

DRAFT

Section 3

A VISION FOR EDEN

Where are we going?

CULTIVATE EDEN is about identifying the assets that are available and the opportunities that exist. While later sections of the plan establish the specific actions to take, a road map is only good when it has a direction to take to get there. This section of the plan identifies the direction of the Town, by way of a vision statement, that feeds into more distinct goals and objectives that focusing on major issues and priorities of the community.

Visioning

A vision statement is a broad-level, forward thinking statement that generally outlines community values as well as what the Town aims to be in the future. The statement at right was created using input from the public, stakeholders and Steering Committee, as well as background information obtained about Eden. Moving forward, it forms the foundation for goals, policies, and actions and all actions undertaken by the Town and community should relate back and support the vision...

“Like many rural communities, Eden’s assets lie in its natural beauty and open spaces. The Town’s success lies in the **balance and cultivation** of these assets with appropriate growth and development that preserves the **small-town character** that identifies us. Agriculture is and will remain the cornerstone of our Town. Development pursuits include these that support **local agriculture** and build **economic diversity**. We envision vibrant hamlets that will retain their character and provide walkable businesses and services that **attract** families and visitors alike, **meeting the needs** of citizens young and old.”

Our Core Values (Goals)

While the vision for Eden provides a broad, overarching statement for where the Town wants to be in the future, goals provide more fine tuned direction to help guide community decisions. These **goals** form the key **values** that are shared by the community, providing the framework for how the Town can achieve its vision for the future - moving forward these terms can be used interchangeably, but share the same meaning. Each core value describes a specific goal area that informs more detailed objectives and eventual action items in later sections of the Plan.

Although **CULTIVATE EDEN** is a much different format and look compared to the previous Comprehensive Plan, it is an update to that planning effort and the information contained within it. As a consequence, the values (goals) are similar, though they have been “refreshed” and updated to account for changes in the community and the desired vision for the future.

Core Values for Eden	How they relate to the 2015 Plan goals...
Building Hamlet Vitality	Rural Character Preservation, Eden Center Redevelopment, Economic Development, Growth Management
Balancing Rural Character	Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection, Open Space Conservation, Environmental Protection, Growth Management
Encouraging Economic Diversity	Economic Development, Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection, Growth Management
Supporting Local Agriculture	Rural Character Preservation, Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection, Open Space Conservation
Creating a Vibrant, Quality Community	Growth Management, Transportation System Management

Building Hamlet Vitality

The primary activity center in the community is the hamlet of Eden Center, containing not only municipal offices and community services, but also a variety of businesses. The Town of Eden will continue to invest in the hamlet in order to make it a more active, pedestrian-friendly environment that provides services to residents young and old.



Eden Center has the framework in place for a vibrant hamlet; strategic investment and community support can make it happen.

Emphasis will continue to be put on well-designed and maintained buildings, engaging storefronts, quality streetside landscaping, and a variety of businesses. As a traditional hamlet, diversity in uses are encouraged to create a more livable and vibrant hub, ensuring its long term vitality.

Balancing Rural Character

Eden is proud of its small town character and charm - it is a trait that has will continue to attract residents and businesses. This core value reflects the desire of the community to grow in targeted areas while preserving its agricultural heritage and pristine



For many in Eden, nature remains an important element.

natural environment. Where development is encouraged, it should reflect a rural, small town design that complements Eden Center and projects a sense of pride in the community.

Encouraging Economic Diversity

While the hamlet of Eden Center is the main hub of activity in the community, the Town is predominantly rural with a significant amount of open space. Capitalizing on underutilized resources, such as the railroad, Franklin Gulf County Park, and the Eden Mills Historic District in the form of recreation, tourism, and other supporting ventures will help to diversify the economic base of the Town. Industrial development will continue to be supported in existing areas of the Town to create jobs and provide additional tax revenue, as well as expanded to strategic locations given the proximity of several State roadways as well as the NYS Thruway.

Supporting Local Agriculture

Eden is a farming community and will continue to be in the future. In order to support agriculture, future development must be sensitive to the unique conditions and operations that come with them. Adequate site design and land development can help to minimize conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural



A variety of farming operations are found in the Town, from field crops to horse farms to greenhouses.

uses. Expanding agricultural-supportive pursuits as well as other related business ventures will encourage long-term sustainability and help to open up new economic opportunities in the Town.

Creating a Vibrant, Quality Community

Eden is an attractive, rural community for families young and old that residents have come to value. The Town will continue to ensure that adequate community resources exist to attract and retain a variety of age groups. In order to be competitive with other communities, Eden must offer and maintain resources that build neighborhoods with lasting value, support social interaction, provide an appropriate level of community services. In addition, quality schools and a range of housing choices for all income levels will ensure that a range of lifestyles are supported.



The Boys & Girls Club of Eden was identified as a key resource to the youth of the community.

Our Objectives for Eden

Building on from there, objectives are the “yardstick” against which future actions are measured; they **define certain strategies** for the Town to take. The Town will use these elements to:

- ◆ **Set priorities for capital improvements**
- ◆ **Encourage desired development patterns**
- ◆ **Establish parameters for private development in the community**

Objectives represent a choice for the future of the community; a choice that needs to be balanced against a number of factors, including, but not limited to, finances, community support, market changes, leadership, local issues, etc. These factors can be complex and sometimes appear conflicting, hence the need to step back and look at the overall goal that the objective is trying to achieve.

In the end, exercise of judgement is a critical component of the planning process, recognizing that there are interrelated



opportunities and constraints that can be addressed from different angles. A Comprehensive Plan is a fluid, living document, intended to adapt with changing conditions as necessary to sustain the community for the future, thus slight modifications or deviations are expected provided the core values are maintained.

Using Eden’s core values from the previous page, the objectives for each are outlined below. As previously noted, **CULTIVATE EDEN** is an update and a number of objectives likely still apply in different areas, though they may be slightly modified. Where applicable, those objectives have been carried over into this version of the plan.

Building Hamlet Vitality

1. Invest in improvements to the aesthetics and visual appearance of the hamlet of Eden Center as the primary community/business area in the Town to promote existing businesses and attract new enterprises.
2. Increase the vitality of the hamlet by seeking to expand business opportunities and variety that provide services for local residents and visitors alike.
3. Promote a vibrant central business district through a mix of uses, including those within a single building, to expand affordable housing options, provide greater flexibility in existing buildings, and allow more investment and development opportunities.

4. Encourage an engaging streetscape that is designed for and has infrastructure and amenities for all modes of transportation including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit, and personal vehicles.
5. Promote a consistent and attractive identity through signage or other systems for the Town of Eden and its various hamlets to increase visual presence, build community, and market the Town.
6. Enhance enforcement of local municipal codes as well as property maintenance codes to maintain building conditions and provide a positive appearance to residents and visitors.
7. Maintain, improve and promote the adaptive re-use of historic structures within the hamlet and other areas in the Town.
8. Direct new businesses to the hamlet of Eden Center, where infrastructure exists, to promote infill development and increase employment opportunities.
9. Promote strategic investment in the hamlet of East Eden as a supporting commercial area that provides neighborhood services as residential development increases over time.
10. Support on-street parking use for short-term users on Main Street while providing other avenues for parking off-site including the possibility of a municipal lot.
11. Provide “business friendly” zoning regulations that encourage quality development, clearly outline the desired intent for the hamlet and adjacent commercial corridors, and balance economic development with hamlet character.

12. Encourage the restoration, revitalization, and rehabilitation of existing properties in the hamlets, especially those already identified in current planning initiatives. Efforts can include façade improvements, physical site enhancements, lighting, and historic preservation.
13. Engage with local and regional marketing and commerce partners to better support the business climate, promote Eden, and guide new business ventures.
14. Discuss the potential for expanding the use of the rail line to commuter traffic with local and regional partners to increase the visibility and growth potential for Eden.

Balancing Rural Character

1. Locate higher density development in proximity to the hamlets of Eden Center and East Eden, where existing infrastructure exists or can be more easily extended, providing necessary mass to support commercial businesses.
2. Support the continued use of development techniques for subdivisions that maximize open space and protect sensitive natural features, such as, but not limited to, cluster subdivisions, transfer of development rights, purchase of development rights, and environmental easements.
3. Prevent suburban sprawl from converting extensive open spaces and active agricultural lands to developed areas.

4. Protect important natural features in the Town, including but not limited to creeks and buffer zones, extensive woodlands, steep slopes, major viewpoints, wetlands/floodplains, and prime farm soils which provide valuable habitat and economic opportunities contribute to the overall character of the Town.
5. Encourage the preservation and reuse of state designated and locally significant historic buildings and sites emphasizing the history and traditions of the Town as well as enhancing tourist economic opportunities and community development
6. Require new development to mitigate traffic impacts through access management techniques that minimize curb cuts and do not require highway capacity expansion.
7. Encourage the use of aesthetic designs in new construction, especially commercial, industrial, and multi-family residential, that are compatible with or enhance surrounding development and features.
8. Minimize the negative visual impacts of development so as to preserve the scenic qualities of wildlife habitats, waterways, areas with steep slopes, and other Open Space lands having Countywide significance.
9. Utilize a variety of subdivision configurations in order to efficiently divide land while still retaining access to and usability of farmlands from the parent parcel. The use of cluster or conservation subdivisions are encouraged.

10. Review and update existing lot dimension requirements and subdivision regulations to provide flexibility in residential development while retaining valuable land and access to it.
11. In areas where farming operations are still active and significant development pressure exists, encourage the use of cluster subdivisions to minimize loss of farmland through inadequate access or use. Consider the use of community septic systems/wells (i.e. package plants) or other similar small-scale systems to aid in the use of clustering.

Supporting Local Agriculture

1. Maintain and protect working farmland to aid in the preservation of the Town's rural and agrarian character.
2. Increase and maintain an appreciation and understanding of farming and farm processes, the strategic and environmental value of farmland, and family farming as a business and a way of life
3. Review and integrate the recommendations of the Eden Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan with available Town planning and economic development activities.
4. Support active and thriving farming operations in the Town by encouraging "non-traditional" agriculturally-based ventures, such as markets, agri-tourism, recreation/entertainment, processing, and supportive businesses.

5. Continue to preserve of farmland and important soils (prime, local/state-wide significance) through the Town's Right to Farm laws.
6. Evaluate and consider improved transitional measures between agricultural and non-agricultural uses to minimize conflicts and provide balance, such as buffering or screening.
7. Non-agricultural land uses near active farming operations or resources should be low impact and not be environmentally degrading.
8. Minimize the potential for agricultural conversion by limiting and providing specific criteria for expansion of public sewer and water into agricultural districts.

Encouraging Economic Diversity

1. Expand opportunities for industrial and commercial development where adequate infrastructure exists, especially water, sewer and transportation access.
2. Increase the diversity of industry and commerce in the community.
3. Encourage well-designed industrial and commercial development that takes into account the character of the Town as well as compatibility with adjacent uses.
4. Promote cooperative programs among the Town, School, private businesses, community service groups, and others that provide

area youth with the opportunity to learn and offer businesses improved manpower resources.

5. Continue to engage with local and County economic development agencies, local businesses, and civic institutions serving the area in cooperative efforts to promote adequate and stable employment by retaining existing businesses and attracting new ones.
6. Identify target industries and businesses that are supported by and desired in the community and that will provide the Town with an “edge” at attracting future residents.
7. When and where appropriate, consider the use of incentives to attract and retain commercial and industrial enterprises such as increased density or streamlined review.
8. Prioritize areas in the Town for commercial/industrial development and develop an action plan for strengthening them for new/expanded opportunities.
9. Encourage visual improvements of existing industrial areas of the Town to improve marketability, foster new/expanded ventures, and encourage redevelopment.
10. Structure land use and zoning regulations to provide greater flexibility for development and redevelopment in commercial and industrial areas while balancing rural character and minimizing environmental impacts.

11. Develop and maintain a corridor plan, especially for State Route 62/Main Street, to enhance and promote the Town’s major transportation corridors.
12. Expand economic vitality by promoting local recreation, cultural resources, agriculture, and the environment through tourism and local visitor experiences.
13. Improve government regulations and procedures to help business activity within the community.
14. Identify and promote vacant or underutilized commercial and industrial sites/properties in the Town.

Creating a Vibrant, Quality Community

1. Maintain the existing high quality of life in the community.
2. Encourage the participation and engagement of local residents, businesses, community groups, and key organizations in activities of the Town, using traditional and non-traditional means such as outreach events, surveys, Facebook/social media, etc.
3. Promote the development of high-quality, affordable, and attractive residential dwellings to provide multi-generational living, especially within and in proximity to the hamlets to take advantage of utilities and promote walkability.
4. Encourage “aging-in-place” developments to provide residential housing for empty-nesters and seniors and ensure they can remain in the Town of Eden.

Creating a Vibrant, Quality Community cont'd

5. Provide adequate, properly located, and well maintained publicly owned facilities and equipment for service to Town residents
6. Seek opportunities for expanding and improving upon available recreational resources in the Town, including local and County parks.
7. Expand upon existing recreational and cultural programs in the Town to enhance social and educational opportunities.
8. Encourage participation and cooperation amongst town government, the school district, the business sector, and town residents in managing the growth and resources of the community.
9. Assure that the Town is prepared to prevent, respond to, and resolve disaster problems that could and do affect the Town by maintaining an up-to-date Disaster Management Plan.
10. An active planning process should be maintained in the Town that includes implementation plans, annual review, and coordination with adjacent municipalities as well as County, State and Federal government actions.
11. Identify efforts to expand critical infrastructure, such as internet/ broadband access, to not only support business and residential growth, but also the existing Eden community.
12. Continue to support renewable energy initiatives in both the public and private sector and seek ways to reduce the environmental footprint of the Town, adapting to changing conditions and increasing overall efficiency.
13. Explore opportunities to improve the delivery of government services and manage facilities through the continued cooperative efforts of shared services with the County and neighboring communities.
14. Evaluate opportunities for expanding alternative modes of transportation in Eden, such as but not limited to, bus routes, rideshare, and park & ride lots, engaging with stakeholders and identifying potential locations.