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## Section 4

### SHAPING EDEN

## Major Findings

The community profile provides an overview of the resources of the Town, helping to highlight constraints or opportunities for growth, areas for protection/preservation. The demographics portion suggests trends that influence types of development and impacts to community services. Finally, public input provides current issues and opportunities facing the Town as well as desires for the future.

Together, these elements highlight the major findings that lead to the development of specific actions items to carry out the goals and objectives of the plan.

- ◆ The rural character of Eden is a highly valued element, and although development and growth is encouraged and desired, it should not do so in disregard of local character.
- ◆ Agriculture is and will remain as one of the primary economic engines of the Town, though it requires a new generation of farmers to sustain it.
- ◆ “Traditional” agriculture (e.g. field operations, cattle management), while valuable, won’t sustain farmers in the long run. Expanding and adapting the business model to other agriculturally-supportive ventures are needed to provide additional means for revenue.
- ◆ The local history of Eden is an important element of the community and should be both highlighted and capitalized upon for its economic benefits.
- ◆ Eden’s youth place great value and have a deep connection to several existing community resources, including the schools, public library, and the Boys & Girls Club.
- ◆ Main Street is the centerpiece of the Town as the primary thoroughfare, business area, and the most prominent visual representation of the rest of the Town. Revitalization of the Main Street corridor is a priority of the community, creating a more walkable and vibrant atmosphere that is business friendly.
- ◆ The conditions of buildings and overall property maintenance are a significant concern, for example on Main Street and Church Street. As noted above, the look and visual appearance of properties provides a representation of the rest of the Town that can affect perceptions to visitors and potential developers.
- ◆ Eden needs a variety of housing that is in line with the market, affordable, and provides opportunities for multi-generational living, from college graduates and young families to empty-nesters and retirees.
- ◆ New housing development also needs to provide a balance between those who desire “country-living” on larger lots with more manageable-sized lots outside of the hamlets.
- ◆ Development flexibility is key for commercial and industrial growth to allow for a greater mix of businesses in and around Eden Center and East Eden, but ensuring that they reflect local character.
- ◆ Eden has a wealth of local resources found in waterways, parks, historical buildings, the railroad, etc., but many of them are not well known or identified outside of local resident knowledge; these need to be utilized better and capitalized on.
- ◆ Corn Fest is a great community event that attracts people from throughout the region. Events like these, facilities that provide

valuable social interaction within the community, and senior/youth services should be expanded upon not only for the benefit of existing residents, but to attract and retain new families.

- ◆ Future development along Main Street should focus on design and interaction between the building/site and the roadway rather than just the use of the site.
- ◆ The design and visual appeal of Main Street (i.e. the roadway itself), while under the jurisdiction of the State, directly impacts the character of the Town. Enhancements and improvements are a necessary component to revitalization efforts.
- ◆ Who is Eden? Where is Eden? The Town needs to create a more prominent identity/sense of place not only for Eden Center, but for the Town overall - make it the “place to be” for future residents.

### **Financial Perspective**

Revenue in the Town is significantly dependent on property taxes vis-à-vis residential growth, common among most communities in New York. Through the development of **CULTIVATE EDEN**, opportunities for residential growth were identified, based on community input and regional housing trends, creating an environment for increasing revenue.

In addition to residential development, revenue growth from taxes on non-residential development (i.e. commercial/industrial) is also desirable. This can be encouraged through community-supported capital improvement projects/opportunities identified in the Plan that enhance the attractiveness of the Town, leveraging public assets and resources to induce private development.

The goal of the plan is to see **PROPERTY VALUE growth at a comparable level with growth rates in Town expenditures** so as to hold the line on property and school taxes, allowing the Town to continue to maintain current levels of community services as well as the ability to add them or finance capital projects where feasible.

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