



THE VILLAGE OF A U R O R A

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2021

Prepared for the Village of Aurora
by LaBella Associates

Adopted by the
Aurora Village Board
12/15/2021



Acknowledgements

In 2021, the Aurora Village Board designated a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

The committee and its consultants, with input from the Cayuga County Department of Planning Department and other local and regional stakeholders, prepared this plan. Thank you to the board members, residents, and business owners in Aurora for your assistance.

Village of Aurora Board of Trustees

Mayor Bonnie Apgar Bennett
Grace Bates
Matthew Bianconi
Janet Murphy
James Orman

Village of Aurora Planning Board

Patricia Bianconi, Chair
Pat Foser
Michele Murphy
Pam Sheradin
Frank Zimdahl

Village of Aurora Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

Ann Balloni
Bonnie Apgar Bennett
Patricia Bianconi
Alexis Boyce
Jim Burkett
Chris MacCormick
Thea Miller
Janet Murphy (alternate)
Pam Sheradin

Land Acknowledgement

The Village of Aurora honors and acknowledges the that the land on which we reside is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Cayuga Peoples. We honor those past, present and future, and those who have stewarded this land through generations. We also recognize that government, academic and cultural institutions were founded upon and continue to enact exclusions and erasures of Indigenous Peoples. May this acknowledgement demonstrate a commitment to working to dismantle the legacies of oppression and inequities and recognize the current and future contributions of Indigenous communities in Aurora, the region and all of New York State.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
1. Background	5
What is a Comprehensive Plan?	5
About Aurora	5
2. Village Vision	7
Goals	7
3. Planning process	8
Legal Basis.....	9
Steps in the Process	9
4. Plan recommendations	15
Land Use and Zoning.....	17
Economic Development.....	23
Community, Housing and Neighborhoods	24
Sustainability and resiliency	25
Infrastructure and Transportation	26
5. Plan implementation	28
How to Use this Plan	28
Monitoring and Updating the Plan	29
Plan Implementation	30
Implementation Matrix.....	31
Appendix A: Existing Conditions	34
Appendix B: Stakeholder Summary	35
Appendix C: Public Workshop Presentation and Summary	36

INTRODUCTION



The primary purpose of the Village of Aurora Comprehensive Plan is to guide Village boards and officials in making decisions that will affect the future of the community. Future Village actions to implement the policies and recommendations in the Plan may include land use local laws and regulations, capital budgeting, and providing services to the community. The Comprehensive Plan addresses a range of issues facing the Village of Aurora and balances competing needs and interests in the community.

This document replaces the previous Aurora Comprehensive Plan dated 2008.

1. BACKGROUND

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan serves as an inventory of community assets, articulates the local vision for the future, and provides a strategy towards achieving goals and recommendations. A comprehensive plan also serves as a useful benchmark of where the community is at the time of its adoption, recording assets, the demographic makeup, employment patterns, critical infrastructure, transportation systems, and environmental conditions. A comprehensive plan is a living document, reflecting the issues and ambitions of a community at one point in time. To maintain relevancy, the Village should revisit and revise this comprehensive on a regular basis and rewrite it as needed.

ABOUT AURORA

Aurora is a scenic village on the eastern shore of Cayuga Lake. It is treasured for its relationship to the lake, its lake views, and beautiful buildings. The tree-lined streets are populated by a range of homes, and they are inhabited by people who share at least two ideals—a fondness for the village and affection for the lake on which it resides. Additionally, Aurora has the advantage of two large, nearby employers, the Inns of Aurora and MacKenzie-Childs. and being home to Wells College.

The village last updated its land use plan with the 2008 Master Plan, a concise description of Aurora at that time and a summary of what it held dear. Much of what that plan states remains true; for example, that the general goals were to maintain the quality of life that is inherently part of Aurora’s traditional character while encouraging greater cohesiveness and community spirit among residents. The Planning Board committed to promoting reasonable development and change while safeguarding the community’s access to and enjoyment of the lake, as well as the built and natural environments of the Village.¹

While many things such as the aesthetics and lakefront beauty of Aurora have stayed the same since the last plan, change has naturally occurred as well. Of course, people move in and move away, the composition of boards varies from year to year, and properties change hands. As of this writing in 2021 the village is also facing issues ranging from the COVID-19 pandemic on a large scale, to changes at Wells College, expansion of the Inns of Aurora, questions about the impacts of different types of housing and lodging, the desire for additional lakefront access, and the increase in tourism that has changed the culture and climate of community gathering spaces at the local level.

The Village endeavored to begin this plan as an effort to start a conversation about what residents of Aurora would like to keep or change in the next ten to twenty years. It is the

¹ <https://auroranewyork.us/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Aurora-Comprehensive-Plan1.pdf>

hope and understanding of the contributors that this plan will be the lens through which the village makes decisions and collaborates with its partners in that timeframe.

2. VILLAGE VISION

During this planning process, the Steering Committee developed the following Vision Statement to guide the plan. This along with the five goals that follow, provide a structure for the plan, as the action items align with the vision and at least one goal each.

The Village of Aurora is a peaceful lakefront community that embraces its properties while honoring its natural beauty.

We value the cooperative spirit, renowned hospitality, the beautiful neighborhoods and welcoming institutions that comprise this special place.

We want to maintain these qualities as we seek to create a more resident-focused, business-friendly, and environmentally conscious community.

We will face the challenges of the future in a responsible and inclusive manner.

GOALS

The Village developed the following goal statements, that when used to guide decisions at the local level will help achieve the vision. They are described in more detail in Section 4:

- Nurture and Expand upon Aurora's Sense of Place
- Preserve the Residential Character and Neighborhoods
- Foster Small Business Development, especially Individually-owned Small Businesses Useful to the Community, and Diversify the Economy,
- Improve Village Infrastructure and Amenities
- Enhance and Expand Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces

3. PLANNING PROCESS



LEGAL BASIS

The Village has prepared this Comprehensive Plan pursuant to NYS Village Law §7-722, which specifies that the Village Board is responsible for preparing and adopting a Comprehensive Plan. As the law also permits the Village Board to delegate this responsibility to an ad hoc committee that it establishes for the express purpose of preparing Comprehensive Plans, the Village Board appointed the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee to guide the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan, after which the Village Board reviews, amends, and adopts it.

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy document. It will guide changes in Village laws and regulations, funding decisions and other Village actions during the next 10 to 15 years. Local land use regulations must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

STEPS IN THE PROCESS

The Village board appointed a Steering Committee to guide the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan. This committee met regularly throughout the latter half of 2021 to assist with public outreach and coordinate the preparation of the plan.

Members of the Steering Committee included representatives from the Village Board, Village Planning Board, Village Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), and Community Preservation Panel (CPP), all of whom are community residents. The following persons participated in the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan:

Name	Affiliation
Ann Balloni	Village Clerk
Bonnie Apgar Bennett	Mayor
Patricia Bianconi	Planning Board
Alexis Boyce	ZBA
Jim Burkett	CPP
Chris MacCormick	CPP
Thea Miller	Village Board
Janet Murphy (alternate)	Village Board
Pam Sheradin	Planning Board

Public involvement included steering committee meetings, dozens of stakeholder interviews, a community survey, and public workshop.

Existing Conditions

The consultant team prepared an existing conditions analysis with input from Village staff and presented it to the Steering Committee in June 2021. While some of the census data is difficult to parse due to the small sample size—for example, the Wells College students count toward overall population of approximately 700 residents, whereas the actual year-round population is fewer than 300—some of the trends and demographic information is helpful in planning for the future. It is also advantageous to understand how Aurora compares to the wider region when explaining how its issues and opportunities differ from, say, the Town of Ledyard or Cayuga County as a whole.

Housing is an important issue in Aurora, and the existing conditions demonstrate some valuable data. First, the total number of housing units in the Village has decreased by 39 from 234 to 195 between 2000 and today. The number of owner-occupied units is 78% today compared to 65% in 2000. This reflects the decrease in rental units, including several demolitions and conversions of former apartment buildings. Also, since many of these units are occupied only in the summer, or on weekends, or are used as short-term rentals, this statistic is somewhat deceptive and approximately 50% of the units are empty in the winter months. Not surprisingly, rents have increased as the number of rental units has decreased. The average gross rent is now \$1,083 and the median house value is \$231,800, in comparison to the median house value in Cayuga County of \$128,000, reflecting an increased interest in second home purchases in the Village.

Additionally, historical circumstances have resulted in large areas of the Village, and most commercial property, being held by one commercial entity. The Village's sense of community and the availability of locations for small businesses have suffered.

The Existing Conditions section is included as Appendix A of this document.

Committee Meetings

The Steering Committee met monthly in-person or virtually over the course of the project to discuss first the vision, goals and objectives and then the public outreach strategy. The committee was instrumental in developing the list of stakeholders, in publicizing the public input opportunities and in reviewing the working drafts of the Comprehensive Plan.

Stakeholder Interviews

During the early stages of the project, the consultant team interviewed more than 50 stakeholders that the Steering Committee and others identified as residents, business owners or others who would like to contribute opinions about the future of the village. We asked a series of questions regarding assets in Aurora, impediments to progress, spending priorities, desired amenities, or businesses, and the “target audience” for the village to strive to attract. We also discussed at length what measures the Village could take to help its residents and business owners succeed.

The interviews helped to inform the goals and action items contained within this plan. A summary of stakeholder comments is included as Appendix B of this document.

Community Survey

The Steering Committee assisted with the development of a community survey that the Village posted online (Survey Monkey) and in other locations such as the Village Clerk’s office and the Village Post Office in July 2021. 93 respondents answered the survey, providing useful feedback about Village priorities in the process. Many of the responses echoed the input received during interviews and the public workshop, including the need for more public open space and access to the lake, support for the redevelopment of existing properties, and a desire for more quality housing options; specifically, single-family homes and apartments. Many of the surveys also reflected a desire for more retail and restaurant options in Aurora, which is statement heard often throughout this planning process.

Public Workshop

A key element in the public outreach process was a half-day public workshop in July 2021 that covered the following topics:

- Sense of Place
- Housing and Neighborhoods
- Economic Development
- Streets and Utilities
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space

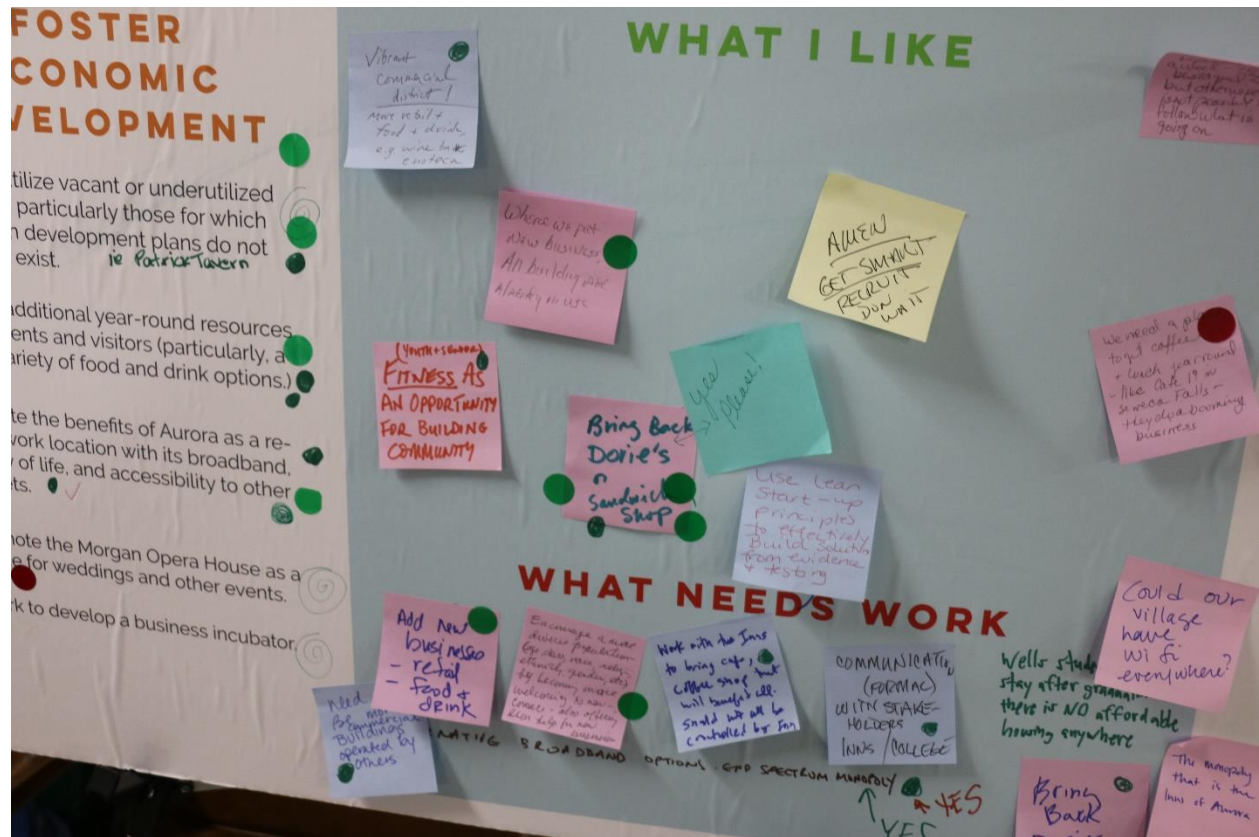
Over 80 people attended the workshop and participated in lively conversations and interactive exercises with boards staffed by the Steering Committee and consultant team.

During the workshop, attendees had an opportunity to comment directly onto maps and boards as well as fill out the community survey. The Village received dozens of comments during and after the workshop ranging from requests for more parks and open space, more varied restaurant and retail options, better communication among all decision-making entities in the Village, and appeals to protect Cayuga Lake and its water quality. The

feedback from the public workshop showed that residents care about the future of Aurora and take the time to remain educated about local issues.

A summary of the public workshop is included in this document as Appendix C.





Adoption

The Steering Committee conducted a public hearing on November 2, 2021, and referred the draft plan to the Village Board on November 8, 2021. The Village Board held a public hearing on December 15, 2021, prior to adopting the Comprehensive Plan on December 15, 2021.

4. PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS



The following section outlines the recommended programs, policies, and strategies that will further the Village's vision.

Over the course of a six-month planning process, dozens of individuals contributed their ideas and knowledge to develop this Comprehensive Plan. The consultant team and Steering Committee completed a review of demographic, economic, and land use data, upon which the Village was able to refine their vision and identify programs, policies, and strategies that will further the vision.

The Comprehensive Plan recommendations are categorized according to the following areas:

- Land Use and Zoning
- Economic Development
- Community, Housing and Neighborhoods
- Sustainability and Resiliency
- Infrastructure and Transportation

The goals herein are not an all-encompassing list of items that the Village and its residents would like to achieve. Rather, it is a realistic list of what the Village and its partners can achieve in the next ten years given the capacity and budget of local government.

LAND USE AND ZONING

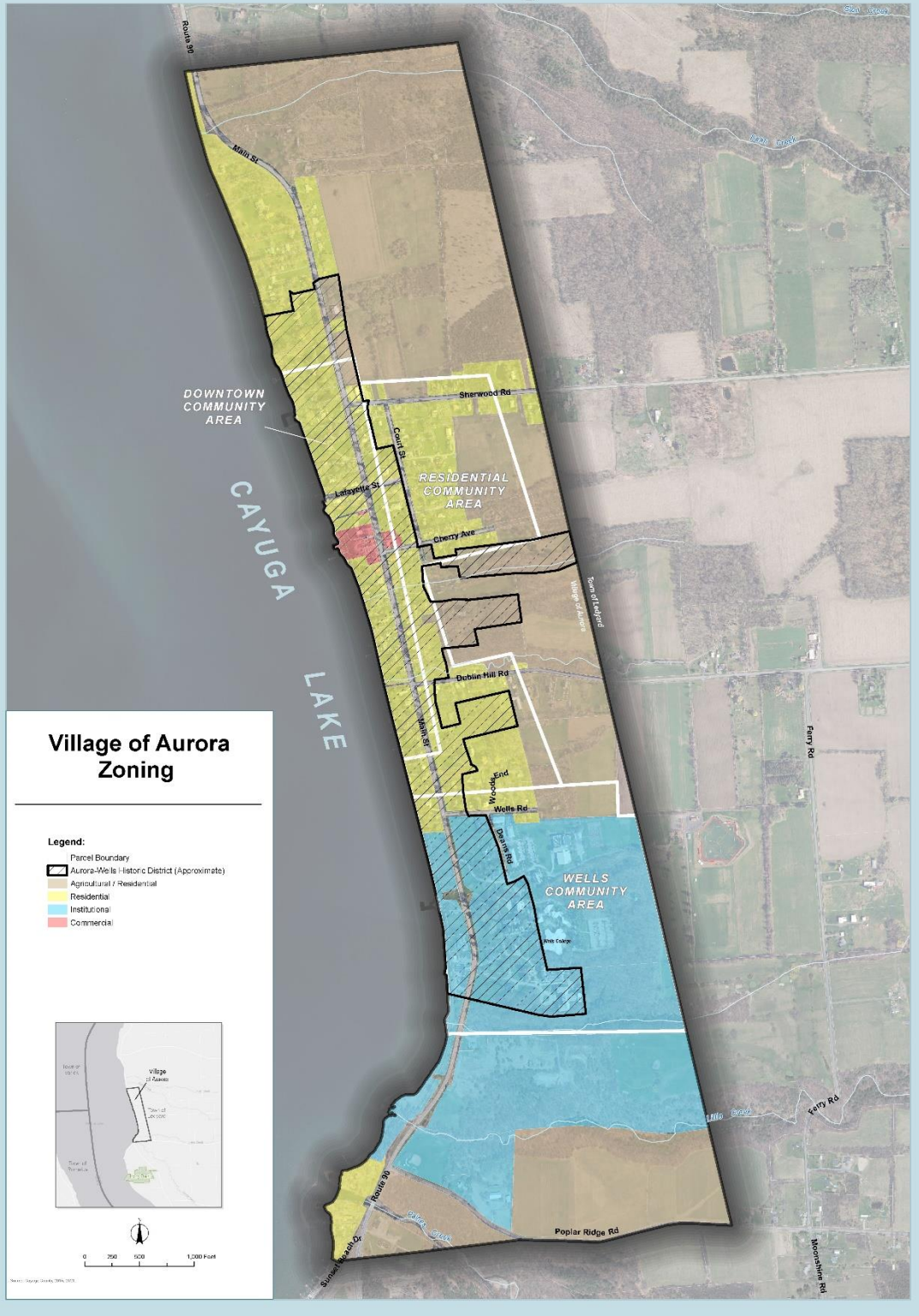
As New York State is a “Home Rule” state, municipalities may regulate land use within their own boundaries. The village has had a zoning law since 1993, and most recently updated its zoning in 2008. Zoning has been amended consistently to regulate the type, size, location, and intensity of commercial, residential, agricultural, and other land.

The current zoning map divides the village into approximately three distinct districts. North of the Wells College campus, the western half of the Village is primarily a Residential district (with a small Commercial district at its center), while the eastern half is Agricultural / Residential (AR). Wells College (and some residential areas that the college previously owned) comprises most of the Institutional district in the Village’s bottom third, with a small Residential lakefront area and another AR district at the southernmost village border. The Aurora-Wells Historic District overlaps with much of the lakefront to the neighborhoods east of Route 90. Local Landmarks as designated by the Village are in various locations throughout Aurora.

Many residents over the course of months of public outreach expressed concern about the zoning law, and there is consensus that it needs an update. However, one important takeaway from this planning process is that zoning is somewhat misunderstood. The existing Residential zoning district is flexible and allows many uses “by right” including two-family housing, mixed-use, commercial, retail, home occupations and supplemental dwellings. The Institutional district, however, has restrictions that the village may wish to consider modifying.

Many of the recommendations within this section focus on changes that the Village may wish to consider when updating its zoning law to reflect the Comprehensive Plan pursuant to NYS General Municipal Law.

VILLAGE OF AURORA Zoning



Future Land Use Map

A Future Land Use map is a central element of the Comprehensive Plan, it outlines the types and locations of land uses throughout the Village and serves as a guide for local boards as they consider redevelopment or new development. The Village developed this Future Land Use map with careful consideration of existing conditions and residents' input.

While a future land use map can often serve as the basis for new zoning districts and regulations, it is not a zoning map. Instead, a Future Land Use map outlines in general terms the different areas of the Village and the density, type, and situation of development in each. The following district descriptions and map provide the overall intent for future land use in the Village, along with policies and programs that the Village should pursue to realize the Future Land Use plan.

Future Land Use Map Districts

Lakefront District

This is the entirety of the Village between Scenic Route 90 and Cayuga Lake. While uses remain open to what is currently allowed, development in this district may be subject to additional restrictions that protect the water quality of Cayuga Lake, and the views that Aurora's location on the lake affords. *The importance of protecting the water going into Cayuga Lake can hardly be overstated*, and that is the impetus for the creation of this district. To protect water and preserve lake views, the Village should consider stricter development regulations near the lake shoreline. The vision for this district is a healthy mix of commercial, residential, institutional, and open space areas serving residents and visitors. These areas should remain as vegetated as possible to protect the lake's water quality.

Village District

This would encompass the current Residential and Institutional areas to the east of Route 90 and would allow for more innovative uses of the parcels within the Wells College properties. While it would effectively dissolve the Commercial District, the mixed-use spirit of that district would live on in the allowable uses of the new Village District. The vision for this district is an area with similar density as what exists, and an additional variety of commercial and retail businesses providing services for residents.

Agricultural-Residential District

The boundaries of this district would not change from those that already exist; however, to help improve water quality in Aurora and Cayuga Lake, a concern that rose to the top during the public outreach process, additional restrictions on development and removal of trees and the like may be considered. In terms of uses, this district is already somewhat flexible, and the Village should maintain that flexibility. The vision for this district is to remain a low-density area with viable and sustainable agricultural and residential uses.

The current situation of development has created, however, a distinct difference between the northern and southern ends of both the Lakefront and Agricultural and Residential Districts. The northern property is more business-oriented and more developed; the southern end is less developed and would allow for a Village park and public land, as well as the possibility of commercial development with minimal impact on residential properties.

Note that the map on the following page is conceptual in nature and not intended to show zoning changes to specific parcels.

Future Land Use Map



Land Use and Zoning Actions

1. Update zoning law for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan represents the Village’s vision for the future, and land use regulations are the most important tool the Village can utilize to implement that vision. The Village should overhaul its zoning regulations and consider including and/or updating provisions for drainage, noise, solar energy, short-term rentals, and cannabis. The Village should also review subdivision regulations as part of this exercise. Land use regulations should reflect what currently exists—for example, residential and commercial uses in the current institutional zone—as well as be more flexible and attract appropriate development.

A major element of the zoning update should be to work with Village boards to ensure that any new regulation is able to be easily administered.

The revised law should support Aurora’s traditional village character in terms of the relationship of the built environment to the natural environment; that is, development standards should protect the lake and other natural surroundings, as those are the elements of the village that set it apart from other communities.

2. Increase the clarity of the development review process.

During the planning process, many residents and stakeholders explained their frustration with the current review process, and the perceived unknowns regarding time and expectations for approval. The Village will continue to improve the permitting procedure, encouraging applicants to consult with village staff before applications begin board reviews to ensure that applications are substantially complete, and the review will move along efficiently.

3. As zoning is updated, engage in conversation with community leaders to provide a dialogue and opportunity for buy-in.

Residents of Aurora desire more variety in retail, dining, and services. For the zoning update to be successful, it will require cooperation from major property owners who can facilitate commercial investment, perhaps from interested developers. This is an important conversation that needs to continue to be had as the Village evolves.

4. Evaluate minimum parking requirements.

The zoning law is reasonable when setting parking standards, as it allows for applicants to propose reasonable proposals during the site plan approval process rather than mandating a set number of spaces. Some municipalities are eliminating parking requirements from the zoning altogether and negotiating the number of parking spaces with applicants based on the type and scale of the project. While Aurora’s parking standards do not require an overhaul, the Village may wish to require thresholds or a maximum number of parking spaces in areas near the lake or where erosion and stormwater are a concern.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Throughout the planning process, residents expressed a strong desire for diversity in new retail, services, and food options in the Village. We also want to balance the quality of life and existing character with economic development. Aurora's location along Cayuga Lake is an asset; however, it is constrained by its physical size, the number of available buildings and the small year-round population. With that said, diversification of the local economy would be more economically sustainable and healthy for the village, and a first step may be to provide additional housing options that would attract new residents who are interested in opening new businesses. Additional residents would have the benefits from making village maintenance more affordable and adding dollars to the local economy to creating wider social opportunities and new businesses.

For Aurora to achieve its equity, diversity, and inclusion goals, it will need to create an economy that caters to everyone from year-round residents to the Wells community to weekend guests. To create this economy, the Village needs more year-round residents. The set of actions below will push Aurora closer to its vision.

Economic Development: Actions

1. Encourage the use of existing community spaces, especially Patrick Tavern.
 - a. Expand the available uses in Patrick Tavern.
 - b. Link Patrick Tavern to Cayuga Lake and the weekend Farmers' Market with appropriate signage on Dublin Hill Extension.
2. Work with building owners to utilize vacant or underutilized buildings
 - a. Work with property owners whose buildings would be eligible for historic tax credits or other development incentives.
 - b. Encourage the formation of a non-profit or advisory business board
3. Welcome additional year-round resources such as new food, drink, retail and recreational options for residents, visitors, and the Wells community.
4. Promote the benefits of Aurora as a remote work location due to its broadband, quality of life, and accessibility to other markets.
5. When new housing is developed, promote the benefits of Aurora as an in-person work location due to walkability and quality of life.
6. Continue to encourage home occupations.

COMMUNITY, HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Aurora's small size allows the Village to provide services and maintain upkeep of its neighborhoods in a responsive manner. As a small community with a limited budget, the Village must continuously explore ways to deliver services effectively and efficiently and progress the goals of this plan in a meaningful way.

Community, Housing & Neighborhoods: Actions

1. Diversify housing while preserving neighborhoods.
 - a. While Aurora residents love their neighborhoods, many agree that a wider range of housing choices is desirable. The Village can encourage this by working with local realtors and the County Economic Development Agency and revising the zoning law to encourage additional housing types throughout the Village.
 - b. Provide quality dwelling units to accommodate members of the local labor force who are interested in living in Aurora. Encourage the development of year-round long-term rentals for these and other potential residents.
 - c. Encourage year-round use of housing stock by incentivizing single-family usage through actions such as passing a local law to provide incentives such as rebates or tax breaks for first-time home buyers
2. Improve and expand communication between the Village, its residents, business owners, the Wells community and other people who care about Aurora.
 - a. Expand website and explore additional communication options.
3. Encourage community involvement that is natural to life in a rural village.
 - a. Create opportunities for in-person interaction.
 - b. Support non-profits such as Patrick Tavern, the Mobile Farmers' Market, summer recreation programs, and others with indoor and outdoor facilities as needed and appropriate.
4. Continue to support and diversify the historic district, contributing buildings and features and/or Local Landmarks.
 - a. Ensure the representation of landmarks significant to the history of all inhabitants of the Village, past and present.
 - b. Continue to support the adaptive reuse of existing buildings.
5. Support the Southern Cayuga School District by emphasizing its strengths and promoting housing that is attractive to young families.

SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

Aurora faces challenges from flooding caused by stormwater runoff, and the likelihood of storms increasing in number and severity will increase over time. The Village should strive to ensure that it along with property owners design and develop residences, transportation systems, infrastructure, and businesses to withstand future flooding events caused by increasingly intense weather events.

Sustainability & Resiliency: Actions

1. Address the impacts of climate change through the implementation of suitable design standards for land development, the handling of storm water, and lakeshore preservation.
 - a. Work with the Town of Ledyard, Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District and DEC to support efforts to control runoff into Cayuga Lake (through retaining and restoring hedgerows and riparian buffers, and other strategies).
2. Support clean energy alternatives through:
 - a. Adoption of solar energy laws, and
 - b. Development of potential opportunities for renewable energy development and use while protecting open space, scenic views, and historic buildings and sites, as well as residential character and growth potential.
3. Embrace the lake. Recognize its importance to Wells College, the Inns of Aurora and tourism, recognize its importance to village residents for their quality of life, and recognize its importance for water and the need for protection.
 - a. Zoning regulations and development standards—both lakefront and on the hills leading down to the water—should prioritize the protection of Cayuga Lake.
 - b. Balance the natural and built environment and protect natural resources and views of Cayuga Lake.
 - c. Encourage residents and property owners to install green infrastructure solutions on their property to prevent runoff into Cayuga Lake. The benefits range from the prevention of algal blooms to the conservation of water and money.
4. Participate in NYS smart growth programs.
 - a. Take the Climate Smart Communities pledge.
 - b. Join the Clean Energy Communities program.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION

The Village has some unique infrastructure and transportation issues and opportunities. First, its water system is privately-owned (by Wells College) and needs automation and an intake pipe deep enough to handle the challenges posed by global warming and climate change. The sewer system is adequate for the Village but faces challenges as Cayuga County is proposing a regionalization that could benefit the Village from a cost and maintenance perspective. As reported in Appendix A, Aurora does not have a Village Hall, which is a barrier to productivity and interaction between local government and the population that it serves.

Transportation is an asset in that the highway network through and around Aurora provides easy access to cities (and airports) in the region including Ithaca, Auburn, Syracuse, and Rochester. For many people, Main Street or Route 90 is their first impression of Aurora, and the corridor's beauty—along with the tree-lined streets beyond—typically results in positive perceptions of the Village. Aurora has invested in walkability along Main Street, with bump-outs, pedestrian crossings, and sidewalks, although additional pedestrian connections are needed to safely connect the center of the Village to Wells College.

Infrastructure & Transportation: Actions

1. Continue to work with Cayuga County, state and federal agencies, and Wells College to find a long-term solution for a sustainable water source for Aurora and support the proposed regionalization of water and sewer infrastructure.
2. For the Village of Aurora government to implement this plan, it needs a functioning office/meeting space. The Village should acquire land and construct a facility to:
 - a. Provide an appropriate work environment for village staff and boards.
 - b. Provide appropriate space to house village records and archives.
 - c. Provide indoor space to accommodate meetings, gatherings, and historical displays.
 - d. Provide outdoor space to encourage youth and adult programs; and,
 - e. Provide parking to accommodate community activities.
3. Upgrade and expand the sidewalk and pedestrian network.
 - a. Extend sidewalks south along Main Street to increase safety for those walking between the Village Center and Wells College.
 - b. Provide a better link from residential areas to the “green streets” leading to Cayuga Lake.
4. Expand recreational assets by working with partners, including the Inns of Aurora, Wells College, and the Finger Lakes Land Trust, on acquisition of lakefront property and formalizing the sharing of resources.
 - a. Continue to improve all parks and acquire new sites, demonstrating the commitment to provide quality open space.

- b. Work toward conservation of the lakefront opposite Wells College, through acquisition or regulation, to preserve iconic views of the lake and maintain the natural beauty and ecology of that section of lakefront. The area is a natural transition from the built environment to the lake, serving both as a filter for water from Paine’s Creek and as a home to wildlife. This land is ideal as a low-impact park for educational and recreational activities.
- 5. Promote Route 90 as a Scenic Byway.
- 6. Continue working to solve traffic, parking and drainage issues connected with Main Street.

5. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION



HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

The Village of Aurora Comprehensive Plan Update represents the policy of the Village for decisions relating to land use and zoning, infrastructure investment, housing policy, economic development, parks and recreation, government services, farmland protection and the conservation of natural resources.

This document can be used in several ways, including:

- As a reference document.
- To understand the community's priorities.
- To guide decisions of Town government officials; and,
- To support grant applications.
- To direct and guide the drafting and amending of Village Zoning Laws

As a Reference

The Comprehensive Plan includes statistics, maps, and general information about the community. The data and maps document the current conditions of the village, based on available data.

To Better Understand Community Priorities

The planning process helped to inform the issues and recommendations for the Plan. Analysis of the issues and opportunities identified during the planning process form the basis for the recommended actions in the Plan.

To Guide Village Government Decisions

The recommended actions and implementation strategy identify specific steps that Village officials and their partners can take to implement the policies in the Plan. The Implementation Strategy identifies the entity responsible for each recommended action, as well as the relative priority or time frame. This table should be used by the Village Board and other boards, committees or officials assigned the responsibility to guide implementation at least annually to review which actions have been accomplished, which should be pursued in the next few years, which need to be modified, and which are no longer needed.

To Support Grant Applications

Grantors are more likely to fund projects that are recognized as priorities for the community, identified following an inclusive and deliberative process. As the Comprehensive Plan represents the official, adopted policy of the Village, projects and activities specifically recommended in the Plan have a better chance of being funded than other projects. Some grant programs award more points in the competitive evaluation of applications to projects that are recommended in adopted Comprehensive Plans.

To Direct and Guide the Drafting and Amending of Village Zoning Laws

The combination of a greater understanding of community priorities and the in-depth analysis of existing conditions provided by the comprehensive plan provides a strong basis for the reconsideration of the village zoning law in the light of current conditions and the needs of the future.

MONITORING AND UPDATING THE PLAN

Over time, changes that occur in the community may require updates to the Comprehensive Plan to reflect and address these changes. Accordingly, it is essential for the Village Board to monitor changes in the community and to reevaluate the relevance of the goals set forth in

the Plan as well as the actions recommended to achieve the goals. The Plan should then be updated, as necessary, to appropriately revise the goals and recommended actions so that the Plan may continue to serve as a useful and relevant guide for Village officials.

The Village Board may enlist members of local boards and other community representatives to assist with reviewing and updating the Plan, as they may have information and insight to assist in determining how the Plan should be revised. As with the initial adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, future amendments to the Plan will require both environmental reviews to evaluate potential adverse impacts and public hearings to provide members of the public to comment on the proposed amendments.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The Village will continue to collaborate in maintaining, implementing, and making future updates to the Comprehensive Plan. At least once per year, the Village Board should review the implementation strategy, document the status, and determine:

- Actions that have been accomplished
- Actions that are no longer required or relevant
- Actions that should be a priority during the upcoming year

For each of the priority actions, the Village Board should assign a person or board to be responsible for timely completion. To assist in monitoring implementation, the Village Board may use a Progress Worksheet to periodically track the status of each action. Maps should be periodically reviewed for accuracy; each new dated version should accompany the plan but not replace the original map.

The following table summarizes the goals and recommended actions, as well as the entity responsible, partners and timeframes. The following abbreviations refer to responsible entities and partners:

<i>AFPB</i>	<i>Cayuga County Agricultural & Farmland Protection Board</i>
<i>CCE</i>	<i>Cornell Cooperative Extension</i>
<i>CEDA</i>	<i>Cayuga Economic Development Agency</i>
<i>CEO</i>	<i>Village of Aurora Code Enforcement Officer</i>
<i>LWRP</i>	<i>Local Waterfront Revitalization Program</i>
<i>NYS DEC</i>	<i>NYS Department of Environmental Conservation</i>
<i>NYS DAM</i>	<i>NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets</i>
<i>NYS DOT</i>	<i>NYS Department of Transportation</i>
<i>NYSERDA</i>	<i>NYS Energy Research & Development Authority</i>
<i>NYS OPRHP</i>	<i>NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation</i>
<i>NYS PSC</i>	<i>NYS Public Service Commission</i>
<i>NYS ESD</i>	<i>NYS Empire State Development</i>
<i>REDC</i>	<i>Central NY Regional Economic Development Council</i>
<i>SWCD</i>	<i>Cayuga County Soil & Water Conservation District</i>

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Land Use and Zoning

Goal	Responsible Party(ies)	Potential Partner(s)	Potential Funding Source(s)	Priority Level
Update zoning for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.	Village Board	Planning Board, ZBA, CPP	General Fund, Clean Energy Communities	High
As zoning is updated, engage in conversation with community leaders to provide a dialogue and opportunity for buy-in.	Village Board	Planning Board, ZBA, CPP, property owners	N/A	High
Continue to support and diversify the historic district, contributing buildings and features and/or Local Landmarks.	Village Historian, Community Preservation Panel (CPP)	Village Board	N/A	Medium
Expand recreational assets by working with partners, including the Inns of Aurora, Wells College, and the Finger Lakes Land Trust, on acquisition of lakefront property and formalizing the sharing of resources.	Ad Hoc Committee	IOA, Wells, Finger Lakes Land Trust, NYS OPRHP	NYS OPRHP, Finger Lakes Land Trust	Medium

Economic Development

Goal	Responsible Party(ies)	Potential Partner(s)	Potential Funding Source(s)	Priority Level
Increase the clarity of the development review process.	Village Board	Planning Board, ZBA, CPP	Combine with Zoning	High
Encourage home occupations.	Village Board	Planning Board, ZBA	Combine with Zoning	High
Promote the benefits of Aurora as a remote work location due to its broadband, quality of life, and accessibility to other markets.	Village Board, Ad Hoc committee	CCE, Cayuga County CVB, area realtors	N/A	Medium
Welcome additional year-round resources such as new food, drink, retail and recreational options for residents, visitors, and the Wells community.	Village Board, Ad Hoc committee	CCE, Cayuga County CVB	ESD, other CFA grant opportunities	Low

Community, Housing and Neighborhoods

Goal	Responsible Party(ies)	Potential Partner(s)	Potential Funding Source(s)	Priority Level
Diversify housing while preserving neighborhoods.	Village Board, Ad Hoc committee	Code Enforcement, Developer community, short-term rental owners	N/A	High
Encourage the use of existing community spaces, especially Patrick Tavern.	Village Board, Ad Hoc committee	CEDA, CCE	Clean Energy Communities, LWRP	Medium
Encourage community involvement that is natural to life in a rural village.	Village Board, Ad Hoc committee	Residents, Village Historian, CCE, NYS Parks	CFA various grants	Medium
Support the Southern Cayuga School District by emphasizing its strengths and promoting housing that is attractive to young families.	Village Board	Southern Cayuga School District	N/A	Medium
When new housing is developed, promote the benefits of Aurora as an in-person work location due to walkability and quality of life.	Village Board, Ad Hoc committee	CCE, Cayuga County CVB, area realtors	N/A	Low

Sustainability and Resiliency

Goal	Responsible Party(ies)	Potential Partner(s)	Potential Funding Source(s)	Priority Level
Improve and expand communication between the Village, its residents, business owners, the Wells community and other people who care about Aurora.	Village Board, Ad Hoc committee	All residents, business owners, Wells faculty & staff	Website - General Fund	High
Address the impacts of climate change through the implementation of suitable design standards for land development, the handling of storm water, and lakeshore preservation.	Village Board	Planning Board, ZBA, CPP, NYS DEC, Cayuga Co Soil & Water	Combine with Zoning	High
Support clean energy alternatives	Village Board	Planning Board, ZBA, CPP	Combine with Zoning	High
Embrace the lake.	Village Board	Planning Board, ZBA, CPP	Combine with Zoning	High
Participate in NYS smart growth programs.	Village Board	CCE, County Planning	N/A	Md
Work with building owners to utilize vacant or underutilized buildings	Village Board, Ad Hoc committee	CEDA / IDA	ESD	Medium

Infrastructure and Transportation

Goal	Responsible Party(ies)	Potential Partner(s)	Potential Funding Source(s)	Priority Level
Continue to work with partners to find a long-term solution for a sustainable water source for Aurora and support the proposed regionalization of water and sewer infrastructure.	Village Board, water operator	Cayuga County, NYS EFC, Wells College, other state & federal agencies	State, Federal programs	High
The Village should acquire land and construct a functioning office/meeting space.	Village Board, Ad Hoc committee	Local businesses	General fund, SAM grant, CFA, bond initiative	High
Evaluate minimum parking requirements.	Village Board	Planning Board, ZBA	Combine with Zoning	High
Upgrade and expand the sidewalk and pedestrian network.	Village Board	NYS DOT, Cayuga County	NYS DOT - TAP grants	Low
Promote Route 90 as a Scenic Byway.	Village Board	NYS DOT, Cayuga County	N/A	Low

APPENDIX A: EXISTING CONDITIONS

APPENDIX B: STAKEHOLDER SUMMARY

APPENDIX C: PUBLIC WORKSHOP PRESENTATION AND SUMMARY