in its final draft form, complete with mapping, goals, and actions/recommendations. In addition, as this was a community-supported and developed document, the consultant team wanted attendees to be able to assist in the implementation phase by identifying those action items that were deemed higher priority. The action matrix contained within the plan was enlarged and spread throughout the Fire Department community room with each attendee provided three stickers in order to identify those actions they felt were important to them. In the end, the higher priority items were easily identified and incorporated into the final document.

While these action items may not necessarily be addressed within the first year of plan adoption, the community input provided as part of this effort gives further credence to pursue those actions ahead of others, where feasible and within the capabilities of the Town and/or partner entity.





Appendix B

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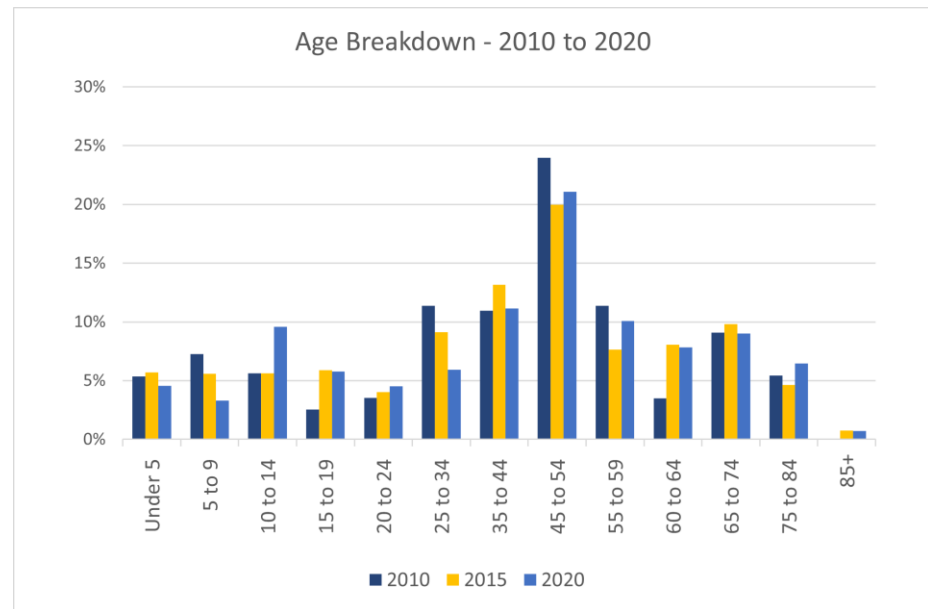
Population

According to the 2020 American Communities Survey (ACS – 5-year estimates), the Town of Colden’s population was about 3,324 people. The Town’s population has remained relatively stable since 2000. Between 1940 and 1980, the population of the Town more than doubled, rising from 1,528 people to 3,128 – a 104% increase. The next decade, from 1980 to 1990, saw a population decline, decreasing by 7%. Population numbers were back on the rise with between 1990 and 2000, showing a 15% increase. Population remained stable in the 2000’s, but increasing about 2% between 2010 and 2020. This increase is in contrast with County trends, which have seen a slight decrease in population since 2010.

Population projections indicate that the County will experience modest growth in the next thirty years and is projected to reach 1,126,234 by 2050. The Town’s population is projected to remain stable, with an expected projection of 3,318 people by 2050.

YEAR	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
TOWN	3,265	3,262	3,252	3,267	3,268	3,270	3,294	3,310	3,306	3,328	3,121	3,148
COUNTY	919,040	919,714	919,542	919,230	920,694	921,584	922,129	923,995	919,866	919,355	954,236	949,715

The Town’s population has aged over the last twenty years, with the median age being 39.9 in 2000 and 47.4 in 2020. In 2020, empty nesters (55-64) made up about 18% of the Town’s population, and seniors (65+) made up 16%. The number of school aged children have also increased, from 15% in 2010 to 19% in 2020. Population of both young adults and middle-aged adults have both decreased by 3% and 1%, respectively.



General findings

- The 1993 plan indicates that between 1940 and 1980, the population of the Town more than doubled (1940 - 1,528; 1980 - 3,128), increasing by 104%.
- The 1990 Census demonstrated a 7% decrease in population between 1980 and 1990.
- Population numbers were back on the rise with the 2000 Census showing an increase of about 15% between 1990 and 2000.
- From 2000 to 2010, population remained stable – decreasing slightly by 1%.
- Between the 2010 and 2020 Census, Colden has seen a population decrease of about 4%. In contrast, the County's population has risen by about 4%.
- Population decreases can be seen in surrounding municipalities as well:
- Population projections from the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council estimates Colden's population will stay relatively stable, rising to 3,318 in 2050. Overall, population in the County is projected to rise to about 1,126,234 by the year 2050.

	AURORA	BOSTON	COLDEN	COLLINS	CONCORD	EDEN	HOLLAND	N. COLLINS	SARDINIA	WALES
2010	13782	8023	3265	6601	8494	7688	3401	3523	2775	3005
2020	13943	7948	3121	5894	8316	7573	3281	3504	2716	3009
% CHANGE	1%	-1%	-4%	-11%	-2%	-1%	-4%	-1%	-2%	0%

Land Use and Zoning

According to current Real Property Service data, the majority of the land in the Town is assessed as residential (68.3%), 23% as vacant, 1.5% as commercial, and 1.2% as agricultural. This roughly coincides with existing zoning patterns, wherein approximately 54.8% of the Town is zoned for residential use, 32.6% for agriculture, 1.5% for business.

Housing

A total number of 1,440 housing units were estimated to exist in the Town in 2020. This represents a 3% increase in the number of housing units since 2010, and an 8% increase since 2000 (according to the 2000 U.S. Census). The data indicates that although the rate of housing growth has increased, the overall rate of growth has declined. The majority of the housing stock in the Town is comprised of single-family, detached homes (92% in 2020). According to the 2020 American Communities Survey, it was estimated that 92%, or 1,328 units, were occupied and 8%, or 112 units, was projected to be vacant. Of the occupied units, 1,160 units (87%) were owner occupied and 168 units (13%) were rentals.

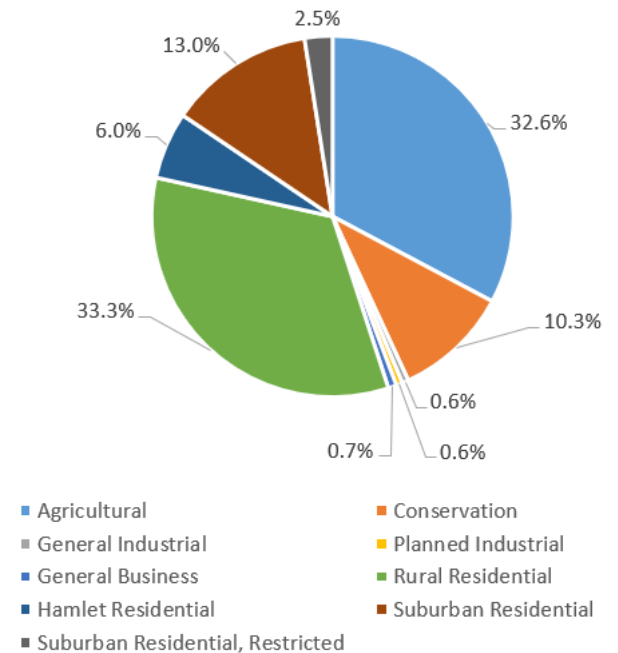
Median Home Values

Year	Value
2010	\$176,600
2015	\$189,800
2019	\$226,000
2021	\$236,700

(Source: U.S. American Communities Survey)

Most homes in the Town were built prior to 1970 (59%), and 40% of homes were built between 1970 and 2010. The number of homes being built has been decreasing in recent years, with only about eleven homes being built between 2010 and 2020. Housing values in the Town have been rising. The median value of a home in 2010 was reported as \$176,600 and \$226,000 in 2020, an increase of about 28%.

Zoning (Acreage)



Other housing findings

- According to 2019 estimates, 66% of people in the Town allocate 20% or less of their income to their housing costs
- Nearly 20% of people allocate 30% or more of their income to housing costs.

Percentage of Income Allocated to Housing Costs		
Less than 20.0 %	748	66%
20.0 to 24.9 %	84	7%
25.0 to 29.9 %	80	7%
30.0 to 34.9 %	26	2%
35.0 % or more	197	17%

Income and Education

In 2020, the median household income in Colden was estimated to be about \$77,596 and median family income was estimated to be about \$87,813. Census data indicates that income for both individual households and families in the town has been on the rise over the last decade. Between 2010 and 2019, median household income has increased by about 9%, while median family income increased by about 1%.

Other income-related findings

- Median household income was projected to be about \$75,938 in 2019. This is a 6% increase from 2010
- Median family income was estimated to be about \$77,500 in 2019. This an 11% decrease from 2010
- In 2010, about 2.9% of households were estimated to be receiving food stamps/SNAP. Estimates for 2019 show this doubling, with about 6% estimated to be receiving food assistance.

Income	2010	2015	2019
Less than \$10,000	6%	4%	1%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	5%	3%	1%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	2%	6%	11%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	6%	11%	6%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	15%	12%	9%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	20%	19%	20%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	15%	13%	19%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	21%	21%	15%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	6%	5%	13%

% of Population Segment Below Poverty Line		
AGE	2015	2019
Under 18 years	11.4%	0.0%
Under 5 years	17.7%	0.0%
5 to 17 years	9.1%	0.0%
18 to 64 years	5.1%	2.1%
18 to 34 years	4.6%	0.0%
35 to 64 years	5.2%	2.6%
60 years and over	6.7%	3.1%
65 years and over	8.2%	2.7%

Types of Income	2010	2015	2019
Total households	1,361	1,305	1,374
With earnings	80%	79%	80%
With Social Security	25%	27%	33%
With retirement income	25%	20%	26%
With Supplemental Security Income	2%	2%	2%
With cash public assistance income	2%	0%	1%
With Food Stamp/SNAP benefits in the past 12 months	3%	3%	6%

- In 2010, it was estimated that about 6% of the population lived below the poverty line. In 2019, it was estimated that this number had decreased to 1.8%
- In estimates between 2015 and 2019, poverty decreased in all population segments but remained in the senior population.

Colden has an educated workforce, with an estimated 95.5% of adults, age 25 and older, having graduated from high school. However, this is a slight, 0.60% decrease from the 2010 rate of 96.1%. About 32.9% of adults, age 25 and older, were estimated to have a bachelor's degree or higher. This is a decrease of about 3.3% from 2010.

- In 2019, it was estimated that 94.2% of adults aged 25 and older had graduated from high school. This is a 1.9% decrease from the 2010 rate of 96.10%.
- In 2019, about 28.1% of adults aged 25 and older had a bachelor's degree or higher. This is an 8.1% decrease from 2010.

Economy

In 2020, approximately 6% (1,748) of the Town's population, over the age of 16, was employed in the civilian workforce. The percentage of residents in the workforce has remained stable over the past decade, decreasing only 2% since 2010. The unemployment rate for the Town was estimated to be about 2%.

There have not been many significant changes in the number of those employed in various occupations and industries, with a few exceptions. The number of individuals employed in *retail trade* has increased by 6% between 2010 and 2020. The number of people employed in *finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing* has increased by about 7%. The number of people employed in public administration had decreased by about 7% within the ten-year time frame. The largest employment sector in the town is educational services, and health care and social assistance, at an estimated 23% in 2020.

Industry	2010	2015	2019
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	0%	0%	1%
Construction	12%	13%	10%
Manufacturing	11%	12%	15%
Wholesale trade	4%	2%	3%
Retail trade	5%	10%	11%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	6%	4%	3%
Information	1%	3%	2%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	5%	4%	7%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	13%	11%	11%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	23%	21%	22%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	4%	13%	6%
Other services, except public administration	6%	4%	6%
Public administration	9%	3%	2%

Commuting and Internet Accessibility

About 90% of the Town's residents work in Erie County. This has remained stable over the years. Approximately 88% of workers commute to work, and about 12% work from home. In 2020, it was estimated that about 6% of workers carpooled, while 81% drove alone. The average commute time to work is about 27.9 minutes.

In terms of internet accessibility, according to 2022 Public Service Commission (PSC) open records approximately 93% of the estimated 1,400 housing units in the Town have cable and 78% have DSL service. Generally, the Town is well served by high speed/broadband internet.

Source: [Broadband availability by Municipality \(https://data.ny.gov/widgets/sjc6-ftj4\)](https://data.ny.gov/widgets/sjc6-ftj4), [NYS Public Service Commission Broadband Map \(https://mapmybroadband.dps.ny.gov/Brabout?address=Colden,%20New%20York\)](https://mapmybroadband.dps.ny.gov/Brabout?address=Colden,%20New%20York) (links current as of January 2024)





Appendix C

DRAFT

Reference document links (*current as of January 2024*):

- **Framework for Regional Growth: Erie Niagara Counties - 2006**
<https://www4.erie.gov/regionalframework/framework-regional-growth-final-plan>
- **Western New York Regional Economic Development Council Strategic Plan - 2011**
<https://regional-institute.buffalo.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/155/2021/07/WNY-Regional-Economic-Development-Strategic-Plan.pdf>
- **Erie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan - 2012**
<https://www3.erie.gov/agriculture/sites/www3.erie.gov.agriculture/files/2021-03/AgFarmlandProtectionPlan.pdf>
- **Western New York Regional Sustainability Plan - 2013**
<https://regional-institute.buffalo.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/155/2020/10/Western-New-York-Regional-Sustainability-Plan.pdf>
- **One Region Forward: A New Way to Plan for Buffalo Niagara– 2015**
http://bap-home.net/solarize/wp-content/uploads/sites/28/2017/05/1RF_A-New-Way-To-Plan-For-Buffalo-Niagara_FinalPlan_reduced.pdf
- **Initiatives for a Smart Economy 2.0 - 2017**
<https://www2.erie.gov/environment/sites/www2.erie.gov.environment/files/uploads/pdfs/Initiatives For Smart Economy 2.0.pdf>
- **Healthy Niagara Initiative**
<https://bnwaterkeeper.org/healthy-niagara-watershed-plans/>
- **Niagara River Watershed Management Plan - 2014**
<https://bnwaterkeeper.org/projects/healthyniagara/>
- **Regional Niagara River Lake Erie Watershed Management Plan - 2017**
https://bnwaterkeeper.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/BNW-WMP-FINAL-VERSION_No_Appendix_REDUCED.pdf

- **GBNRTC Moving Forward 2050 - 2018**
<https://regional-institute.buffalo.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/155/2021/07/Moving-Forward-2050-Full-Document.pdf>
- **GBNRTC Bike Buffalo Niagara Master Plan - 2020**
<https://www.gbnrtc.org/regional-bike-buffalo-niagara-master-plan>
- **Southern Tier Trail Feasibility Study**
<https://gobikebuffalo.org/project/southern-tier-trail-feasibility-study/>
- **Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail**
<https://www.ecattrail.org/>