

TOWN OF BUTTERNUTS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

THE PATH FORWARD



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INTRODUCTION

The Town of Butternut is located in Otsego County, New York. It is a rural town centered around the Village of Gilbertsville, a small historic village.

This Comprehensive Plan updates the previous plan, adopted in August 2013. This update was authorized by the Butternuts Town Board in 2022. Comprehensive plans are intended to be living documents based on forecasts of future conditions. A ten year update cycle is good planning practice, reflecting an opportunity to reassess as current conditions change and forecasts of the future are updated.

A comprehensive plan provides a framework that can guide decisions. It will be used by the Town of Butternuts, but may also influence decisions by the Village of Gilbertsville, Gilbertsville-Mt. Upton Central School District, and many community institutions. When they are all working toward common goals and pursuing common objectives, success is more likely.

A comprehensive plan is intentionally designed to address a wide variety of issues including land use, quality of life, economics, public safety, and environmental quality. It looks into the future and creates a picture of where we want to be and the steps we may take to get there.

AUTHORITY TO PLAN

New York State Town Law, §272-a addresses the Comprehensive Plan.

1. Legislative findings and intent. The legislature hereby finds and determines that:
 - (a) Significant decisions and actions affecting the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the state and its communities are made by local governments.
 - (b) 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.

The law further finds that enacting a comprehensive plan is in the best interest of the Town, and fosters cooperation among governmental agencies; and that “The participation of citizens in an open, responsible and flexible planning process is essential to the designing of the optimum town comprehensive plan.”

Finally, the law enumerates desirable content for a comprehensive plan

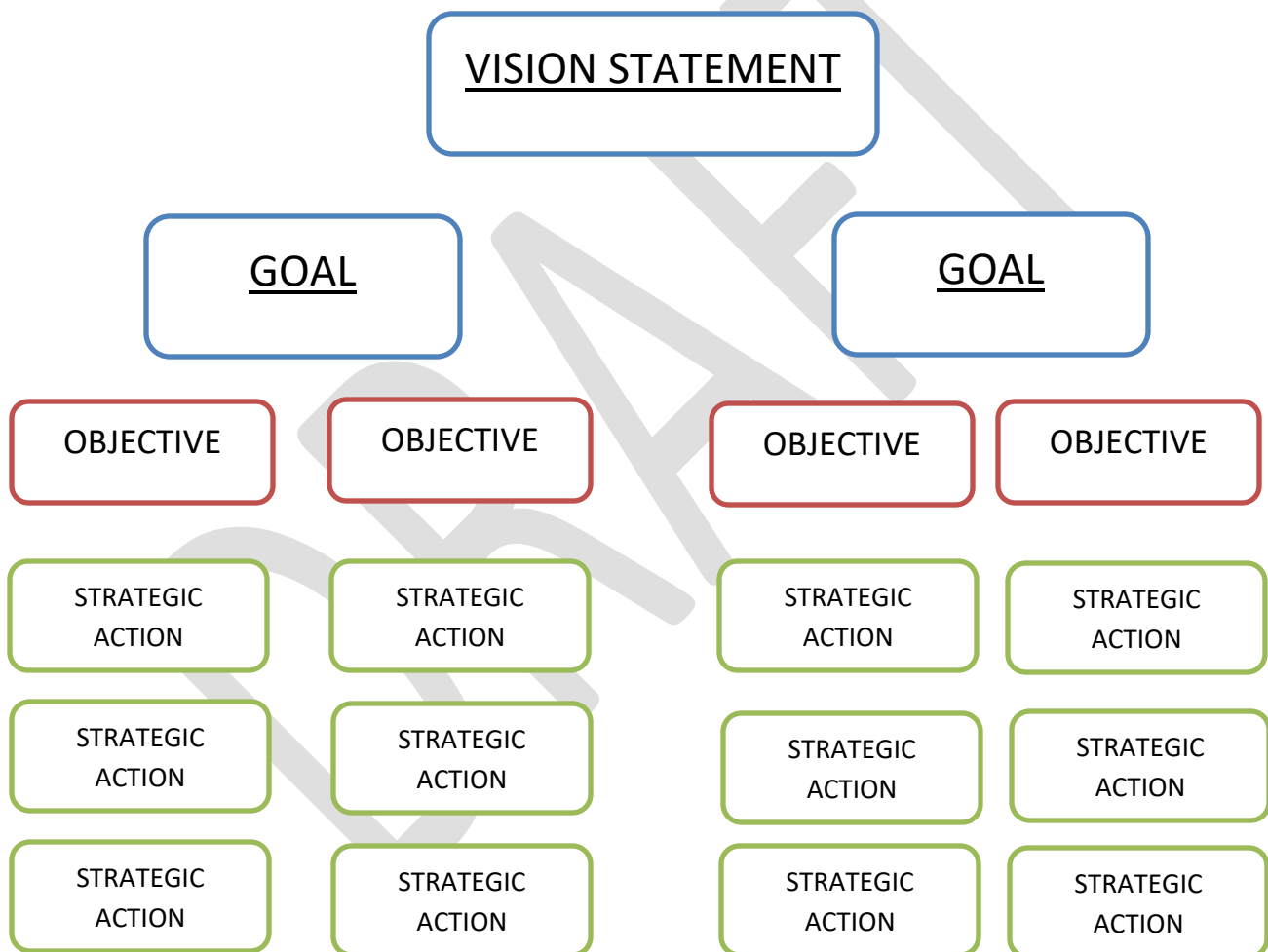
- (a) General statements of goals, objectives, principles, policies, and standards upon which proposals for the immediate and long-range enhancement, growth and development of the town are based.
- (b) Consideration of regional needs and the official plans of other government units and agencies within the region.
- (c) The existing and proposed location and intensity of land uses.
- (d) Consideration of agricultural uses, historic and cultural resources, coastal and natural resources and sensitive environmental areas.
- (e) Consideration of population, demographic and socio-economic trends and future projections.
- (f) The location and types of transportation facilities.
- (g) Existing and proposed general location of public and private utilities and infrastructure.
- (h) Existing housing resources and future housing needs, including affordable housing.
- (i) The present and future general location of educational and cultural facilities, historic sites, health facilities and facilities for emergency services.
- (j) Existing and proposed recreation facilities and parkland.
- (k) The present and potential future general location of commercial and industrial facilities.
- (l) Specific policies and strategies for improving the local economy in coordination with other plan topics.
- (m) Proposed measures, programs, devices, and instruments to implement the goals and objectives of the various topics within the comprehensive plan.
- (n) All or part of the plan of another public agency.

NYS Town Law §272-a §3

The Town of Butternuts has prepared this Comprehensive Plan update in concurrence with the authority and framework provided by this law.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The assignment of the Town Board was to review and update the 2013 Comprehensive Plan. The process began with a thorough review of that plan, making note of what should be retained, what should be updated, and what should be replaced. For example, the demographic information in that plan was based on the 2010 U.S. Census and the 2007 USDA Agricultural Census; there is now newer data available from the 2020 U.S. Census and the 2022 American Community Survey, as well as the 2017 Agricultural Census. It was also necessary to revisit the community vision, using public outreach to understand what had changed in ten years.



The process begins with a Vision Statement. This is best described as “What do we want the Town of Butternuts to be in 2040?” A vision should strike a balance between striving for a desired future and being realistic about what may be achievable.

The Vision is supported by Goals. Goal statements are at a high level, offering the means to understand how the vision can be attained. Each Goal is supported by a limited number of Objectives. Objectives are specific, measurable, realistic, and time-bound. A set of Objectives spells out how the Goal can be achieved over time. Finally, each Objective is supported by a small number of Strategic Actions. These are very detailed, and most importantly have an entity responsible for its implementation. It is unlikely that an action without an owner will be accomplished.

The process of the comprehensive plan can be summed up as this: “By taking the specific actions, we can accomplish this objective, which in turn will help attain the goal that will create positive movement toward make our vision of the Town of Butternuts a reality.”

We plan best when we plan WITH the community, not FOR the community.

It is critically important that the public be involved throughout the process of developing the plan. This plan is based on learning about the desires and concerns of the residents and business owners in the Town of Butternuts, and about their vision of the future. By involving the public, the plan becomes theirs, not a plan that belongs to Town officials.

Public involvement included a survey and public meetings. The survey was distributed by mail and was available on both the Town and Village websites. It collected demographic information, and opinions about the future of the town, strengths, weaknesses, treasured places, and ideas of what would improve the town. There were 188 completed surveys received. See Appendix for the questionnaire and the summary of results. Public meetings were held during the plan development to provide additional opportunities for input.

THE TOWN AND THE VILLAGE

While this is the Town of Butternuts’ Comprehensive Plan, it was recognized early in the planning process that it must also take into account the Village of Gilbertsville. The village is the center of the town in many ways: the geographic center; a commercial center; and the home of institutions like the Gilbertsville Public Library, churches, Butternut Valley Grange, and the Gilbertsville Fire Department. The Village is also a municipal corporation that is authorized and required to make its own decisions, maintain its infrastructure, levy property taxes, and do planning. The Village has been designated on the National Register of Historic Places as an Historic District.

New York State General Municipal Law requires towns to have a planning board, but imposes no such requirement on villages. The Village took action in May 2023 to eliminate their planning board. They do maintain a zoning board of appeals, which is required in order for residents to appeal zoning decisions including requests for variances.

CONTEXT: BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF BUTTERNUTS

The Town of Butternuts was established from part of the Town of Unadilla in 1796. The northern part of Butternuts was annexed to form the Town of Morris in 1849, and additional territory was taken from the Town of Unadilla in 1857. The flowing timeline depicts important events in the history of the town.

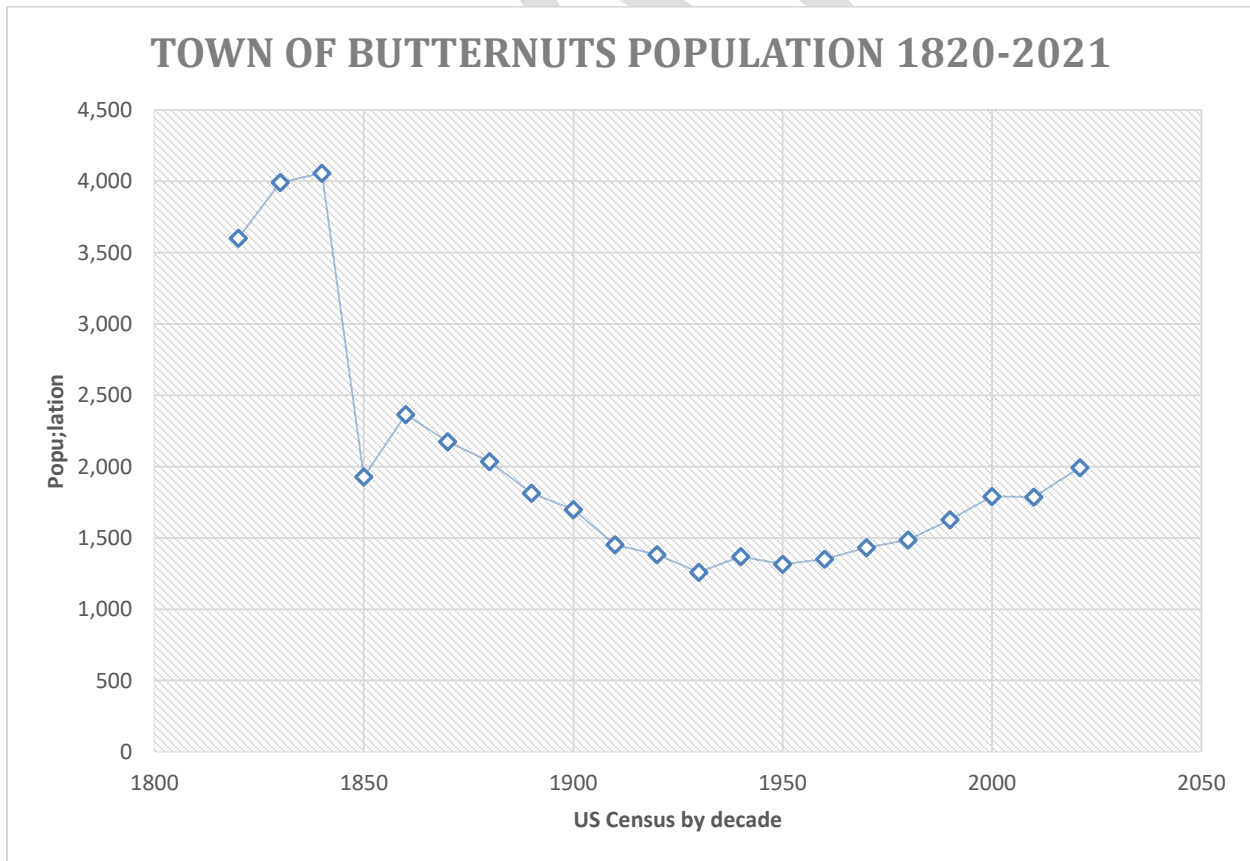
TOWN OF BUTTERNUTS		
TIMELINE OF IMPORTANT HISTORICAL EVENTS		
	1786	Abijah Gilbert acquires 1000 acres of Morris land patent from Jacob Morris
The Village of Gilbertsville is founded	1787	
	1790	The first schoolhouse is constructed
The Town of Butternuts is created	1796	
	1797	First Congregational Church of Butternuts is formed
First Presbyterian Church is formed	1805	
	1806	Gilbertsville Baptist Church is formed
The Masonic Lodge is chartered Jesse C Smith of Butternuts joins the 139th New York Volunteer Regiment. He later commands the 11th Brigade at the Battle of Gettysburg as a Brigadier General	1808	
	1818	A stone schoolhouse is constructed. In 1888 it becomes the home of the Gilbertsville Library
Samual Cotton is appointed the first Postmaster	1822	
	1833	Christ Episcopal Church is founded
Gilbertsville Academy and Collegiate Institute is established	1845	
	1849	Town of Morris is created from the northern portion of Town of Butternuts
Butternut Cemetery Association is incorporated	1867	
	1868	John Brewer opens a bank in town
Eagle Fire Engine & Hose Company is founded after a series of arson fires	1874	

	1876	The Otsego Journal begins printing in Gilbertsville Telegraph service comes to the Town Gilbertsville Baptist Church is built to replace a wooden building destroyed in an 1875 arson fire
The 2nd Village Improvement Society formed in Gilbertsville, later incorporated in 1891	1886	
	1891	Gilbertsville Free Library is incorporated and is the first public library in Otsego County
Fires destroy the Gilbertsville commercial district	1893	
	1894	The Gilbert Block is constructed after fire
Village of Gilbertsville is incorporated Fire destroys the Gilbert home and the Stag's Head Inn	1895	
	1897	Gilbert home that became the Major's Inn is reconstructed after fire
Telephone service begins. Telegraph office operates until 1922	1900	
	1907	State Highway 51 constructed to Mt. Upton, and to New Lisbon. Paved in 1925
Butternut Valley Grange #1142 is formed, operates until 1925.	1908	
	1910	Tianderah Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution is organized
Electricity comes to Butternuts	1923	
	1926	Butternut Valley Garden Club organized
Gilbertsville Central School District formed	1931	
	1932	Boy Scout Troop 44 is chartered
Gilbertsville school is constructed Butternut Valley Grange #1533 is created as the reorganization of the previous Grange	1934	
	1946	American Legion Post #1339 is chartered
Town conveys the title of the Hall to the Butternut Valley Grange	1952	

	1971	Otsego County opens Copes Corners Park on land donated by the Cope family
Most of the Village of Gilbertsville is recognized as an Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places	1974	
	1982	The Historic District is expanded to include the entire Village of Gilbertsville
A school merger is approved to create the Gilbertsville-My. Upton Central School District	1989	
	1994	The new Gilbertsville-Mt. Upton School building is constructed on State Route 51

There is population data from the U.S. Census dating to 1820. The large population loss in 1850 coincides with the creation of the Town of Morris from Butternuts in 1849. The trend shows slow growth since 1950.

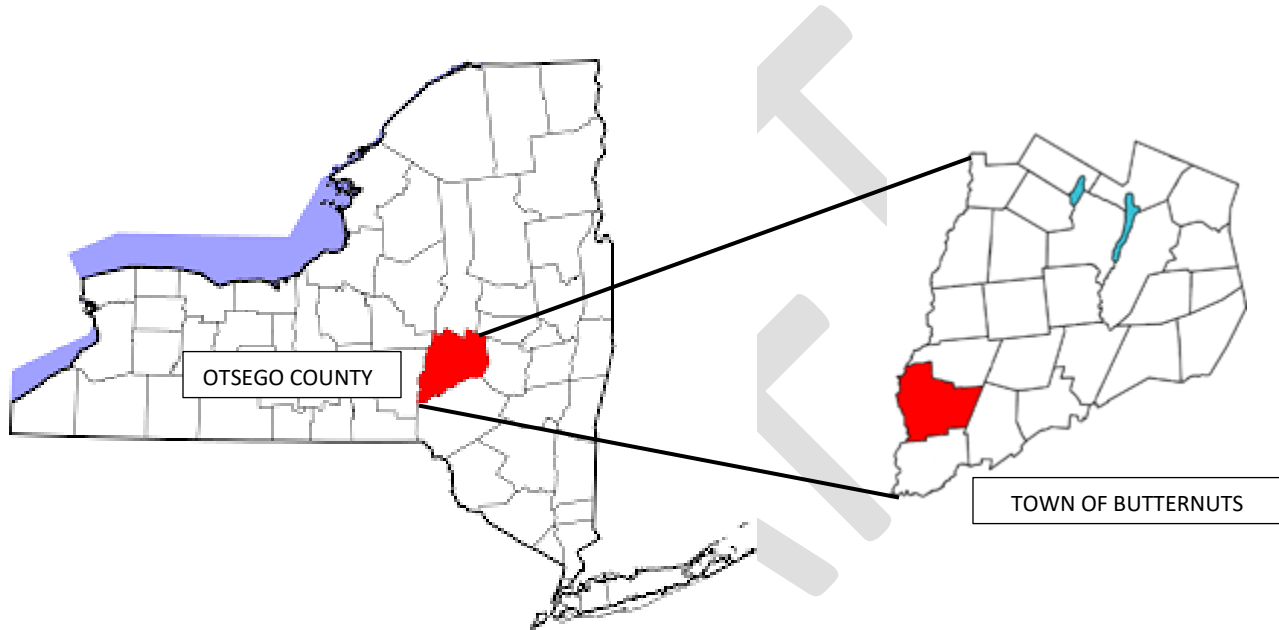
FIGURE 1: HISTORY OF POPULATION OF TOWN OF BUTTERNUTS



CONTEXT: THE TOWN OF BUTTERNUTS TODAY

DEMOGRAPHICS

The Town of Butternuts is rural, covering 53.9 square miles. It is located in Otsego County, in a region of New York State called Leatherstocking. Demographic data is extracted from the American Community Survey, a product of the U.S. Census Bureau. The population in 2021 was 1,993 with an average population density of 37 people per square mile.



Butternuts has an older population, with a median age of 47.7, which is about 25% higher than the statewide median. Those age 65 and above account for 21.6% of the population, while 15.4% are under 18. Butternuts has a significant population of veterans; 11.2% of the population, versus 7.7% of Otsego County and 4.2% of New York State.

There were 844 households in the town, for an average household size of 2.4 people. This is typical of the towns in Otsego County. About 63% of the population of the town live in households led by married couples.

Butternuts is a bit wealthier than the region. Average per capita income is \$34,917, and household income is \$70,455. These are about 10% and 20% higher respectively than the rest of Otsego County.

More detailed demographic data is found in the Appendix,

Economy. The economy of the town includes agriculture, construction and contracting, quarrying and timber, and service/hospitality organizations. There are a small number of retail businesses in the village. An inventory of local businesses was created to conduct a survey. The survey asked about current business conditions including both opportunities and barriers, and about the business owner’s perspective on future business conditions and prospects for their own business.

The inventory, which may be incomplete, found that there are about 50 businesses located in the town. This excludes others that have customers in the town, like heating oil and propane vendors.

Business Type	Number
Retail	5
Wholesale	2
Agricultural (includes farms, maple producers, related)	18
Contractors	12
Hospitality	5
Other services	4
Equine (stables, riding)	2
Mining, quarrying	2

Land Use. The town is characterized primarily by rural residential and agricultural uses, and vacant land.

Parcel type	Number of parcels	Land value	Total value
Residential	697	\$25,369,000	\$89,622,100
Agricultural	60	\$3,356,300	\$10,207,000
Vacant land	518	\$15,923,000	\$16,899,600
Tax exempt	36	\$778,700	\$9,578,401
Utilities	29	\$90,200	\$5,663,161
Other uses	28	\$1,030,000	\$1,634,000
Total	1,368	\$46,546,200	\$133,604,262

Source: Town of Butternuts assessment rolls Year 2022

Active agricultural uses include dairy, cattle, sheep, and horse farms; and cropland. Vacant land comprises a number of categories including rural, residential, and abandoned agricultural land. Tax exempt properties include the Gilbertsville-Mt. Upton school, Copes Corners Park, cemeteries, and the Town hall and highway garage. There are also a number of tax-exempt properties in the Village of Gilbertsville, including three churches, the Butternut Valley Grange,

the Gilbertsville Public Library, the Gilbertsville Fire Department, and the properties owned by the Village Improvement Society including the Gilbert Block and Post Office.

More detailed information on land use and value is in the Appendix.

Housing. As noted above, there are 697 residential properties in the town. Of these, 406 are categorized as single-family residence, 133 as rural residence with more than 10 acres of land, 92 as manufactured housing, 4 as two-family residence, and 39 as seasonal residence. This information does not distinguish between owner-occupied and rental properties. Discussion with a knowledgeable local realtor indicates that there are few rental properties available in the town at any given time, and that finding a home to purchase can also be challenging.

Geography. The Town of Butternuts comprises a mix of valley and upland flat land suitable for tillage, and hills that are both steeply and gently sloped.

The town is transected by the Butternut Creek and bordered on the west by the Unadilla River, all part of the Susquehanna River/Chesapeake Bay watershed. The *Butternut Creek Watershed Management Plan*¹ identifies 983 acres (4.2%) of the area of town in the 100-year floodplain and 987 acres (4.22%) in the 500-year floodplain. There have been significant flood events in the town and Village of Gilbertsville in 2006 and 2021, as well as more localized flood damage in smaller events.

Transportation: Roads, bridges, and culverts in the Town of Butternuts are owned by three jurisdictions: the Town, Otsego County, and New York State.

TABLE 3: ROADWAY OWNERSHIP (CENTERLINE MILES) ²		
New York State	Otsego County	Town of Butternuts
6.9	27.43	65.73

All of the roads in the town are characterized by low traffic volumes. Average annual daily traffic (AADT) is a standard measure in which actual traffic counts are adjusted by seasonal factors. These counts are a total of vehicles travelling in both directions. State highways are counted on a regular basis, local roads less so. Table 3 shows AADT for the State and County roads in the town. Town roads, where counts are available, have daily volume generally less than 200.

TABLE 4: TRAFFIC VOLUME (AVERAGE ANNUAL DAILY TRAFFIC) ³			
Road	Segment	Year of Count	AADT
NY 51	Unadilla R – Village line	2017	1345

¹ NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Butternut Creek Watershed Management Plan Mod 10.5.21

² NYS Department of Transportation, Data Services Bureau, Local Highway Inventory

³ NYS Department of Transportation, Data Services Bureau, Traffic Volume Report

County Road 3	River Road – NY 51	2018	528
County Road 4	Lobdell Rd – Village line	2017	439
County Road 5	No counts available		
County Road 8	Taylor Road - Village line	2017	516

There is currently no public bus service in the town. *Getthere*, a program of the Rural Health Network of South Central New York, is a mobility manager. Their Connection to Care program can finance transportation of eligible clients to medical services.

While our rural roads have low traffic volume, they are also narrow and generally lack shoulders, making walking and cycling potentially hazardous.

CONTEXT: THE TOWN OF BUTTERNUTS GOVERNANCE

The town is governed by an elected Supervisor and Town Board as established in New York State municipal law (New York State Consolidated Laws, Town Law Article 3 §20). The Highway Department is overseen by an elected Town Highway Superintendent. The Town Clerk and Tax Collector are also elected positions. The town has exercised the option provided in §20(f) to have a single assessor appointed by the Town Board. The Town Board is responsible for governing town functions, adopting and overseeing the town budget, and passing local laws as they deem necessary. In Butternuts, each Board member is also assigned specific oversight duties (e.g., parks, highways, policies). The law requires justices of the peace to preside over a Town Court, and the option to retain a town attorney for professional legal services.

The Town Planning Board, established under Town Law §272-c, has seven members appointed by the Town Board. The Planning Board is responsible for implementation of the Town’s subdivision and site plan review laws, and completing other planning tasks assigned by the Town Board.

In towns without a police force, the town board is authorized to appoint a Town Constable with law enforcement powers. The town once had a constable, but upon his retirement did not appoint a replacement, leaving no reliable mechanism for enforcing town laws.

CONTEXT: CURRENT ISSUES OF CONCERN

Renewable Energy Development: Both the town and New York State have addressed renewable energy installations, both solar arrays and wind turbines. While wind turbines are always large and most typically in arrays of a number of turbines that fit the site topography, solar installations are very scalable. They may range from a residential-scale array mounted on

a rooftop or ground mount posts, to a community solar array on the order of five acres, to commercial utility scale arrays that can be very large.

The town passed “Local Law No. 1 of the year 2021 - Renewable Energy Systems Local Law” to define its role in renewable energy. This is primarily for residential-scale installations. New York State Executive Law 94-C created the Office of Renewable Energy Siting (ORES). The regulations implementing the law are found at *Chapter XVIII, Title 19 of NYCRR Part 900, Office of Renewable Energy Siting, Subpart 900-1*. Under this law, ORES is responsible for accepting applications and issuing permits for any “major renewable energy facility”, defined as an installation with a generating capacity of 25 kilowatts or greater.

The Town Board will monitor any proposals for developing projects that will be subject to ORES oversight.

Cellular Telephone and Broadband Service: Cell phone and high-speed internet service have become a necessity for families, students, and businesses. There are areas of the Town of Butternuts that have neither. While most properties have internet access, it mostly at DSL speeds; Otsego Electric Cooperative has established fiber optic service through its OE Connect subsidiary; Frontier Communications has also run some fiber optic lines. But this is by no means universal. Cell service is limited, and very much carrier-dependent.

The US Department of Agriculture and the Federal Communications Commission both have programs to support the deployment of rural broadband service through both grants and loans to telecommunications companies. The Town of Butternuts may find it worthwhile to join with other towns in the region to continue to advocate for truly universal broadband installation.

STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES

The plan development process included an assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, known as a SWOT analysis. The first two apply to the current situation, while the others will be addressed in looking at the future. Input to the SWOT analysis was from the Planning Board, the resident survey, and the initial public meetings. This input was then synthesized to provide a more concise picture.

Strengths include:

- Quiet rural character
- Historic nature of the Village of Gilbertsville
- Community character – people care about one another
- Quality of the natural environment
- Multi-generational families as a source of stability

- Respected community organizations (3 churches, Butternut Valley Grange, Gilbertsville Fire Department and Emergency Squad, Gilbertsville Free Library)
- Agricultural businesses
- Gilbertsville-Mt. Upton Central School
- Relative ease of access to nearby cities of Oneonta and Norwich to meet many needs (healthcare, shopping, entertainment)
- Availability of affordable land for development
- Reputation as a welcoming place to live

Weaknesses include:

- Lack of local businesses to meet residents' basic needs, including food and healthcare
- Lack of local and nearby employment
- Lack of dependable high-speed internet and cell phone service
- Decline in agricultural businesses, loss of farms
- Lack of affordable housing for families and seniors
- Multi-generational families as resistance to change
- Not enough destinations to attract tourism spending
- Few transportation options
- Difficulty in maintaining Town infrastructure (roads, culverts)
- Lack of affordable daycare services
- History of flooding
- Little citizen participation in local government

People were also asked to identify “treasured places” that are very important to defining the character of the town. These are places they want to see maintained into the future.

Treasured places were noted as:

- The Major's Inn
- Copes Corners Park
- The Gilbert Block
- Local churches
- Gilbertsville Free Library
- Centennial Park, Overlook Park
- Natural areas along the Dunderberg and Butternut Creeks
- Historic homes

In order to achieve a positive future for the town, we must build upon the strengths, overcome the weaknesses, and cherish the treasured places.

DIRECTION: THE TOWN OF BUTTERNUTS IN 2040

The next step in the planning process is to chart the future of the town. The year 2040 was selected as an appropriate horizon, fifteen to twenty years in the future.

OPPORTUNITIES and THREATS

As noted above, the SWOT analysis included the identification of opportunities that may be realized to move in a positive direction, and threats that may create barriers to such actions.

Opportunities include:

- Availability of land for development
- Abandoned properties available for redevelopment
- Expansion of property tax base from new development
- Development of housing for people of all ages
- Development of services for senior citizens
- Investigation of the pros and cons of a zoning code
- Promotion of local businesses across all sectors
- Improved communication between local governments (town, village, school district) and residents
- Creating an enforcement mechanism for local laws
- Families wanting to relocate from urban to rural setting
- Continued popularity of remote work
- Creation of renewable energy installations
- Expansion of educational opportunities by Gilbertsville-Mt. Upton Central School “beyond the walls”
- Grants for historic preservation, land acquisition, cleanup or demolition of abandoned properties
- Federal and state government funding programs for rural broadband and cell service
- Creation of farm-to-table programs to support local farms and agricultural businesses
- Creation and support of recreational facilities and programs for families, youth, and tourists including community recreation center, walking/bicycle trail system, canoe/kayak rental, equestrian stables/trails, eco-tourism

Threats include:

- Growing proportion of senior citizens who need more services
- Inability to attract and retain local businesses
- Abandoned properties that create blight and reduce neighboring property value
- Reduction of property tax base from property abandonment
- Difficulty in maintaining basic infrastructure in a state of good repair
- Challenges to sustainability of the agricultural economy
- Consumption of prime land for renewable energy installation
- Increased regulation by New York State (e.g. Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act) and Federal governments; and from programs like the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement
- Increased flood damage from more frequent and severe storms
- Sustainability of the Village of Gilbertsville as an independent municipality
- Inability to attract residents to public service including local government and emergency services
- Lack of an enforcement mechanism for local laws
- Loss of established Home Rule governance due to New York State laws, regulations, and policies

The question that drives the remainder of this plan is “how can we pursue the opportunities, overcome the threats, and create a positive direction for the Town of Butternuts?”

Population Projection

As noted above, one of the key factors affecting the future of the town is the change on population over time. There are no reliable sources for population forecasts at the town level, but the Cornell Program on Applied Demographics provides county-level forecasts. Their forecast for Otsego County shows a decline from 2020 to 2040 of about 2% (59,778 to 57,533)⁴ and a levelling off of the aging trend.

⁴ Cornell Program on Applied Demographics at <https://pad.human.cornell.edu/counties/projections.cfm>

THE VISION

Creating a shared vision of the future is an important first step in the Comprehensive Plan. Input was gained through a brainstorming session of the Planning Board and key partners, a question on the survey, and conversation at the first round of public meetings. Much of the input focused on the high value people place on the rural nature of the Town, the strong sense of history in the Village, and the way that people here connect with each other and through our local institutions. Common concerns focused on communication, transportation, and the ability to meet more personal needs locally.

VISION STATEMENT

In 2040, the Town of Butternuts will be a thriving rural town that retains its community-centered character and recognizes the importance of the historic nature of the Village of Gilbertsville. The Town will be a welcoming place for people and families of all ages and stages of life, providing a quality local school, affordable housing, places of worship, and services for senior citizens. There will be excellent transportation and up to date communication infrastructure. The Town will support and encourage agricultural enterprises and small businesses that serve the needs of residents and visitors.

The next step in moving toward that shared vision is the adoption of goals.

GOAL STATEMENTS

The statements of goals are intended to be at a high level. They are concise statements of what the Town wants to accomplish, but are not specifically actionable.

GOAL 1: Community character. Promote actions that retain the Town's rural character while providing adequate and affordable housing for people of all ages and stages of life.

GOAL 2: Natural environment Protect the natural environment by protecting clean air and water; protecting farmland, woodlands, and open spaces; protecting wildlife; while working to mitigate the impacts of flooding and other natural events.

GOAL 3: Governance. Promote actions by the Town Board and all surrounding municipalities that improve cooperation, transparency, and communication to benefit local residents and business owners.

GOAL 4: Business development. Identify and remove barriers to retaining existing businesses and attracting new businesses across the agricultural, retail, wholesale, professional services and service sectors that create and support local employment and community character

GOAL 5: Digital and physical infrastructure. Maintain the Town's physical infrastructure in a state of good repair. Achieve universal availability of cellular telephone and broadband service.

GOAL 6: Public Safety. Promote actions that improve and protect the safety of residents and visitors in the areas of crime, transportation, hazard mitigation, and emergency services response.

OBJECTIVES and STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Each goal is supported by objectives. Rather than broad statements, these are specific and measurable, so progress can be measured over time. The objectives are supported by strategic actions, which answer the question “How does the town get this done in order to make progress toward achieving the vision?” The actions have been written to be within the jurisdiction of town government. They do not rely, as had been the case in the previous comprehensive plan, on groups that had yet to be created, or other agencies that may not have a stake in the Town of Butternuts.

GOAL 1: Community character. Promote actions that retain the Town’s rural character and the Village’s historic quality with adequate and affordable housing for people of all ages and stages of life.

OBJECTIVE 1.1 Partner with Otsego County Planning, Office for Aging, other departments and local realtors to determine housing needs for seniors and families, and applicable housing programs.

OBJECTIVE 1.2: Review and update as appropriate Town land use laws

STRATEGIC ACTION 1,2,1 Conduct a study of development patterns and growth of the town every 5 years beginning in 2024, consisting of, but not limited to. population, business, and land use

STRATEGIC ACTION 1.2.2 Review Town subdivision and site plan review laws on a 5-year cycle beginning with the subdivision law in 2024 and the site plan review law in 2025.

GOAL 2: Natural environment Protect the natural environment by protecting clean air and water; protecting farmland, woodlands, and open spaces; protecting wildlife; while working to mitigate the impacts of flooding and other natural events.

OBJECTIVE 2.1 Develop partnerships to implement the priority projects of the 2021 Butternut Creek Watershed Management Plan.

STRATEGIC ACTION 2.1.1 Identify infrastructure susceptible to flood damage, especially high priority bridges and culverts.

STRATEGIC ACTION 2.1.2 Identify opportunities to preserve and increase public access to the Butternut Creek, especially at Copes Corners Park

OBJECTIVE 2.3 Review the recommendations of the Otsego County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan that will have a positive impact on the Town of Butternuts.

STRATEGIC ACTION 2.3.1 Town of Butternuts will work to support local agriculture through educating the public about the legal requirements and strategies of the New York State Right to Farm law (NYS Agriculture and Markets Law §308 of 2021).

GOAL 3: Governance. Promote actions by the Town Board, Village Trustees, and Gilbertsville-Mt. Upton Central School Board that improve cooperation, transparency, and communication to benefit local residents and business owners.

OBJECTIVE 3.1 Improve methods for the Town, Village, and School District to effectively communicate news to local residents

STRATEGIC ACTION 3.1.1 The Town, Village, and School District commit to maintaining up to date websites with links to each other's sites; and well-maintained social media presences.

OBJECTIVE 3.2 Identify opportunities for the Town and all neighboring municipalities to share services

STRATEGIC ACTION 3.2.1 Create a local Shared Services Plan

GOAL 4: Business development. Identify and remove barriers to retaining existing businesses and attracting new businesses across the agricultural, retail, wholesale, professional services, and service sectors that create and support local employment and the local economy.

OBJECTIVE 4.1 Identify barriers to business development by sector

STRATEGIC ACTION 4.1.1 Work with local business owners and county economic development professionals to develop a list of barriers for each sector, and identify any that the Town may have a positive impact on

OBJECTIVE 4.2 Identify opportunities to improve the local business climate

STRATEGIC ACTION 4.2.1 Create a directory of local businesses to be available in print and on the Town and Village of Gilbertsville websites and other potential means of distribution; to also contain a Town map and list of emergency contacts

GOAL 5: Digital and physical infrastructure. For the Town's physical infrastructure, continue to move toward and achieve a state of good repair. Achieve universal availability of cellular telephone and broadband service.

OBJECTIVE 5.1 Manage the condition of Town roads, bridges, and culverts, by the most efficient means to move toward and achieve a state of good repair.

STRATEGIC ACTION 5.1.1 Undertake and adopt a Town Infrastructure Management Plan that accomplishes the objective and also uses the Otsego County 2021 Hazard Mitigation Plan to develop a critical infrastructure flood resilience and mitigation plan

OBJECTIVE 5.2 Advocate for the provision of transportation services for seniors, low-income individuals and families, and those with disabilities

STRATEGIS ACTION 5.2.1 Work with surrounding municipalities and Otsego County to identify opportunities to improve transportation services for underserved

OBJECTIVE 5.3 Partner with Otsego County and surrounding towns to advocate for investments under the USDA Rural Broadband Initiative to achieve universal service

STRATEGIC ACTION 5.3.1 Create a specific plan to achieve universal broadband service in the Town

GOAL 6: Public Safety. Promote actions that improve and protect the safety of residents and visitors to the town

OBJECTIVE 6.1 Enable the enforcement of Town of Butternuts local laws.

STRATEGIC ACTION 6.1.1 Enact necessary Town law(s) to create a local enforcement mechanism

STRATEGIC ACTION 6.1.2 Enact local laws as necessary to ensure the safety of Town residents

OBJECTIVE 6.2 Continue historically strong support for all fire departments, ambulance services, and emergency service personnel that serve the Town

STRATEGIC ACTION 6.2.1 Recognize and communicate the value of our local volunteer emergency service providers to the community. Work with the Eagle Fire Engine and Hose Companies (Gilbertsville Fire Department and Emergency Squad), Borden Hose Company (Mt. Upton Fire Department), and South New Berlin Fire Department to understand their needs and ensure their viability into the future.

OBJECTIVE 6.3: Recognize the importance of public education and information to improve traffic safety and other public safety issues in the Town.

STRATEGIC ACTION 6.3.1 Develop and disseminate information to residents about traffic safety, school safety, and other public safety issues through a variety of media

CONCLUSION

With the approval of the Town of Butternuts Comprehensive Plan by the Town Board on [fill in date], there is a new roadmap in place to guide the decisions of the Town. As the Strategic Actions are implemented, the Town Board and Planning Board will be able to determine whether the intended results are occurring. Each successful action will help move the town on a positive direction toward achievement of its goals and ultimately realization of its vision. When actions do not achieve the desired result, they can be modified, replaced, or discarded.

It is the desire of the Town of Butternuts Board to maintain the town as a safe and desirable place for people to live and raise their families and for local businesses to thrive, provide jobs, and help meet the needs of the residents. This plan will help them do so into the future.

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