



# TOWN OF EDEN

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

ADOPTED APRIL 11, 2018



*Planning Consultant services provided by the design team of:*

Clark Patterson Lee | WWS Planning | Foit-Albert Associates



*WWS Planning*



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# Section I

## INTRODUCTION

# Introduction

## cul•ti•vate

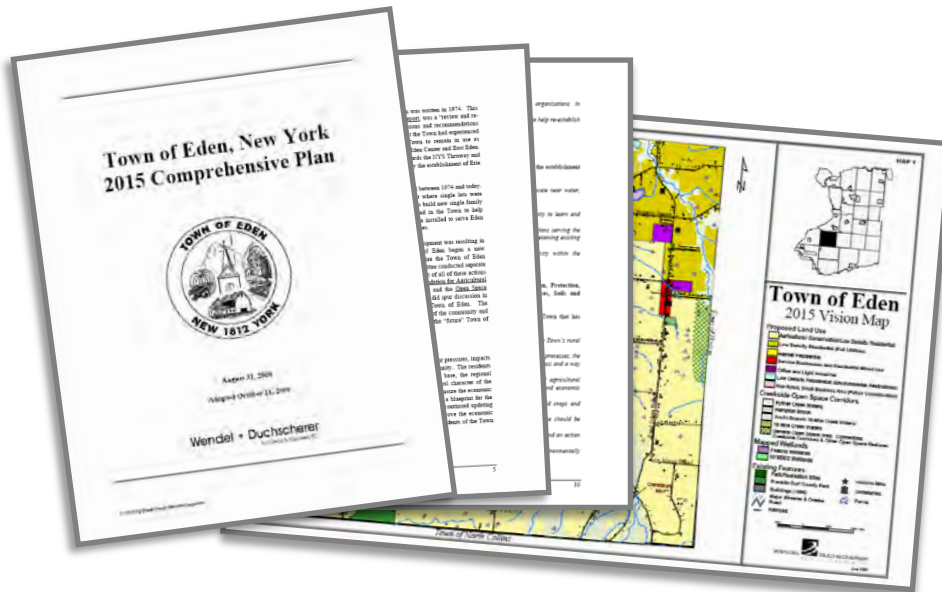
/ˈkəl-tə-, vāt/

Verb

1. To prepare or prepare and use (land) for raising of crops
2. To foster the growth of
3. Further, encourage
4. To seek the society of

### Why Plan? Why now?

The Town of Eden's previous comprehensive plan was completed in 2000 with a 15-year planning horizon (2015). While still valuable, that planning effort was a seven-year long process that began in 1993



and referenced data that was becoming less pertinent as time grew on. The Town and the community members of Eden have become more eager to “cultivate” Eden’s potential, looking to build upon existing and future opportunities and creating new target projects for completion.

This desire to update the vision for the future is further bolstered with the completion of several key studies and plans that seek to identify and capitalize on assets in the Town including:

- ♦ Open Space Index (1999)
- ♦ Sowing the Seeds for Southtowns Agribusiness – An Assessment of Farms and a Plan for the Future (2009)
- ♦ Town of Eden Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan (2009)
- ♦ Natural Resources Inventory (2012)
- ♦ Renewing the Town of Eden – Four Corners Revitalization Report (2017)

The Comprehensive Plan update will provide a new vision for the Town, incorporating the goals from these other plans and insuring farming remains a major aspect of the Town, retaining the rural character that residents and visitors associate with Eden. But, while agriculture has always been the predominant industry in the Town and the main economic driver, it is recognized that the community needs to diversify and strengthen other elements in the community to help maintain and grow a strong economy.

Bolstering Main Street in Eden Center through business improvement and growth and developing a vision for the hamlet of East Eden are two critical components of that diversity that the community have readily identified through the planning process. This update will focus on those elements, among others, while referencing and incorporating the recommendations and policies noted in the other aforementioned plans. It is with this updated planning effort, reaching out to a variety of stakeholders in the Town, that a new vision will be “cultivated” for Eden to successfully guide it for the next 10-15 years.

### **Plan Intent & Purpose**

A Comprehensive Plan has a number of important purposes for a community, perhaps the most important being the foundation for zoning and local land use regulations, as reflected in New York State Town Law. In fact, State law requires that zoning laws be adopted in accordance with a Comprehensive Plan. By law, this is defined as:

*“...the materials, written and/or graphic, including but not limited to maps, charts, studies, resolutions, reports and other descriptive material that identify the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices and instruments for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the town...”*

*- NYS Town Law §272-a(2)(a)*

However, it also provides other important benefits, including:

- ♦ **Guidance:** Not only to Eden’s elected leaders, but also to appointed Board members (Planning and Zoning) and special committees, made up of appointed residents and volunteers that help to inform decision-making.
- ♦ **Collaboration:** It gives the community an opportunity to work together, discuss ideas, and establish 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 that can be utilized to grow Eden in the future.
- ♦ **Grants:** With a collective vision and strategy for moving forward, the Town is more likely to be successful in obtaining State and Federal funding for future projects than communities that do not have a plan.
- ♦ **Budgeting/Capital Improvements:** The plan can be used as a tool during these efforts to identify programs and projects in the Town and ensure that community priorities are being incorporated.

The typical timeframe for a Comprehensive Plan is 10-15 years with a regular review every 2-3 years as a best practice, ensuring that the community is on the right track and works to address priority actions. As previously noted, the Town of Eden’s last Plan was finalized in 2000. Since then, many factors have changed, including



leadership and community priorities. This requires a more in-depth review of the overall vision as well as other, more specific elements in the community to keep the Plan up-to-date and relevant.

*“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*

Proactive planning keeps the Town “ahead of the game” rather than being reactive to issues or opportunities. In addition, there are several action items contained within the former plan that either were completed, out-of-date, or simply irrelevant to today’s standards. The update gives the Town and community an opportunity to revisit the Plan with a fresh set of eyes in an age in which the available resources seem to be ever changing as technology evolves.

**The Process**



The Town’s Comprehensive Plan update was directed and managed by a volunteer Steering Committee made up of a cross section of the community that included elected officials, Town staff, Board representatives, residents, business owners, youth, the School District, and other committee and local group representatives. The Steering Committee’s role is to provide direction and feedback to the Town’s planning consultant tasked with developing the plan itself. The Committee met monthly from February 2017 through March 2018.

Overall, the planning process involves several key steps beginning with gathering of necessary data on the physical aspects of the Town as well as feedback from residents, business owners, and other local stakeholders. From there, a future community vision is developed, goals are identified, future land uses are mapped out, and an action plan is developed.

The draft plan is anticipated to be ready by the beginning of 2018 with the necessary environmental review (SEQRA) shortly thereafter. The final plan would be ready for Town adoption sometime in early Spring 2018.

**Community Outreach**

An important component of the planning process is community engagement. This was achieved by various means, some traditional and some not, in order to gather ample feedback from residents to determine their desires and note concerns. A full summary of the feedback obtained is located in **Appendix A**.



- ♦ **Steering Committee visioning** - During the steering committee kickoff meeting, an interactive exercise has held to brainstorm what Eden is now and what Eden wants to be in the future.
- ♦ **Community Kickoff** - In May of 2017 a public kickoff meeting was held to introduce the community to the project, educate them on the process, share some of the information collected to date, and, most importantly, gather initial feedback from those in attendance. Approximately 80 residents were in attendance, including students and youth. A brainstorming exercise was given to identify core past, current, and future values from residents. As there was a good youth turnout, a separate exercise was held for them in a similar fashion, albeit on a simpler level, to determine what the anchors of the Town were and what could be in its future.



- ♦ **Youth/School workshop** - Also in May of 2017, three youth workshops were held at the Eden Senior High School during regular classes. The workshop provided students the opportunity to share their thoughts in a similar manner as during the community kickoff meeting, identifying what they valued in the Town now and what it needed in the future. The workshop also provided students a chance to discuss what their overall perception of the Town was. Their thoughts and ideas are equally as important as adults since the values they hold and the amenities they seek are similar to those of young families with youth, seeking places to raise them and thereby invest in the community. Attracting families are key to a sustainable future for Eden.
- ♦ **Corn Festival** - During the annual Corn Festival in August 2017, the Town set up a dedicated booth in the community tent to advertise the plan and process as well as invite residents, and visitors alike, to participate in a survey for additional ideas.



- ♦ **Fire Dept. Open House/ Annual Halloween Parade** - Eden's annual Halloween Parade draws family and youth throughout the Town for an opportunity to show off their costumes and interact with their neighbors. The Fire Dept. open house provided a chance for the community to meet and see, up close and personal, the equipment and people keeping Eden safe. Using these venue to reach a different group, background information on the plan was provided along with an opportunity to share thoughts and a visual preference survey.
- ♦ **Second Public Meeting** - A second public meeting was held in December of 2017 to share progress of the plan update and the preliminary ideas and goals that have been generated to date. It was a chance for the community to give feedback to make sure the committee and consultant were “on the right track.” Future land use was also discussed, with Eden residents given the opportunity to determine where growth should occur or areas to be protected. Approximately 35 residents attended.



## Acknowledgements

“Cultivate Eden,” the Town’s Comprehensive Plan update, was developed through the volunteer efforts of the Steering Committee members, made up of Town officials and staff, residents, and business owners. The committee was an integral part of the process through their embodied knowledge of the Town, dedication to the process, and overall enthusiasm for developing a vision for their community. The Town would also like to thank the community-at-large who contributed to the plan through the various outreach events and public meetings - without which the plan wouldn’t truly be a plan for the community!

## Steering Committee Members

Kevin Zittel (Committee Chair/ Agriculture Rep.)	Bill Laing (Local business owner/EMS Rep.)
Melissa Hartman (Eden Supervisor)	Mark Clark (resident/past CEO)
Richard Ventry (Town Board)	Angeleah Lograsso (Student)
Bill Mahoney (Planning Board)	Louis DeCarolis (Student)
Andrew Romanowski (Planning Board)	Mark Lee (Erie Co. Planning)
Kristin Kent (Zoning Board)	Amy Porter (Eden Parks & Recreation Executive Director)
Lamont Beers (Conservation Board)	
Ed Krycia (Chamber of Commerce)	
Sandy Anzalone (Eden Central School District)	

## Section 2

### COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

## Community Snapshot

### Brief History of the Town

Eden Valley, originally known as Tubbs Hollow, was the site of some of the first settlements of the future Town in the early 1800's. This area was named after Deacon Samuel Tubbs, the first to settle in the valley, with relatives that soon after established their first sawmill in 1811 and first gristmill in 1812. Originally known as the township of Willink, the burgeoning population (around 4,000 by 1810) was later subdivided into four towns – Eden, Hamburg, Concord, and Willink (Boston and Evans later were divided off of Eden as well). The Town of Eden was officially incorporated on March 20, 1812 and soon thereafter grew at a much quicker pace. By 1822 the towns first post office was established as a result of this growth with additional mills along Eighteen Mile Creek, an important economic resource.

Through the mid to late 1800's, several hamlets were established in the area, including Clarksburg, Eden Valley, and Eden Center, taking advantage of the creeks power. In addition, the fertile lands provided abundant crops for the community, a legacy that still continues today. By 1903 the telephone had arrived in Eden, being noted as one of the most strategic advances to that point for the communication and the expansion of the railroad through the own provided additional markets for products as well as travel. In 1962, Eden celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and the following year established an annual event to continue celebrating agriculture and the community at large. The Corn Festival pays homage to Eden's agricultural roots as well as its rich environment that continues to draw residents and visitors to this day.

### Eden Today

Located in the “southtowns” of Erie County, Eden is approximately 40 square miles in size and boasts a significant amount of open space for agriculture, natural features, and low density development. A predominantly rural community, the main business district of the Town is found in the hamlet of Eden Center, which also contains the public school campus, governmental offices, Fire Hall, local churches, and the Original American Kazoo Company, North America's only metal kazoo factory dating back to 1916. The hamlet is easily accessible via State Route 62/Main Street (running north/south) as well as Eden-Evans Center Road/Church Street (east/west) which make up the four corners of the hamlet. East Eden, a smaller, less populated hamlet, is located on the east side of the Town.

### About Us

The 2000 Plan was based on economic and demographic data that referenced US Census data from 1990 and 2000. A significant component of **CULTIVATE EDEN** is the use of up-to-date information to provide a better picture of the current state of the Town today and identify potential trends in the future. This data will help Eden make more informed decisions moving forward.

The data on the following page provides a “snapshot” of the key demographics and trends of the Town.

- ♦ Population is stable but down from a high of over 8,000 in 2000
- ♦ Median household age is increasing (38.8 to 48.6), common among many communities nationwide



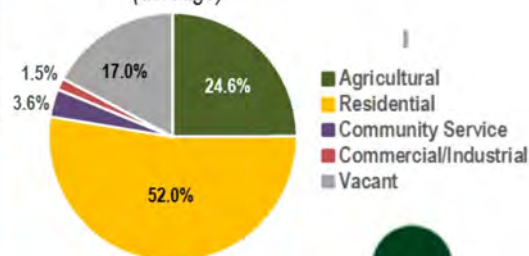
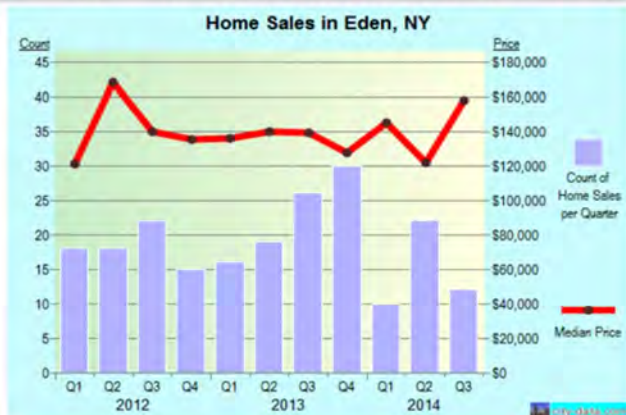
## TOWN OF EDEN COMMUNITY PROFILE SNAPSHOT



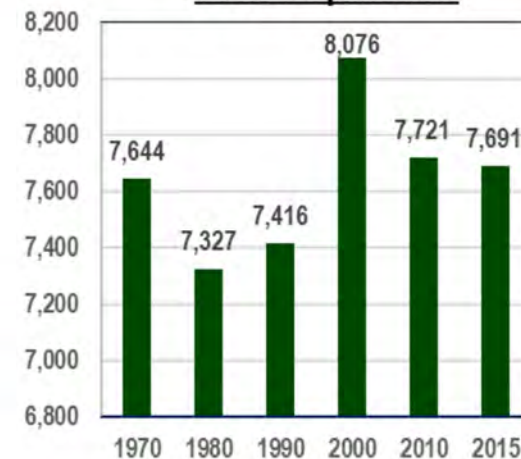
**SQUARE  
MILES**

**TOTAL  
POPULATION**

**PERSONS PER  
SQUARE MILE**



MEDIAN  
AGE  
48.6  
YEARS



Year	Population (millions)
1980	2,407
1990	2,650
2000	2,995
2010	3,066
2015	3,209



**MEDIAN  
HOUSEHOLD SIZE**

**2.53 PERSONS**

- ◆ Those considered “empty nesters” (55-64) and seniors have increased since 2000, while school-aged children (under 19) have decreased; young adults (20-34) have remained stable.
- ◆ A majority of the Town is residential by use (52%) followed by almost 25% agricultural
- ◆ Housing has increased since 2000, though the rate of growth has declined.
- ◆ Housing stock is mixed with over half constructed prior to 1960
- ◆ Median home values are higher than in 1980 and remained stable since 2012
- ◆ Median household incomes have also increased since 2000 (11%)

Additional details are provided in Appendix B.

### **Implications**

The demographics are more than just numbers; they give a window into the future trends and provide insight for community priorities. For Eden specifically:

- ◆ A **stable population** entails that there is a sufficient balance between inward and outward migration or births and deaths. While stability is good for the status quo, it is also an indicator that there is work that can (and should) be done to avoid a decline.
- ◆ Declining household sizes and increasing median age indicate that there are likely **less families** in the Town and **less children**, both needed for a sustainable community.
- ◆ Higher numbers of **seniors and elderly** translate to the need for more community services, affordable housing, and other modes of transportation besides personal automobiles.
- ◆ The balance of older vs. newer homes can impact code enforcement for maintenance, affordability, and overall variety from a marketing aspect. Eden still has an almost 50-50 **balance of older and newer homes**. Newer homes can increase the tax base and attractiveness of Eden to new residents.
- ◆ **Housing variety** is also key to making the Town more attractive to new residents, but also for older folks who are looking to downsize but remain in the Town; almost 90% of the housing stock in the Town is single-family homes.
- ◆ An increase in median income is seen as an indicator that there is more **spending power** for residents, though it can be overshadowed by inflation and expenses. Keeping the money local is the priority for Eden.
- ◆ The Town’s well-educated workforce is viewed favorably for economic growth as it can attract potential high-wage employers. This is further supported by the increase in the overall workforce population in Eden. To keep this trend up, the Town will need to **expand business development opportunities and invest in the community** to make it attractive.

- ♦ Eden is a bedroom community with an average commute time of 30 minutes. Providing **employment opportunities locally** can decrease this number - a benefit to the employees, the Town, and the environment. The Town can't create jobs, but it can "set the stage" with zoning, investment, and marketing.

## Our Community

In addition to the community makeup (demographics) of Eden, the physical attributes have a significant impact on economic development and quality of life. The section below and on the following pages summarize land uses and physical characteristics of the Town.

## Existing Land Use (Map 1)

The Town of Eden was originally sub-divided from the Holland Land Company Purchase during the 1700's. Presently the Town covers an area of approximately 39.86 square miles, which includes various land uses, but most of which cater to the agricultural industry and residential living. Land uses have generally remained the same since the completion of the prior plan in 2000.

Residential lands, the largest use in the Town, are found throughout, with larger land holdings on the periphery and smaller, denser properties closer to the hamlets of Eden and East Eden. Eden Center, the de facto heart of the community, contains the central business district as well as a number of community and public uses; it is also one of the most historic districts within the community of Eden.

Code	Property Class	No. of Parcels	% Total	Acreage	% Total	Assessed Land Value	% Total	Assessed Total Value	% Total
100	Agricultural	137	4.0%	6,084.51	24.6%	\$5,369,341.00	8.7%	\$16,647,885.00	4.5%
200	Residential	2,691	77.8%	12,837.89	52.0%	\$44,510,817.00	72.0%	\$292,058,190.00	78.9%
300	Vacant	401	11.6%	4,206.04	17.0%	\$6,872,354.00	11.1%	\$7,458,054.00	2.0%
400	Commercial	94	2.7%	315.86	1.3%	\$2,143,540.00	3.5%	\$14,886,206.00	4.0%
500	Recreation & Entertainment	10	0.3%	137.00	0.6%	\$242,700.00	0.4%	\$1,745,800.00	0.5%
600	Community Service	35	1.0%	261.28	1.1%	\$1,817,160.00	2.9%	\$27,478,418.00	7.4%
700	Industrial	8	0.2%	53.09	0.2%	\$273,700.00	0.4%	\$1,867,000.00	0.5%
800	Public Services	30	0.9%	225.46	0.9%	\$492,360.00	0.8%	\$7,960,604.00	2.2%
900	Forest, Parks & Conservation	2	0.1%	263.39	1.1%	\$122,600.00	0.2%	\$122,600.00	0.0%
0	No Data available	53	1.5%	306.12	1.2%	\$0.00	0.0%	\$0.00	0.0%
TOTAL		3,461	100.0%	24,690.64	100.0%	\$61,844,572.00	100.0%	\$370,224,757.00	100.0%

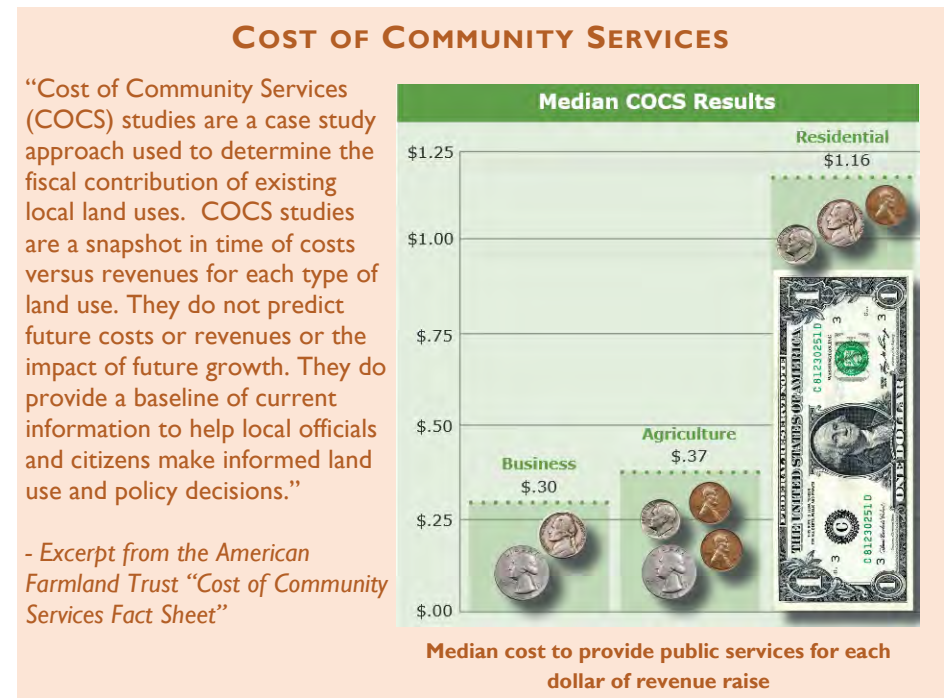


Radiating out from Eden Center along State Route 62 are a number of commercial and industrial areas, interspersed with residential homes, common in rural communities such as Eden. The proximity of the railline west of Route 62 also was influential in the development of the corridor. Sporadic other commercial uses are found in the Town near East Eden in the northeastern corner of the Town as well as in the vicinity of the Thruway and US Route 20 in the northwest. East Eden is a “micro developed” hamlet in this farm community that consists of mainly agricultural, residential and commercial uses. Many of the residents in this area rely on businesses in neighboring Hamburg for their daily needs.

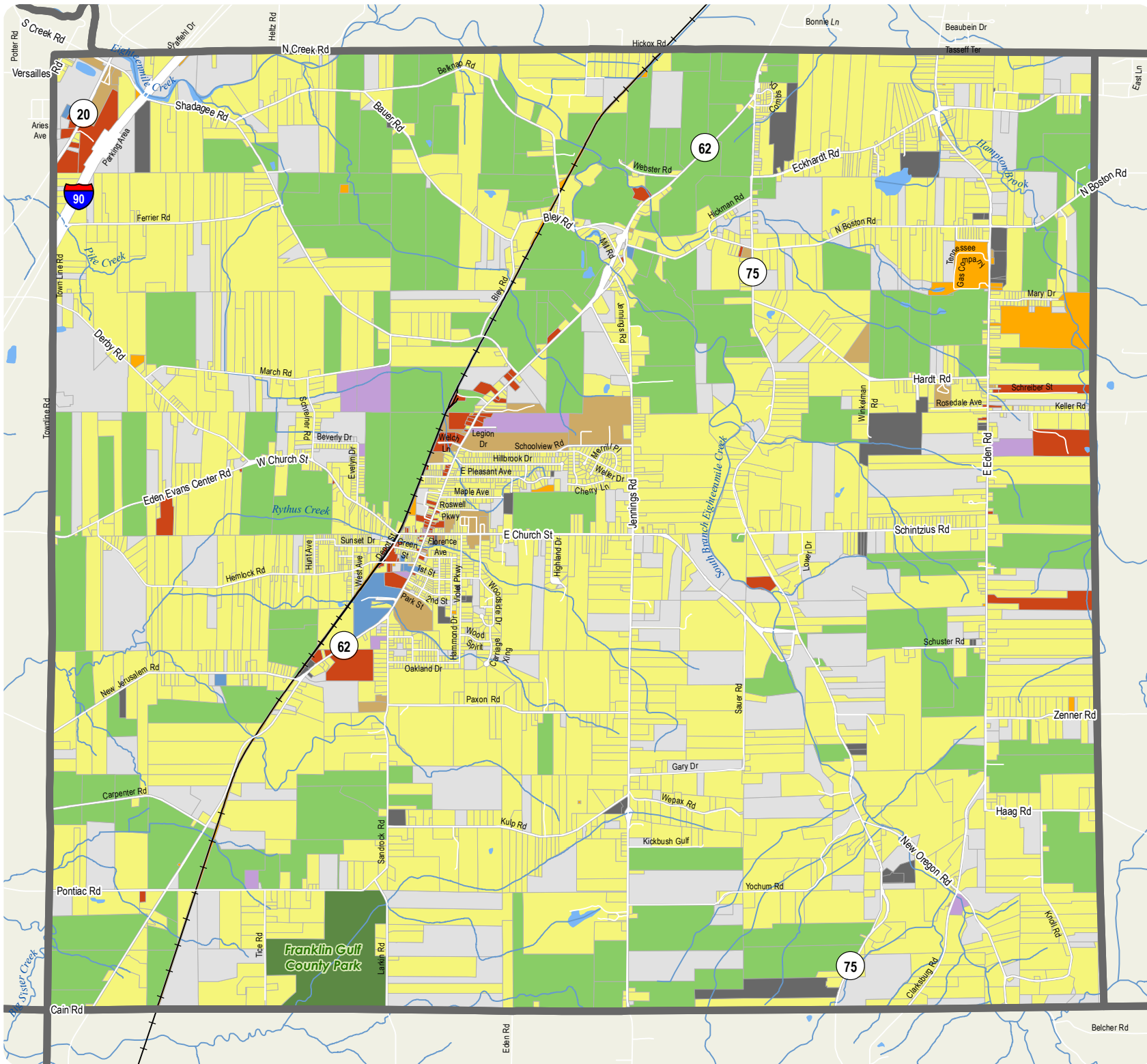
Agriculture is the next highest use in the Town (almost 25 percent) with most of these uses located on the outer edges of the Town. In comparison to data from 1995, the amount of land used for agriculture has decreased by 5 percent, likely converted to residential use. However, as the 2009 Eden Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan notes, agriculture still remains an extensive part of the Town with “nearly 15,000 acres of the town, half of the Town’s 39 square miles, is agricultural acreage or is in woods, hedgerows, and open space associated with farms and about 8,500 acres is in active agricultural production.”

The distribution of land uses not only have implications on overall character, but also on tax burden and economic development. While most communities typically rely on residential growth to boost tax revenue, it is not the preferred primary method for growth. Only 52 percent of the Town is physically used for residential from an acreage perspective, but it constitutes almost 80 percent of the value of the

Town. This, in turn, puts a greater burden on residents for needed Town revenue in the form of property taxes. Cost of community services studies in rural towns such as Eden have shown that the revenue generated by residential uses by taxes end up being LESS than the cost born by the Town to supply/maintain needed public services (water, sewer, fire, etc.).



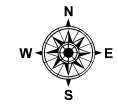
By comparison, commercial/industrial and working and open lands typically require less public services and therefore have a greater payback with tax revenue. Creating a greater balance of residential to non-residential land use will provide a more sustainable environment for the Town and yield greater tax revenue.



# 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update

## Map 01 General Land Use

Monday, June 19, 2017



### Legend

- Town Boundary
- Railroad
- Creeks/Streams
- Waterbodies
- No Parcel Data
- Agricultural
- Residential
- Vacant
- Commercial
- Recreation & Entertainment
- Community Services
- Industrial
- Public Services
- Conservation & Parkland



## **Zoning (Map 2)**

The Town of Eden, like many Western New York communities, follows a traditional Euclidean zoning model. This style of zoning divides the Town into specific districts that are dictated by a list of primary and the other compatible uses, creating a hierarchy with in each district that builds off of previous districts. The conservation district is the most restrictive while general industrial allows the most. While this methodology was revolutionary at its conception, this method of zoning can limit the potential of a property to a specific range of uses. This is especially evident in areas of mixed use (commercial and residential on the same property/building) which are typically found in Villages or hamlets such as Eden Center. Currently, the zoning in the Town of Eden consists of the following Districts:

### **Residential**

*Rural Residential (RR), Hamlet Residential (HR), Suburban Residential (SR), Suburban Residential Restricted Use (SR\*)*

Over 50 percent of the Town is zoned as one of these residential districts. While the intent of each of the districts is to primarily allow single-family residential uses along with limited community services (i.e. churches, schools), the difference among them is density, dictated by the availability of sewer and water services. The Hamlet Residential (HR) District aims for higher density with smaller lot sizes (as low as 0.25 acres) while lots in the Rural Residential (RR) District are between 0.75 and 2 acres – larger lots required for private sewer & water. The Suburban Residential (SR) District falls between these two with lot sizes around one-acre. With the exception of the HR District, agricultural operations are also noted

as a permitted use. A wide range of special uses within the Districts are noted as well including, but not limited to, recreational clubs, public utilities, camps, kennels, hospitals, and cemeteries. The HR District allows for a full-range of residential uses, including two-family dwellings; these dwellings are subject to a special permit in the SR District and not allowed in the Suburban Residential Restricted Use District.



Residential development ranges from smaller lots, closer together in the hamlet (left) to more open space and distance between homes in the country (right).

### **Business**

*Office Business (OB), Local Business (LB), General Business (GB)*

The three business districts build upon the lower level district (Office Business), which generally permits professional offices, small retail, upper-level accessory residential (live/work style), and churches. Local Business (LB) offers a wider array of retail and commercial uses, while the General Business (GB) caters to more auto-oriented enterprises such as hotels/motels, car sales, and outdoor amusement establishments. These districts encompass the hamlets of Eden Center and East Eden as well as the Route 62 corridor. While East



Eden has its own dedicated district (LB), Eden Center shares its zoning with the corridor-style development pattern along Route 62, though each has its own distinctive character.

### Industrial

#### *Planned Industrial (PI), General Industrial (GI)*

Industrial districts in the Town of Eden are limited - two of which are located near the NYS Thruway and the third south of Eden Center. Uses allowed in these districts are much the same and include research and development facilities, office parks, manufacturing, and building materials, among others, provided that storage and operations are indoors or otherwise screened. The GI District does not permit junkyards, but does allow a number of business uses from the General Business District.



The Town has a number of industrial-style buildings, mainly found south of the hamlet of Eden Center. This area is zoned for General Industrial and the buildings here range in size, though most are of a smaller footprint.

### Open Space Zones

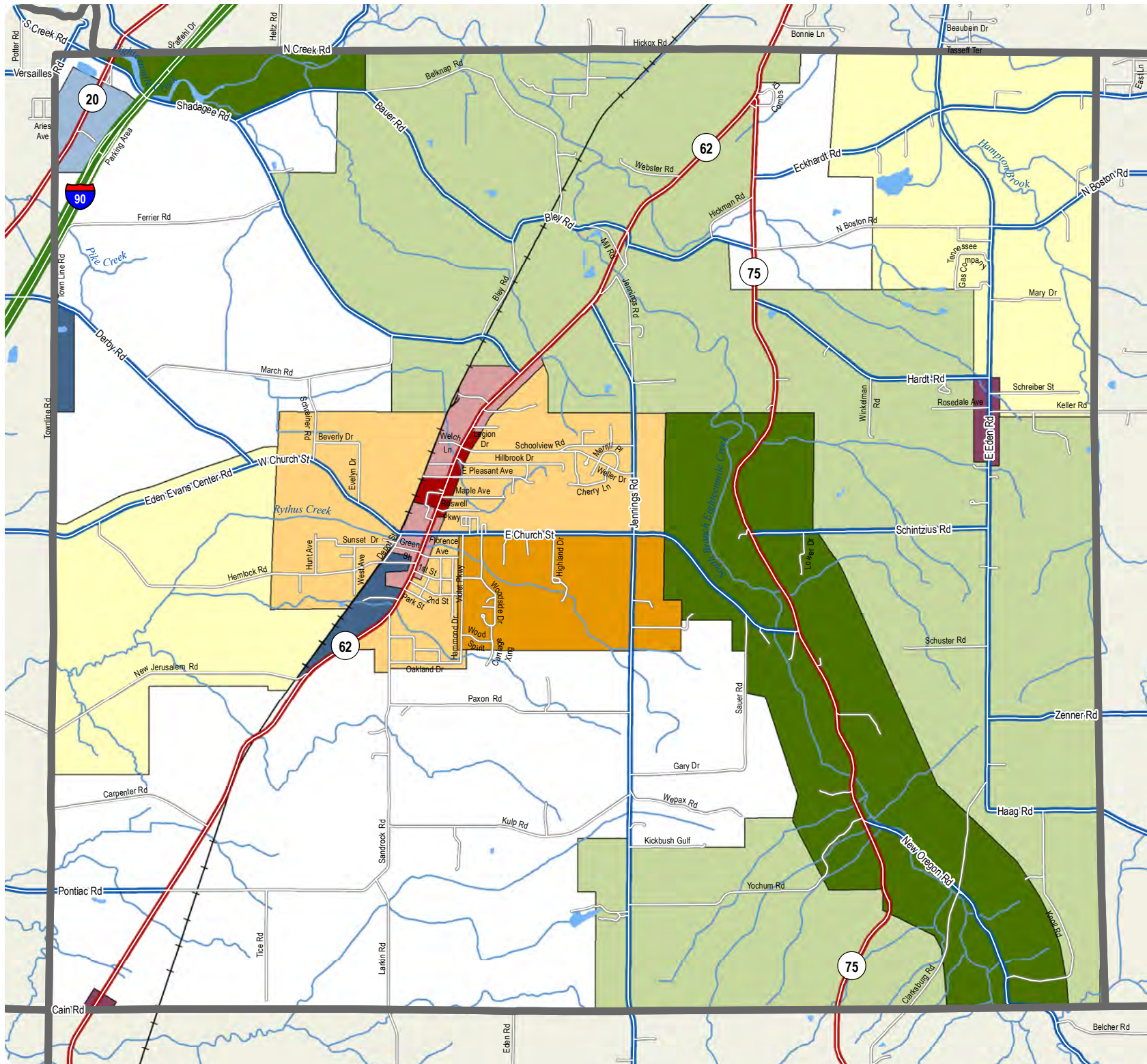
#### *Agricultural (AG), Conservation (C)*

These two zoning classifications cater to the protection and enhancement of Eden Valley, including the rich agricultural soils and sensitive environmental features. Permitted development in each of these zones is limited to agriculture, recreation, parks, forestry, and single-family residential, though the latter is a minimum of 4-5 acres in size. Both of these districts are eligible for development easements through the Town's transfer of development rights regulations to further preserve these lands and encourage development within appropriate areas of the Town.

### Overlay Zones

*Route 62 Hamlet* – This overlay provides additional regulations along the 62 corridor from Shadagee Road to New Jerusalem Road to “manage and improve commercial growth” in regards to architectural design, landscaping, signage, and site access. The overlay zone is further broken down into four areas including a Hamlet Transition Area at the north, Residential/Office and CBD Area in the center, and the Industrial/Economic Development area to the south. Additional site plan requirements and other standards are required for each section, providing numerous levels of regulations that could and have impacted redevelopment opportunities.

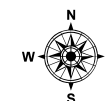
*Floodplain* – This zone provides floodplain management in conjunction with official mapped FEMA floodplains areas and noted on the zoning map.



# 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update

## Map 02 Existing Zoning

Monday, June 19, 2017



- Town Boundary
- Interstate
- State Routes
- County Roads
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- Agricultural (A)
- Conservation (C)
- General Industrial (GI)
- Planned Industrial (PI)
- General Business (GB)
- Local Business (LB)
- Office Business (OB)
- Rural Residential (RR)
- Hamlet Residential (HR)
- Suburban Residential (SR)
- Suburban Residential, Restricted Use (SR\*)





*Creekside Open Space* - Regulations within this overlay provide additional protections and site development restrictions for Ryther Creek, Hampton Brook, 18-Mile Creek, and the south branch of 18-Mile Creek, as well as limited tributaries.



*Regulated MS4* – Properties within this zone are subject to Phase 2 stormwater permit program requirements as dictated by the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC). Municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4) aim to control stormwater discharges and reduce pollutants that are carried away to nearby waterbodies. In Eden, the MS4 area generally includes the Route 62 corridor from Eden Valley down to Paxon Road and the railline to Jennings Road. The area between the northern Town line and Eckhart Road is also included in this overlay.

Similar to the land use implications, zoning affects community character and future economic development opportunities, more so due to regulatory nature of zoning. Changes to district boundaries as well as their intent, dimensional requirements, site standards, and uses can “set the stage” for growth or protection in areas that the community envisions in the future.

## **Community Assets & Natural Resources (Maps 3-7)**

As part of the Community Profile, a review and analysis of the natural assets are undertaken and incorporated – effective planning needs to take full consideration of the physical features of a community. However, as a direct result of the previous Comprehensive Plan efforts, a number of resource plans have been created that include much more detail; they are incorporated by reference into **CULTIVATE EDEN**.

These plans, as previously noted, are summarized below and provide a general picture of the natural and physical features of the Town.

### Open Space Index (1999)

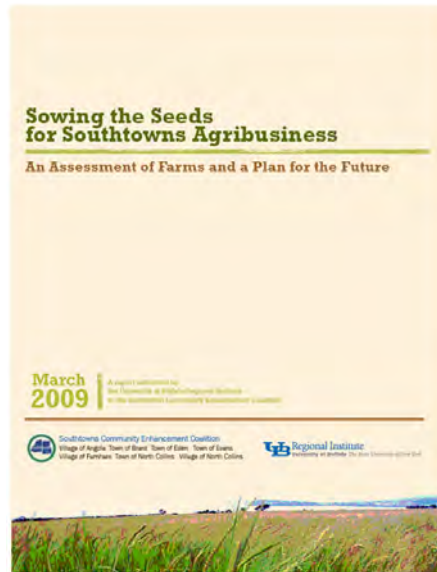
The primary goal of the Open Space Index was to provide an inventory and map of the open spaces of the Town to ensure proper utilization of these lands in the future. Initially begun in 1995, the four-year process reinforced what is already known about the Town – a vast majority of the community consists of various forms of open and natural land uses. It goes further to highlight, from 1995 data, the extent of large-acreage open space (greater than 5 acres) in the form of agricultural lands, natural terrestrial forested, and palustrine/wetlands. The vast majority of this is located on the eastern portion of the Town, with natural features such as wetlands and forested areas, in the southeast; this corresponds with the Conservation Zoning District. Protection and careful development adjacent to these resources is important not only for the sake of the character of the Town, but also to maintain the environmental health of the land. Features such as wetlands and forests hold soils together from

erosion and act as a “natural sponge” to hold stormwater. Maintaining the character of the community through resource preservation is not only important to current residents, it is also a key marketing element for future households.

### Sowing the Seeds for Southtowns Agribusiness – An Assessment of Farms and a Plan for the Future (2009)

This study looked at the extent of existing farming operations in the Southtowns of Erie County as well as a providing a plan for sustaining them through non-traditional means in the future. The traditional way of life for farming, working the land and selling commodities on the market, are not sufficient for the longevity of today’s farming families; agri-business ventures are increasingly helping farmers diversify. The plan outlines several strategies for ensuring longevity of farms in the area, including Eden, such as:

- ♦ Enhancing visitor readiness through maintenance, communication, and improvements
- ♦ Building capacity through planning, regulatory review, and human capital



- ♦ Developing products and services with diversity in mind
- ♦ Communication and marketing

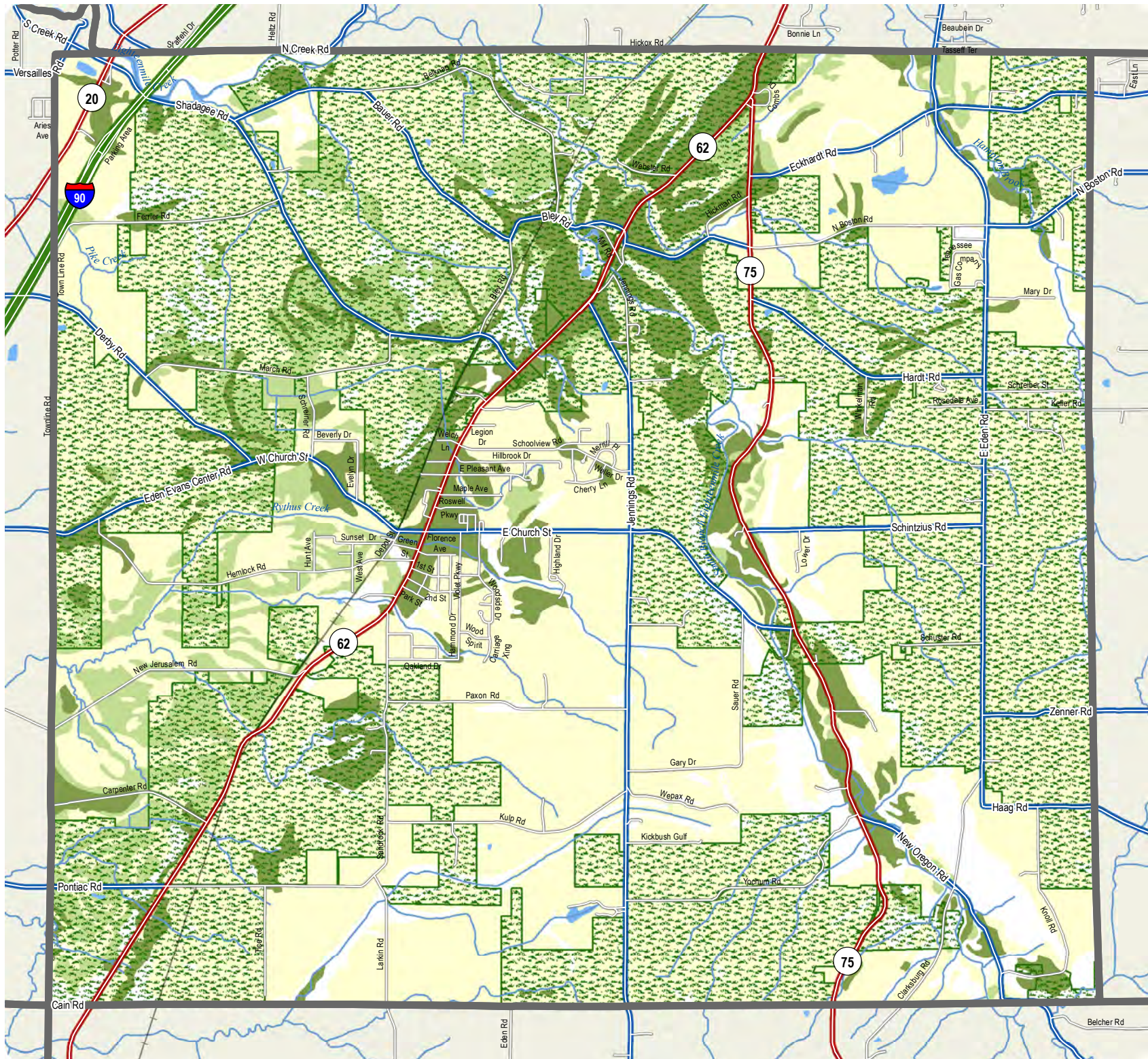
### Town of Eden Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan (2009)

In 2009, Eden updated its 1998 protection plan to “reassess and reevaluate appropriate tools to protect farmland” and strengthen the future for agriculture. As noted throughout CULTIVATE EDEN, agriculture is prevalent in the Town, with over 8,500 acres used for active production. Eden consists mainly of smaller farms with over 80 percent of the farms earning incomes from agricultural products less than \$250,000 annually. Concerns of local farmers look to profitability and viability as the overarching concern with development pressure closely behind. Town cooperation on a variety of issues such as utilities, zoning and land use regulations, and assessments are important to effecting change and ensuring sustainability of agriculture in Eden.

Several recommendations are provided in the plan, including:

- ♦ Directing development towards the hamlets and away from agricultural lands
- ♦ Initiate water line restrictions to manage growth
- ♦ Improve utilization of existing regulations including the transfer of development rights and conservation easements
- ♦ Engage in extended dialogue with the community and Town officials on agriculture to ensure it remains prominent in the public eye

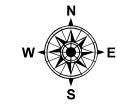




# 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update

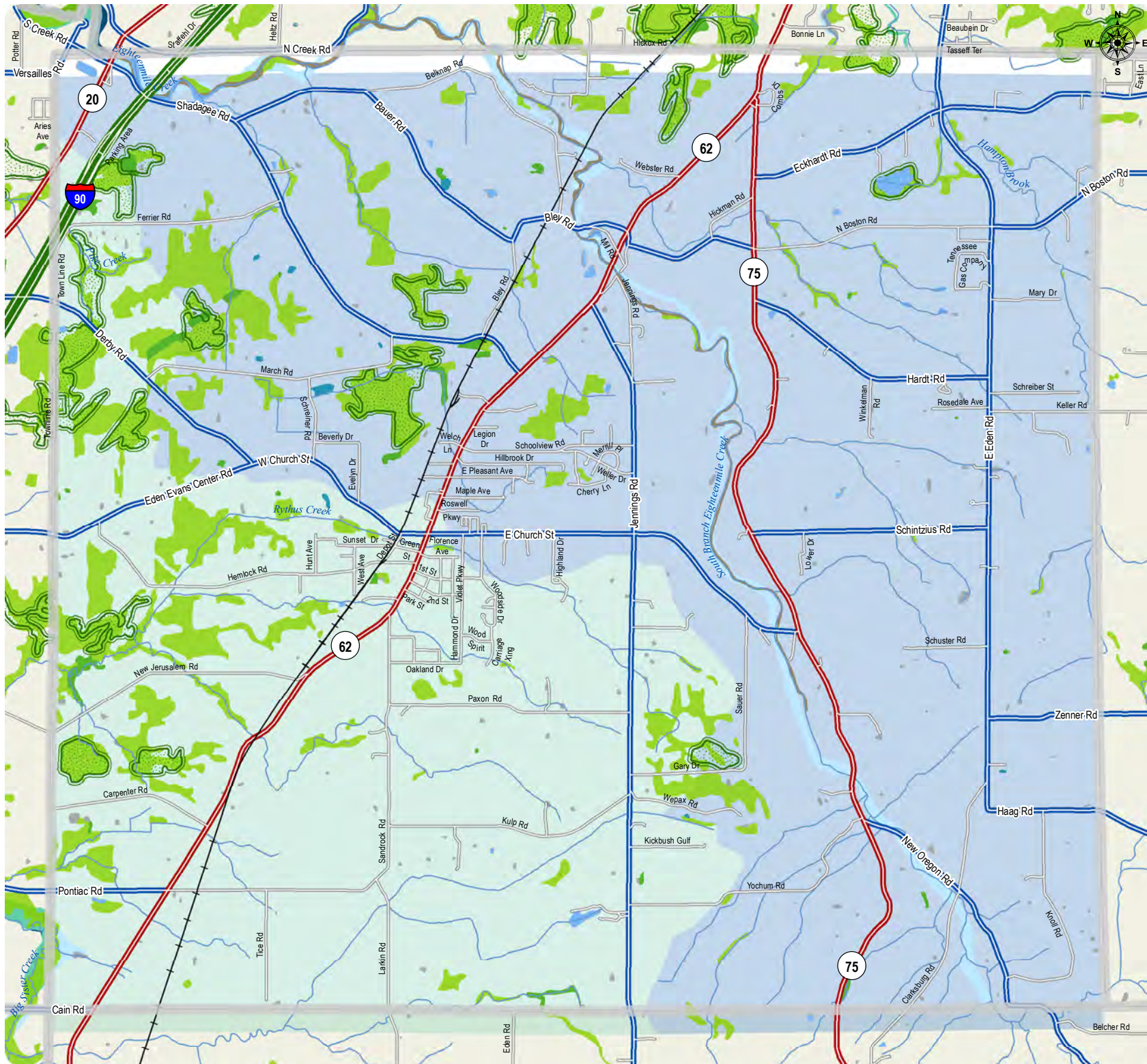
## Map 03 Agricultural Districts & Prime Farmland Soils

Monday, June 19, 2017



- Legend
- Town Boundary
  - Interstate
  - State Routes
  - County Roads
  - Local Roads
  - Railroad
  - Waterbodies
  - Creeks/Streams
  - County Ag District 8
  - Important Where Applicable
  - Prime Farmland
  - Prime Farmland (where drained)

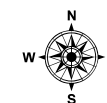




## 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update

### Map 04 Water Features

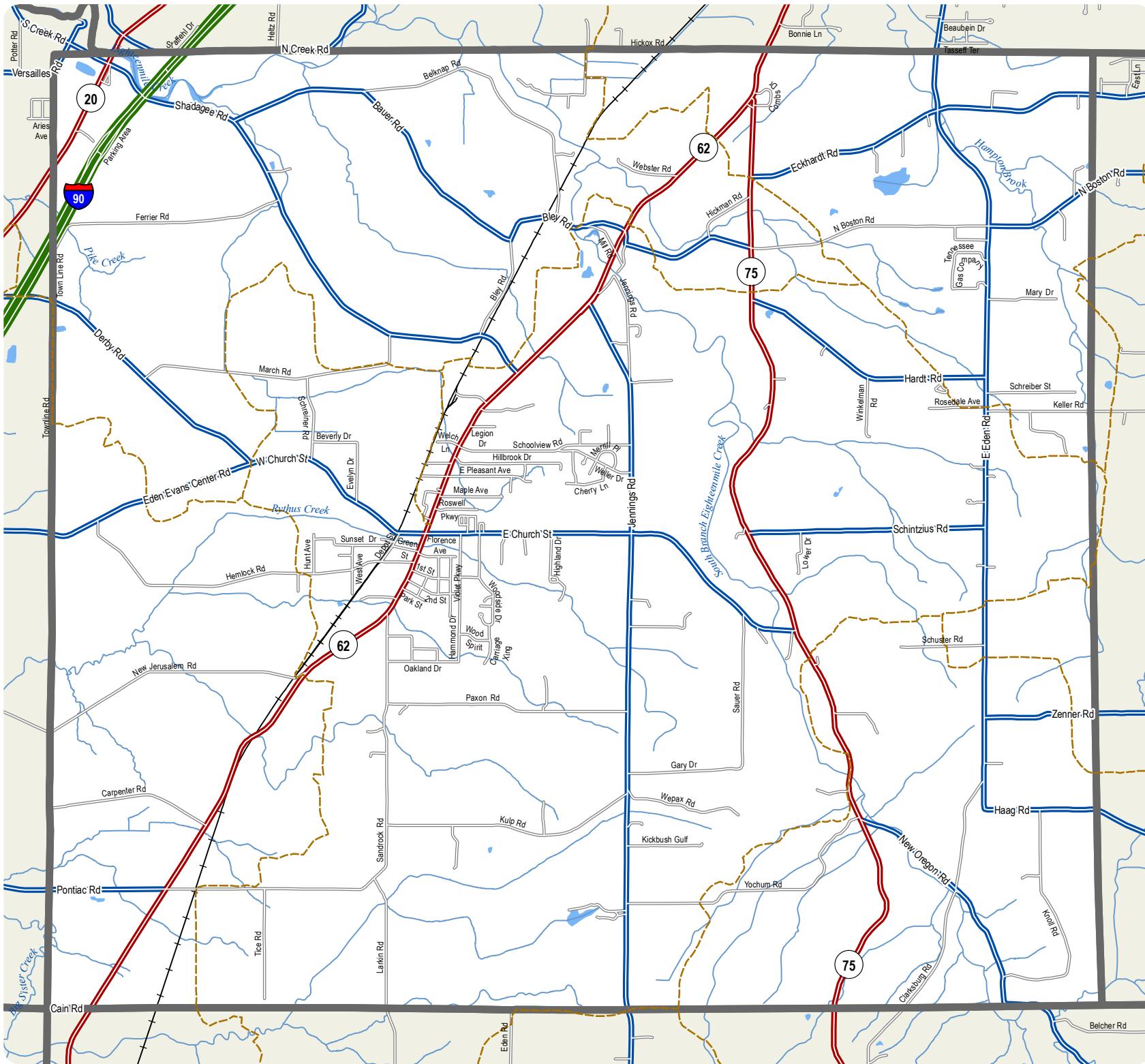
Monday, June 19, 2017



#### Legend

- Town
- Railroad
- Waterbodies
- DEC Wetland
  - Freshwater Emergent Wetland
  - Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
  - Freshwater Pond
  - Other
  - Riverine
- Zone A: 100-yr Floodplain
- Zone AE: 100-yr Floodplain
- Zone X500: 500-yr Floodplain
- Cattaugus
- Eighteenmile

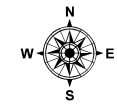




## 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update

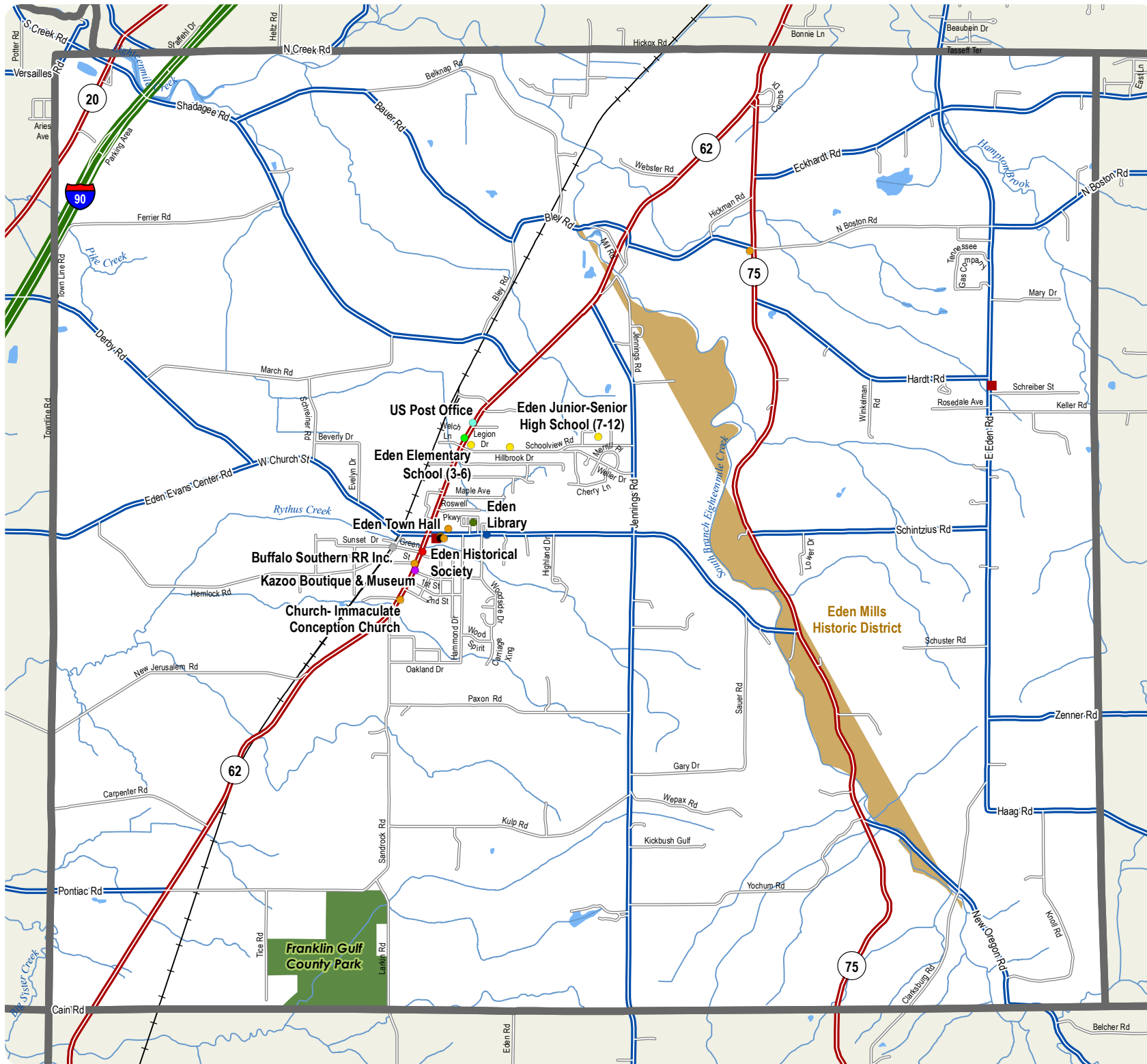
### Map 05 Transportation Network

Monday, June 19, 2017



#### Legend

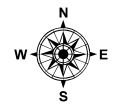
- Town Boundary
- Railroad
- Creeks/Streams
- Waterbodies
- Interstate
- State Routes
- County Roads
- Local Roads
- Snowmobile Trails



2017 Comprehensive Plan  
Update

Map 06  
Community Assets

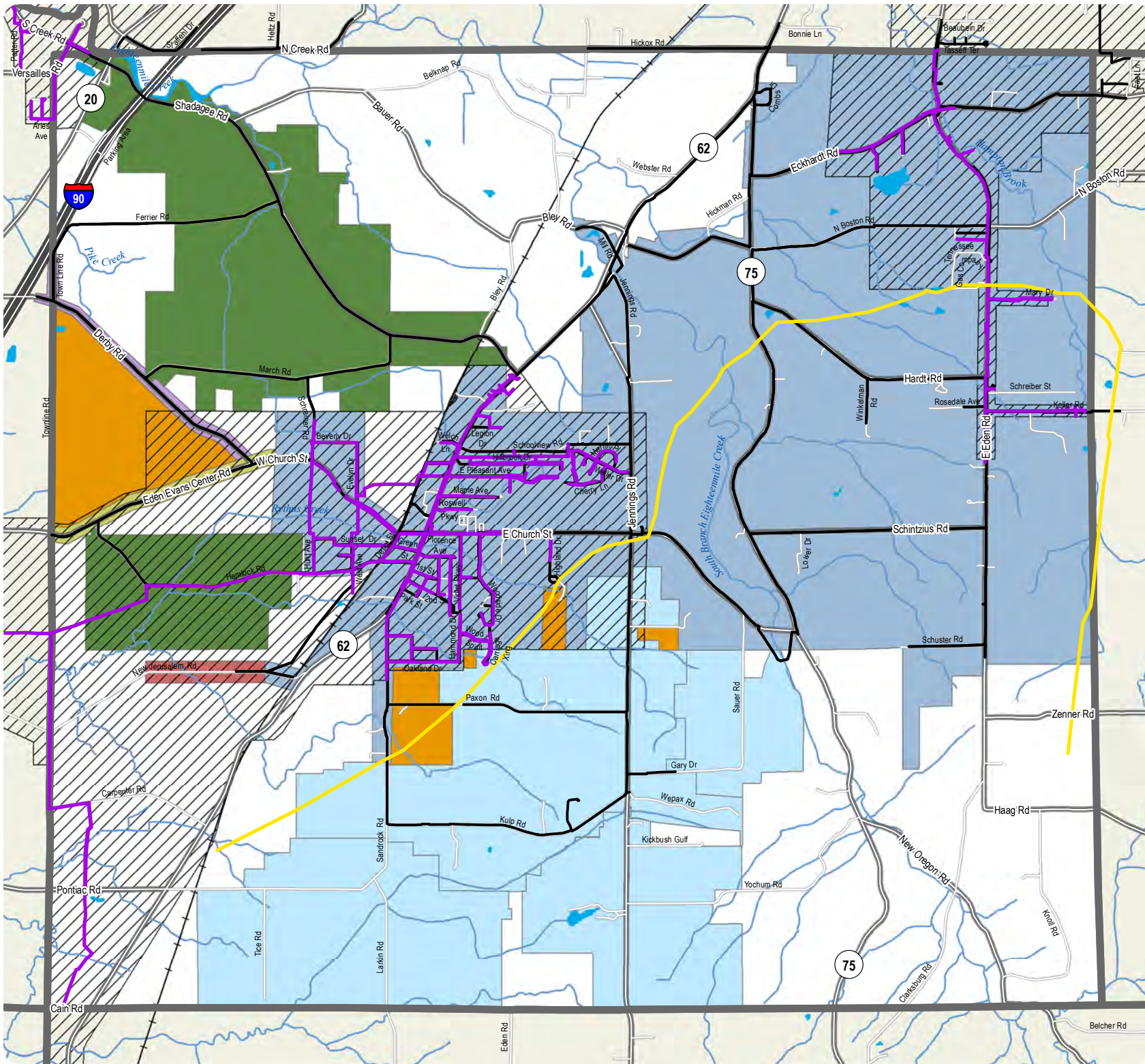
Monday, June 19, 2017



Legend

- Town Boundary
- Railroad
- Creeks/Streams
- Waterbodies
- Interstate
- State Routes
- County Roads
- Local Roads
- Boys & Girls Club of Eden
- Buffalo Southern RR Inc.
- Local Churches
- Educational
- Edens Historical Society
- Edens Library
- Edens Police Department
- Edens Town Hall
- Evergreen Cemetery
- Kazoo Boutique & Museum
- US Post Office
- FireDepts

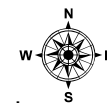




## 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update

### Map 07 Local Utilities

Thursday, January 04, 2018



#### Legend

- Town Boundary
- Interstate
- State Routes
- County Roads
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- Waterbodies
- Creeks/Streams
- County Sewer District
- Eden WD
- Eden WD #3 Ext
- Eden WD #4
- Eden WD #5
- Extension #1
- Extension #2
- Unknown
- Sewer Mains
- Water Mains
- Natural Gas Main





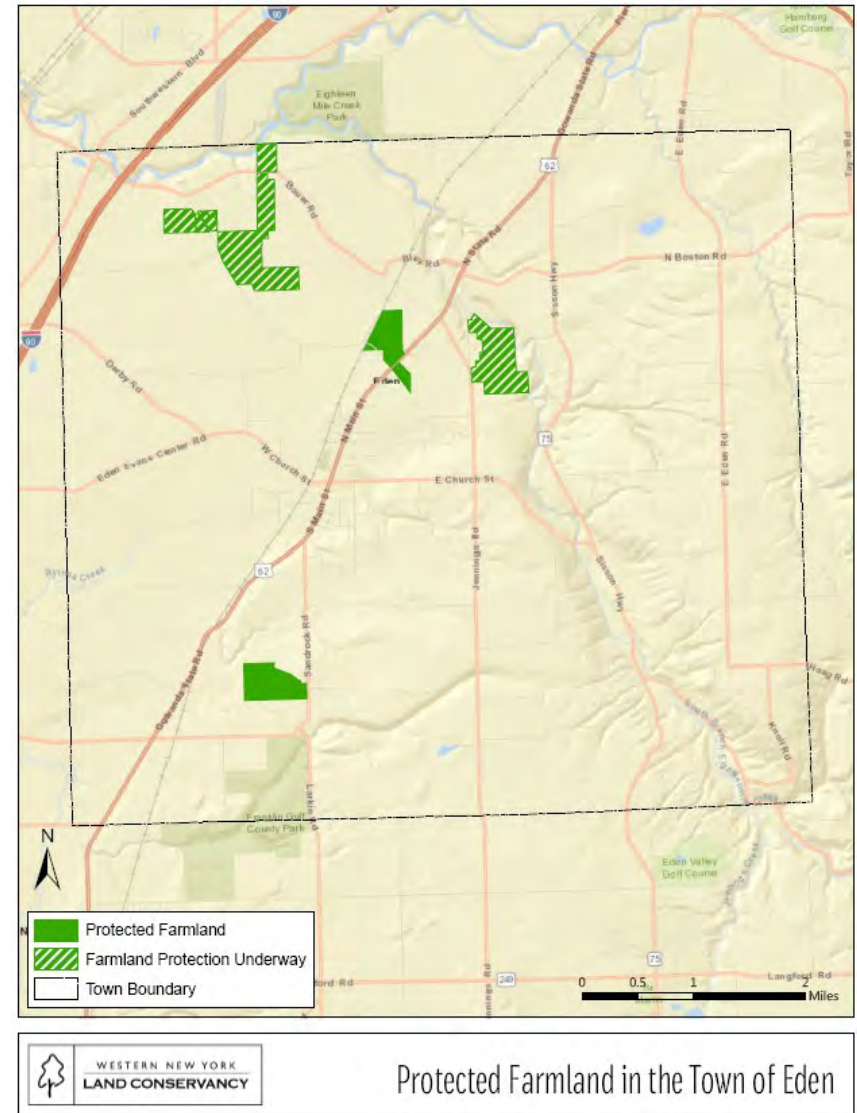
- ♦ Explore funding opportunities, business plans, and regulations that will support and encourage continued agricultural pursuits in the Town

### Natural Resources Inventory (1999, amended 2012)

The Natural Resources Inventory builds upon the 1999 Open Space Inventory and goes into further detail beyond simple open spaces. As stated in this document from previous planning efforts (1974 Eden Comprehensive Plan):

“Eden remains essentially a rural community with large amounts of open space. However, since very little land (with the exception of roads) is in public ownership, most of the town is open to development based upon private decisions. Given the steady growth of the past, open space could become scarce at least in the urban section.”

This statement remains true to Eden today. The inventory highlights various natural elements of the Town including geology, soils, wetlands, floodplains, waterbodies, and hydrogeology. One of the keys implications of the Inventory, and reflected in current practice in the Town, is the importance of the Conservation Zone. This area contains a number of significant natural resources that can impact development or otherwise result in environmental degradation if disturbed, including steep slopes, habitat areas, extensive woodlands/forests, floodplains, and prime soils. This is mapped in detail on the following pages as well as in the Resource Inventory. The boundary of this Conservation Zone should not be changed and continue well into the future of the Town.



Much of Eden's natural resources remain the same as they have in the past; human changes on the surface as a result of growth and land development, including buildings, roads, parking, and utilities are the most evident. The extent of water and sewer districts, two critical utilities that can impact the density of future development, have expanded since the 2000 Comprehensive Plan as shown in **Map 7**. The hamlet of Eden Center south along Route 62 and west to the Town line as well as the northeast corner of the Town are all serviced by Erie County Sewer; public water is provided to well over half of the Town as well. It is within these areas that growth pressure will be the greatest and land use regulations will need to be carefully reviewed to ensure that natural resource protection and economic development are balanced.

Community resources are also noted in the Resource Inventory and note assets such as, but not limited to:

- ♦ Eden Fire Company
- ♦ Town Police
- ♦ The school campus, including two elementary schools and a Jr./Sr. High School
- ♦ Seven churches
- ♦ Town Library
- ♦ Town Hall (East Church Street) and Highway Facilities (North Main Street)



- ♦ Several cultural/historical sites, including the Asa Warren House and Godfrey Metz House
- ♦ Public recreational facilities, such as Swartz Field and Flower Field, the two largest Town-owned facilities, and Franklin Gulf Park, a 649 acre County preserve that spans multiple Towns

Other unique assets in the Town that were not noted specifically include the Kazoo Boutique & Museum (only metal kazoo factory in North America) and the Buffalo Southern Railroad, Inc. station on Depot Street.

These resources contribute to the character and quality of life of the Town of Eden and in some cases, such as Franklin Gulf Park and Swartz Field, provide additional opportunities for improvement and collaboration. The natural resources of the Town also provide significant economic opportunities in the form of outdoor recreation such as hunting and fishing with extensive stands of forests and wetlands providing a variety of



(Top to bottom): Immaculate Conception Church, Swartz Field at sundown, Asa Warren House on Main Street

waterfowl, gamebirds, turkey, deer, and other mammals as well as waterbodies with a diversity of fish. As noted in the 1999 Open Space Index and further confirmed in the 2012 Inventory, these areas are found in abundance throughout the Town.

### Renewing the Town of Eden – Four Corners Revitalization Report (2017)

The latest in the Town’s planning efforts, an assessment of the buildings and public streetscape of the Four Corners area of Eden Center led to a guidance document and conceptual drawings for revitalization of several key buildings. Beyond the key buildings identified in the plan, overall revitalization of the hamlet was recognized as not only desirable from residents, but needed to improve the character of the central business district and combat an increase in unkempt properties along a high-visibility corridor. While the overall building stock is in good condition and the hamlet has

“pleasant walkability,” several factors preclude this including:

- ♦ A high amount of front-loaded, asphalt-paved parking areas
- ♦ Gaps in building mass and streetscape
- ♦ Lack of street trees and pedestrian amenities

The mix of building types and ages range by 150 years, providing an opportunity for a potential historic district and ensuring a level of architectural consistency. Nine individual buildings were noted as eligible for the National Register based on a windshield survey of the Main and Church Street study area. Building improvement concepts were also developed for five properties that addressed the current deficiencies in the corridor and utilized draft design guidelines for façade restoration/improvements. These design guidelines were also included in the final report for the Four Corners revitalization area.



The Four Corners area contains several structures that contribute to the visual appeal of the hamlet, though not all. Maintaining this character and further enhancing it can spur additional growth.



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## 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 2000 Plan goals...
<b>Building Hamlet Vitality</b>	Rural Character Preservation, Eden Center Redevelopment, Economic Development, Growth Management
<b>Balancing Rural Character</b>	Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection, Open Space Conservation, Environmental Protection, Growth Management
<b>Encouraging Economic Diversity</b>	Economic Development, Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection, Growth Management
<b>Supporting Local Agriculture</b>	Rural Character Preservation, Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection, Open Space Conservation
<b>Creating a Vibrant, Quality Community</b>	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.

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



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



*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.

# 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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# Section 5

## MOVING FORWARD

## Future Land Use

A Comprehensive Plan not only addresses community issues and opportunities, but also growth (and preservation). This section provides a graphic illustration of the preferred future land use patterns in the community, giving residents, business owners, and developers direction on the proposed form and framework for land uses. Basically, it answers a simple question:

### *What do we want Eden to (physically) look like in the future?*

Existing land use patterns and targeted development areas serve as the basis for the future land use map, providing a more realistic view of what exists in the Town currently as well as potential trends and opportunities. The map not only deals with growth, though, as there are a number of valuable natural and cultural resources within the Town that contribute to community character and can serve as economic development catalysts. Prime agricultural lands,

recreational areas, and sensitive environmental features are all indicated on the map as well for preservation and limited growth.

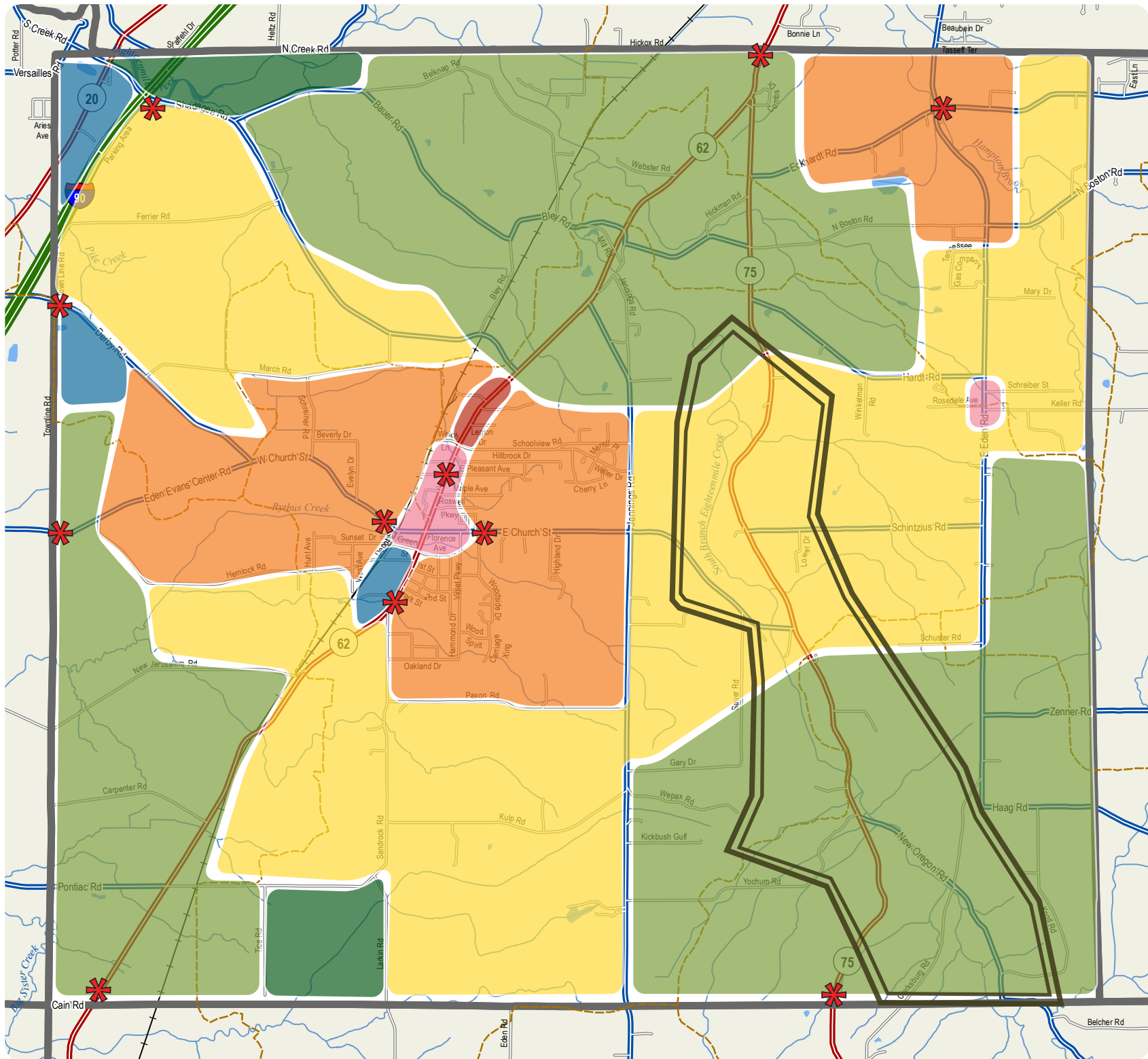
The overall intent of the future land use map is to focus services and commercial development within the existing hamlet of Eden Center, acting as the pseudo-“village core.” This serves two purposes: balancing rural character within a more concentrated development area, thereby creating a more attractive and walkable central business area, and taking advantage of existing infrastructure.

Development is intended to be more dense and “village-like” within the hamlet, supporting the traditional, organic growth that is typical of rural towns; infill, redevelopment, and preservation will be the predominant objectives in Eden Center.

A successful central business area requires an adequate density of “rooftops,” which already exists in the area around the hamlet with a number of residential neighborhoods serviced by public utilities. Expanding this residential density further beyond its existing extent



*This graphic illustrates a general change in land use intensity and development between the rural/country portions of Eden (left) moving into the slightly higher “density” of the neighborhood residential (middle) and then the hamlet.*



# 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update

## Future Land Use

Monday, June 19, 2017



### Legend

- Town Boundary
- Railroad
- Creeks/Streams
- Waterbodies
- Interstate
- State Routes
- County Roads
- Local Roads
- Agricultural Priority
- Neighborhood Residential
- Rural Residential
- Hamlet Mixed Use
- Commercial Corridor
- Industry
- Park/Recreation
- Conservation Overlay Area
- Gateways





will support future business growth and expansion while taking advantage of utilities or requiring minimal extensions to provide service. Assuming that additional residential growth occurs in the Town, strategic expansion would be focused west along West Church and Eden-Evans Center Road where development is desired to support the hamlet and sewer service could be extended west from West Church and Schreiner Road (water already exists here).

Though growth is predominantly focused on Eden Center, due to its location, existing infrastructure, and at the intersection of two major roadways, the area in and around East Eden also holds opportunities for the future, though a different scenario. The three factors mentioned above for Eden Center are what East Eden currently lack to truly “activate” it in a similar fashion to Eden Center. While supporting a smaller commercial area, building up the residential density along the Hamburg border is the primary focus, taking advantage of the investments made in Hamburg and the need/desire for rural living that is shrinking there. As growth builds over time, improvements in the visual quality and aesthetics of East Eden can be made to support it and create a more functional hamlet.

The remaining areas of Eden will continue to be more rural in character with larger lots at a smaller density, mainly to address the need for private septic and water systems. Several areas of the Town that are prime farmland would continue to remain as such, with added emphasis on agricultural operations and supporting enterprises and protection against non-agricultural conversions.

While a future land use map illustrates areas for general land uses,

one item to keep in mind is that this is NOT a zoning map. It 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 simply regulations and intent 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.

### **Land Use Categories**

The land uses shown on the future land use map are broken down into the following categories:

#### **Agricultural Priority Areas**

These are the portions of the Town that have a higher concentration of active farmlands, prime soils, or within County Agricultural Districts. Agricultural-supportive businesses are encouraged as well as other agribusiness ventures (tourism, recreation, value-added products, retail, lodging, events, etc.), provided they support local farms/farmers. As the name implies, agriculture may be the main priority, but non-agricultural development is allowed provided that best practices for conversion are followed, such as:



- ◆ Location to avoid valuable soils or infrastructure
- ◆ Allow flexibility in development, such as encouraging clustered subdivisions with dedicated roadways
- ◆ Discourage frontage homes with long, narrow lots
- ◆ Provide lot sizes appropriate for private utility systems and replacements with appropriate separation (between 2-3 acres)
- ◆ Avoid large-lot subdivisions (i.e. encourage more manageable-sized lots to conserve farmland)
- ◆ Provide buffers between non-agricultural and agricultural uses

### **Rural Residential**

Areas of the Town that are still more rural in nature, providing the “country character” that is attractive in Eden, but contain less active agricultural lands/farms and therefore having fewer impacts to key farming areas. Non-agricultural development



is encouraged more in these areas at a slightly higher density, though public water and sewer is likely not available. Due to this, larger parcels (2 acres +/-) are still needed to provide adequate space for private septic systems and wells.

### **Neighborhood Residential**

These areas are serviced by public water and sewer or are near potential expansion areas and therefore can support a higher density of development (0.5-1 acre +/-). The neighborhood residential category provides the



“rooftops” necessary to support commercial activity within Eden Center as well as provide additional growth capacity building off development in the neighboring Town of Hamburg. Residential uses would range from single-family residential to townhouses and developments catered to specific lifestyles (seniors, empty-nesters, first-time homeowners, etc.) and income levels. For single-family uses, rather than the typical “bowling alley” type of lots developed along major thoroughfares, subdivisions are encouraged to have dedicated roadways or clustering to better utilize lands and maintain the semi-rural character.

### **Hamlet Mixed Use**

The hamlet of Eden Center is the primary activity area of the Town. The intent of this area is to create a more



traditional “downtown” for residents and visitors with a variety of shops, restaurants, dwellings, and businesses in a pedestrian-oriented environment. Other characteristics of this area include:

- ♦ Higher-density (1/4 acre lots and/or 2-3 stories 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 community needs to increase vitality of the area
- ♦ Identifiable destination
- ♦ Emphasis on quality of design, activity, and aesthetics

As noted, East Eden is included within this category, but due to its secluded nature, it will focus more improving the existing quality of design and curb appeal rather than attracting new development. Over time as density and residential homes move south from Hamburg, this area can transition over to include more mixed and neighborhood-supporting uses.

### **Commercial Corridor**

This land use category is catered more towards automobile-oriented commercial uses taking advantage of volumes along the Route 62

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. Pedestrian connections are encouraged though mainly within the immediate area as well as to the school and Corn Festival grounds. This area would also function as a gateway into the hamlet of Eden Center, though not “compete” with the higher density and pedestrian activity encouraged in the hamlet. Design standards should be adopted to minimize off-site impacts, such as parking and drive-throughs.

### **Industry**

Though industrial by name, these areas would be predominantly more light industrial in nature, designed to fit inconspicuously with the surrounding land. Design standards such as landscaping, buffering, and building design

would be established to promote sound development and protect nearby areas from undesirable aspects with these more intensive land uses. Encouraging and promoting the proximity to a variety of



transportation corridors, including the Thruway, railroad, and State Route 62 would be key points, though investment in other public infrastructure may be needed.

### **Conservation & Park/Recreation**

These two categories include important ecological/natural/conservation areas as well as key recreational assets that need to be preserved for local and regional enjoyment. For these areas, development is limited to passive recreational and supportive pursuits such as trails, parking areas, overlooks, pavilions, picnicking facilities, etc. Accessibility and proper identification/wayfinding of these resources can be utilized for marketing and economic development pursuits. The intent of the conservation overlay area would be much the same as the zoning for that lays out - allowing low intensity development to occur with another level of regulations that protect sensitive natural features.



## **Design Guidance**

In addition to land use, site and building design guidelines can promote consistency among developed areas as well as providing direction for private and public investments and improvements. Generally, these guidelines seek to:

- ◆ Emphasize quality design and craftsmanship, prompting further business development and highlighting dedication to improvements in the Town
- ◆ Provide a human-scale for architecture that promotes greater activity
- ◆ Create a balance between pedestrians and auto-centered uses and design
- ◆ Encourage development that is sensitive to natural features and the rural character of Eden

Through the use of a visual preference survey (VPS), public input was collected to provide a general direction on desired visual elements for future development and redevelopment. Various example images were provided that exhibited building, site, and other development characteristics that could be considered for several general locations throughout Eden; those images that were viewed or identified the most by the committee and respondents are shown on the following pages. This information can be utilized to encourage a more detailed discussion on design as well as promote the development of actual design standards in the future.



## BUILDING FORM & DENSITY (EDEN CENTER)



## CHARACTER (ROUTE 62 CORRIDOR)



## MULTI-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT



## STREETSCAPE





## RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT FORM



## PUBLIC SPACE STYLE/INTENSITY



## Form-Based Code?

A different way of regulating land use, a form-based code is an alternative way of zoning that uses physical form as the organizing principle in the built environment rather than merely a separation of uses. These types of codes “address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings to one another, and the scale/types of streets and blocks.” (*Form-Based Codes Institute*)



Results of conventional zoning...



...what Form-Based Codes can achieve.

## Action Plan

Chapter 3 and 4 outlined the core values for the Eden community as well as the objectives to undertake to achieve those values - without viable actions to carry them out, results would be difficult to realize. The following pages outline key recommendations for the Town, based on priority and noting what community value it encompasses.

These recommendations do not make an attempt to address and identify EVERY action that is required nor the exact method for carrying it out. As much as **CULTIVATE EDEN** is a guidance document, the recommendations provide direction for action; how the Town ultimately fulfills it is within its own discretion.

The priorities are divided up into three categories:

1

### **Immediate** (within a one-year timeframe)

These actions or initiatives are the most important to address following the completion of the Comprehensive Plan update and typically consists of policy decisions or regulatory/administrative changes. Without following through on these actions, subsequent work to carry out the recommendations of the Plan will be difficult to achieve. These actions may not be associated with a specific recommendation or goal, but rather the entirety of the Comprehensive Plan itself.

2

### **Short-Term** (2-5 years timeframe)

While equally important, these actions may require some additional work to establish partnerships, seek funding opportunities, or require planning and discussion among

3

Town staff or the community. The actions contained in this category may be integrated with the Town's capital planning programming.

### **Long-Term** (5+ year timeframe)

Long range projects and initiatives that may require additional funding, resources, or strategic partnerships or rely on earlier actions to take place in order for these to be undertaken. These are typically larger-scale, higher-cost projects that could be associated with State agencies such as the Department of Environmental Conservation or Transportation in order to share financial and technical resources.

**CULTIVATE EDEN** is intended to be an active, working document for Town government, boards, and the community-at-large. To assist in that effort, several other components are included in the action plan - estimated cost, funding sources, partners, and status.

- ♦ **Estimated cost** - Approximation of cost for action. The use of outside groups/firms are identified where likely, but could be utilized anywhere, thus changing the potential cost.
- ♦ **Funding sources** - Avenues for grants and other additional sources to offset local funding (see page 61).
- ♦ **Partners** - Those who have a stake in/potential to influence an action (e.g. funding, review, permitting, technical assistance, resources, etc.), including both internal and external entities.
- ♦ **Status** - Provides the Town with space to track and monitor progress over the life of the plan.

## CORE VALUE

Hamlet Vitality	Rural Character	Economic Diversity	Local Agriculture	Vibrant, Quality Community	ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	COST EST.	FUNDS	STATUS	PRIORITY
<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	Incorporate form-based zoning regulations where appropriate (e.g. hamlet & 62 corridor) to focus on building design and relationship to the street rather than just the use itself.	Town Board, outside consultant, Erie County Planning	\$10,000 per district	CSCP, ESD		<b>1</b>
		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	Ensure development in Eden Center allows for a mix of types to build it up as a traditional hamlet with “Village qualities” and character.	Town Board, Planning Board	N/A <i>(if done in-line with other regulation updates)</i>			<b>1</b>
<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>	Revise building frontage and parking regulations within the hamlet so that all building storefronts engage with pedestrians first.	Town Board	N/A <i>(if done in-line with other regulation updates)</i>			<b>1</b>
<b>X</b>					Develop an inventory of the exterior conditions of buildings in the hamlet, with emphasis to those in the Four Corners general area and including the side streets, and develop a list of priority improvements.	Town Board, Code Enforcement	\$30,000	NYMS, PRHP		<b>1</b>
<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	Develop a streetscape plan on Route 62 for improvements within the right-of-way including trees, bike lanes, road diets, utility burial, parking, etc. and discuss with NYSDOT for implementation or long-range planning.	Town Board, outside consultant, NYS DOT, Town Highway, Erie County Planning & Public Works	\$40,000	DOT		<b>1</b>
<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	Revise transfer of development regulations to encourage higher density in the hamlet and other areas identified in the Future Land Use for additional development.	Town Board, Conservation Board	N/A <i>(if done in-line with other regulation updates)</i>			<b>1</b>



## CORE VALUE

Hamlet Vitality	Rural Character	Economic Diversity	Local Agriculture	Vibrant, Quality Community	ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	COST EST.	FUNDS	STATUS	PRIORITY
	X			X	Ensure appropriate regulations exist that protect and preserve sensitive natural resources such as extensive woodlands, gullies, steep slopes, ridgelines, and scenic views, which contribute to the character and marketing of Eden.	Town Board, Conservation Board	N/A <i>(if done in-line with other regulation updates)</i>			1
		X			Identify the extent of underutilized industrial lands/buildings in Eden and work with Erie County IDA to ensure they are included on all available marketing materials.	Town Board, Erie County IDA & Planning, Chamber of Commerce	N/A			1
	X			X	Review site plan application and review process to ensure that they balance Town interests, but do not necessarily burden development opportunities.	Town Board, Planning Board	N/A			1
	X		X		Develop an agricultural priority zoning district that puts farming as the highest and best use with stringent regulation on non-agricultural development.	Town Board, Conservation Board, Erie County Planning, outside consultant	N/A <i>(if done in-line with other regulation updates)</i>			1
			X	X	Engage with the School District and local farmers regarding the extent of “farm to school” connections to expand agricultural markets and provide fresh, local foods to students.	Town Board, local farmers, School District	N/A			1



## CORE VALUE

Hamlet Vitality	Rural Character	Economic Diversity	Local Agriculture	Vibrant, Quality Community	ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	COST EST.	FUNDS	STATUS	PRIORITY
			<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	Encourage farm to table, breweries, tasting rooms, and other local agriculturally-supportive business ventures within the hamlet.	Town Board	N/A			<b>1</b>
		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	Initiate a feasibility study to determine the current conditions of industrial areas in the Town, potential areas of expansion, constraints, and necessary improvements.	Town Board, outside consultant, Erie County IDA & Planning	\$30,000	ESD		<b>1</b>
	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>		Review existing subdivision regulations, especially clustering, for residential development to ensure adequate flexibility for retaining access to and usability of valuable farmlands.	Town Board, Planning Board	N/A <i>(if done in-line with other regulation updates)</i>			<b>1</b>
<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>	Research and include provisions in the zoning code for accessory dwelling units and other similar options to provide aging-in-place and other housing opportunities.	Town Board, Planning Board, Erie County Planning	N/A <i>(if done in-line with other regulation updates)</i>			<b>1</b>
		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	Utilize the property revaluation process to verify and update existing property values in the Town based on current market conditions.	Town Board, Erie County, Town Assessor				<b>2</b>
<b>X</b>					Identify areas for municipal parking areas as businesses in Eden Center to provide opportunities for walking, window shopping, etc. and ease traffic on Main Street.	Town Board	N/A			<b>2</b>

## CORE VALUE

Hamlet Vitality	Rural Character	Economic Diversity	Local Agriculture	Vibrant, Quality Community	ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	COST EST.	FUNDS	STATUS	PRIORITY
<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>	Establish and enhance dedicated gateways into Eden and the hamlets to create a better sense of place and identity.	Town Board, local groups, Chamber of Commerce	\$300,000	DOT, ESD, PRHP		<b>2</b>
		<b>X</b>			Engage with the Town of Evans and Erie County on joint efforts for industrial development in and around the I90/Thruway interchange.	Town Board, Town of Evans, Erie County IDA & Planning, Chamber of Commerce	N/A			<b>2</b>
<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>			Work with CSX and property owners to identify improvements to the area around the Depot station, including parking, lighting, landscaping, and business opportunities can could support future train travel.	Town Board, CSX, property owners	\$1,000,000 <i>(assuming full build-out)</i>	PRHP, NYMS, DOT, ESD		<b>2</b>
<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>	Explore the feasibility of a community center for all ages within the hamlet to provide a central gathering location and area for community events.	Town Board, outside consultant	\$30,000 <i>(study)</i> \$1,500,000 <i>(build-out)</i>	ESD, PRHP		<b>2</b>
<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	Establish other community activities in Town on a more local-scale, including farmers markets, community dinners, and harvest events, among others.	Town Board, Recreation Dept.	N/A			<b>2</b>
<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>	Improve and maintain identification and wayfinding of local recreational and cultural assets including parks, athletic facilities, and historical sites.	Town Board, Recreation Dept.	\$250,000 <i>(construction)</i>	PRHP		<b>2</b>

## CORE VALUE

Hamlet Vitality	Rural Character	Economic Diversity	Local Agriculture	Vibrant, Quality Community	ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	COST EST.	FUNDS	STATUS	PRIORITY
X	X	X		X	Develop a Park and Recreation Master Plan that provides an analysis of existing parks and recreational assets in the Town, including trails and general connectivity among resources, to assess specific needs and opportunities for improvement/enhancement.	Town Board, Recreation Dept.	\$50,000	PRHP, ESD		2
X		X		X	Develop a market analysis report to help determine and target specific businesses, as well as housing types, that the market could support in Eden, especially the hamlet of Eden Center.	Town Board, outside consultant	\$40,000	ESD		2
X		X		X	Provide pedestrian amenities within Eden Center including landscaping/planters, decorative street lights, benches, etc. to encourage walkability and activity.	Town Board, Chamber of Commerce, Town Highway	\$500,000	DOT		2
	X	X		X	Engage with Erie County and other stakeholders on expanding access and recreational opportunities at Franklin Gulf County Park, including a variety of trails, overlooks, and interpretive areas.	Town Board, Erie County Parks, neighboring Towns, outdoor groups, Rec. Advisory Board	\$30,000 <i>(assuming outside consultant used for technical support)</i>	PRHP, DOT		2
X	X			X	Establish a local historic district for Eden Center/Four Corners to take advantage of funding and protect/enhance resources.	Town Board, State Historic Preservation Office	\$30,000 <i>(assuming outside consultant used)</i>	PRHP		3
X	X				Become a Certified Local Government (CLG) to establish local review of historic assets and provide opportunities for related funding.	Town Board, State Historic Preservation Office	N/A			3

## CORE VALUE

Hamlet Vitality	Rural Character	Economic Diversity	Local Agriculture	Vibrant, Quality Community	ACTION ITEM	PARTNERS	COST EST.	FUNDS	STATUS	PRIORITY
	X	X		X	Expand low-impact, recreation-related development in and around the 18 Mile Creek area that capitalizes on the adjacent County park in Hamburg.	Town Board, Erie County Parks, Town of Hamburg	\$50,000 <i>(assuming outside consultant used for technical support)</i>	PRHP		3
X		X			Engage with stakeholders to expand the reuse of the existing train line for additional scenic excursions or travel from the Southtowns to Buffalo and other points.	Town Board, Erie County, Buffalo Cattaraugus & Jamestown Scenic RR, Buffalo Southern RR	N/A			3
X		X		X	Evaluate the level of effort and acceptance by the Town of making Eden a “Climate Smart Community” through NYS DEC, requiring certification and environmental commitments, to open up the Town to additional funding streams and further conservation goals.	Town Board, Conservation Board	N/A			3
				X	Continue to utilize the local Boys & Girls Club for youth recreation and identify shortfalls in programming/events with opportunities for collaboration with the Town.	Town Board, Recreation Dept., Boys & Girls Club	N/A			Ongoing



## Key Projects/Initiatives

The action plan on the following pages provides a number of recommendations for Eden to carry out to further the objectives and vision of the community. Throughout the planning process, in discussions with the steering committee and Eden residents/business-owners, several ideas were brought up that spurred additional discussion. In turn, these project ideas were transformed into preliminary graphics and concept drawings.

It should be noted that these projects are conceptual in nature and will likely require much more refinement and further work to bring them to fruition. The primary intention of them are to be **“catalyst”** projects or initiatives to provide momentum to making beneficial changes/improvements in the community.

### Community Center

Through the course of the Comprehensive Plan update, the potential to develop a community center for the residents of Eden was identified as an opportunity to build social interaction and provide a valuable community resource.

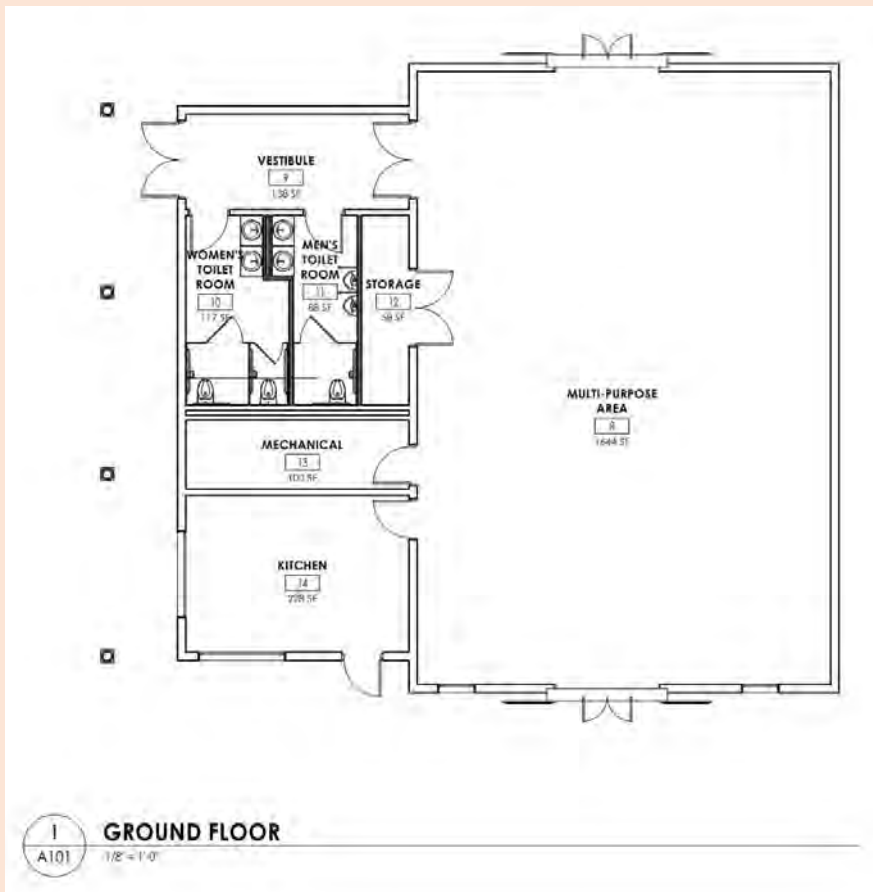
The conceptual idea for a community center is a non-traditional/flexible communal space that takes an alternative approach to space design this would allow for an accommodation of a variety of needs and users/age-groups in a cost-effective manner. The intended design of the community center is influenced by the barns of the farm culture that dot the landscape of Eden.

The space would feature a basic approach of a one room, multi-purpose space for gatherings and functions that can transform based

on the programming needs. Depending on design, this space could be changed from an open court recreational court to a gathering space for special events. An extended overhang with multi-functional windows would help allow for growth and cater to different needs during the warmer season months.

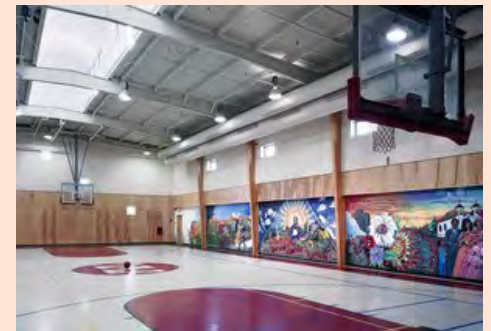
#### Tasks:

- ♦ Feasibility study, including site alternatives, programming needs, design, cost estimates. Programming consideration includes space flexibility for groups events, kitchen space, recreation (i.e. open courts, fitness classes, etc.), and age groups.
- ♦ Identify funding sources, internal and external. Consider a local GoFundMe or other similar fundraising initiatives in addition to Town funds and/or grants.
- ♦ Engage with residents, local businesses and organizations for additional support.
- ♦ Hire professional design firm to finalize design and provide technical services.



Conceptual floor plan layout for a simple, multi-functional space

Flexible spaces designed for multiple users have the ability to adapt to community needs from formal group events to small classes to dedicated active recreation.



These two concepts highlight the local rural character of Eden in both a 500,000 SF footprint (top) and 750,000 SF footprint (bottom).

## Croop's Mill Park

The Croop's Mill is located west of State Route 62, north of the Bley Road bridge on the south branch of Eighteen Mile Creek. The mill itself represents a connection to the historical roots of the Town and its founding and includes several old buildings from that period as well - a former creamery and farmhouse. Eighteen Mile Creek is immediately adjacent to the site on the west side and gives a prime opportunity for public access to one of the community's natural resources. Overall, the site itself would have a tremendous impact in the regards to public access to not only a historical asset of the Town, but also the creek. In turn, these would help connect the residents of Eden to their past while helping to attract visitors to the community.



The existing site contains numerous structures not associated with the history of the property, namely temporary farmworker housing. Relocation of these dwellings and development of the site is possible in order to further this idea.

### Tasks:

- ♦ Feasibility study, including extent of existing site assets, building conditions, structural integrity, and site conditions. Both the creamery and mill have been neglected and significant deterioration are evident.
- ♦ Continue to discuss the future of the rest of the property with the current owner and enter into formal agreements.
- ♦ Develop site alternatives, programming needs, design, and cost estimates. Access and wayfinding to the site will be important as it is in an isolated location and set down from the roadway.
- ♦ Engage with local/State historical organizations for additional input.
- ♦ Recommendations for amenities to include on the site.
- ♦ Identify funding sources, internal and external. Consider a local GoFundMe or other similar fundraising initiatives in addition to Town funds and/or grants.





This conceptual illustration outlines the various amenities and features that could be incorporated in the site, ranging from historical/cultural interpretation to active recreation to community gardens. Connections to history, agriculture, and the water are all possible at this site, taking advantage of an otherwise underutilized and deteriorating resource.



Current view of the creamery (left) and the mill from the creek (right).





## Depot Street

The history of the Town includes the railroad, though to a lesser extent compared with neighboring communities such as Evans/Angola or Hamburg. However, Eden still has a quaint rail station that still exists, utilized over time as variety of professional offices. Nearby, several industrial-style, larger-footprint buildings also exist, though currently underutilized. Though there is still great local interest in maintaining and increasing active use of the rail for excursions or possibly commuter traffic, this area still has great potential to be transformed into a new center of activity centered around rail history.

Though anchored by the rail station, the entire Depot Street area needs to be considered holistically. Integrating the rail station with the nearby buildings and other businesses in Town can help to create a niche area that builds off of, but does not compete with, businesses on Main and Church Street. This can help to create additional activity in the hamlet and make Eden more of a draw to visitors, encouraging additional business investment. The preferred course of action is to develop a more defined strategy for the area that includes a brief market analysis and development plan for buildings and the street that can be used to initiate discussions with property owners and potential developers.



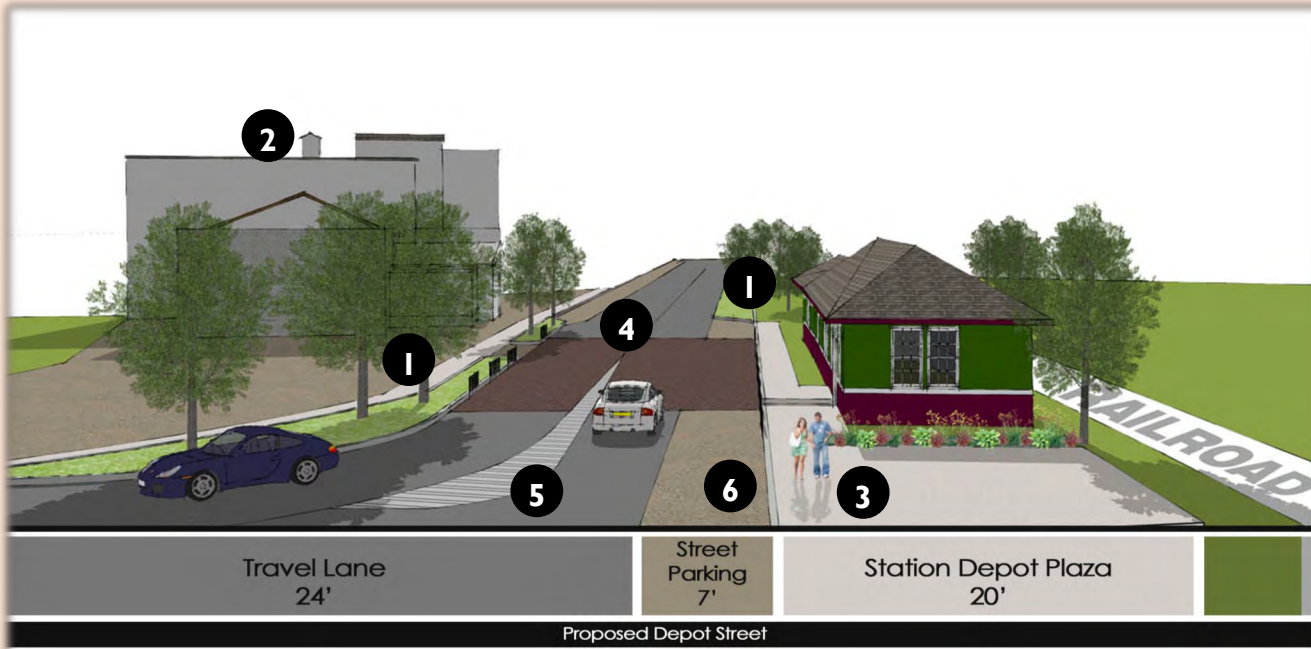
### Potential opportunity areas:

- ♦ Micro-brewery/winery (utilizing the nearby available industrial space) complete with an outdoor spaces
- ♦ Tasting room for local breweries/wineries
- ♦ Dining facility for local farm-to-table opportunities
- ♦ Community/youth business incubation, such as a “maker space” geared towards the younger generation, containing various technical equipment and resources
- ♦ Private event/gathering space
- ♦ Investment in this area provides incentive for existing nearby businesses to consider potential expansions

THE  
CREATION  
STATION

Marketing concepts for  
potential Depot Street  
opportunities.

- GARDEN OF EDEN BREWERY -



Reimagining the Depot Street area could consist of several elements including:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| (1) Redefining the street edge and addition of landscaping                                      | (4) Patterned and/or alternative materials for pedestrian crossings |
| (2) Redevelop former industrial buildings   | (5) Defined travel lanes  |
| (3) Define and call out pedestrian areas (fence, sidewalk) to create an identity/sense of place | (6) On-street parking to encourage walking                          |



Re-imagining the space as a "maker space" allows for entrepreneurship and facilitating small businesses.



Expanding upon the existing rail station with other rail features, such as this railcar in the Village of Victor (left), build up the character of the area as well as landscaping and pedestrian amenities.



## Eden Center & Main Street

The hamlet center of Eden offers the foundation of a complete package, with narrower, village-style streets and semi-walkable neighborhoods, the opportunity awaits to re-vitalize the vibrancy of the hamlet center. Modifications to the roadways within the right-of-way that include the elements noted at right (referred to as streetscape: street + landscape) would harbor a safer and more inviting environment.

Studies have shown that investing in the public realm (i.e. the right-of-way) with visual improvements and maintenance create a more attractive and inviting business environment for additional investment and growth. In addition, implementing pedestrian elements creates more potential for activity within the hamlet, adding to the overall vibrancy and creating a more defined sense of place.

Main Street and Church Street are the two primary roadways that lead to the center of Eden Center, though Main is owned and maintained by NYS DOT as State Route 62. However, by developing a locally-supported streetscape plan for this roadway that provides benefits to businesses and residents alike, the Town can proactively engage with DOT through their *Smart Planning Program* and context sensitive design initiatives to incorporate these ideas into long-range planning for the road.

An example of the results of the DOT's *Smart Planning Program* on Route 146 in Altamont.



### Streetscape design elements:

- ♦ Bike lanes - where adequate pavement width exists (5' minimum) these provide dedicated lanes for bikers. Shared lanes with cars (14' minimum) provide transition as well as shoulders (markings/signage recommended)
- ♦ Crosswalks - high visibility, consider alternative materials or paint
- ♦ Bumpouts - define entrances and on-street parking areas, provide shorter pedestrian crossing areas
- ♦ Street landscaping - adds visual interest, slows traffic (vertical element), pedestrian comfort, filters air from traffic, stormwater and green infrastructure potential
- ♦ Street lighting - pedestrian and vehicular-scale, decorative, shielded for light spillage, LED/high efficiency



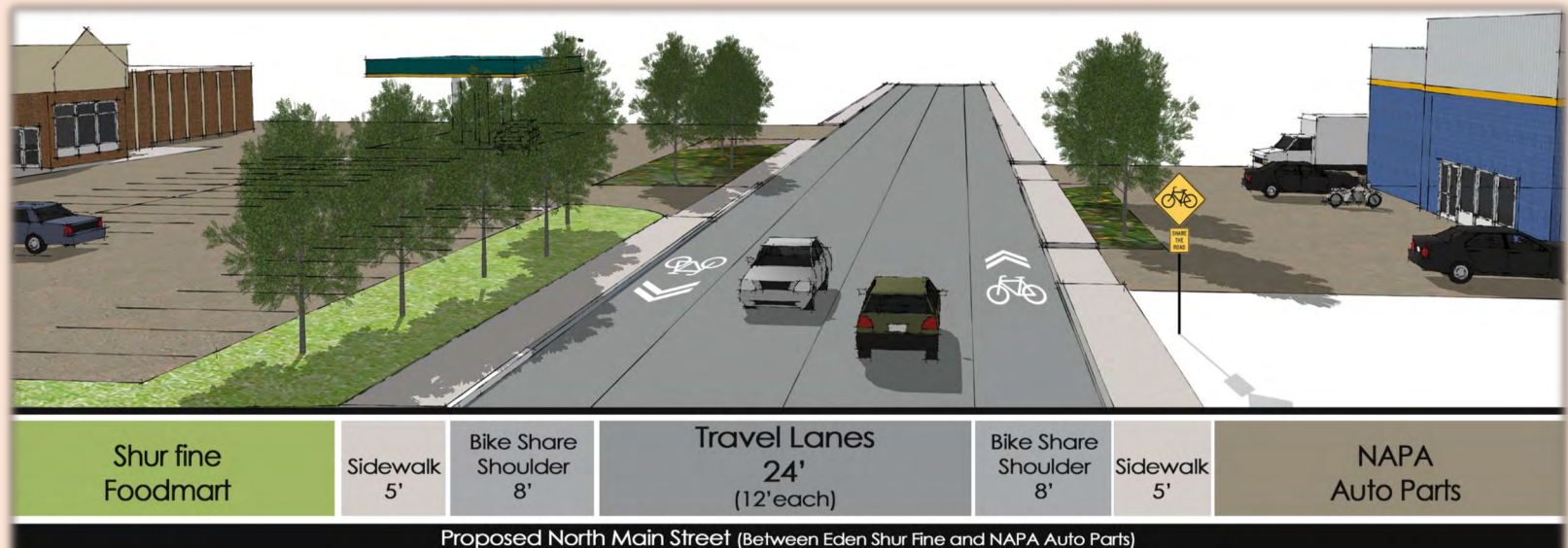
Reimagining Main Street can include enhancements such as:

- (1) Curb bump outs to "frame" access points, shorten pedestrian crossings, slow traffic
- (2) Enhanced crosswalks
- (3) Decorative street lighting (possible two-tier light fixtures for road/sidewalk)
- (4) Addition of bike lanes where width allows
- (5) Delineate on-street parking with other parking materials
- (6) Maintaining and improving landscaping (while retaining space for snow storage)



Outside of the hamlet:

- (1) Address parking management/better markings
- (2) Landscaping for screening, visual appeal
- (3) Access management (smaller curb cuts, dedicated access)
- (4) Extending sidewalks
- (5) Providing bike facilities in shoulder (markings/signage)



\*No road changes were made to road width in either view.



## Eden Center & Main Street, cont'd

Other considerations for Eden Center include the level of development density desired. A unique “build out” exercise was initiated with the steering committee which visualized this effort through the use of Lego blocks scaled to an aerial image of Eden. These blocks were used to identify where existing buildings should be retained (blue), but more importantly, areas where infill development or redevelopment were encouraged. Combined with good site design principles (at right), this yielded a conceptual representation of the level of density that is supported in Eden.

### Design principles:

- ♦ Engaging storefronts (e.g. large windows, architectural design elements)
- ♦ Parking to rear or side (no frontage)
- ♦ Shared access and parking
- ♦ Mixed uses
- ♦ Zero lot line setbacks
- ♦ Two to three stories (third story setback if height is a concern)
- ♦ Landscaping



Existing buildings to be that should remain are **BLUE** while new commercial development is **YELLOW**. **ORANGE** is residential and when shown above indicates a mixed use structure, common in many hamlets and Villages.

*"A good plan executed right now is far better than a perfect plan executed next week."*

*-Gen. George S. Patton*

**CULTIVATE EDEN** serves as the policy and guidance document for growth and investment in the community over the next 10-12 years, including local decision-making, zoning, budgeting, grants, and coordination with other entities. Making the vision for the Town of Eden a reality will take time, but it cannot be done without a plan for how to implement it. This section outlines the roles of various entities as well as various tools and strategies for the Town government and other boards, groups, organizations, and the community-at-large to utilize moving forward.

## Implementation Strategies

### Strategies for using the Plan

**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 dialogue helps to ensure that service and delivery of actions are in line with the goals of the plan.

**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 Eden residents and the stakeholders were involved in the update of the plan, involvement should not stop there. Maintaining an open dialogue and interacting with the community is key for successful implementation.



Continuing community outreach beyond the plan can help to build a greater sense of community, pride, and ownership for the future of the Town.

**Coordination...** Generally, the Town Board is viewed as the responsible party for most actions, but in reality they would predominantly serve as the lead *coordinator* with other internal departments as well as public and private entities and organizations. Ultimately, there are a number of actions that can only be carried out by local government (e.g. zoning changes), but a coordinated effort with others will cultivate long-lasting partnerships and support for future projects and programs.

**Flexibility...** A comprehensive plan is “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.

**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, a joint board, or a special committee and should prepare a progress report to the community that includes at a minimum:

- ♦ A list of implemented projects/programs/initiatives that have been completed during the 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 that need to be made to any actions that are not working and identify ways to make it better;
- ♦ Recommendations for priority action items to be considered for implementation for the next year.

## Tools for Implementation

**Plan Adoption...** One of the first actions that the Town must undertake is the official adoption of **CULTIVATE EDEN**. 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.

**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 tax funds, 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.

**Regulations...** One of the most effective means of implementing the objectives of any plan is through zoning. Following adoption of the plan, the Town should perform a thorough review of the existing zoning code for consistency, paying attention to specific actions that pertain to regulations, and consider amendments to carry out the goals of the plan as appropriate.

**Capital Program...** As with many efforts, **CULTIVATE EDEN** identifies a number of projects/actions that relate to public improvements that can only be carried out by the Town. Being a

rural town, Eden's financial resources will always be limited and public dollars must be spent wisely. 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 **CULTIVATE EDEN** should be referenced when developing the capital improvement program to ensure higher priority projects are incorporated where appropriate.

**Plan Relationship...** The Town of Eden will use the plan as a resource for future planning activities. While **CULTIVATE EDEN** has its own directives and intent, there are other initiatives, programs, and plans that relate to and are consistent with the goals and objectives contained herein. The Town should continue to reference and coordinate long-term planning efforts and actions with these and other local/regional documents (*not an exhaustive list*):

- ♦ Town of Eden Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan
- ♦ Erie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan
- ♦ Framework for Regional Growth
- ♦ Sowing the Seeds for Southtowns Agribusiness
- ♦ One Region Forward
- ♦ Erie County Park System Master Plan

## 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, administered through the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) 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)

- ♦ Empire State Development (ESD) – Strategic Planning and Feasibility Studies, Grant Funds, Market New York, NYS Grown and Certified Agricultural Producer
- ♦ Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program
- ♦ New York Main Street Program (NYMS)
- ♦ Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation (PRHP) – Environmental Protection Funds, Recreational Trails Program
- ♦ Department of State (DOS) – Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, Local Government Efficiency
- ♦ Department of Environmental Conservation/Environmental Facilities Corp. (DEC/EFC) – Wastewater Infrastructure Engineering/Planning Grant
- ♦ Environmental Facilities Corp. (EFC) – Green Innovation Grant Program



- ◆ Climate Smart Communities Program (CSCP)
- ◆ State Council of the Arts (SCA) – Arts and Culture Initiatives
- ◆ Department of Agriculture and Markets (AGM) - Farm to School, Waste Storage and Transfer System Program, Amendments to Local Laws

#### ***NYS Department of Transportation***

- ◆ Consolidated Local Street & Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS)
- ◆ Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
- ◆ Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP)
- ◆ Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP)
- ◆ BRIDGE NY

#### ***Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC)***

- ◆ Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
- ◆ Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)
- ◆ Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Submitting grant applications requires significant effort from the Town and any consultants utilized in preparation and delivery. The plan update 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 on the project, 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 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.