PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Land Use

Current Conditions

The Town of Glenville adopted a new zoning ordinance on April 4, 2001. The new ordinance includes updated zoning districts that are more appropriate to modern needs of Town residents. Based on the revised zoning ordinance, the study area includes a new overlay zoning district entitled the "Town Center Overlay", located around the intersection of Route 50 and Glenridge Road. The overlay district serves a number of specific purposes. Building design standards, sidewalks, sign requirements, open space, and landscaping are a few of the regulatory measures implemented in this overlay district. These regulations, together with the efforts of the Town Center Master Plan, will assist in making the commercial hub attractive and friendly to more than just the automobile.

The study area east of Route 50 and the parcels immediately west are zoned general business and professional/residential and are included in the Town Center Overlay District. The southern portion of the study area is classified as airport land use, another new classification in the revised zoning ordinance. This district includes not only the airport, but also accommodates land uses associated with passenger airports, should service ever expand to include private and/or public airline services.

It does not appear that the new zoning ordinance will cause any conflicts with the Town Center Master Plan. The mixed-uses allowed in the study area are consistent with the desired uses for the Town Center.

Existing Comprehensive Plan

The Town of Glenville Planning and Zoning Commission adopted the current Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Glenville on April 9, 1990. Changes within the Town have caused discrepancies between the built conditions and the plan over the past fourteen years. The expansion of public water and sewer services, the opening of the Exit 26 Thruway Bridge and the emergence of new development patterns have caused some of these discrepancies.

The goals and objectives outlined in the Comprehensive Plan have provided and will continue to provide the Town with a necessary guide for the physical development of the community. The Comprehensive Plan designates Route 50 and Glenridge Road as the Town Center, and it suggests that this area follow a detailed design plan. The goals presented here, combined with the new zoning overlay district, provide the necessary background, support, and vision needed for the development of the Town Center Master Plan.

Recommendations

The Town of Glenville should enact a series of regulatory and economic development initiatives to focus land use, with the intent to establish a critical mass of businesses and activity in the Town Center. This mixed-use approach will reinforce the area as the "heart" and focal point of the Town of Glenville and will provide a unique shopping experience in the Capital Region. The proposed uses within the Town Center would allow people the opportunity to live, work, shop, and play without ever having to leave the community. This will reduce car trips for residents, allow those who cannot drive the opportunity to access jobs and entertainment, and afford residents the ability to shop close to home in a community environment.

TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Traditionally, most communities developed around a compact, mixed-use town center, main street, or downtown. The full range of resident needs was met in these areas: shopping, housing, and employment. This pattern can still be seen in most cities. However, as cities grew into the suburbs, mobility also increased. The automobile made it easy to acquire goods and services despite location. In addition, modern zoning laws strictly separated uses, which made it more difficult for communities to develop along traditional lines. The results of these changes are utilitarian but forgettable places very unlike the strong mixed-use communities of the past.

However, the emergence of New Urbanism (traditional planning which incorporates the automobile), smart growth, (an approach which favors compact growth), and lifestyle centers, (a traditional town center formed around a retail core), traditional patterns have become common once again. Although the suburban model will not disappear, mixed-use development patterns are resurfacing throughout the country as one of the key ingredients of a successful and vibrant community center.

Two views of downtown Saratoga Springs, New York

Bringing together retail, office, and residential uses with civic and recreational features is the underlying formula for a vibrant and sustainable town center. (Multiple-uses refer to different uses adjacent to each other, such as an office next to a bakery, usually in separate buildings. Mixed-use refers to different uses in the same building, whether they are vertical or horizontal.) The Town Center should be a multiple-use district made up of vertical mixed-use buildings with retail as the primary ground floor activity. The specific land use recommendations to achieve this goal are listed below.

Retail

Retail activity is an essential ingredient of any town center or downtown. It provides the level of activity and vibrancy that elevates an area from a business district to a community center. Unlike

Two-story buildings, such as these found on Saratoga Road, easily fit into Glenville. They utilize land more efficiently than single-story buildings, provide a positive enclosure to the street and can provide additional space for offices and/or apartments.

offices or employment centers, retail uses continuously draw people to an area. The Town Center should be a mixed and multiple use district, with a primary focus on creating a critical mass and concentration of retail activity. The Town of Glenville should pursue economic development initiatives to attract and retain desirable retail to the Town Center.

The Town Center is currently home to a number of popular retail establishments such as K-Mart, Peter Harris Clothes, Mayfair Jewelers and Hallmark. Expanding the range of retailers and improving the appearance and accessibility of the Town Center will enhance the district's potential to attract local and regional shoppers.

Office

Offices should be encouraged to locate above retail businesses. They provide services to residents, additional activity, patrons to businesses at varying hours, as well as job opportunities to residents who may want to work close to home and/or walk or bike to work. Stand-alone office buildings are acceptable, however they should not be located where they would adversely affect the needed concentration of retail activity. The Town of Glenville should actively pursue multi-story, mixed-use projects that combine retail and office/professional in the same structure.

Residential

Apartments should also be encouraged to locate above retail businesses within and adjacent to the Town Center. Apartments create activity, provide additional patrons to businesses, and foster a livelier neighborhood atmosphere. Apartments would also provide the Town with alternative housing opportunities that could attract young people and families. There has also been a trend of seniors moving to town centers and downtowns in a desire for the culture and amenities available, and to avoid having to maintain a large home and property after children have moved out. The Town of Glenville should actively pursue multi-story, mixed-use projects that combine retail and residential uses in the same structure. Stand-alone apartment buildings are also acceptable, however, they should not be located where they would adversely affect the needed concentration of retail activity.

Recreation/Open Space

Both passive and active recreational facilities and amenities should be encouraged in the Town Center. Public comments included a desire for bike paths, pedestrian trails, a public gathering area, parks, outdoor amphitheater, and more recreational and nighttime activity. Open space in the Town Center should take many forms, from formal plazas and courtyards to greenbelts and pocket parks. Specific open space recommendations are listed below.

- Saratoga Road & Glenridge Road – Due to the urban character of the area, open space along these arterials should take the form of plazas, courtyards, and pocket parks. The goal is to provide gathering places and opportunities for community interaction, soften the built environment, and provide areas for passive recreation. One opportunity already being pursued by the Town is to convert the former Payless Service Station into a pocket park and Town Center Gateway. This small park will provide an elegant northern entrance to the Town Center. Its location also lends itself to serving as the northern terminus of the proposed multi-use path system. Bike racks should be provided to allow for a transition between walking, biking, and transit.

Former Payless Service Station

Conceptual Design for a Northern Gateway Park

- <u>Vacant Lands & K-Mart Site</u> – The vacant land located east of Saratoga Road and north of Glenridge Road and the K-Mart site both present opportunities for open space. Either location would be appropriate for a formal town square, depending on how development occurs over time. A town square, or other large, civic-oriented area should be created, for both passive/active recreation and community events. Based on public comments, this space could include a playground, outdoor auditorium, grassy areas, and a central plaza. The central plaza could be utilized for numerous activities such as community events, craft fairs, a farmers market, ice-skating, etc.

- <u>Town Center Greenbelt</u> – A greenbelt could be extended around the northeastern periphery of the district, parallel to Saint Anthony's Cemetery and the Maybrook neighborhood. This would provide opportunities for passive recreation. In addition, a greenbelt could connect a multi-use path to the Indian Kill Nature Preserve to the east and to the northern gateway park to the west.

Civic

An integral part of a traditional town center is civic uses and institutions. The Town Center currently includes a U.S. Post Office, the Glenville Branch of the Schenectady County Public Library, and the Town Municipal Center. These three adjacent institutions should be combined into one municipal campus. The Municipal Center is no longer large enough to comfortably house the Town's administrative offices and the Police Department. As a result, the Town recently purchased an adjacent residential home and property to provide additional office space, and the establishment of a Town history center. This brings the total land area of the Municipal Center to over seven acres and provides the Town with the ability to expand, with the intent to eventually build a new Town Hall. The land that was recently purchased contains the highest point in the Town Center. This is an ideal location for a new Town Hall, affording it the monumental status appropriate to the Town's principal civic structure. The current Municipal Center could then be converted to a Public Safety building. The Library will also have the room to expand its facility. These three buildings would then serve as the core of a new municipal campus that would be connected together and to the Town Center via sidewalks and the multi-use path system.

The Town Municipal Center and Glenville Branch of the Schenectady County Public Library
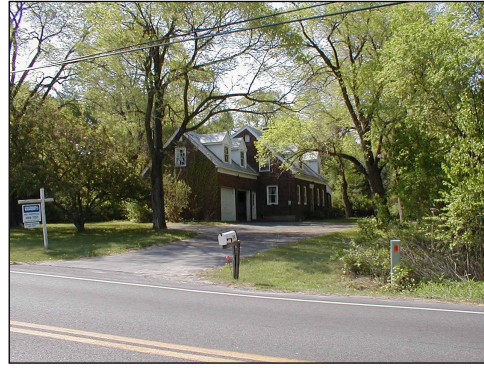
This property was recently purchased by the Town, adding four acres to the Municipal Center.

Other Potential Uses

Some other potential uses or projects that would fit well into the Town Center include the following:

Arts Center – A community-based Arts Center could potentially offer some or all of the following features:

- Gallery space for display by local artisans/groups
- Teaching rooms for art or music classes (to include programs targeted at pre-school, school age children and teenagers, the general public, and senior citizens)
- Space for rotating artists in residence
- Space for performances and community events (small to moderate size - maybe up to 300 seats)
- Kitchen facility (for special event/catering abilities)
- Recording studio room
- Studio space for local artists
- Outdoor space for "theater in the park" performances

Museum – A museum, perhaps in conjunction with an art or history center, could provide the Town with the ability to celebrate its culture and unique history. The museum could also include a library of Town documents and reference materials, as well as a research area, complete with personal computer and internet access.

YMCA – The Parkside YMCA located on Droms Road is an aging facility. The Town Center could provide a centralized, and easily accessible location for a new facility should the YMCA need to relocate.

County Ice Rink – Schenectady County recently built an ice rink at the Schenectady County Airport. The success of the facility has prompted the County to consider a second rink. Although there is merit to providing dual rinks in the same location, there is also merit in locating a second rink in, or adjacent to, the Town Center. The Town Center could provide a centralized, and easily accessible location. One potential site would be just north of the Empire State Aerosciences Museum.

Youth Center – The Town Center is easily accessible to three school districts, making it an appropriate potential site for a youth center. Anticipated uses of the center include

social/recreational activities, after school tutoring, family and youth counseling, coordination of youth activities, and emerging youth needs.

Traditional Neighborhood Development

There is a significant amount of land located within and adjacent to the Town Center between Price Chopper and St. Helen Estates. This area is an appropriate location for residential development. Due to its proximity to the Town Center, this area would be suitable for a Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND). TNDs are the same as neighborhoods found in the Village of Scotia or any older community. They feature varying lot sizes and housing types, a network of streets with sidewalks and street trees.

TND – Bruce Street, Scotia