

# Town of Glenville

## Comprehensive Plan

### Executive Summary



September 13, 2017

The 2017 Comprehensive Plan is comprised of six major sections or chapters, including this Executive Summary, followed by a number of appendices. The six major sections/chapters of the Plan are as follows:

- A. Executive Summary
- B. Introduction
- C. A Brief History of Glenville
- D. Plan Initiatives
- E. Plan Areas
- F. Plan Implementation

Section D, Plan Initiatives, constitutes the “heart” of the Plan. Here the Plan dives into 11 different subject areas, covering topics as varied as Economic Development, Housing, Transportation and Renewable Energy. In this section, each of the 11 subject areas are analyzed in some detail, with goals and initiatives spelled out for each. The other sections/chapters, while important in their own right, essentially exist to support the analysis and policies identified in section D.

What follows is a brief summary of sections B through F.

### **Section B. Introduction**

Twenty-seven (27) years have passed since the adoption of the last Glenville Comprehensive Plan in 1990. Much has changed in Glenville in over ¼ of a century. Much has also changed with the world, and with the technology that shapes our community and the people who live, work, shop and play in Glenville.

What does not seem to have changed much since 1990 are the expectations and desires of the Town’s residents and business owners. As evidenced by community surveys leading up to adoption of both the 1990 and 2017 Comprehensive Plans, residents seem to relish Glenville’s geographic position with the Capital District, and the benefits that this brings. All of the major employment areas of the Capital District are easily accessible to Glenville residents, with the three major urban centers (Albany, Schenectady and Troy), as well as Saratoga Springs, all located within a ½ hour drive. Yet, the Town’s position as an outer ring suburb has allowed Glenville to remain a bedroom community while avoiding some of the trappings of the inner suburbs of the region such as rapid growth and the traffic congestion that accompanies it.

Glenville’s position in the Capital District has also allowed the western half of the Town to maintain its rural, pastoral character, which is viewed as a very important trait by both rural Town residents and those who live in the more suburban eastern half of the Town. Residents also cite the local parks and preserves as a key draw, in addition to the excellent local school systems that serve the town. And while the Town’s residents generally favor economic development, they prefer to see it occur at a pace that is manageable and does not erode the character of the town. “We don’t want to become Clifton Park (or Wolf Road)” was mentioned by survey takers leading up to adoption of both the 1990 Plan and 2017 Plan.

## Community Vision Statement

In the Introduction section of the Plan we also outline the Community Vision Statement, which serves as broad policy for more specific sections of the Plan. The Town's Vision Statement consists of a three-pronged approach (Livable, Diverse, on the Rise), with three characteristics of each prong outlined as follows:

### Livable

- Quality of Life* – Safe, well-maintained neighborhoods, convenient parks and waterfront, excellent schools, and easy access to services and amenities are offered.
- Affordable* – A wide variety of housing options and values can be found in Glenville and Scotia.
- Bustle-free* – Glenville's geographic position in the region keeps us relatively free of traffic gridlock, noise, industrial blight and crowds.

### Diverse

- Outdoor Amenities and Parks* – Glenville and Scotia residents and visitors enjoy our outdoor offerings and parks.
- Places to Live* – Relatively affordable housing and a diverse choice of housing options prevail.
- Commerce and Industry* – Glenville benefits from properly-scaled and located businesses and industry.

### On the Rise

- Attractive to Commerce and Industry* – The Town Center area and Business & Technology Park are undergoing rejuvenation and reinvestment.
- Pedestrian Accommodations* – Long overlooked in Glenville, the Town is moving forward with sidewalks while pursuing funding for a network of multi-use trails.
- History and Culture* – Recent acquisition of the Yates Mansion and a new focus on the Town's heritage, leading up to the 2020 bicentennial, demonstrate Glenville's commitment to sharing its interesting past.

### **Section C. A Brief History of Glenville**

This chapter offers a glimpse of the Town's history. Here it is noted that man first came to the area that was to become Glenville 8,000 to 10,000 years ago, after departure of the last continental glacier. Evidence of these Eskimo-like peoples were found along the Town's western border in the early 1900s.

Several different peoples of the Algonkian nations next occupied, or at least visited our area for thousands of years, until the mid-1600s when the Mohawk tribe of the Iroquois people forced them north and out of our area following the 1669 Battle of the Kinaquariones, in Wolf Hollow. The Mohawks themselves arrived in our area somewhere around 1590, and remained until shortly after the Revolutionary War.



Other Native American peoples appear to have at least passed through what is now Glenville, and perhaps even made their homes here for a short period. One such group was a not well-known mound-building race that was here for an unknown period during the same time as the long visitation/occupation by the Algonkian peoples.

The first Europeans to arrive in our area were the Dutch, during the 1620s. Perhaps the first notable European occupant of what is now Glenville was Alexander Lindsey Glen, a Scotsman who built his home on the north side of the Mohawk River in 1665 in the vicinity of what is now the Glen Sanders Mansion. He named the area "Scotia," in reverence to his native Scotland.

In 1798 the City of Schenectady was incorporated, with Glenville becoming its fourth ward. A little over two decades later, in 1820/1821, Glenville split off from Schenectady and was incorporated as a separate town.

Early Glenville was primarily a farming community, with tradespeople, stores and hotels serving residents and westward migrants. People and businesses were generally clustered along the Mohawk Riverfront, with a few outlying hamlets, including West Glenville, Hoffmans (thanks to Hoffmans Ferry), and scattered settlements in eastern Glenville.

The Mohawk River has been a focal point of transportation in our area throughout recorded history. The various Native American peoples used it for travel and food. Later it took on national importance with the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825. For a brief period of time stage coaches moved along the north side of the River along what is now Route 5. Then the railroads arrived in the mid-1800s, further solidifying the Mohawk Valley as a major transportation corridor. That distinction continues today with the NYS Thruway, not to mention the Erie Canal/Mohawk River, which is primarily used for recreation.

Other notable dates include 1904, when the Village of Scotia became an incorporated village, and 1927, when the Schenectady County Airport opened. The Airport became a County-owned facility in 1934.

The General Electric Company in Schenectady has long been a player in Glenville, bringing good jobs to Glenville residents. The association of Glenville and General Electric was solidified even more shortly after the conclusion of World War II when returning veterans, with FHA mortgages in hand and with convenient, affordable land being available in Glenville, led to a two-decade period of rapid housing growth in our area from 1950 to 1970.

Still a bedroom community today, Glenville offers convenient access to major employers and shopping areas, while providing its residents with suitable local goods and services, a modest but robust industrial base, very good local schools, excellent parks and preserves, and relatively affordable, diverse housing.

#### **Section D. Plan Initiatives**

As noted previously, Chapter D, Plan Initiatives, is the key section of the Comprehensive Plan. Here the Plan assesses 11 subject areas and sets the Town's goals and initiatives for these 11 topics. The 11 subject areas are as follows:

1. Recreational Resources / Facilities and the Arts / Historic and Cultural Resources
2. Community/Economic Development
3. Commercial and Industrial Facilities
4. Housing
5. Natural Resources
6. Institutional, Government and Educational Resources/Facilities
7. Infrastructure and Utilities
8. Transportation
9. Health and Emergency Services
10. Agricultural Resources
11. Renewable Energy

In this section the Plan puts into place over 100 short-term/ongoing and long-term goals, as well as a similar number of initiatives spread over these 11 topics. Chapter F, Plan Initiatives, provides a table of the initiatives, with three different levels of priority assigned to all of the initiatives.

What follows are two examples of high priority initiatives (medium priority in the case of housing and renewable energy) from each of the 11 subject areas:

#### Recreational Resources / Facilities and the Arts / Historic and Cultural Resources

- Repair and upgrade the Town and Village's portion of the Mohawk/Hudson Bike-Hike Trail and encourage greater public use of the Trail.
- Complete restoration of the Green Corner's School

#### Community / Economic Development

- Promote the development of agri-tourism along the Route 5 corridor
- Target the Freemans Bridge Road corridor for new mixed use and office development, with light/clean industrial development earmarked for lands to the rear of the frontage properties

#### Commercial and Industrial Facilities

- Continue cooperation with Metroplex/Schenectady County exploring additional commercial and industrial development on Schenectady County Airport lands
- Update the 2007 Business & Technology Park Master Plan using funds awarded through the 2016 Consolidated Funded Application (CFA) grant process

#### Housing

- Adopt conservation design standards and apply these to rural areas of Glenville where preservation of character and protection of natural resources is highly desired
- Ensure that the growing senior population's housing needs can be accommodated within the Town via appropriately-scripted zoning codes and well-conceived placement of zoning districts that allow senior housing

#### Natural Resources

- Adopt strategies identified in the Well Field Protection Committee's February, 2013 Advisory Report to protect the Town's wellheads from flooding and nearby gravel mining impacts



*Pond and wetlands along Lovers Lane North*



- Place priority on preservation of rural character whenever potentially incompatible land uses are contemplated for western Glenville, including commercial recreation uses, solar farms and wind farms

#### Institutional, Government and Education Resources/Facilities

- Revisit the sales tax distribution formula established for the Rivers Casino & Resort, given that the Town of Glenville and other impacted Schenectady County towns are only receiving an additional 0.8% of new sales tax from the casino
- Establish a sales tax task force to set a strategy for a more progressive sales tax agreement between the towns and Schenectady County

#### Infrastructure and Utilities

- Raise the two lowest elevation outdoor wells at the Town's municipal wellfield and install a berm around the wellfield and water treatment plant to guard against flooding



*Glenville Water Treatment Plant*

- Finalize the replacement of existing water meters with electronic meters to allow remote meter reading for all Town water customers

#### Transportation

- Support ongoing effort to reintroduce CDTA bus service to the Glenville Business & Technology Park
- Adopt access management strategies for the Route 50 corridor within the Town's Zoning Ordinance

#### Health and Emergency Services

- Seek early input from local fire and police departments for all major development proposals
- Evaluate costs/benefits of new location and development plan for Town Police and Court services with consideration of a campus-like setting, bringing together other elements of local government and possibly including recreational, educational and/or private interests

### Agricultural Resources

- Carefully limit the intrusion of public water and sewer services into rural and agricultural areas of Glenville
- Promote agri-tourism and agri-business practices for the Route 5 corridor through adoption of suitable zoning and the use of public relations campaigns



*Farm field on Potter Road*

### Renewable Energy

- Continue to evaluate the costs/benefits and overall suitability of use of the Town's former landfill property for a commercial solar farm
- Work with commercial and large-scale residential developers to promote the installation of electric car charging stations

## **Section E. Plan Areas**

Many of the initiatives articulated in the Comprehensive Plan are geographic-based, limited to just one property, street, park, neighborhood, etc. The Plan Areas chapter of the Comprehensive Plan presents these initiatives via a series of seven maps, along with considerable supporting narrative. The seven plan areas are as follows:

1. **Mohawk Riverfront** – An approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile to  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile deep strip all along the 14 miles of Mohawk riverfront in Glenville. The area typically includes a significant amount of 100 year flood plain, in addition to scattered federal wetlands. Isolated areas of development can be found at Arrowhead Marina, the neighborhoods south of the Village of Scotia, lower Freemans Bridge Road, and in Alplaus. However, most of this plan area is a mix of undeveloped or agricultural, which is reflective of the limitations posed by the flood plain.



2. **Route 50 Corridor** – This plan area includes about a 2,000-foot wide swath the entire length of Route 50, with Route 50 more or less centered within the strip. This is the Town’s principal commercial corridor, although parts of the corridor exhibit a blend of residential and commercial.
3. **Freemans Bridge Road Corridor** – A broom brush-shaped area that is wider at the bottom than at the top, bordering the Route 50 Corridor area on the west and Suburban Eastern Glenville on the east. This is a vital commercial corridor, second only to the Route 50 corridor in terms of commercial status. The area is characterized by a mix of old and new, with a significant amount of vacant commercially-zoned property located back from the frontage properties.
4. **Rural Western Glenville** – Encompassing nearly ½ the geographic area of the Town, Rural Western Glenville is essentially all those lands west of Sacandaga Road (NYS Route 147) and north of the Mohawk Riverfront Area. This portion of Glenville offers a mix of rural residential and pastoral, with a terrain that is pleasantly hilly and for the most part, scenic.
5. **Glenville Business and Technology Park and Vicinity** – An unmistakably distinct area of Glenville where industrial and warehousing uses have been clustered since the establishment of the military depot during the early 1940s. A noticeable amount of redevelopment and new development has occurred within this area in the last decade, introducing newness and vitality in an area that is in need of reinvigoration.



*Western end of the Glenville Business and Technology Park*

6. **Suburban Eastern Glenville** – This Plan Area covers around 30% of the Town, with Sacandaga Road marking the Area’s western boundary. This is the area that one associates with suburbia, and it encompasses numerous well-maintained neighborhoods, new and old. The Route 50 and Freemans Bridge Road Plan Areas divide the Suburban Eastern Area in a north-south direction.

7. **Village of Scotia** – The Village of Scotia is a municipality onto its own, separate from Glenville. For this reason the Glenville Comprehensive Plan does not set policy for the Village of Scotia. Yet, the Comprehensive Plan acknowledges that neither the Town of Glenville nor Village of Scotia exist in a vacuum. Land use, transportation, economic development and housing decisions and policies in one municipality impacts the other. The Comprehensive Plan, therefore, encourages intermunicipal cooperation on a number of fronts, and it leaves the door open for cooperative efforts that could result in cost savings, including consolidation of services, if mutually agreeable.



*The Scotia Cinema is a people draw on Mohawk Avenue*

The Plan Areas section of the Comprehensive Plan also identifies and maps two important hamlets of the Town of Glenville; Alplaus and West Glenville. And while Alplaus and West Glenville are not distinct Plan Areas, falling within the Mohawk Riverfront and Rural Western Glenville Areas, respectively, they are unique enough to have warranted a number of goals and initiatives targeted specifically to the hamlets. Preservation of character is paramount to both hamlets.

#### **Section F. Plan Implementation**

The last chapter before the map-heavy Appendices is the Plan Implementation chapter. It is reasonable to say that not much new ground is broken with this chapter. Rather, this chapter compiles the 145 plan initiatives into table format, articulating the various initiatives by the 11 subject areas detailed in Chapter D – Plan Initiatives.

The Plan Implementation Table does go one additional step, however, assigning a priority level to each of the initiatives. The three different priority levels are as follows:

1. Highest Priority: Implement within two years.
2. Medium Priority: Implement within two to five years.
3. Still important, but there is no urgency to complete.

Statistically, 37 of the 145 plan initiatives were assigned a Level 1 priority, constituting 25.5% of the initiatives. More than half (80) of the 145 initiatives were assigned a Level 2 priority. This equates to 55.2% of all initiatives. A total of 28 initiatives, or 19.3%, were categorized as Level 3 priority.

One other item that distinguishes the Plan Implementation section of the Comprehensive Plan is that the table identifies the entity or agency that is responsible for undertaking and/or funding the various plan initiatives. Not surprisingly, the Town of Glenville is the most frequently identified responsible party, being named as the sole entity charged with implementation, or sharing responsibility with other agencies or entities. In fact, that Town of Glenville figures in 135 of the 145 initiatives, or 93%. And of these 135 initiatives, the Town has sole responsibility for 48 of them, sharing responsibility for the other 87 initiatives.

Twenty-six (26) other agencies/entities are identified as being responsible, or partly responsible, for implementation of at least one of the 145 initiatives. Some of the agencies/entities who have been identified multiple times include Schenectady County, Metroplex, Village of Scotia, developers, and several New York State agencies.

The sheer number of initiatives identified in the Plan Implementation section speaks to the broad reach of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. The large number of agencies and entities who will have a hand in implementation of the Plan underscores the importance of the Town developing and/or extending partnerships with other parties. Taken together, implementation of the Comprehensive Plan calls for unwavering commitment in the short, medium, and long-term.