TOWN OF AURORA

2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

What is a Comprehensive Plan & Why Do We Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan is an official, long-range blueprint for a municipality's future, created by its local government. It sets forth the community's vision for growth and development, addressing land use, housing needs, infrastructure improvements, neighborhood revitalization, transportation, farmland preservation, climate resiliency, and natural resource protection. A well-crafted plan includes topical chapters, supporting maps and graphics, a vision statement, goals and objectives, findings and recommendations, and an implementation strategy that together provides a clear and practical guide for decision-making.

While the Town of Aurora underwent a regional comprehensive plan with several adjacent communities in the early 2000s and has used that plan to help guide land use decisions, that plan was never formally adopted. Aurora continues to rely on zoning regulations first implemented decades ago, with incremental updates in the 2010s and recent adjustments to protect residential and commercial character. Recognizing the limitations of a piecemeal approach, the Town Board committed to creating a formal plan that provides a cohesive framework that will help guide growth and preservation.

Developed through a robust community engagement process, the 2025 Comprehensive Plan reflects residents' priorities of preventing sprawl, supporting small businesses, preserving open space and farmland, maintaining affordability, and preparing for future challenges such as infrastructure needs and climate change. By establishing a shared vision and clear strategies, the plan provides Aurora with the framework to proactively guide development, preserve its unique character, and ensure a vibrant, resilient future for the next 10 to 20 years.

How to Use This Plan

Comprehensive plans are intended to remain flexible and representative of the community's changing needs, conditions, and emerging trends. The community and its leaders should be consistently reviewing the Plan's vision, goals, and recommendations when making decisions on major changes to Aurora. However, the community should also be reviewing and updating the plan as necessary, so it remains consistent with the changes occurring in the community.

This plan should be utilized to evaluate the merit of capital projects, development proposals, and regulatory changes such as updates to the zoning code. While some proposed projects and/or initiatives may align with the goals and objectives set forth in the plan, others may not and will require additional scrutiny. The guiding vision statement, goals, and recommendations in this plan do not cover every possible opportunity, issue, or decision the Town may have to make, but are meant as tools that will assist with the local decision-making process and are intended to serve as the foundation for the Town of Aurora.

1. Aurora's Community Profile

This section provides a snapshot of Aurora's current conditions—covering demographics, housing, land use, natural resources, the economy, and more—to establish a clear baseline for planning. The Town should use the information included in this section as both a foundation for decision-making and a benchmark to track progress and adapt strategies over time.

2. Community Engagement Process

This section documents how residents' voices shaped the plan through surveys, workshops, and other outreach, ensuring that the Vision, Goals, and Recommendations reflect community priorities. By grounding the plan in public input, recommendations made in the plan are more likely to gain support and succeed in guiding Aurora's future. The Town should refer back to this section when seeking to better understand the community's perspective on a given issue, opportunity, or potential project.

3. Policy Framework

This section outlines the plan's Vision, Goals, and Recommendations, establishing a clear framework to guide land use, development, infrastructure, and preservation decisions. The Town should use it as the roadmap for aligning policies, zoning updates, and investments with the community's long-term priorities.

4. Action Plan

This section details how the Town will put the plan's recommendations into action by identifying time frames, responsibilities, and potential funding sources. It should be used as a working guide to prioritize investments, track progress, and ensure the plan remains a practical tool for shaping Aurora's future.



COMMUNITY PROFILE

The following chapter summarizes the existing conditions and current trends in the Town of Aurora. This inventory and analysis will provide the community with baseline data on important demographics, economic trends, land uses, housing, natural resources, and much more in and around the Town. The knowledge gained from this community profile helped define the goals and informed the recommendations needed to meet the community's vision. This information will also serve as a benchmark that residents can use to measure progress and analyze changes in their community over time.

TOWN HISTORY & INTRODUCTION

A Brief History of Aurora

The history of the Town of Aurora extends back thousands of years, well before the arrival of the Seneca Nation. One of the Town's most significant prehistoric sites is the Sinking Ponds Wildlife Sanctuary, located within the Village of East Aurora. Named for the 26 sunken footbridges that connected Elma to Aurora, the sanctuary was inhabited during the Archaic era by the Meadowwood people. Archaeological excavations in the 1960s and 2010s uncovered tools, bowls, and settlement foundations dating back to 4,000–1,000 BCE.

The Town of Aurora was officially established in 1818 after separating from the Town of Willink, though Revolutionary War veteran Joel Adams had already settled there in 1804. The Town includes five hamlets—Jewettville, Griffins Mills, West Falls, Blakeley, and South Wales—along with the Village of East Aurora. These communities developed along both branches of the Cazenovia Creek, utilizing its hydropower for mills that supported economic growth. Jewettville's brickyards even supplied materials for Buffalo's streets until the last kilns were removed in 1977.

The Hamlet of Griffins Mills played a key role in the area's abolitionist movement, with Quakers from Orchard Park, Mennonites, and other activists using the Griffins Mills Presbyterian Church (built in 1812) as a meeting place and nearby homes as Underground Railroad stations. West Falls, originally called Crockershire, and later Florence, was founded in 1849 with the establishment of a post office. The hamlet, named after waterfalls on Cazenovia Creek, was a vital stop on the plank road trade route connecting Springville and Buffalo. It once hosted a passenger and freight station, four hotels, general stores, and taverns. Blakeley and South Wales, though smaller, contributed to the Town's rural economy and community life, the latter of which is home to the Grow School – a renowned college prep boarding school for students with language-based learning disabilities.

By the late 19th century, Aurora was known as the "horse racing capital of the world" due to breeding programs at Hamlin and Jewett Farms. The Jewett Stock Farm featured the world's only mile-long covered racetrack until its dismantling in 1917. Today, Strawberry Banks Farm continues the Town's equestrian tradition.

Despite its rural nature, Aurora has a rich legacy. It contains both eligible historic districts and sites, along with several National Register-listed structures in the Village, including the Roycroft Campus, a landmark of the Arts and Crafts movement. As Aurora looks to the future, it can leverage its history for growth. Revitalizing its hamlets can support small businesses, tourism, and residents' daily needs; Griffins Mills' social justice legacy can inspire community engagement; and West Falls' trade history highlights the value of strong infrastructure. By preserving its heritage while fostering sustainable growth, Aurora can balance progress with its deep-rooted past, ensuring a vibrant and resilient future.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Town of Aurora is in the Western New York (WNY) region, centrally located within Erie County, and the broader Buffalo-Niagara Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). While the Town is characterized by its rural charm and close-knit community, it also benefits from convenient access to major regional amenities and employment centers. A defining feature of Aurora is the Village of East Aurora, which serves as both the cultural and economic hub of the Town. The Village is renowned for its historical significance as the cornerstone of the American Arts and Crafts movement, particularly through the Roycroft Campus, which continues to attract visitors and artisans from across the region.

Aurora is well-connected through several key transportation corridors, including U.S. Route 20A, New York State Route 240, and the Route 400 expressway. These thoroughfares facilitate easy travel to the City of Buffalo and other neighboring communities, making Aurora an attractive residential option for commuters. The Town also benefits from its proximity to regional transportation hubs such as the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport and the Buffalo Exchange Street & Depew Amtrak Stations, further enhancing connectivity to both national and international destinations. Aurora's strategic location within the Buffalo-Niagara MSA makes it an ideal bedroom community for those who work in larger municipalities but seek a quieter, more rural environment. The Town offers a balance between accessibility and tranquility, providing residents with a high quality of life while maintaining strong ties to the economic and cultural opportunities of the greater Buffalo region.



REVIEW OF PAST PLANNING, POLICY ACTIONS & INITIATIVES

Regional Comprehensive Plan Towns of Aurora, Elma, Holland, and Wales and the Village of East Aurora

The Town of Aurora prepared its first comprehensive plan in 1981 and last completed a comprehensive plan in 2004 as part of the Regional Comprehensive Plan for the Towns of Aurora, Elma, Holland, and Wales and the Village of East Aurora. The plan was funded by Erie County as part of a larger program seeking to encourage communities to work in a regional and cooperative manner to capitalize on opportunities and jointly resolve common issues. Although never officially adopted, the plan has provided the Town with an extensive inventory of existing conditions in the town along with various recommendations that have helped guide the Town with their planning, policy actions, and initiatives since. In the plan, six overarching goals and their preceding strategies were identified for the Town of Aurora. Some key strategies for each of the goals from this previous plan to consider today include:

1. Preserve community character
    - Preserve the rural character of the Town through proper planning and development.
    - Preserve and enhance existing cultural resources, including the library facilities.
    - Preserve historic resources and promote architectural development styles consistent with the character of these resources and the area.

2. Properly manage future growth and development
    - Encourage the use of alternative development techniques that manage the density and adverse impacts of residential development, and control sprawl.
    - Provide adequate and accessible locations for affordable housing within the overall pattern of development, especially for the elderly.
    - Properly plan development to preserve areas identified as important open space, stream corridors, wildlife habitat and corridors, and farmland.
    - Allow for the provision of adequate infrastructure that addresses public needs without encouraging excessive growth.
    - Promote the development of a diversity of housing alternatives to accommodate all age groups and incomes.

3. Preserve and promote recreational opportunities
    - Improve and maintain existing recreational facilities and increase opportunities for diverse recreational activity in the Town.
    - Promote bike paths and interconnections between recreational facilities within the Town and the region.
    - Provide increased and easily accessible recreational opportunities to address the needs of the Town's youth.

4. Provide for economic development
    - Designate sufficient areas to allow for a measured amount of commercial and industrial growth, at an appropriate size and scale, that is compatible with the character of the surrounding community.
    - Effectively plan for new commercial business in a manner that promotes new business but manages its growth to prevent sprawl.
    - Provide for a diverse economy that offers opportunities to workers of all skills.
    - Encourage and promote opportunities for start-up businesses and local entrepreneurial efforts.

5. Protect environmental resources
    - Preserve natural habitat areas to maintain biological diversity and properly manage wildlife populations.
    - Protect groundwater aquifers, surface waters, and watershed lands such as wetlands and significant upland areas that recharge potable water sources.
    - Protect groundwater resources from the impacts of failing septic systems.
    - Preserve and protect important scenic viewsheds and resources.
    - Encourage the use of and provide incentives for alternative energy sources to conserve natural resources.

6. Maintain and enhance the existing transportation system
    - Provide for a more pedestrian friendly transportation system.
    - Promote safe roads for automobile travel with pathways to effectively accommodate bicycles, horses and pedestrians.
    - Increase land use density around shopping and activity centers to promote pedestrian activity and alleviate traffic congestion.

Other Planning Initiatives

Since the Town's participation in the 2004 Regional Plan, several other planning projects and initiatives have taken place at the local, county, and regional level. These previous plans were taken into consideration and helped inform the development of this comprehensive plan update.

2010

Town of Aurora Open Space Plan

In 2007, the Aurora Town Board formed the Aurora Open Space Committee with the mission of defining, inventorying, and evaluating the Town's priority open space resources. With the goal of preserving an additional 1,500 acres of open space land in the Town from development, the committee published the Town of Aurora Open Space Plan in 2010. Components of the Open Space Plan included informing the public about the importance of open space and how it can be preserved, identifying parcels with high open space value, developing a program for conservation measures, and identifying sources of funding for preservation. Overall, the plan identified nine distinct groupings of parcels covering approximately 4,000 acres of land for conservation.

2019

Erie County Parks Master Plan Update

First completed in 2003, the Erie County Parks Master Plan 2019 update sought to identify ways to preserve, enhance, and improve the nearly 10,000-acre park system the County manages. The Town of Aurora is home to one of the County's "heritage parks', the 457-acre multi-purpose Emery Park. The plan called out three overarching park priorities: (1) preserve and enhance heritage areas and special park features, (2) reduce lawn mowing, and (3) relocate the disc golf holes to prevent damage to natural features. To accomplish these three priorities, the plan recommends 91 actions items for Emery Park.

2021

Southern Tier Trail Feasibility Study

In 2021, several trail and mobility advocacy groups partnered together to study the feasibility of constructing the 80-mile Southern Tier Trail which would connect residents across 20 cities, towns, and villages throughout Erie and Cattaraugus County together, providing safe and convenient access to recreational opportunities. The process included an inventory of existing conditions, community engagement to gather input on how the trail would be best used, and ultimately a list of 23 project recommendations which would collectively see the full 80-mile trail completed. Two project recommendations were identified in the Town of Aurora, the West Falls Railroad Corridor and the West Falls to Colden Railroad Corridor. The West Falls Railroad Corridor would span 3.1 miles connecting the Hamlet of West Falls northward to the already active Orchard Park Corridor. The West Falls to Colden Corridor would span 4 miles and would connect the Hamlet of West Falls southward to the Town of Colden.

2022

Erie County Multi Hazard Mitigation Plan – Town of Aurora

An update to the County's original 2015 plan, the focus of the plan is to identify actions that would help reduce long-term risks caused by hazards or disasters such as flooding, earthquakes, or wildfires. Each participating jurisdiction was provided with a profile overviewing their community and the risks they face, along with a list of recommended actions they can take to mitigate those risks. Overall, two hazards were identified as high risk for Aurora, flooding and utility failure. To address these risks and others, four recommended actions were provided for the Town to undertake:

1. Conduct a vulnerability assessment for each school to determined improvements needed to mitigate future hazards.
2. Conduct a study to determine where a potable water facility could be built in the Town.
3. Install two generators at each emergency facility in the Town.
4. Work with the Count to conduct outreach to flood-prone properties in the Town.

2023

Town of Aurora Complete Streets Policy

Adopted in 2023, the objective of the policy is for the Town to ensure they are creating safe, accessible, and sustainable transportation networks that accommodate the needs of all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, farmers and other businesses. Inspired by New York State's 2011 Complete Streets Act which requires all federal and state funded transportation projects to design roadways for all users; the Town's policy also requires locally funded projects to do the same.

State of the Region: Western New York Strategic Plan

There are ten Regional Economic Development Councils (REDC) across New York State, each designed to empower local officials to address the most pertinent needs in their communities. The Town of Aurora falls within the Western New York (WNY) region, regional priorities identified in the WNY that should be considered with the growth of Aurora into the future include: (1) Catalyze Private Investment in Our



Walkable Commercial Corridors, (2) Support Revitalization of Community Anchors, Waterfront Areas, and Tourism Assets, (3) Invest in Infrastructure and Resources That Connect Our Region, and (4) Foster and Promote a Regional Culture of Entrepreneurship.

2025

New York Forward – West Fall Falls Strategic Investment Plan

In 2024, the Town of Aurora was awarded, on behalf of the Hamlet of West Falls, one of the two NY Forward (NYF) program grant awards for the Western New York REDC region. The $4.5 million NYF program was created with the intent of invigorating and enlivening downtown areas in New York's smaller and rural communities by funding public and private sector development and improvement projects. In 2025, New York State awarded seven projects in West Falls with portions of the $4.5 million award, including:

- Expand Programming Capacity of the West Falls Center for the Arts ($1,245,000)
- Expand Capacity at the Blueberry Treehouse Farm ($784,000)
- Transform Veterans Park, West Falls-Colden Library and West Falls Community Playground into Local Destinations ($758,000)
- Reinvent the West Falls Depot ($725,000)
- Building Access to West Falls by Converting a Rail Corridor into a Multi-Use Trail ($420,000)
- Preserve the Dog Bar ($392,000)
- Celebrate Local Flavor at the Florence Market ($176,000)

Erie County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan Update

The 2025 Erie County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan, an update to the 2012 plan, sets new priorities and goals for land use in Erie County and its agricultural industry. Emphasized in the plan are goals to protect and preserve existing farms and farmland through a variety of means, enable and support new farm and farm-related businesses, protecting the environment and mitigating the effects of climate change, improving the public's awareness of agriculture, and developing the agricultural economy at large.

Based on the Erie County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan, focus areas for the Town of Aurora include:

- Protecting and preserving high-value agricultural land, particularly by encouraging or allowing solar farms on non-agricultural parcels and by providing succession planning resources to existing farmers.
- Encourage agricultural parcel owners to participate in the Agricultural District program.
- Review zoning codes and building codes to address farm friendliness, such as policies regarding standard farm practices, on-farm businesses, additional (non-farm) businesses on agricultural parcels, etc.

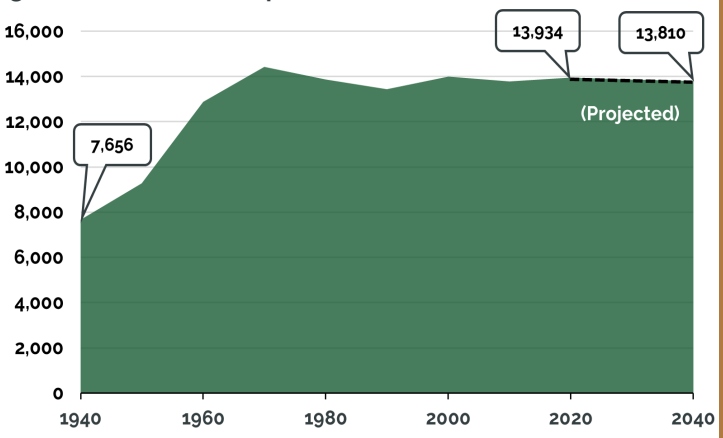
KEY DEMOGRAPHICS & TRENDS

The following Section is an overview of demographic trends in the Town of Aurora. To assist in the evaluation and the understanding of current issues, comparisons are made to the Towns of Orchard Park and Concord, as well as the entirety of Erie County. Orchard Park was selected as a comparison community as it is a neighboring Southtown community to Aurora which also includes a village. However, alternative to Aurora, Orchard Park has embraced sewer expansions and strip commercial development. The Town of Orchard Park experienced much of their population growth during the second half of the 20th century as many households at the time left the City Buffalo, following the national trend of suburbanization. The Town of Concord was also selected as a comparison community as it is also an Erie County Southtown with a village within it; however, its rate of population growth and rural/agricultural setting more closely align with the Town of Aurora.

Throughout this section, Community, County, and State data was sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census, American Community Survey (ACS), IMPLAN, Envision Tomorrow, data. NYSED, NYSDOL, and Cornell's Program on Applied Demographics (PAD); In some instances, there are slight discrepancies in dataset years between areas of investigation. The closest years are provided for comparison purposes. While conclusions drawn from this dataset should take into consideration data collection methods, these data sources are the most current and accurate statistics available.



Fig. 1: Town of Aurora Population Trends



Population Trends

As of 2020, the estimated population for the Town of Aurora was 13,934, this includes the Village of East Aurora (5,998). Historically, from 1900 to 1970, the Town experienced an increase of 10% or more every decade with the greatest shift in population occurring from 1950 (9,271) to 1960 (12,888). During this time the Town saw a 39% population increase. Since 2000, the population of the Town has remained essentially the same. So, while the Town is certainly not growing like it was throughout the 20th century, it is not experiencing a decline in its overall population either.

Across Erie County, the population was 954,236 as of 2020 and experienced a population increase of 0.4% since 2000. During this time, the Town of Concord saw a -2.4% decline while the Town of Orchard Park saw a 7.4% increase. Projecting out to 2040, the County is expected to see a decline of 0.9%. Similar trends are expected for Aurora (-1.0%) and Orchard Park (-1.2%) while Concord is expected to see an increase (+2.4%).

Location	2000	2010	2020	% Change '00-'20	Projected % Change '20-'40	Projected Population 2040
Town of Aurora	13,996	13,782	13,943	-0.6%	-1.0%	13,810
Town of Concord	8,518	8,494	8,316	-2.4%	2.4%	8,513
Town of Orchard Park	27,637	29,054	29,686	7.4%	-1.2%	29,323
Erie County	950,265	919,040	954,236	0.4%	-0.9%	945,891

Age Trends

While the population size of Aurora is not changing significantly, its median age is. As of 2022, the median age of an Aurora resident is 50.3, an increase of 22% since 2000. Comparatively, the median age across Erie County is 40 while the median ages for the Towns of Orchard Park and Concord are 47.2 and 46.9 respectively.

The 45-64 age group is the largest age group in Aurora, making up 33.8% of the total population. However, following the Town's median age trends, the over 65 age group is expected to become the largest age group by 2028 (27.8%). By 2028, the over 65 age group is expected to see a 55.3% increase in their population compared to 2010 proportions. The 20-34 age group is expected to see a 33.8% increase during this time too; however, it will only represent 14.6% of the total population.

Aurora's median age is rising faster than the rest of the County's, yet the comparison communities (Orchard Park & Concord) have similar shares of residents under 18 and over 65. Taken altogether, Aurora is an aging community, albeit not significantly more than other southtown communities in Erie County. Moving forward, the Town should plan to accommodate its aging population as the 65+ age group will be the dominant population by 2028. The Town must also plan to welcome new young families to help offset the population's aging.

Location	Under 18/% Pop.	Under 65/% Pop.	Median Age
Town of Aurora	2,911/21%	3,190/23%	50.3
Town of Concord	5,978/20.1%	7,199/24.3%	47.2
Town of Orchard Park	1,718/20.7%	1,785/21.5%	46.9
Erie County	189,431/19.9%	188,291/19.7%	40.0

Fig. 2: Town of Aurora Age Trends

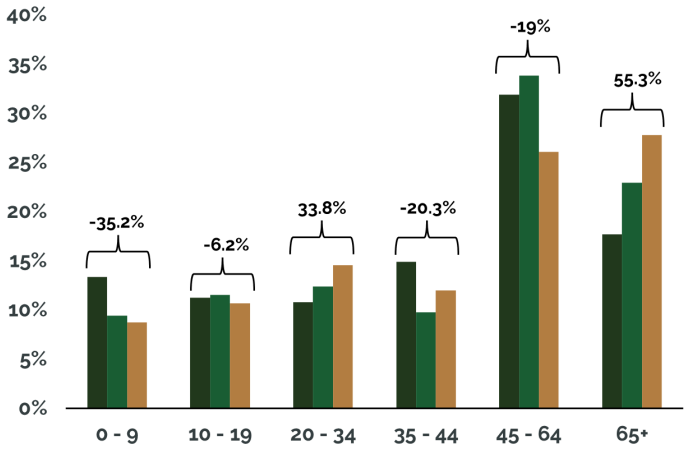
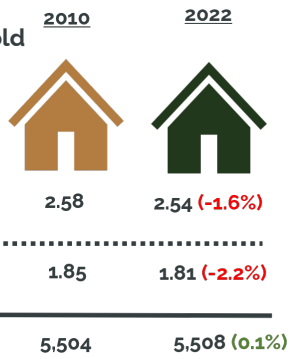


Fig. 3: Town of Aurora Household Trends



Household Composition

There are an estimated 5,508 households in the Town of Aurora, meaning the number of households have remained effectively the same since 2010 (5,504). While the number of households has remained the same, the average size of both owner- and renter-occupied households has decreased.

The household composition of Aurora differs when compared to the rest of Erie County. While married-couple households are the dominate household type throughout all comparison communities, the percentage of married-couple households in Aurora is much higher than all other communities. Conversely, the proportion of single-parent households in Aurora is also significantly greater than the proportion in Concord and Orchard Park. Coupled with the fact that only 26.3% of households in Aurora have a child under 18, it suggests that a significant number of married-couple households are empty-nesters. As such, there is likely demand for day cares and other child-care related services to assist the 733 single-parent households in the Town.

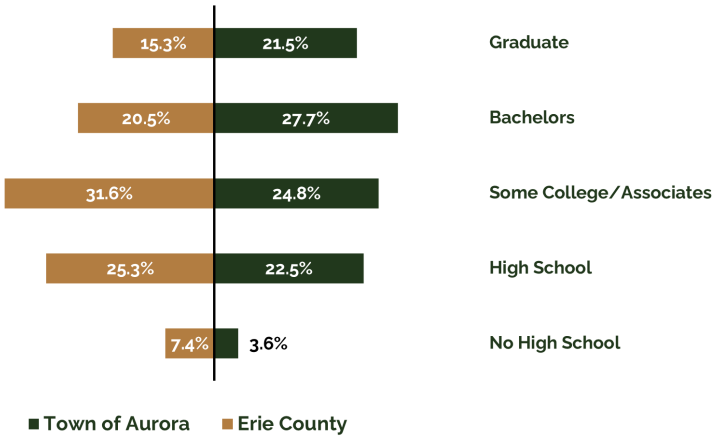
Household Type	Town of Aurora		Town of Orchard Park		Town of Concord		Erie County	
Married-Couple	3,322	60.3%	6,958	55.0%	2,041	55.3%	165,430	40.3%
Single-Parent	733	13.3%	1,200	9.5%	222	6.0%	70,141	17.1%
Non-Family Household	143	2.6%	829	6.5%	173	4.7%	31,694	7.7%
Single Household	1,310	23.8%	3,670	29.0%	1,254	34.0%	143,175	34.9%
TOTAL	5,508	100%	12,657	100%	3,690	55.3%	410,440	100%
Households with Children Under 18	1,451	26.3%	3,082	24.4%	938	25.4%	101,900	24.8%

Education & Race

Nearly 50% of Aurora residents over the age of 18 have a bachelor's or advanced degree, compared to just 35.8% of the entire Erie County population. Furthermore, just 3.6% of adult Aurorans have not completed high school. Compared to 7.4% of residents across all of Erie County.

Examining school enrollments, students in the Town of Aurora area primarily attend school at the East Aurora Union Free School District (EAUFSD). The EAUFSD covers the entirety of East Aurora, the majority of Aurora, and portions of the Towns of Colden and Elma. Other portions of the Town of Aurora fall within the Iroquois, Holland, Orchard Park, and Springville-Griffith School Districts. As of the 2024 school year, there are 1,669 students across three schools in the East Aurora School District. Since the 2013 school year, the district's overall student population has decreased by 8.2% (1,818 in 2013). While

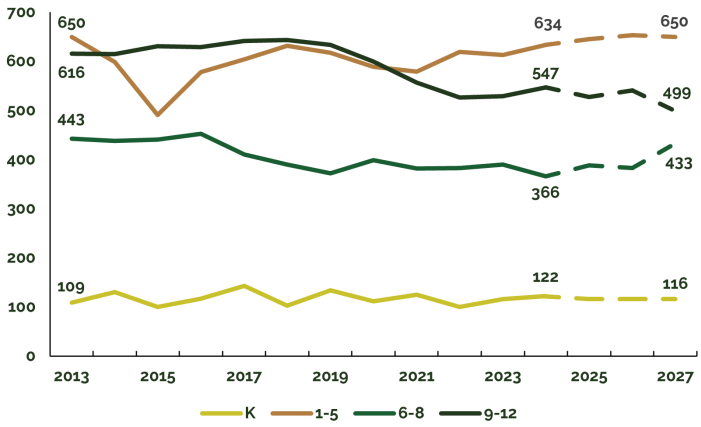
Fig. 4: Town of Aurora Education Trends



year over year student populations fluctuated between -6.7% and +6.9%, the average change in the student population each year for the last decade was -0.7%. The total number of kindergarten students in the district is 11.9% larger today than it was 10 years ago, however, the total number of 6th - 8th and 9th – 12th graders have both decreased by more than 10%. The EAUFSD's latest annual student enrollment report projects a reversal of the school district's declining population trends with an increased student enrollment of 1,698 by the 2027/2028 school year. The report anticipates kindergarten enrollment to decline by 4.9% and 9th-12th grade enrollment to decline by 8.8% by 2027/2028. However, 6th-8th grade enrollment and 1st-5th grade enrollment are projected to increase by 18.3% and 2.5% respectively, over the same period.

In addition to the school district, there are six private schools in the Village of East Aurora and Town of Aurora. These include The Aurora Waldorf School, The Grow School, and the Guiding Earth Montessori School, East Aurora Montessori School, Mandala School, and the Immaculate Conception School. None of these private schools offer full K-12 education and instead specialize in specific student populations or methods of education.

Fig. 5: East Aurora School District Enrollment Rates



Grade	East Aurora School District		Aurora Waldorf School		The Grow School		Guiding Earth Montessori School		East Aurora Montessori School		Mandala School		Immaculate Conception School	
Pre-K	N/A	N/A	19	19.7%	0	0%	7	28%	28	87.5%	N/A	N/A	0	0%
K	116	6.1%	23	45.3%	0	0%	4	16%	4	12.5%	5	25%	11	7.5%
1-5	613	37.9%	53	18.8%	0	0%	14	56%	N/A	N/A	11	55%	80	55.2%
6-8	390	23.6%	22	0%	19	17.6%	0	0%	N/A	N/A	4	20%	54	37.3%
9-12	529	32.4%	0	16.2%	89	82.4%	0	0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0%
TOTAL	1,648		117		108		25		32		20		145	

The Town of Aurora lacks diversity, especially when compared to the rest of Erie County. According to the 2020 Decennial Census, 95.2% of the Town of Aurora identify as White. 3.1% identify as two or more races, and just 1.7% of the population collectively identify as Black (0.3%), American Indian (0.3%), Asian (0.6%), Pacific Islander (0.01%), or Other (0.5%).

Comparatively, across Erie County, 72.7% of the population identifies as White. Three other race groups have populations at or above 5%, including Black (14.1%), Asian (4.9%), and two or more races (5.4%). The County's racial diversity is likely due to the more urbanized areas such as the City of Buffalo and Lackawanna, as well suburban areas like Cheektowaga and Amherst.

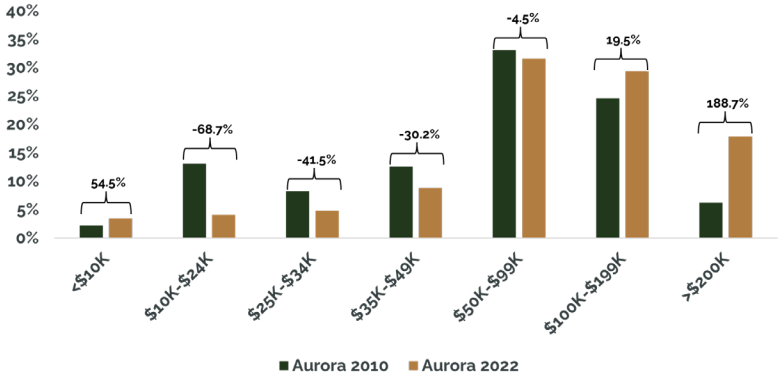
Race	Town of Aurora		Erie County	
White	13,274	95.2%	693,563	72.7%
Black	41	0.3%	134,795	14.1%
American Indian	35	0.3%	5,594	0.6%
Asian	82	0.6%	46,384	4.9%
Pacific Islander	1	0.01%	280	0.03%
Two+ Races	434	3.1%	51,816	5.4%
Other	76	0.5%	21,804	2.3%

Household Income & Employment
The median household income (MHI) for the Town of Aurora as of 2022 when adjusting for inflation is $93,537. When adjusting for inflation, the Town of Aurora has seen a 47.2% increase in their median household income (MHI) since 2000. During this time, the Town of Concord saw a similar 45.2% increase in their MHI. However, Concord still lags Aurora's MHI by more than $30,000. Erie County saw an 81.6% increase in their MHI but still lags Aurora by more than $20,000. Despite outpacing Erie County's MHI, Aurora still lags Orchard Park's MHI by over $7,000.

Examining Aurora's Median Household Income by income brackets, the greatest change in the number of households for each bracket was observed in the > $200K income bracket. In 2010, 6.2% of households in Aurora were making $200,000 or more. As of 2022, 17.9% of all households make over $200,000. Despite significant shifts in this income bracket, most households in Aurora still make between $50K-$99K (31.6%).

Location	2000 (IA)	2010 (IA)	$ Change '00-'22 (IA)	% Change '00-'22
Town of Aurora	$63,550	$66,009	$29,987	47.2%
Town of Orchard Park	$59,762	$75,158	$40,813	68.3%
Town of Concord	$40,891	$46,977	$18,469	45.2%
Erie County	$38,567	$46,816	$31,477	81.6%

Fig. 6. Town of Aurora Median Household Income Bracket Trends



Employment Trends

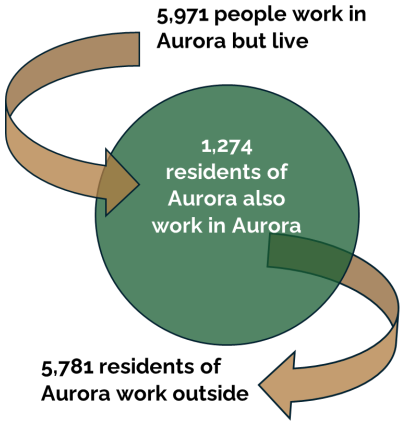
Employment Sectors
As of 2022, there are 6,935 employed residents in the Town of Aurora. The major employment sectors for residents include Education, Health & Social Services (32.6%), Manufacturing (12.6%), Professional & Administrative (9.8%), Arts, Entrainment & Food Services (9.24%), and Construction (8.9%).



Industry	2010		2022		% Change
	#	%	#	%	
Education, Health, & Social Services	1,795	26.4%	2,267	32.6%	26.3%
Manufacturing	1,138	16.7%	879	12.6%	-22.8%
Professional & Administrative	807	11.9%	682	9.8%	-15.5%
Arts, Entertainment, and Food Services	442	6.5%	641	9.2%	45%
Construction	426	6.3%	618	8.9%	45.1%
Retail Trade	478	7%	558	8%	16.7%
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	390	5.7%	434	6.2%	11.3%
Public Administration	181	2.7%	323	4.6%	78.5%
Other	418	6.2%	217	3.1%	-48.15
Wholesale Trade	204	3%	116	1.6%	-43.1%
Information	96	1.4%	104	1.5%	8.3%
Transportation and Warehousing	345	5.1%	93	1.3%	-43.1%
Agriculture	76	1.1%	3	0.04%	-96.1%
TOTAL	6,769	100%	6,935	100%	2.0%

Industry	2010 Median Wage (IA)	2022 Median Wage (IA)	% Change
Agriculture	$48,905	N/A	N/A
Construction	$73,824	$79,717	8.0%
Manufacturing	$75,750	$96,481	27.4%
Wholesale Trade	$66,890	$132,139	97.5%
Retail Trade	$58,391	$28,228	-51.7%
Transportation & Warehousing	$74,659	$69,002	-7.6%
Information	$55,699	$63,924	14.8%
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	$62,058	$109,967	77.2%
Professional & Administrative	$84,567	$87,571	3.6%
Education, Health & Social Services	$64,036	$66,343	3.6%
Arts, Entertainment, and Food Services	$9,712	$15,782	62.5%
Public Administration	$73,258	$67,278	-8.2%
Other	$30,290	$41,214	36.1%
Median Individual Income	**$63,585**	**$88,832**	**39.7%**

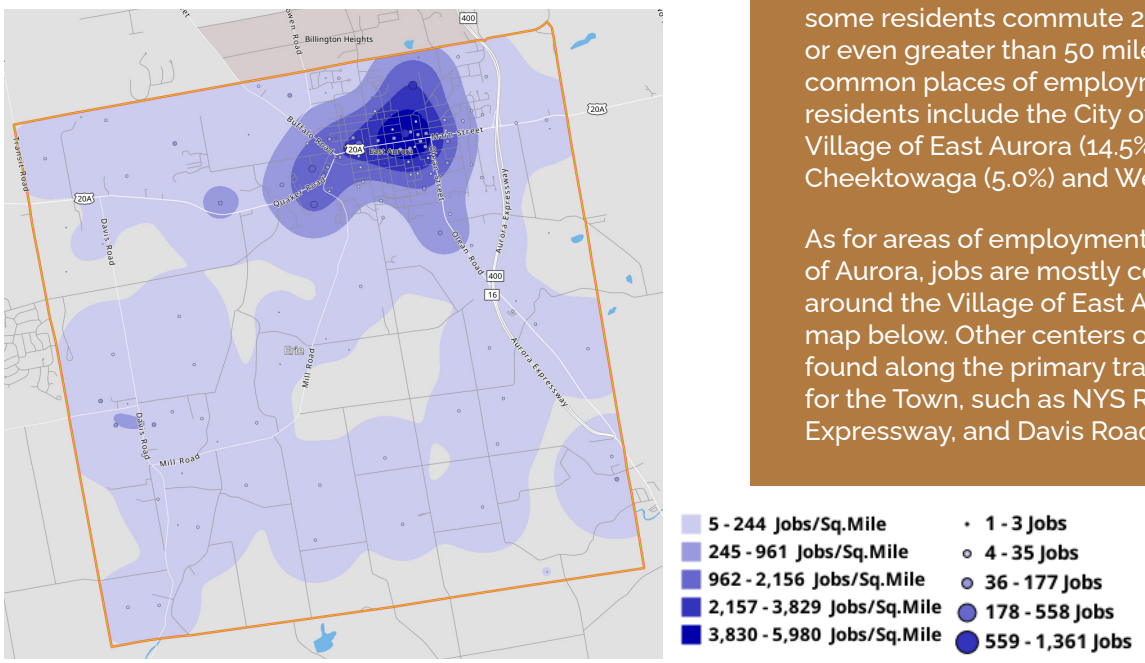
Industry Wages
The median yearly wage by industry in the Town of Aurora varies widely, ranging from $13,658 for accommodation & food service jobs to $132,139 for wholesale trade jobs. When adjusting for inflation, the median individual income in the Town of Aurora was $88,832 in 2022, which indicates that three industry sectors have a higher median wage than the town-wide median wage: Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade, and Finance, Insurance & Real Estate. Since 2010, the median individual has seen a 39.7% increase in their yearly income, only three industry sectors have seen a greater increase in their median wage: Wholesale Trade, Finance, Insurance & Real Estate, and Arts, Entertainment, and Food Services.



Commuting Patterns
Most of the employed residents of Aurora work outside of the Town. As of 2022, an estimated 5,781 residents leave the Town of Aurora to get to their place of employment, while just 1,274 residents both live and work inside the Town. An additional 5,971 workers who live outside of the Town of Aurora work within it. Since 2012, the number of residents who also work in Aurora has decreased by 6%. With only 18.1% of the resident workforce working within the community, the private automobile is the preferred method of commuting as 77.4% of residents drive alone and an additional 4.6% carpool. Only 3.0% of residents in Aurora walk, bike, or use rideshare to get to their place of employment while, an estimated 15% work from home.

The majority of the Town's workforce (82%) is employed outside of the Town, with an average commute time of 25 minutes. Most residents (50.1%) travel 10-25 miles to work, however, some residents commute 25-50 miles (4.8%) or even greater than 50 miles (8.3%). The most common places of employment for Aurora residents include the City of Buffalo (18.9%), the Village of East Aurora (14.5%), and the Towns of Cheektowaga (5.0%) and West Seneca (4.4%).

As for areas of employment within the Town of Aurora, jobs are mostly concentrated in and around the Village of East Aurora, as seen on the map below. Other centers of employment can be found along the primary transportation corridors for the Town, such as NYS Route 20A, the Aurora Expressway, and Davis Road.



Economic Projections
Since 2000, unemployment trends in Aurora and Erie County have closely mirrored those of New York State. Aside from the temporary spikes caused by the 2008 financial crisis and COVID-19 pandemic, all three areas have experienced declines in unemployment since 2012.

Since 2003, Erie County has experienced a slightly stronger increase in total business establishments, growing by 9.9% compared to the 7.0% growth across the WNY region. However, this growth was not uniform across all industries, as five of the 21 sectors in Erie County saw declines.

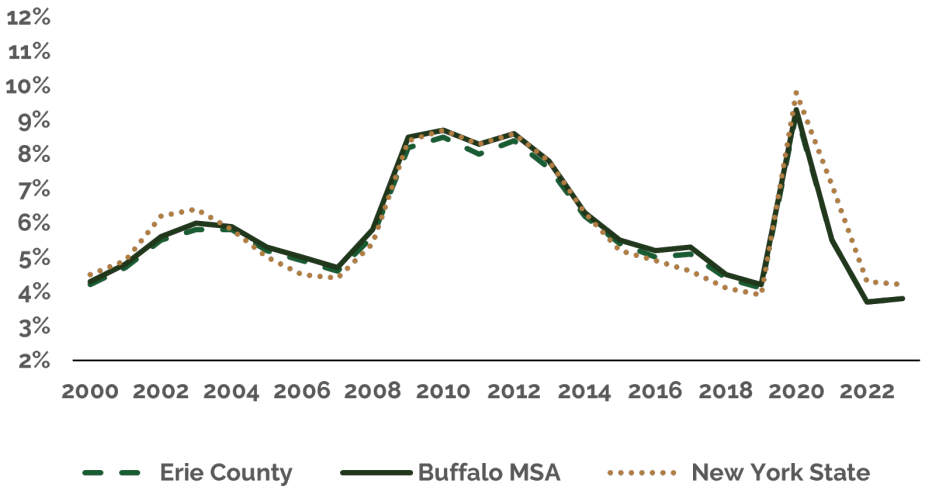
The most significant decreases in establishments occurred in Mining, Wholesale Trade, and Manufacturing. In contrast, notable gains were recorded in the Management of Companies, Transportation & Warehousing, Unclassified, Administrative & Waste Services, and Government sectors.

The employment projections by industry provide a clue into which type and the approximate square footage (sq ft) of additional building space that will be needed in the future. The annual gross demand in the Town of Aurora (Census Tracts 138, 139 & 140) is estimated to be over 30,022 sq ft across all industry sectors over the next decade.

- The Manufacturing sector is expected to grow the most, comprising 74% of the demand for the area.
- The Accommodation & Food Services, and Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation sectors will drive the next greatest annual gross demand for additional space: 7,664 sq ft and 3,354 sq ft respectively.
- Based on these employment statistics and knowledge of the regional and local economies, LaBella performed an economic and real estate market analysis for the following market sectors: office and industrial.

Commuting Characteristic	#	%
Mode of Transportation		
Car/Carpool	5,552	82%
Work From Home	1,016	15%
Walk, Bike & Rideshare	446	3%
Travel Distance		
<10 miles	2,447	36.8%
10-25 miles	3,333	50.1%
25-50 miles	316	4.8%
>50 miles	553	8.3%
Place of Employment		
City of Buffalo	1,255	18.9%
East Aurora	965	14.5%
Cheektowaga	335	5%
West Seneca	290	4.4%
Other	3,804	57%

Fig. 7: Unemployment Trends





Industry	Average sq ft per Employee	Employment			Gross Annual Demand (sq ft)
		2020	2030	Change	
Wholesale Trade	750	544	440	-104	**-7,793**
Educational Services	300	159	115	-44	**-1,315**
Government	300	63	49	-14	**-423**
Finance & Insurance	250	176	160	-16	**-405**
Other Services	300	149	137	-12	**-349**
Information	300	22	29	7	**207**
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	300	234	249	16	**472**
Health Care & Social Assistance	300	901	927	26	**786**
Construction	500	242	267	25	**1,256**
Transportation & Warehousing	500	12	44	31	**1,556**
Retail Trade	300	567	658	91	**2,724**
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	500	31	99	67	**3,354**
Accommodation & Food Services	300	651	906	255	**7,664**
Manufacturing	1,000	1,628	1,851	223	**22,287**
TOTAL		**5,379**	**5,931**	**+552**	**30,022**

Office Market

- The office market remains strong across the Western New York region but is slightly weaker within the Town of Aurora study area (Census Tracts 138, 139, and 140). Based on projected employment trends in office-oriented industries—Information, Finance & Insurance, Government, Other Services, Educational Services, Health Care & Social Assistance, and Professional & Business Services—LaBella estimates an annual demand of more than 1.96 million sq ft of office space.
- Within the Town of Aurora, office space demand is projected to decline by 1,027 sq ft annually. Over a 10-year period, this translates to a total demand for approximately 19.6 million sq ft of new office space across WNY, while the Town of Aurora study area is expected to see a net reduction of 10,275 sq ft.

Industrial Market

- Unlike the office market, demand for new industrial space remains strong in both the Western New York region and the Town of Aurora study area (Census Tracts 138, 139, and 140). The WNY region is projected to require approximately 1.25 million sq ft of industrial space annually, with an estimated demand of 17,306 sq ft per year within the Town of Aurora.
- Based on projected employment trends in industrial-focused sectors—Manufacturing, Construction, Transportation & Warehousing, and Wholesale Trade—LaBella estimates a total demand of 19.6 million additional sq ft of industrial space across WNY over the next decade. Of this, more than 173,000 sq ft would be needed in Aurora alone.

When selecting targeted industries for attraction and retention, key factors to consider include the number of jobs, total wages generated, and the average wage of workers. Economic development efforts should generally prioritize industries that create the most jobs and contribute significantly to overall economic growth. The following list serves as a catalog of potential industries, allowing economic development agencies to strategically determine their areas of focus.

Sub-Sector Industry	2023		
	Employment	Total Wages	Average Wage
Existing Strengths			
Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	40	$3,715,332	$93,882
Electrical Equipment and Appliances	145	$18,518,107	$127,346
Chemical Manufacturing	96	$12,166,454	$126,170
Beverage & Tobacco Product Manufacturing	41	$1,936,725	$47,578
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	112	$9,446,750	$84,455
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Instrument, Book, & Miscellaneous Retailers	93	$2,962,808	$31,801
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	150	$7,978,395	$53,230
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	119	$9,827,033	$82,349
Food Manufacturing	141	$9,738,183	$69,266
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	79	$5,952,655	$75,159
Performing Arts and Spectator Sports	12	$4,689,170	$389,412
Nonmetallic Metal Product Manufacturing	38	$3,166,313	$82,467
Accommodation	69	$2,382,898	$34,427
Furniture, Home Furnishings, Electronics, and Appliance Retailers	53	$2,705,982	$51,352
Primary Metal Manufacturing	28	$2,551,377	$91,819
Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing	12	$979,305	$84,622
Plastics & Rubber Products Manufacturing	32	$2,859,460	$90,527
Credit Intermediation & Related Activities	84	$8,956,453	$107,144
Building Material & Garden Supply stores	51	$2,642,143	$51,582
Paper Manufacturing	40	$2,982,709	$75,298
Emerging Strengths			
Construction of Buildings	2	$128,129	$64,064
Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation Industries	22	$669,904	$31,058
Real Estate	30	$2,257,079	$74,868
Motion Picture & Sound Recording Industries	2	$87,195	$43,598
Gasoline Stations and Fuel Dealers	2	$76,599	$38,299
Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	17	$1,729,472	$104,478
Personal and Laundry Services	43	$1,806,766	$42,085
Telecommunications	2	$180,178	$90,089
Petroleum & Coal Products Manufacturing	2	Insf. Data	Insf. Data
Rental and Leasing Services	12	$733,262	$62,561
Textile Product Mills	2	Insf. Data	Insf. Data
Agriculture & Forestry Support Activity	2	Insf. Data	Insf. Data
Museums, Parks, and Historical Sites	2	$96.885	$48,442
Utilities	2	Insf. Data	Insf. Data
Hospitals	2	Insf. Data	Insf. Data
Wood Product Manufacturing	2	$116,830	$58,415
Financial Investment & Related Activity	2	$300,825	$150,413
ISPs, Search Portals & Data Processing	1	Insf. Data	Insf. Data
Warehousing & Storage	1	Insf. Data	Insf. Data

Existing Strengths *– Industries that currently have a large employment share (relative to the U.S.) and have strong regional growth over time.*
Emerging Strengths *– Industries that currently have a relatively low employment share but have shown strong regional growth over time.*

KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

"Opportunities" represent existing strengths or assets in the Town that can be further leveraged and supports the potential for new development, business creation, or achieving the plan's vision statement and goals.

Growth Potential in Manufacturing & Industrial: The WNY region is projected to need 1.25 million sq ft of industrial space annually; Aurora alone could see demand for 17,306 sq ft per year. Leveraging available sites for light manufacturing or advanced industry can diversify the Town's economic base.

Rising Senior Demographics and Service Demand: With a projected 55.3% increase in the 65+ population by 2028, there is a market for health care, senior living, and support services—potentially creating local jobs and investment in these sectors.

Growing White Collar Workforce: Nearly half of Aurora's adult residents hold a bachelor's or advanced degree, compared to just 35.8% countywide. Additionally, 15% of Aurorans work remotely from home. This skilled talent pool can attract knowledge-based employers while the Towns rural character can be seen as attractive for remote workers.

Retaining & Attracting Young Families: Encouraging modest-density housing options (e.g., duplexes, townhomes, courtyard homes) around the village, near schools, and walkable hamlets can appeal to younger households, bolstering school enrollment and local services.

"Issues" represent either existing needs or gaps in the Town that limits future development or the Town from achieving the plan's vision statement and goals.

High Out-Commuting Rate: More than four in five employed residents leave Aurora for work. Such out-commuting can reduce local spending power during weekdays and limit employer incentives to locate within the Town.

Declining Younger Population & 'Brain Drain': Aurora's median age continues to rise, and the share of 20–34-year-olds is comparatively small (14.6% projected by 2028). Furthermore, while the EAUFSD expects modest improvement in some grades, overall enrollment has dropped 8.2% since 2013, echoing a slow decline in younger families. Without concerted efforts to attract or retain young adults, the Town risks a narrowing labor force and reduced family-oriented services.

Incomplete Support for Multi-Generational Living: While Aurora has rising senior demographics, younger families, and single-parent households, limited housing styles and intergenerational programming mean these groups often compete for resources and suitable living arrangements.

LAND USE & ZONING

Land use information and development regulations show how the community has developed historically, how land is being used today, and how it may be developed or redeveloped in the future. In the Town of Aurora, the land use patterns and zoning regulations depict a rural community with historically built-up hamlets, while the Village of East Aurora acts as the area's economic and cultural center.

EXISTING LAND USE

Residential

77.9% of all parcels in the Town of Aurora are classified as residential land use, making it the most common land use type in the Town. Most residential land uses are single-family homes (96.7%), followed by parcels where there is more than one primary residential dwelling (1.7%), duplexes and triplexes (1.5%), seasonal residences (0.02%), apartment buildings (0.01%), and one manufactured home park which is in the hamlet Blakeley. Residentially classified parcels vary widely by parcel size, with some parcels as small as a tenth of an acre, while others exceed 100 acres. Overall, residential land uses cover more land area than any other land use in the Town at 61.7% (12,857 acres).

Vacant

17.5% of all parcels in the Town of Aurora are classified as vacant land use, making it the second most common land use type in the Town. While vacant land is prevalent throughout the Town and some vacant parcels are the size of a typical single-family lot, most vacant parcels in the Town are either heavily forested or actively used as farmland. Vacant parcels with these characteristics help contribute to the rural nature of the Town and in preserving its natural assets. Development strategies for the Town's smaller vacant parcels should focus on those most immediately outside the Village of East Aurora, thus helping to reduce sprawl and the need for expanded water/sewer infrastructure. Overall, vacant land uses cover 24.4% of all landcover in the Town (5,072 acres).

Commercial

1.9% of all parcels in the Town of Aurora are classified as commercial land use. Commercial land uses are found scattered throughout the Town; however, these uses are more frequently found along NYS Routes 240, 20A, and 16. These routes are regional travel corridors, allowing these businesses to benefit from a local and regional customer base. Historically built-up places throughout the Town, such as the Hamlet of West Falls, also have pockets of commercial land uses. Commercially classified parcels vary widely by parcel size, with some parcels as small as a tenth of an acre where others exceed 61 acres, however, most do not exceed 7 acres in size. Overall, commercial land uses cover 1.4% of all landcover in the Town (297 acres).

Public Services

0.8% of all parcels in the Town of Aurora are classified as public service land uses. Generally, these parcels are used for energy transmission and railroad lines. The only active railroad line remaining in the Town is the Buffalo and Pittsburgh Railroad which is owned by railroad company Genesee & Wyoming. Overall, public service land uses cover 0.5% of all landcover in the Town (109 acres).

Community Services

0.7% of all parcels in the Town of Aurora are classified as community service land uses. These parcels are evenly distributed across the Town, however some of the larger community service parcels include the World Mission Society of God seminary (114.5 acres), the East Aurora School District High School (98.2 acres), and the Grow School (62.7 acres). Overall, community service land uses cover 2.0% of all landcover in the Town (417 acres). Properties classified as community services are generally exempt from real property taxes.

Agriculture

0.3% of all parcels in the Town of Aurora are classified as agricultural land uses. Historically, farming was an important component of the land use, character, and economy of Aurora; however, much of that land has been converted to residential uses over the past several decades. Prominent agricultural land uses still present in the Town include the Strawberry Banks Farm (equestrian breeding facility), several nurseries and garden centers, and a few remaining family farms. Overall, agricultural land uses cover 2.4% of all landcover in the Town (508 acres). The true total number of agricultural parcels and the total land area they cover cannot be determined as a significant portion of actively farmed land in the Town is classified as vacant.

Recreation & Entertainment

Four parcels, or 0.1% of all parcels in the Town of Aurora are classified as recreation & entertainment land uses. These land uses include the Bob-o-Link Golf Club, the East Aurora Country Club, The Blueberry Treehouse Farm, and the Quaker Aurora Tennis Club. Overall, recreation & entertainment land uses cover 0.5% of all land cover in the Town (106 acres). Parks classified as Parks and Forested Land uses make up 0.8% of all parcels and cover 7.0% of all land cover in the Town (1,458 acres). For information on parks and other parcels dedicated to recreational uses, refer to the Recreational, Historical, and Cultural Resources Chapter.

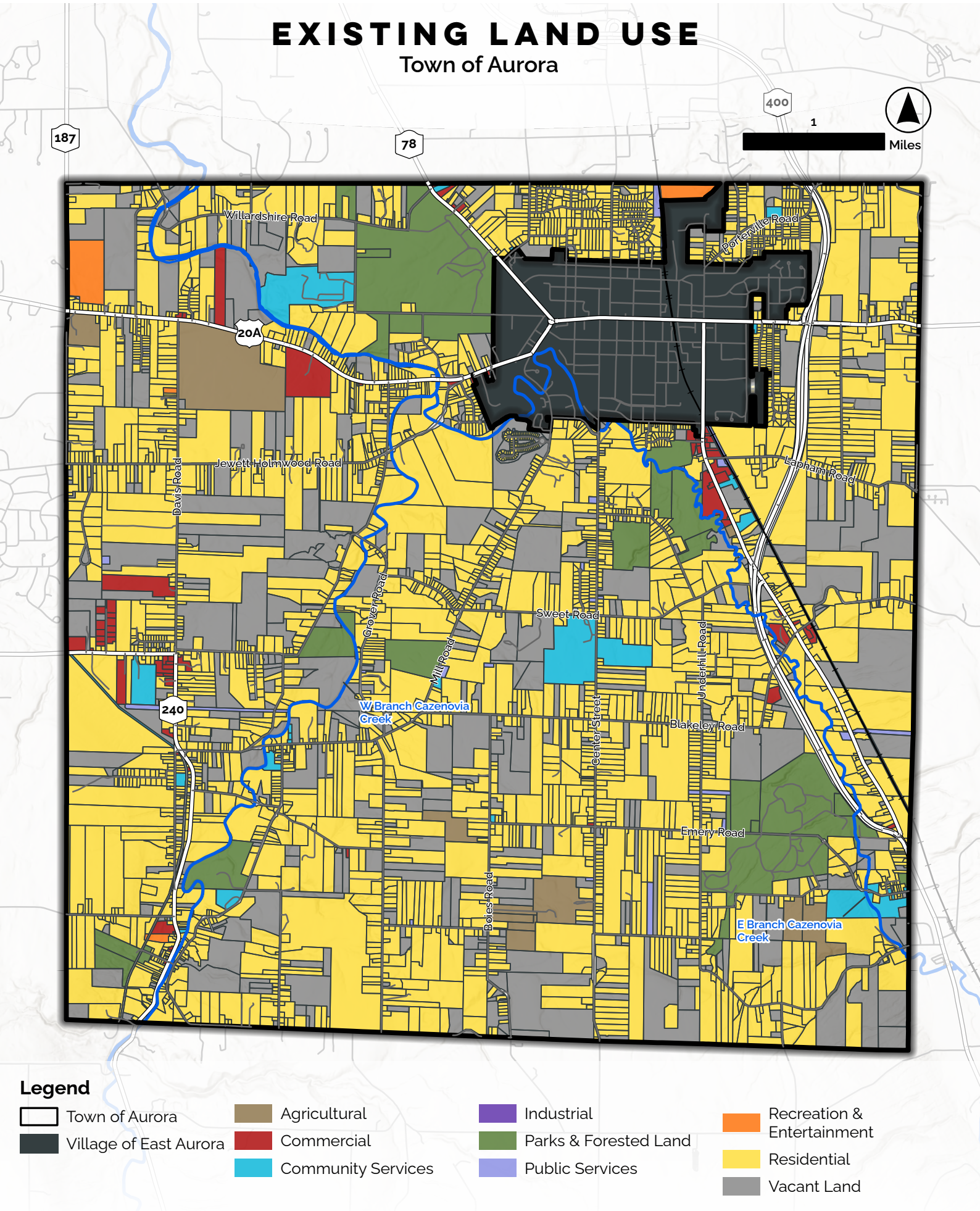
Industrial

There is only one parcel throughout the entirety of the Town of Aurora that is classified as an industrial land use, the IRR Supply Center, which is a distributor of parts for plumbing, heating, and cooling systems. Within the Town's only industrial zoning district along Ellicott Rd, near the intersection of Davis Rd, there are a number of industrial-like businesses such as Twinco, Team Fabrication, and a manufacturing plant for Moog. However, according to New York State tax parcel codes, these businesses are considered commercial as they are classified as storage and/or distribution facilities, or office buildings.



EXISTING LAND USE

Town of Aurora



Legend

- Town of Aurora
- Village of East Aurora
- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Community Services
- Industrial
- Parks & Forested Land
- Public Services
- Recreation & Entertainment
- Residential
- Vacant Land

ZONING DISTRICTS & REGULATIONS

Residential Districts

Agriculture District (A)

The agricultural district is the most expansive zoning district in the Town as it covers approximately 14,589 acres (67.1%) of land within the Town. The zoning district covers the majority of lands that are not immediately adjacent to a roadway. Permitted uses within this zoning district include one- and two-family dwellings, agricultural pursuits, and seasonal cottages. Regulations in this district cover maximum height, building size, minimum lot size, and setbacks.

Rural Residential District (RR)

The rural residential district is the second largest zoning district in the Town as it covers approximately 3,941 acres (18.1%) of land within the Town. Parcels regulated by this district are those up to 300' from the road rights-of-way in the Town. Permitted uses within this zoning district include one- and two- family dwellings, places of worship, public and private schools, parks, home occupations, day cares, and bed-and-breakfasts. Regulations in this district cover maximum height, building size, minimum lot size, and setbacks.

Single-Family Residential District (R-1)

The single-family residential district (R-1) covers approximately 2,174 acres (10%) of land within the Town. Parcels regulated by this zoning district are well represented throughout the Town, however, the largest expanse of this district is found along the Town's northern boundary, around the Village of East Aurora. Permitted uses within this zoning district include single-family dwellings, places of worship, schools, parks, home occupations, day cares, and bed-and-breakfasts. Regulations in this district cover maximum height, building size, minimum lot size, and setbacks.

Residential 2 District (R-2)

The residential 2 district (R-2) covers approximately 519 acres (2.4%) of land within the Town. Parcels regulated by this zoning district can be found around the Village of East Aurora, as well as the Town's more historically built-up areas, such as the Hamlets of West Falls and Jewetville. Permitted uses within this zoning district include any uses permitted in the R1 district, two-family dwellings, professional home offices, and dwellings for up to three temporary roomers. Regulations for this district cover maximum height, building size, minimum lot size, and setbacks.

Residential 3 District (R-3)

The residential 3 district (R-3) is the least expansive zoning district in the Town as it covers approximately 13.4 acres (0.1%) of land. Parcels regulated by this zoning district are found almost exclusively in the Hamlet of West Falls, aside from one small outpost north of the Village of East Aurora. Permitted uses within this zoning district include any uses permitted in the R2 district, multi-family dwellings (3+ units or townhouses), rooming houses, and nonprofit institutions with a special use permit. Regulations for this district cover maximum height, building size, minimum lot size, and setbacks.

Commercial Districts

Commercial 1 District (C-1)

The commercial 1 district (C-1) covers approximately 19 acres (0.1%) of land within the Town. Parcels regulated by this zoning district can be found in small groupings along the Town's major thoroughfares such as NYS 16, 78, and 240. The purpose of the zoning district is to provide areas or centers for shopping and service-oriented uses that are easily accessible to the neighborhoods which they serve and are not intended to draw customers from considerable distances. Permitted uses within this zoning district include professional offices, goods and retail services, and any uses permitted in the R-2 district. Various other commercial uses are allowed by a special use permit.

Commercial 2 District (C-2)

The commercial 2 district (B-2) covers approximately 169 acres (0.8%) of land within the Town. Like the C-1 district, parcels regulated by the C-2 district can be found along the Town's major thoroughfares. The purpose of the zoning district is to provide areas in the Town where business offices and businesses may be located which include activities that may draw clientele from all areas in the Town and from outside the Town. Permitted uses within this zoning district include those allowed by right and special use permit in the C-1 district as well as other commercial uses that have a higher intensity of patronage and generation of potential nuisances. Regulations for this district cover maximum height, building size, minimum lot size, and setbacks.

Commercial 3 District (C-3)

The commercial 3 district (C-3) covers approximately 332 acres (1.5%) of land within the Town. Parcels regulated by this zoning district are largely concentrated along the Town's border with the Town of Orchard Park, along NYS route 240. The purpose of the zoning district is to provide areas in the Town where businesses, medium-sized retail, and industrial and manufacturing facilities may be located, which include activities that may draw clientele from all areas in the Town and from outside the Town. Permitted uses within this zoning district include any uses permitted in the C-2 district along with manufacturing facilities, food processing, junk yards, and adult-use cannabis establishments.

Overlays

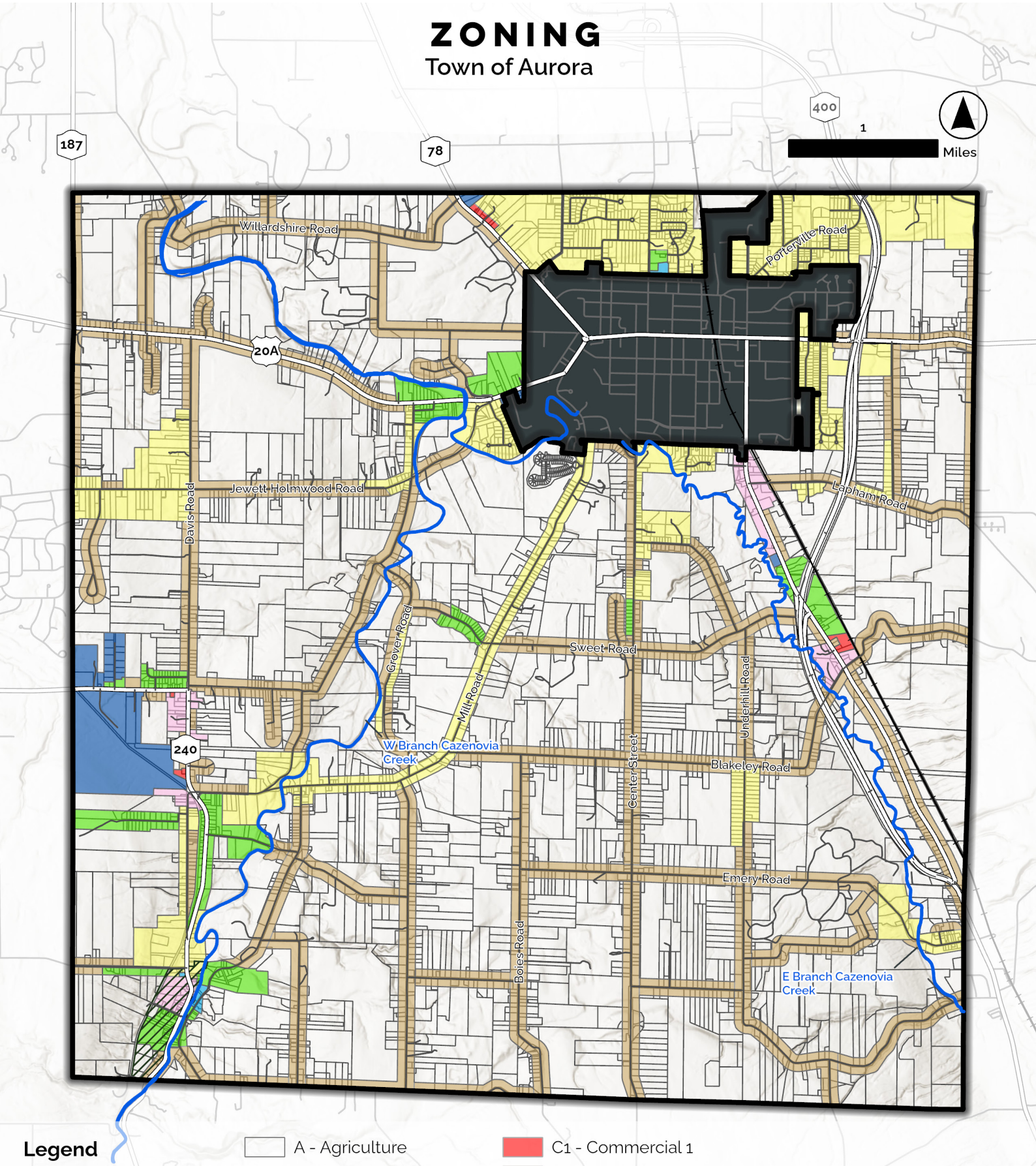
West Falls Hamlet Overlay

Recognizing that the Hamlet of West Falls is an existing built-up area consisting of mixed-uses at a higher density than the rest of the town, the Town of Aurora's zoning ordinance includes a zoning overlay for the hamlet with the intent to preserve the character and quality of the area while encouraging service-oriented uses focused on meeting the needs of customers within West Falls. The overlay district covers properties contiguous to Bridge St and Route 240 from the southern border of the Town of Aurora to Behm Road. Overall, approximately 119 acres (0.5%) of land within the Town falls within the overlay district.

The overarching objectives the overlay are: (1) emphasizing redevelopment of existing properties, (2) permitting the conversion of residential structures to office and commercial space, (3) focusing projects at the pedestrian scale, (4) citing parking to the side or rear of buildings, (5) buffering development that adjoins sensitive land uses, (6) architectural standards that improve the image of the area, and (7) the prohibition of franchise architecture. All uses permitted within the overlay are the same as those of the underlying zoning district. In addition to the regulations of the underlying zoning district, additional regulations include architectural standards, building standards, and landscaping standards.



ZONING
Town of Aurora



Legend

- Town of Aurora
- Village of East Aurora
- A - Agriculture
- R1 - Single-Family Residential
- R2 - Residential 2
- R3 - Residential 3
- RR - Rural Residential
- C1 - Commercial 1
- C2 - Commercial 2
- C3 - Commercial 3
- West Falls Hamlet Overlay District

LAND UTILIZATION BY ZONING DISTRICT

To determine how effective the Town's zoning regulations are at producing the desired land uses within each zoning district, an analysis was conducted to determine what types of land uses fall within each zoning district and how frequently they occur.

Based on the analysis of land use distribution, it is not surprising that single-family residential is the most common land use across nearly all zoning districts, even for residential zoning districts whose intentions are to allow higher density residential uses. For instance, the R-2 zoning district was established to allow for single-family and two-family housing, however, two-family housing only makes up 2.6% of all residential land uses in the district. Similarly, the R-3 district is intended to allow multi-family housing, however, only 7.1% of housing types in the district are multi-family and an additional 7.1% are two-family homes.

Another misalignment between the Town's zoning districts and land use distribution is within their C-3 district. The purpose of the zoning district is to provide areas in the Town where businesses, medium-sized retail, and industrial and manufacturing facilities may be located. However, 0% of the land uses within the district are considered industrial land uses. Most businesses within this district include "Other storage, warehouse and distribution facilities".

Land Uses	Zoning Districts						
	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-R	C-1	C-2	C-3
Residential	74.7%	81.5%	82.4%	66.5%	56.3%	39.8%	11.8%
Single-Family	98.6%	96.7%	85.7%	98.4%	88.9%	82.2%	50.0%
Two-Family	0.4%	2.6%	7.1%	1.6%	11.1%	13.3%	50.0%
Multi-Family	0.5%	0.7%	7.1%	0.1%	0.0%	4.4%	0.0%
Commercial	0.3%	0.9%	5.9%	1.7%	18.8%	34.5%	52.9%
Community Services	0.9%	0.9%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	1.8%	8.8%
Public Services	0.5%	0.3%	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%	0.9%	2.9%
Industrial	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	0.9%	0.0%
Parks & Forest	0.75	1.2%	0.0%	2.3%	0.0%	2.7%	0.0%
Rec & Entertainment	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%
Vacant Land	22.8%	15.2%	11.8%	26.1%	18.8%	18.6%	20.6%
Agricultural	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%

Note: Land Use utilization could not be determined for the Agricultural District as this district is not bound by parcel lines and overlaps with parcels that are included in several other districts.

WHAT WE HEARD

Throughout the planning process, residents and stakeholders of Aurora were continuously engaged to ensure the plan reflects their desires and vision for the community. Engagement opportunities included a public survey, stakeholder interviews and focus groups, and two public workshops. Regarding land use and zoning, Community members strongly valued Aurora's rural character and voiced a clear preference for preserving open space, managing growth carefully, and updating zoning to reflect today's housing and business needs.

- **Preserve Rural Character and Open Space:** Residents support protecting farmland, forests, and scenic landscapes. Conservation and open space were the top land use priorities in the public survey.
- **Limit and Focus Development:** Most respondents want to limit new development entirely or direct it to specific locations, such as near the Village of East Aurora or in existing developed areas (i.e. hamlet of West Falls). Infill development and reuse of vacant parcels were preferred over expanding into rural or natural areas
- **Modernize Zoning:** Many residents and stakeholders called for updated zoning that supports small-scale, context-sensitive growth, allows accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and enables mixed-use development in hamlets.
- **Infrastructure & Environmental Concerns:** Residents stressed that future development should align with existing infrastructure to avoid costly expansions. Concerns included increased traffic, loss of green space, and stormwater impacts.
- **Support Hamlet-Scale Growth:** West Falls and other hamlets were identified as appropriate places for modest, walkable development that respects their historic scale and character.

KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

"Opportunities" represent existing strengths or assets in the Town that can be further leveraged and supports the potential for new development, business creation, or achieving the plan's vision statement and goals.

West Falls Hamlet Overlay District Encourages Thoughtful Growth: The West Falls Hamlet Overlay offers a strong framework for maintaining historical character while promoting mixed-use development in a walkable environment. This approach supports small businesses and adaptive reuse of buildings. Similar overlays could be considered for other Hamlets and historically built-up areas in the Town.

Potential for Increased Housing Diversity in Higher-Density Residential Zones: The R-2 and R-3 zoning districts were intended to support a mix of housing types, but single-family homes dominate. Encouraging duplexes, triplexes, and multi-family housing through zoning adjustments or incentives could provide more affordable housing options while accommodating changing demographics.

C-3 Zoning District as an Underutilized Asset for Economic Growth: The Town's C-3 zoning district covers 332 acres, yet there are no industrial land uses within it. This presents an opportunity to attract targeted industries such as light manufacturing, technology, or green energy businesses, which could diversify the local economy and provide new job opportunities.

"Issues" represent either existing needs or gaps in the Town that limits to future development or the Town from achieving the plan's vision statement and goals.

Infrastructure Limitations for Future Growth: Expanding residential and commercial development could require significant investment in infrastructure, including water, sewer, and roads. The Town's current rural land use pattern makes infrastructure expansion costly, so strategic infill development where infrastructure already exists should be prioritized to maximize efficiency and minimize costs.

Traffic and Transportation Challenges Along Major Corridors: With commercial uses concentrated along NYS Routes 240, 20A, and 16, there is potential for congestion and safety concerns, particularly if development increases. A lack of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure along these corridors' further limits mobility and access.

HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

A comprehensive assessment of local housing conditions is crucial for understanding how current residents live and for identifying strategies to attract new residents to the Town of Aurora. Ensuring that the town remains accessible and appealing to a diverse population is key to its long-term vitality. This section examines Aurora's housing landscape, including the age of its housing stock, housing types, tenure rates, and housing costs and affordability, as well as projections for future housing demand. To assist in the evaluation and the understanding of current issues, comparisons are made to the Towns of Orchard Park and Concord, as well as the entirety of Erie County.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates & Decennial Census; Landmax Data Systems; Redfin Real Estate Brokerage

Housing Tenure

As of 2022, the Town of Aurora (excluding the Village of East Aurora) had an estimated 3,392 occupied housing units (95%) and 173 vacant units (5%). Of the occupied housing in The Town of Aurora, 2,617 of those units (89%) are owner occupied while 334 (11%) are renter occupied.

Comparatively, both the towns of Concord and Orchard Park have higher percentages of renter-occupied units, making up approximately 26% of their housing stock, compared to just 11% in Aurora.

Housing Stock Type

The distribution of housing units in the Town of Aurora is heavily skewed towards single family housing which makes up 82.8% of all housing units in the Town. Large multi-unit homes (5+ units) are the second most common housing type, making up 7.4% of all units. In total, all multi-family housing (2 or more units) comprises 16.8% of all housing within the Town of Aurora.

Orchard Park has a slightly lower percentage of single-family homes (8.9% fewer) compared to Aurora. The second most common housing type in Orchard Park is apartment complexes with 5 or more units, which represents 18.3% of all their housing, compared to just 7.4% of Aurora's.

In Concord, single-family homes constitute a smaller share of housing at 74%, followed by buildings with five or more units at 11.6%, and triplexes or quadplexes at 6.9%.

Housing Stock Age

Most homes in the Town of Aurora are over 65 years old, with 59.8% built before 1960. In contrast, fewer than 30% of homes in Orchard Park and 43.5% in Concord were built before 1960.

Since 2000, only 6.1% of homes have been constructed within the Town of Aurora, including 180 units since 2010. Comparatively, 14% of Orchard Park's homes and 13.2% of Concord's homes were built after 2000.

Fig. 8: Town of Aurora Housing Tenure

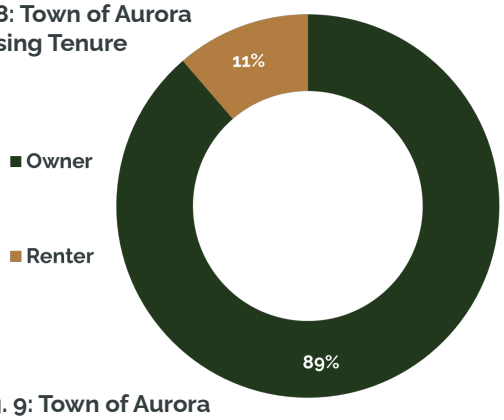


Fig. 9: Town of Aurora Housing Stock Type

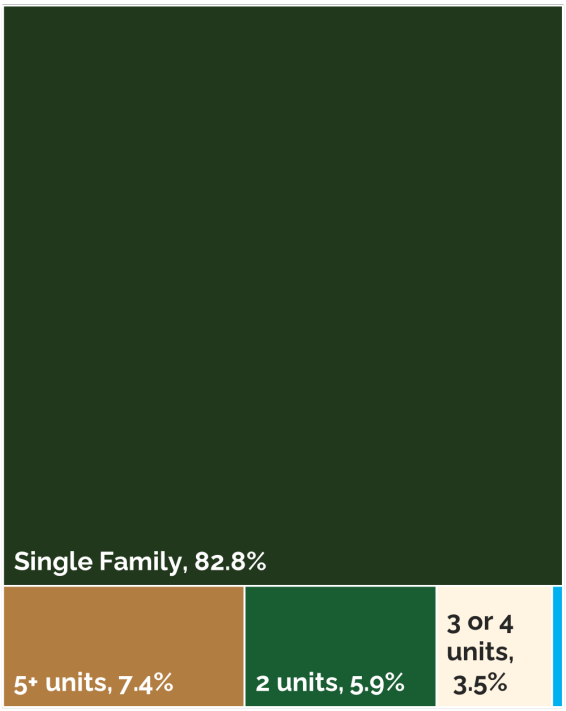
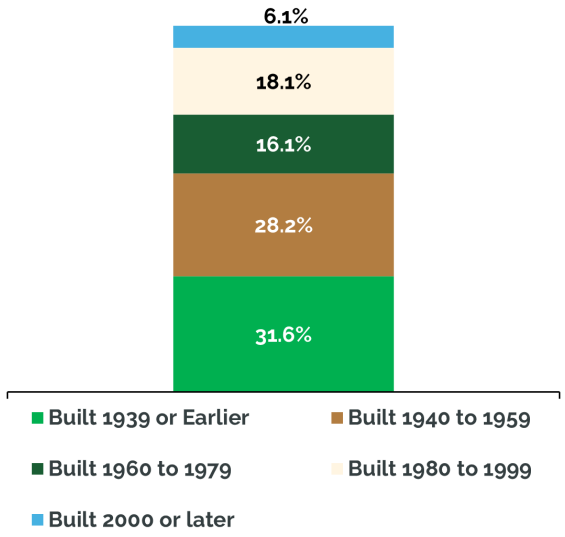


Fig. 10: Town of Aurora Housing Stock Age



Housing Sales

Based on data collected from Landmax, which compiles information from public records (tax assessor, county deed records, etc.), there were 86 homes sales in the Town of Aurora throughout 2023, a 56.4% increase compared to the 55 home sales in 2013. Through both years, single-family homes were by and large the most common home sale type, making up 98.2% of home sales in 2013 and 98.8% in 2023. Even after accounting for inflation, the average home sale price increased by 62.3% or $181,311 over this 10-year window. Compared to Erie County as a whole, the increase in home sales prices in Aurora outpaced the county, which saw only a 37% increase—equivalent to $85,064—over the same period.

Over the five-year period from 2020 to 2024, the Town of Aurora experienced a surge in real estate sales immediately following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (2021–2022), with 134 single family home sales recorded in 2021 and 142 in 2022. Since then, the number of single-family home sales has returned to pre-pandemic levels, with 86 sales in 2023 and 67 sales in 2024. In reviewing the most recent sales, there are clusters of activity near the Village of East Aurora, with a particularly high concentration of sales along Aurora Mill Road, Milestone Drive, and Creekstone Drive. These sales mostly involve newly constructed homes. When comparing sales prices over this same period—and adjusting for inflation—single-family home prices increased by more than $50,000 on average. In contrast, multi-family home prices remained relatively steady, ranging from $341,000 to $463,000. However, there was considerable fluctuation due to the small number of multi-family transactions (only five) during this span.

Town of Aurora

	SFH		MFH		Seasonal		Mobile	
	Count	Avg $	Count	Avg $	Count	Avg $	Count	Avg $
2013	54	$294,905	1	$93,752	0	N/A	0	N/A
2023	85	$473,098	1	$426,769	0	N/A	0	N/A

Erie County

	SFH		MFH		Seasonal		Mobile	
	Count	Avg $	Count	Avg $	Count	Avg $	Count	Avg $
2013	4,180	$171,379	387	$175,399	10	$61,376	3	$61,000
2023	7,165	$307,300	886	$291,608	6	$82,608	7	$63,057

Single Family Home Sales (Landmax)

	SF Sales	Sale Price	Inflation Adjusted
2020	112	$354,281.40	$432,077.40
2021	134	$351,950.80	$401,017.80
2022	142	$445,411.10	$487,440.57
2023	86	$458,913.40	$475,258.00
2024	67	$480,618.30	$483,765.50

Multi-Family Home Sales (Landmax)

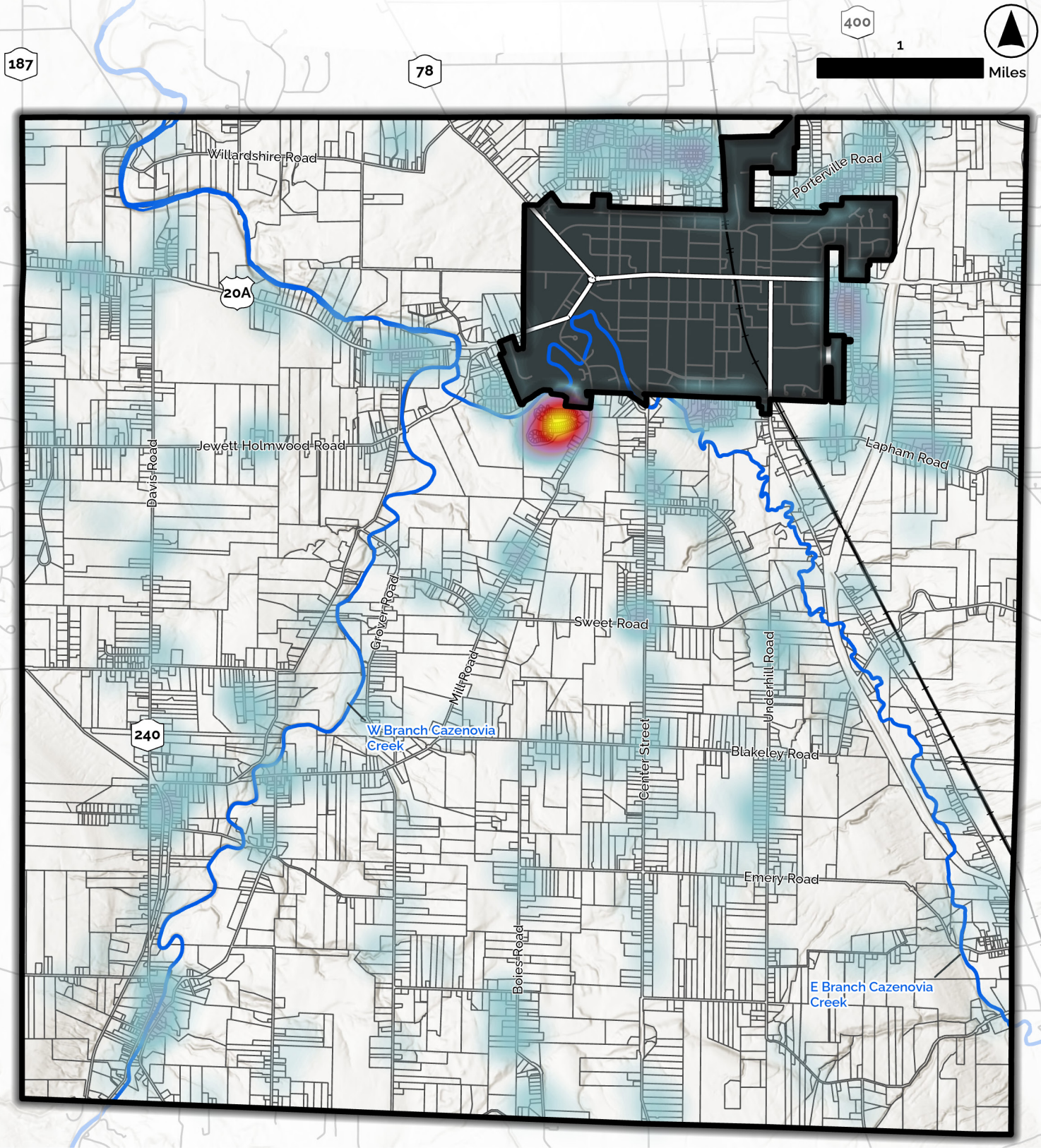
	MF Sales	Sale Price	Inflation Adjusted
2020	1	$380,000	$463,443.49
2021	3	$300,00	$341,824.30
2022	0	$0	$0
2023	1	$414,000	$428,745.00
2024	0	$0	$0

Year	Count	Average Cost ($)	Year Over Year % Change
2013	78	$240,947	N/A
2014	83	$275,430	14.3%
2015	68	$281,895	2.3%
2016	95	$313,268	11.1%
2017	89	$313,845	0.2%
2018	91	$345,569	10.1%
2019	93	$347,977	0.7%
2020	92	$360,561	3.6%
2021	81	$399,854	10.9%
2022	99	$489,262	22.4%
2023	64	$460,461	-5.9%
2024	73	$481,702	4.6%

Housing sales transactions for single-family homes were also compared against MLS data from 2013 to 2024. MLS Brokerage data is data collected and managed by real estate professionals (brokers and agents) who list properties for sale or lease. When excluding the Village of East Aurora, the following sales trends emerged. The Realtor MLS database recorded a higher total number of transactions in 2013; however, the average sales price was approximately 18% lower than that reported by the Landmax system. By 2023, the most recent year with data from both platforms, MLS recorded seven fewer transactions, with an average sales price 2.7% lower than that reported by Landmax. However, this data only includes transactions reported in the Realtor MLS database and does not account for private sales conducted independently. Year over year, MLS Brokerage data reported an average sale price increase of 6.8% for Aurora homes. Nationally, home sale prices typically increase by 3-5% annually; across Erie County, home sale prices increased by 6.3% on average each year.

HOME SALES (2021 - 2024)

Town of Aurora



Legend

- Town of Aurora
- Village of East Aurora

Homes Sales Density

Sparse

Dense

Housing Value

Between 2000 and 2020, the median home value in the Town of Aurora rose 35.79% to $296,974. While this increase was lower than the statewide growth of 43%, it outpaced Erie County (+15.81%) and neighboring communities like Orchard Park (+18.26%) and Concord (15.19%).

Housing Sales per Square Foot

Using data from Redfin Real Estate Brokerage, the average cost per square foot of home sales for single-family and 2–4-unit multi-family homes was analyzed from 2013 to 2023 for Erie County and New York State. As of 2023, it costs an average of $171.91 per sq ft for a single-family home and $89.79 per sq ft for a 2–4-unit apartment in Erie County. Since 2013, square footage costs for these types of homes have increased by 95% and 210%, respectively. Statewide, the average cost per square foot for a single-family home is $367 per sq ft, and for a 2–4-unit multi-family home, it is $318.17 per sq ft. Since 2013, costs across New York State have increased by 180% and 450%, respectively.

Fig. 11: Town of Aurora Housing Value

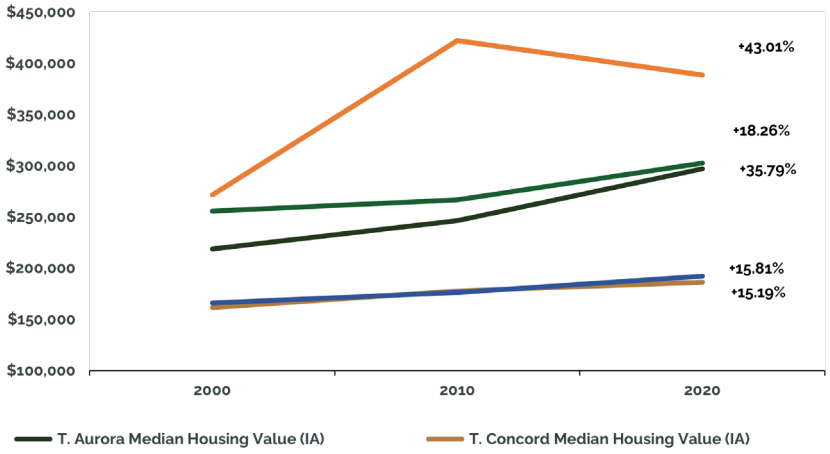
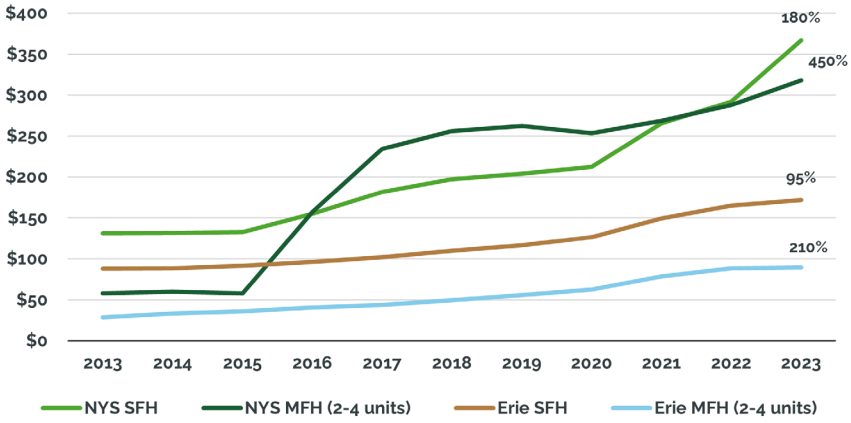


Fig. 12: Housing Sales per Square Feet



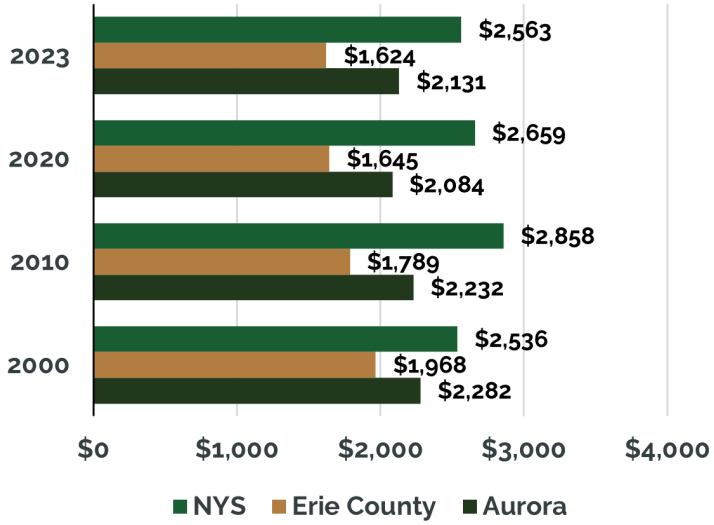
HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

(Data sources: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-year estimates & Decennial Census; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI Inflation Calculator; HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy)

Monthly Mortgage Costs

Since 2000, when adjusting for inflation (IA), the median mortgage in The Town of Aurora has decreased by 6.6%. Comparatively, in that same time, the median mortgage in Erie County has decreased by 17.5%; across NYS it has increased by 1.1%. As of 2023, the median mortgage (IA) in The Town of Aurora is $2,131 while across NYS the median mortgage (IA) is $2,563, a difference of $432. This likely due to a higher frequency of cash sales as the housing market has intensified throughout the region.

Fig. 13: Monthly Mortgage Costs



Monthly Renter Costs

Since 2000, when adjusting for inflation (IA), the median gross rent in The Town of Aurora has increased by 0.65%. Comparatively, in that same time, the median gross rent in Erie County has increased by 16.7%; across NYS the gross rent has increased by 31.05%. As of 2023, the median gross rent (IA) in the Town of Aurora is $1,087 while across NYS the median gross rent (IA) is $1,646, a difference of $559.

Owner & Renter Cost Burdens

While housing affordability in Aurora has generally improved over time, a significant number of residents, particularly renters, still experience housing cost burdens. The HUD Area Median Family Income (HAMFI) is the median family income calculated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for a given jurisdiction. These values are used by HUD to determine fair market rent rates and income limits for HUD funded programs. The Town of Aurora is a part of the Buffalo-Cheektowaga Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), for which HUD calculates the median family income to be $96,900, $18,120 less than the median family income in The Town of Aurora ($115,020)

Also maintained by HUD, the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy dataset (CHAS), provides information on household income, housing affordability, and housing cost burdens. CHAS data is expressed as a percentage of HAMFI spent on housing costs. For renters, housing costs include the cost of rent and utilities. For homeowners, housing costs include the cost of mortgage payments, utilities, association fees, insurance, and real estate taxes. Households spending less than 30% of their total income on housing are considered to have "affordable" housing costs. Households spending 30% to 50% of their income on housing are "cost-burdened," and households spending more than 50% are considered "severely cost burdened". As of 2021, 30.7% of renters and 11.7% of homeowners in Aurora are living in housing that is unaffordable.

Fig. 14: Monthly Renter Costs

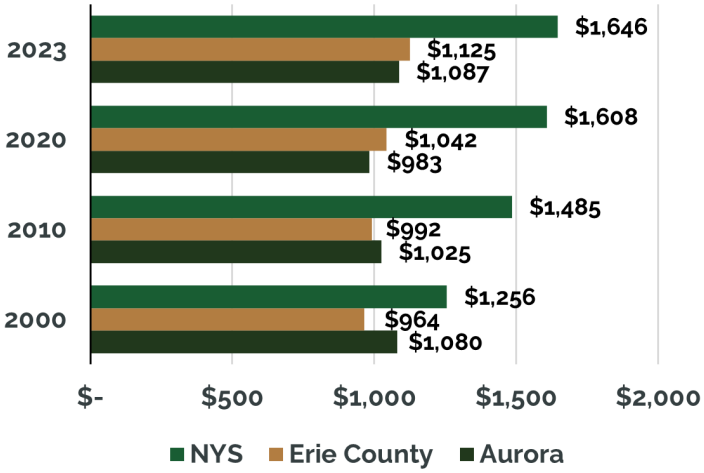
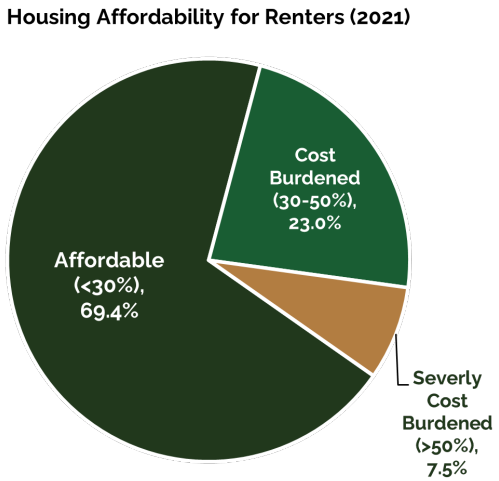
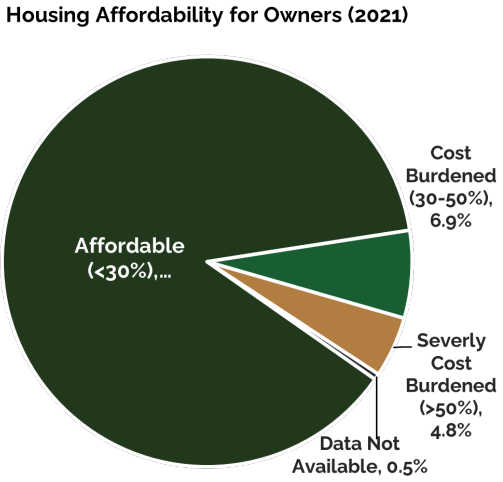


Fig. 15: Town of Aurora Housing Cost Burdens

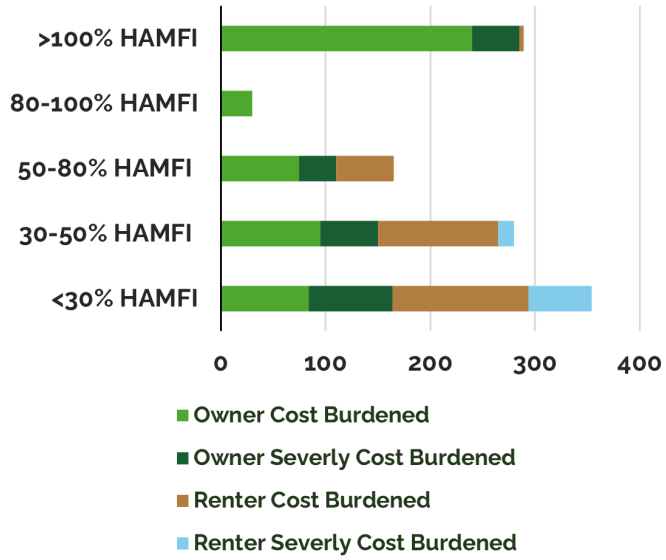




Cost burden by Income

When examining cost-burdened households by income, the most significant housing affordability challenges are found among households earning 50% or less of Aurora's HAMFI, with 634 households experiencing cost burdens. At the over 100% HAMFI level, a notable 285 owner-occupied households are also cost-burdened. No renter households earning 80-100% or more of Aurora's HAMFI are cost-burdened; however, cost burdens are observed among owner-occupied households at all income levels.

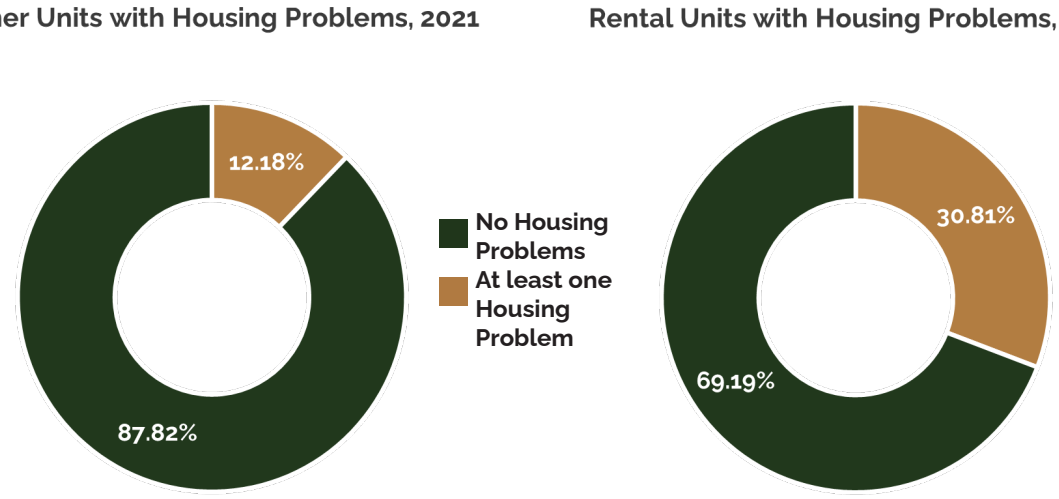
Fig. 16: Town of Aurora Housing Cost Burden by Income



Housing Problems

Approximately 31% of renter-occupied rental units throughout the Town of Aurora have at least one recorded housing problem. Comparatively, only 12.8% of owner-occupied units have a recorded housing problem. Housing problems include incomplete kitchen facilities, incomplete plumbing, there is more than one person per bedroom, or the housing cost burden is greater than 30%.

Fig. 17: Town of Aurora Housing Problems by Tenure





FUTURE HOUSING DEMAND

There are an estimated 2,840 single-family and 230 multi-family homes in the Town of Aurora. Of the 2,840 single-family homes, 2,223 are on standard large lots (>7,000 sq ft) and only 617 are on small lots (<7,000 sq ft). The Envision Tomorrow Balanced Housing Model was used to project the additional housing units needed by 2040 under both high-end and low-end growth scenarios.

Under a high-end growth scenario, the Town will need 245 future incremental units. Under the low-end growth scenario, projected demand is for 164 additional units.

High Estimate

Under the high-end growth scenario, the Envision Tomorrow Balanced Housing Model predicts that to accommodate the Town's new households, there will need to be 245 future incremental units. These new units don't only include new builds but also may include vacant building rehabilitations or the conversion of single-family homes to higher densities (i.e. duplexes). Most of these households (65%) are projected to be large lot single family homes. To provide a balanced and sustainable supply of housing, the model has projected that there will need to be 161 new large-lot single-family homes, 48 small-lot single-family homes, 24 townhomes, and 12 multi-family units.

Fig. 18: Town of Aurora Future Housing Demand - High-End

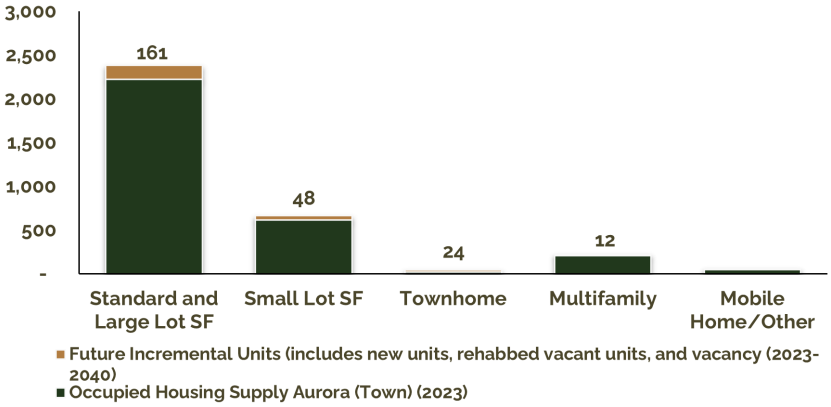
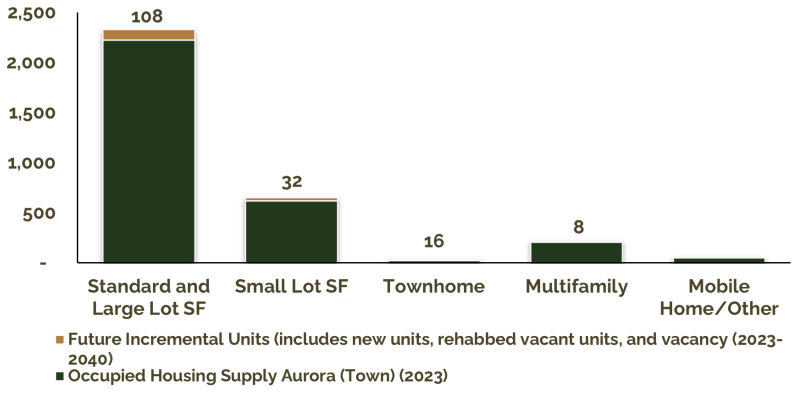


Fig. 19: Town of Aurora Future Housing Demand - Low-End



Low Estimate

Contrastingly, under the low-end growth scenario, the Envision Tomorrow Balanced Housing Model projects a demand for 164 additional housing units—one-third fewer than in the high-end growth scenario. These units are not limited to new construction but may also include rehabilitated vacant buildings or the conversion of single-family homes into higher-density housing (e.g., duplexes).

As with the high-end growth estimate, the majority (65%) of these households are expected to be large-lot single-family homes. To ensure a balanced and sustainable housing supply, the model forecasts the need for 108 new large-lot single-family homes, 32 small-lot single-family homes, 16 townhomes, and 8 multi-family units.

WHAT WE HEARD

Throughout the planning process, residents and stakeholders of Aurora were continuously engaged to ensure the plan reflects their desires and vision for the community. Engagement opportunities included a public survey, stakeholder interviews and focus groups, and two public workshops. Regarding Housing & Neighborhoods, residents expressed concern about the availability and affordability of housing in Aurora, with an emphasis on maintaining community character while expanding options for all life stages.

- **Need for Diverse Housing Options:** Many emphasized the need for senior housing, affordable rentals, and "missing middle" housing types like duplexes and townhomes to support aging residents and young families.
- **Affordability Concerns:** Rising home prices and limited rental availability were frequently cited. Residents worry that younger generations and local workers are being priced out of the community.
- **Focus Housing Near the Village and Infrastructure:** Community members prefer concentrating on new housing near the Village of East Aurora or within existing neighborhoods, where infrastructure and amenities already exist.
- **Support for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs):** There was strong support for allowing ADUs as a way to increase affordability, support multi-generational living, and help seniors age in place.

KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

"Opportunities" represent existing strengths or assets in the Town that can be further leveraged and supports the potential for new development, business creation, or achieving the plan's vision statement and goals.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) & "Missing Middle" Infill: Updating zoning to permit ADUs by right, and encouraging duplexes, triplexes, or cottage courts would expand lower-cost options without large-scale development, accommodating seniors, young families, and single professionals.

Housing Rehabilitation & Preservation Programs: Significant amount of existing housing in Aurora is over 65 years old. A local revolving loan fund or grant program could help maintain these structures, improve energy efficiency, and keep housing affordable for existing homeowners, preventing displacement and preserving neighborhood character.

Targeted Senior Living Near Infrastructure: Encouraging senior-friendly or assisted-living developments within or adjacent to sewer service areas near the Village could reduce sprawl, ensure easy access to essential services, and help older adults age in place.

Workforce Housing Close to Jobs: Incentivizing mixed-use or higher-density housing near commercial corridors and employment centers would allow teachers, service workers, and first responders to live closer to workplaces, bolstering Aurora's workforce and local economy.

"Issues" represent either existing needs or gaps in the Town that limits future development or the Town from achieving the plan's vision statement and goals.

Limited Housing Diversity and Choice: Over 80% of Aurora's housing stock consists of single-family homes, leaving few options for renters, seniors, or moderate-income households seeking multi-family, duplex, or townhouse units.

Affordability Pressures & Cost Burdens: Although inflation-adjusted mortgage costs have declined overall, an estimated 31% of renters and 11.7% of homeowners still spend more than 30% of their income on housing, impacting lower-income residents most acutely.

Lack of Senior-Friendly Housing: With Aurora's median age rising, many older adults have difficulty finding accessible, single-floor living or assisted-living facilities; this lack of senior options can force longtime residents to relocate elsewhere.

Aging Housing Stock & Rehab Needs: Most homes in Aurora are over 65 years old, often requiring costly maintenance or energy efficiency upgrades that can strain homeowner budgets and limit overall housing quality.

MUNICIPAL & PUBLIC SERVICES

An inventory of municipal and public services within the Town demonstrates all the amenities that make the community a desirable place to live as well as helping call out any gaps that exist which could be targeted for improvement in the future. Various services are provided throughout the Town of Aurora; however, some services are limited or may not exist due to the rural and low-density character of the community.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Town of Aurora offers a variety of community services to support residents of all ages. The Aurora Municipal Building houses essential services, including the Town Clerk's Office, which manages records, permits, and licenses such as marriage certificates, dog licenses, and handicap parking permits. The Building & Code Enforcement Department oversees zoning regulations and ensures compliance with safety standards, while the Assessor's Office maintains property records and tax assessments.

The Town of Aurora Senior Center offers a range of services and programs to support the well-being of residents aged 55 and older. The center provides a Nutrition Lunch Program, offering hot, nutritious meals on weekdays at noon for a suggested donation of $3.50 per meal. Seniors can reserve meals in advance and enjoy socializing with peers in a welcoming environment. Additionally, the center hosts various fitness programs aimed at promoting health and mobility, including exercise classes tailored for older adults. The Aurora Senior Center is a highly utilized service facility and service in the Town and is outgrowing its limited space, which in turn limits the ability to expand the services it offers.

The Aurora Town Public Libraries (Town of Aurora Public Library & West Falls-Colden Community Library) offer free internet access, community meeting rooms, and lending services, including books, media, and unique items like the Empire Pass for state parks. The Town's Parks & Recreation Department maintains parks and recreation programs, including sports leagues, fitness classes, and community events. Seasonal activities and town-sponsored events provide opportunities for social engagement and enrichment.

POLICE & FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Town of Aurora, in conjunction with the Village of East Aurora, is served by the East Aurora/Town of Aurora Police Department. This department is dedicated to protecting life and property, enforcing laws, preventing crime, and providing emergency services to the community. Additionally, the Erie County Sheriff's Office may provide support and assistance within the Town of Aurora as needed.

Fire protection services in the Town are provided by the East Aurora Volunteer Fire Department. This all-volunteer organization is committed to delivering professional emergency fire, rescue, and EMS services to residents. Additionally, the West Falls Volunteer Fire Company and the South Wales Volunteer Fire Company serves areas within the southern part of Aurora.

TOWN ROADS

The Town of Aurora Highway Department provides a variety of road maintenance services across the Town, including but not limited to repairing and paving roads, mowing roadsides, trimming and cutting down dead trees, cleaning out ditches, installing new culvert pipes where they are needed, chipping branches, and picking up chunk wood. The Highway Department also plows and salts all Town and County roads throughout the winter. Across the town, approximately 26.2 miles of roads are owned by New York State, 45 miles are owned by Erie County, and 50.9 miles are owned by Aurora.

WASTE & RECYCLING

Town waste and recycling services are managed through a contract with Waste Management for residents outside the Village of East Aurora. Town residents are advised to place their garbage and recyclables at the roadside within 5 feet of the road before 7:00 a.m. on their designated collection day.

The Town of Aurora Highway Department offers additional services, including the collection of tires (limit of two per household) and car batteries during scheduled weeks in April, June, August, and October. In the fall, leaf collection is provided from mid-October through December 1, weather permitting; residents should rake leaves to within 3 feet of the roadside for pickup. The department also handles the pickup of chunk wood and tree limbs, with specific guidelines for size and stacking, during the first working Monday of each month from April through October.

DRINKING WATER

Drinking water in the Town is supplied via direct access by the Erie County Water Authority (ECWA). ECWA owns and operates the entire system for all but 36 town customers who live on private roads (S Heerick Dr, Heiler Dr, Hickory Ln, Mary James Ln, Mirchell Rd), and is responsible for all customer service, billing, and capital improvements. Overall, 2,799 properties (68% of properties) in Aurora have access to public drinking water, while 974 (23.9% of properties) get their water via private wells. Property owners with a private well system are responsible for ensuring proper well maintenance, testing, and treatment to maintain water quality. In contrast, all municipalities east and south of Aurora either have their own municipal drinking water system or are totally reliant on private well systems.

SEWER & STORMWATER

The Erie County Division of Sewerage Management (DSM) serves the Village and portions of the Town. The Village and portions of the Town are assigned to Sewer District No. 8, which operates infrastructure such as collector sewers, pumping stations, and a water resource recovery facility. Erie County's sewer district 8 covers approximately 2,462 acres of land within the Town, which includes the entirety of the Village of East Aurora, several town parcels around the Village, and parcels along Center Street leading up to the high school. Overall, 417 properties (10% of properties) in the Town of Aurora have sewer service. In addition to sewer services, the Town manages stormwater drainage to prevent flooding, erosion, and water pollution. The stormwater system includes a network of drains, culverts, and retention basins that direct runoff from roads, properties, and public spaces into natural waterways.

2,963 properties (72.8%) within the Town rely on private septic systems for wastewater treatment, as municipal sewer services are not available in all areas. A typical system consists of a septic tank, where solids settle and break down, and a leach field, where effluent liquid is filtered into the soil. Homeowners are responsible for routine maintenance, including pumping the tank every 3-5 years to prevent system failure and environmental contamination. The Erie County Health Department regulates septic system installation and maintenance, requiring permits for new or replacement systems to ensure compliance with health and environmental standards.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Internet services in the Town are provided by multiple broadband and wireless providers, such as Spectrum, GoNetspeed, T-Mobile Home Internet, Viasat, and Starlink. These providers offer residents access to high-speed internet, cable, and fiber-optic connections, depending on location. While areas within and near the Village of East Aurora typically have access to fiber-optic and cable internet, more rural parts of the town may rely on DSL, fixed wireless, or satellite internet due to infrastructure limitations. Additionally, some locations where fiber-optic lines have been installed have negatively impacted tree cover by significantly trimming tree limbs to accommodate the installation. Major service providers offer a range of speeds and packages to meet residential and business needs, with ongoing efforts to expand broadband coverage to underserved areas.

Erie County is currently in the process of building out their middle-mile community fiber optic broadband network called ErieNet. The mission of the new county not-for-profit will be to address the broadband needs of underserved communities by developing the infrastructure needed for service providers to install last-mile service connections. ErieNet is expected to begin build-out in the nearby Town of Boston by 2026, with tie-ins to the Town of Aurora slated for the future.

ELECTRICITY AND NATURAL GAS

Electricity in the Town of Aurora is provided by New York State Electric & Gas (NYSEG) while natural gas is provided by National Fuel. These utilities ensure reliable energy distribution to homes and businesses, with NYSEG maintaining the electrical grid, responding to outages, and offering energy efficiency programs, while National Fuel supplies natural gas for heating, cooking, and other residential and commercial uses. Customers have the option of choosing alternative Energy Service Companies (ESCOs) for electricity and gas supply while still relying on the main utility providers for distribution and maintenance.

Recently, through the support of the Town's Climate Smart Communities Committee, the Town has rolled out a Community Solar program called Aurora Solar Savings, which is an opt-in program. Through NYSEG, residents can sign up at no cost to have a portion of their electricity they use to be sourced from a solar energy farm. The program currently receives its energy from a solar project in Halfmoon, NY which is north of Albany, NY. There are only a few hundred spots provided to Aurora which have all be claimed, but the Town is actively working to expand the number of slots for the program. The program is a benefit to the community and residents for several reasons, including up to 10% off utility bills, no need for roof-mounted solar panels, and the town receives additional grant funding through the program success which can be invested towards other clean energy projects.

WHAT WE HEARD

Throughout the planning process, residents and stakeholders of Aurora were continuously engaged to ensure the plan reflects their desires and vision for the community. Engagement opportunities included a public survey, stakeholder interviews and focus groups, and two public workshops. Regarding Public & Municipal Services, community feedback emphasized the importance of maintaining high-quality public services while addressing infrastructure gaps and preparing for future needs.

- **Internet & Cell Service Gaps:** Many residents, especially in the southern and more rural areas, reported poor internet and cell service. Expanding high-speed broadband was a top priority for improving access to work, education, and emergency services.
- **Desire for Sustainable Services:** There is interest in expanding recycling, e-waste drop-off, and composting programs to improve environmental sustainability.
- **Protecting the Tree Canopy:** Utility upgrades have resulted in significant tree loss, prompting calls for a coordinated tree management and preservation plan.
- **Senior Services in High Demand:** With a growing senior population, residents called for enhanced transportation, health services, and community programming to support aging in place

KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

"Opportunities" represent existing strengths or assets in the Town that can be further leveraged and supports the potential for new development, business creation, or achieving the plan's vision statement and goals.

Broadband Expansion to Enhance Connectivity in Rural Areas: While some areas have high-speed internet, rural parts of the Town still rely on DSL or satellite services. Expanding broadband access, particularly fiber-optic networks, could attract remote workers, support small businesses, and improve digital access for residents.

Enhancement of Senior Services and Community Programming: With a growing senior population, there is an opportunity to expand programs at the Senior Center, such as transportation services, health screenings, and technology training to improve digital literacy and social connectivity.

Sustainable Waste Management Initiatives: The Town already offers some waste and recycling services, but opportunities exist for expanding composting programs, hazardous waste collection, or educational initiatives to promote waste reduction and environmental sustainability.

"Issues" represent either existing needs or gaps in the Town that limits to future development or the Town from achieving the plan's vision statement and goals.

Aging Road and Stormwater Infrastructure: With a significant amount of road maintenance responsibility, ongoing repairs and stormwater management will require investment. Flooding and erosion concerns may increase with more extreme weather events.

Tree Canopy Loss Due to Infrastructure Upgrades: Broadband and utility installations have led to significant tree trimming, impacting the Town's natural character and environmental benefits. Implementing policies for responsible tree management alongside infrastructure expansion could help mitigate this issue.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

Transportation systems are the arteries of community life—supporting mobility, shaping land use patterns, and influencing public safety and environmental health. In the Town of Aurora, the rural landscape, limited public transportation, and reliance on personal vehicles have defined a transportation network that is both an asset and a challenge. Key corridors such as NYS Routes 20A and 16 serve as vital connectors to regional employment centers, yet high traffic volumes and limited pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure present growing concerns for safety and accessibility. As the Town continues to evolve, identifying opportunities to enhance connectivity, support alternative transportation options, and promote walkability will be critical in fostering a more inclusive and sustainable future.

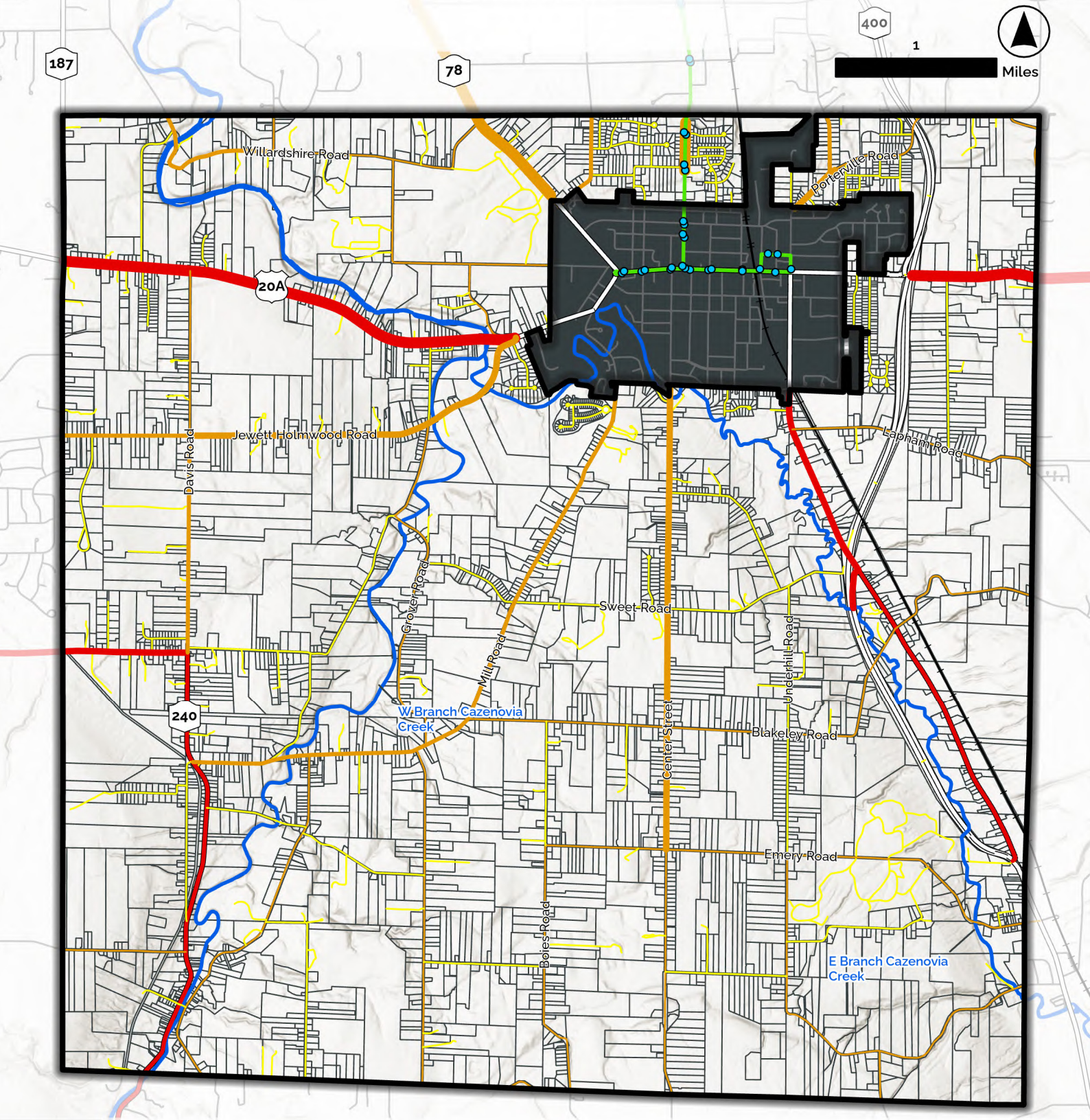
TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

The Town of Aurora's transportation network is characterized by roadways under various jurisdictions. NYS Route 20A, otherwise known as Quaker Road, Hamburg Street, Main Street and Big Tree Road, is an east-west two-lane minor arterial in Aurora and is considered a gateway to the Town of Orchard Park, the Town of Wales, and NYS Interstate 400, otherwise known as the Aurora Expressway. NYS Route 20A generally consists of 12-foot-wide travel lanes with added turn lanes and various lane width changes throughout the Town boundary. NYS Route 16, otherwise known as Olean Street and Olean Road, is a north-south corridor that begins at Main Street in the Village of East Aurora and spans through the Hamlet of South Wales within the Aurora township boundary. NYS Route 16 consists of approximately 12-foot-wide travel lanes and varying shoulder widths. Other key corridors in the Town include Center Street, Buffalo Road, Davis Road, Mill Road, and Maple Street.



TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Town of Aurora



Legend

- Town of Aurora
- Village of East Aurora

Jurisdiction

- State
- County
- Local/Private

AADT

- 13 - 1543
- 1544 - 3354
- 3355 - 5973
- 5974 - 10115

NFTA

- Route 70
- Bus Stops

Traffic Volumes

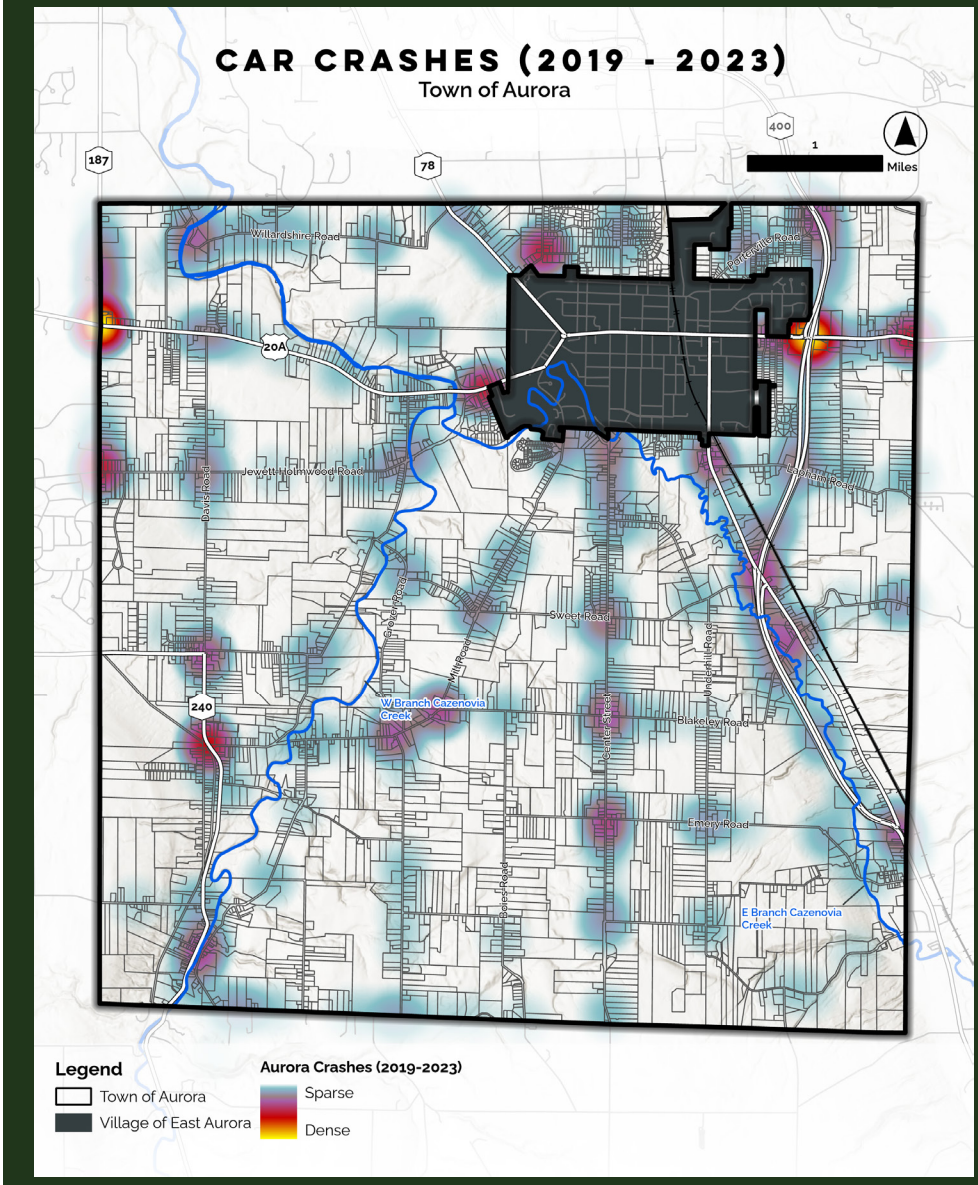
Traffic volumes throughout the Town of Aurora vary depending on the road classification. Most roads classified as either principal arterials or minor arterials will have the highest traffic volumes. Roadways in the Town that are under either State or County jurisdiction have been noted to have the highest traffic volumes as they have been designed to accommodate commuters and through traffic.

Traffic Crashes

Based on data from the NYS Department of Transportation, 507 motor vehicle crashes were reported in the Town of Aurora between 2019 and 2023. The highest number of these crashes occurred on NYS Route 20A along the Town's border at Transit Road and the entrance and exit ramps for NYS Interstate 400, as well as at the intersection of Davis Road (NYS 240) and Mill Road. Other notable high crash locations include NYS Route 20A at Jewett Holmwood Road, Transit Road at Jewett Holmwood, Bowen Road at Hillcrest Road, and Center Street at Emery Road. No crashes resulting in fatality were reported. Among the 507 motor vehicle crashes reported, one crash involved a bicyclist, and one crash involved a pedestrian.

Road	Crash Frequency
Center Street	43
NYS 400	43
Transit Road	36
Davis Road	35
Mill Road	32
Jewett Holmwood Rd	25

Roadway	Jurisdiction	AADT, 2013	AADT, 2023	% Change in AADT 2013-2023	% Trucking Traffic
US Route 20A (Route 400 to Town Line)	New York State	10,145	10,115	-0.3%	8%
Buffalo Road	New York State	9,146	9,528	+4.2%	4%
Maple Street	Erie County	7,542	7,775	+3.1%	3%
Quaker Road	New York State	7,168	7,100	-.01%	5%
Olean Road	New York State	6,195	5,782	-6.7%	6%
Center Street	Erie County	4,500	5,145	+20.3%	5%
Jewett Holmwood Road	Erie County	4,230	4,138	-2.2%	5%
Davis Road	Erie County	3,119	3,243	+4.0%	4%



Transit Service

The Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) provides transit service to Erie County with one bus route serving the Town of Aurora. The 70 route (East Aurora Express) is an express route that operates between Downtown Buffalo and East Aurora. This route runs only on weekdays and arrives in the Village four times per day, twice in the morning at 7:08 am and 7:43 am, and twice in the evening at 4:40 pm and 5:10 pm. This route reaches the Town via the Maple Street exit on NYS Interstate 400, Continuing through the Village via Maple Street again. Bus stops within the Town are both located on Maple and Main Street.

The Going Places Transportation Program is a program provided by the Erie County Department of Senior Services. This service provides van transportation for health-related services, food and nutrition, personal business, and social activities, and is available Tuesday through Friday (except holidays) to Town of Aurora residents over the age of 62. This program has a suggested donation of $8 per person each way; however, donations are confidential.

Rural Transit Service (RTS) is a non-profit transportation service that provides transportation to senior citizens, low/moderate income individuals and clients with disabilities. Eligible residents are transported to dialysis clinics, medical offices, physical therapy, pharmacies, colleges, workplaces, senior centers, nutrition sites, adult day cares, grocery stores, banks, salons/barbers, etc., with medical trips taking priority. The Rural Transit vans run between 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday, except holidays. Rural Transit riders are not required to contribute to services utilized through RTS, although donations are accepted and encouraged.

Railroads

The Town of Aurora, particularly the Village of East Aurora, has a rich history of commuter rail service dating back to the 19th century. Initial proposals for a rail line from Buffalo to East Aurora emerged as early as April 1832 by the Buffalo and Aurora Railroad Company. However, due to economic challenges, the project was delayed. It wasn't until December 23, 1867, that the first passenger train arrived in East Aurora under the direction of the Buffalo & Washington Railroad Company, which later became part of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

At its peak, Riley Street Station in East Aurora saw 18 passenger trains daily, serving approximately 300 passengers traveling to and from Buffalo. However, with the rise of automobile travel, demand for rail services declined. The last passenger train departed the station on December 31, 1973, marking the end of over a century of commuter rail service in East Aurora. Today, the historic station building has been repurposed and operates as Riley Street Station, a gastropub that preserves and celebrates the rich railroad heritage of East Aurora. Existing Amtrak services are available nearby in the City of Buffalo or the Village of Depew.

According to the United States Department of Transportation, there is one active rail line in the Town of Aurora. The Buffalo Line is the main line rail owned by the Buffalo & Pittsburgh Railroad. There are nine over-grade crossings, four at-grade crossings, and two under-grade crossings in the town and village.

In May 2020, a significant train derailment occurred in the Village of East Aurora. A freight train operated by Buffalo & Pittsburgh Railroad derailed near Main Street and Riley Street, resulting in 15 cars leaving the tracks. Fortunately, there were no injuries reported among the crew or residents, and no substantial damage to nearby structures. The derailment led to the evacuation of 41 homes as a precautionary measure due to a diesel fuel spill from the locomotive. Investigations revealed that the incident was caused by a track crew leaving a siding switch unlocked, which allowed the switch to move and misalign the tracks. This event highlighted concerns about rail safety in the community, especially regarding the transportation of hazardous materials.

Air Travel

The Town of Aurora does not have its own airport. Residents typically rely on nearby airports for air travel. The closest major airport is Buffalo Niagara International Airport (BUF), situated approximately 17 miles from Aurora. The airport offers numerous daily flights to various destinations and serves as the primary hub for travelers in the region.

For general aviation, several smaller airports are accessible within a reasonable distance:

- **Buffalo Airfield (9G0):** Located in West Seneca, this public-use airport is approximately 6 miles southeast of downtown Buffalo.
- **Akron Airport (9G3):** Situated near Akron, New York, this privately owned, public-use airport is about 12 miles northeast of Aurora.
- **Buffalo-Lancaster Regional Airport (BQR):** Found near Lancaster, New York, this public-use airport is approximately 3 miles northeast of Lancaster and serves the surrounding communities.

These facilities primarily accommodate private pilots and small aircraft operations.

Active Transportation

On-Road Bicycle Facilities

There are no dedicated on-road bicycle facilities in the Town of Aurora or Village of East Aurora. However, when Main Street in the Village of East Aurora was redesigned several years ago, the NYS DOT included a shared shoulder space between the travel lanes and the on-street parking spots. Although this space does not meet legal width requirements to be considered a bike lane, it is used as a bike lane for all intents and purposes. While some bicyclists do utilize this space as a bike lane, most cyclists do not feel safe doing so and opt instead to use the sidewalks.

Sidewalks

Sidewalk infrastructure is primarily concentrated within the Village of East Aurora, where the Department of Public Works oversees maintenance, including snow removal. Property owners are responsible for keeping sidewalks adjoining their lands free from snow, ice, and other obstructions. Outside the village limits, the presence of sidewalks is limited, with pedestrian pathways being less common. Portions of the Town outside East Aurora where sidewalks are present include new subdivisions around the edge of the Village, as well as portions of the Hamlets of West Falls and South Wales. The Town's Highway Department focuses on maintaining 62 miles of town roads, handling tasks such as plowing, salting, and general road upkeep, but sidewalks are not a primary feature in these areas.

Multi-Use Trails

Majors Park offers trails in both the northern and southern sections of the park. The northern section of the park is primarily a wetland with a trail/boardwalk offering access throughout the wetland complex. The southern section of the park offers trails through forests, meadows, and riparian habitats along Cazenovia Creek. There is no trail that connects the northern and southern sections of the park.

Knox Farm State Park has an expansive set of trails that provide amenities for various activities such as biking, hiking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing. Trail surfaces range from paved paths to natural terrains, accommodating different preferences and skill levels. The park's trail system includes several notable paths:

- **Outer Loop (3.5 miles):** This extensive trail circles the park's perimeter, providing a comprehensive tour of its varied landscapes.
- **Backyard Trail (1.45 miles):** A moderately distanced path that offers a closer look at the park's natural features.
- **Butterfly Trail (0.8 miles):** A shorter trail ideal for observing local flora and fauna, particularly butterflies.
- **Library Trail (0.7 miles):** A scenic route that provides a peaceful walking experience.
- **Lower Pond Trail (0.5 miles):** A brief trail that leads to a serene pond area, perfect for a leisurely stroll.

JP Nicely Park features approximately 2.25 miles of trails. The main loop trail begins near the park's south end and leads through wooded areas down to Cazenovia Creek. The trail is well-marked and wide, providing a comfortable hiking experience. Much of the path runs alongside the creek, offering scenic views and shaded by large trees. Along the way, there are spots to rest near the water, making it a pleasant environment for hikers and their pets.

Emery Park features several trails and at least three trail heads that provide connections to all of the amenities and facilities located at the park.

The Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail is a planned 27-mile multi-use trail that will eventually connect the Town of Orchard Park in Erie County to the Town of Ashford in Cattaraugus County, utilizing the former right of way for the Buffalo, Rochester, and Pittsburgh Railroad. The portion of the trail that will traverse through the Town of Aurora will begin on the border of Aurora and Orchard Park on Ellicott Rd (NYS Route 240). The trail will pass through the Hamlets of Jewettville and West Falls before exiting the Town into the Town of Colden along Davis Rd (NYS Route 240). Once fully completed, the trail will provide residents and visitors of Aurora with 27 miles of uninterrupted access throughout multiple historic communities in Western New York.

WHAT WE HEARD

Throughout the planning process, residents and stakeholders of Aurora were continuously engaged to ensure the plan reflects their desires and vision for the community. Engagement opportunities included a public survey, stakeholder interviews and focus groups, and two public workshops. Regarding Transportation Systems, residents emphasized the need for safer, more accessible transportation options beyond personal vehicles, with a strong focus on walkability, biking, and road maintenance.

- **Support for Trail Connectivity:** Expanding trail networks, including the Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail (ECRT), was widely supported to improve recreation, access to parks, and connections between throughout the town.
- **Expand Sidewalks and Bike Infrastructure:** Residents called for more sidewalks and bike lanes—especially along Center Street and Mill Road, in the hamlet centers, and routes to the high school, and Knox Farm Park. These improvements were seen as essential for safety, accessibility, and community connectivity.
- **Improve Transit Access and Options:** There was notable demand for enhanced public transit, including shuttles to Buffalo, service to events, and options for seniors and low-income residents. Several participants suggested exploring on-demand services or expanded bus routes
- **Enhance Road Maintenance and Conditions:** Many survey respondents expressed dissatisfaction with road conditions and requested more consistent maintenance, particularly on rural roads and bike lanes

KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

"Opportunities" represent existing strengths or assets in the Town that can be further leveraged and supports the potential for new development, business creation, or achieving the plan's vision statement and goals.

Enhance Trail Systems and Park Linkages: Completing the 27-mile ECRT multi-use trail will connect Aurora to Orchard Park and Colden, promoting recreation, healthy living, and potential economic spin-offs (e.g., local cafés, bike rentals) near trail heads. Trail connections at Majors Park, Knox Farm State Park, and JP Nicely Park can be further integrated with future sidewalks or bike paths, increasing accessibility and encouraging eco-tourism and alternative mobility around Aurora's natural assets.

Opportunities for Complete Street Initiatives: Many roads already have 12-foot travel lanes that may be suitable for re-striping or adding bike lanes, traffic calming, or pedestrian crossings to improve safety for non-drivers.

On-Demand or Microtransit Pilot Projects: Building on NFTA's express routes and existing senior transit, Aurora could explore phone-app-based or reservation-driven shuttles to expand service hours or coverage areas, benefiting young workers and older adults alike.

"Issues" represent either existing needs or gaps in the Town that limits to future development or the Town from achieving the plan's vision statement and goals.

Rail Safety Vulnerability: The 2020 derailment near Main Street in East Aurora highlights potential risks posed by freight rail lines transporting hazardous materials, emphasizing the importance of local emergency preparedness and communication.

High-Crash Locations on Major Corridors: NYS Route 20A near the 400 ramps, Davis Road (NYS 240), and other intersections experience notably higher crash rates, suggesting the need for better signage, turning lanes, or traffic-calming measures.

Speeding and Cut-Through Traffic on Secondary Roads: Local roads like Center Street and Mill Road sometimes serve as cut-throughs for drivers avoiding main arteries, leading to higher speeds, noise, and safety concerns for residents.

RECREATIONAL, HISTORICAL, & CULTURAL RESOURCES

The following sections provide an overview of the recreational, historical, and cultural resources within the Town of Aurora, including parks and other recreational spaces, historic sites eligible to be included in the National Register of Historic Places, and areas of cultural significance to the Town. Together these places help shape the character of the Town and are attractions that bring visitors into the community.

TOWN PARKS

J.P. Nicely Memorial Park

Located in the Hamlet of West Falls, J.P. Nicely Memorial Park covers approximately 65 acres of land along West Falls Road and is adjacent to the Aurora Waldorf School. Amenities at the park include several baseball fields, a basketball court, pickleball courts, a small lodge and three picnic shelters, 2.25 miles of walking trails, and tennis courts. J.P. Nicely Park is also home to one of the Town's Summer Day Camps, where children ages 8-12 are exposed to a variety of different sports and themed events.

West Falls Veterans Park & Community Playground

Located at the corner of Davis Road and Bridge Street, Veterans Park covers approximately 1 acre of land along the western side of the Cazenovia Creek in the Hamlet of West Falls. This park is multifaceted in that it provides a memorial to veterans of the West Falls area as well as home to the West Falls Memorial Day Parade ceremony. The parks also provide daily recreational amenities such as seating, public parking for nearby businesses, historic interpretive signage about the community, and scenic views of the Cazenovia Creek. Veterans Park is essential to the character of West Falls as it both celebrates the area's past while providing direct access to one of the community's greatest assets, the Cazenovia Creek.

Located on the eastern side of Cazenovia Creek, the West Falls Community Playground is found along W Falls Rd and covers approximately 0.26 acres of land. While the playground provides an area for families to take their children for recreation, there is currently a lack of sidewalks along West Falls Road which makes accessing the playground difficult by foot.

Warren Drive Park

Located in Warren Drive in the Village of East Aurora, the town park covers 2.5 acres of land, providing a playground, a small picnic area, pickleball courts, and athletic fields. The park also hosts a picnic shelter that is rentable to host parties and events.



Majors Park

Located just south of the Village of East Aurora, Majors Park covers 160 acres of land along Olean Rd (NYS Route 16). The primary feature of the park is the east branch of the Cazenovia Creek which bisects the park into a northern and southern half, inhibiting direct access between the two sections. The northern section of the park is primarily a wetland with a trail/boardwalk offering access throughout the wetland complex. The southern section of the park, which is only accessible from Hubbard Rd, offers trails through forests, meadows, and riparian habitats along Cazenovia Creek.

Aurora Community Pool Park

Aurora Community Pool Park is a 7-acre park found on the border between the Village of East Aurora and the Town of Aurora. The park is equipped with an outdoor pool and wading pool, a picnic shelter with picnic tables and grills, tennis and pickleball courts, a small playground, and several sports fields.

VILLAGE PARKS

In addition to all the town-owned parks, both in the Town of Aurora and Village of East Aurora, there are several recreational spaces in the East Aurora that are managed by the Village. These spaces are also often frequented by Village and Town residents too.

Hamlin Park

One of the oldest parks in the Town, Hamlin Park was established in 1899 and covers 16-acres of land along S Grove Street. The park offers various amenities for all types of recreational activities, including two picnic shelters and a pavilion, several picnic tables, a volleyball court, a baseball court, a rotary bandstand, horseshoe pits, a half mile track, tennis and pickleball courts, a baseball diamond, and a multi-purpose sports field.

Cazenovia Creek Nature Sanctuary

The Cazenovia Creek Nature Sanctuary is a protected natural space located on the border between the Village and Town covering approximately 5.59 acres, 2.16 of which is in the Town of Aurora. Heavily forested with direct access to the Cazenovia Creek via rudimentary trails, the nature sanctuary seeks to provide space for the nourishment of native species of flora and fauna while also offering residents the opportunity to immerse themselves in nature.

Sinking Pond Wildlife Sanctuary

Located on the northern border of the Village, the Sinking Pond Wildlife Sanctuary covers approximately 73 acres of ponds, hills, and wetlands. Formed tens of thousands of years ago by glaciers, the site was purchased by the Village in 1930. The sanctuary today is a refuge for the area's native species and while also providing limited trails and seating areas for visitors to appreciate the natural beauty of the area. Programming and maintenance at the park are provided by Friends of Sinking Ponds Wildlife Sanctuary.

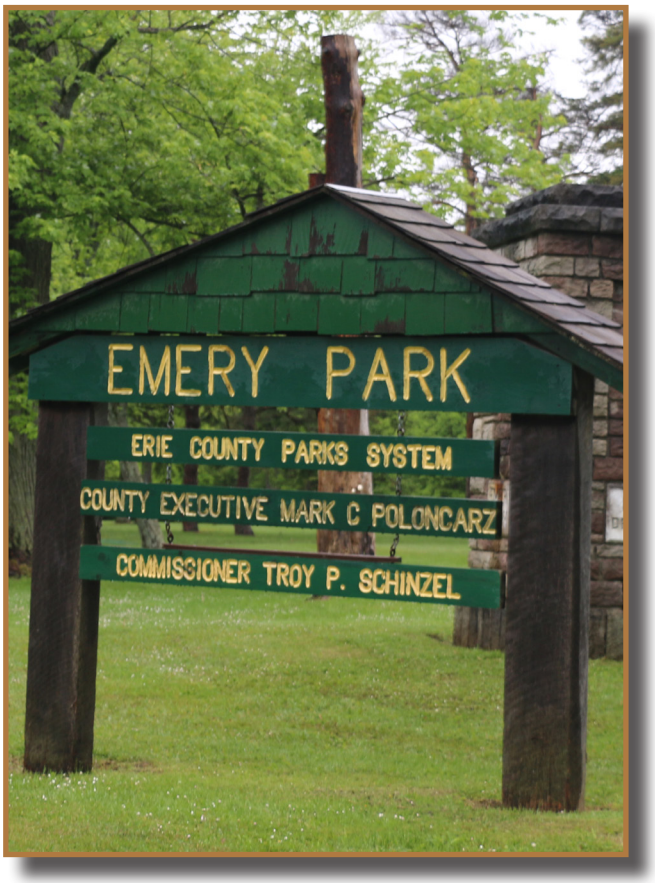




COUNTY & STATE PARKS

Emery Park

Emery Park is a 457-acre park and one of the oldest in the Erie County system as it was acquired in 1925 from the Josiah Emery farmstead, a former resident of the Town. The park is multi-purposed, offering both passive and sports-specific recreation options for all four seasons. With a major ravine and the Cazenovia Creek cutting through the park, the park offers an abundance of opportunities for hiking and immersion in natural settings. Other prominent recreational facilities in the park include a ski-slope and lodge, an 18-hole black diamond disc golf course, an amphitheater, and various sports facilities and picnic areas.



Knox Farm State Park

Knox Farm State Park is a New York State owned park and the former country estate of Buffalo's renowned Knox Family. The 633-acre park is comprised of a variety of habitats, including over 400 acres of meadows, 100 acres of woodlands and several prominent ponds and wetlands. The park's expansive set of trails provides amenities for various activities such as biking, hiking, horseback riding, and cross-country skiing. The park is also home to a 6-acre dog park and nursery which supplies planting to state parks all throughout Western New York (WNY). However, the park is most notable for hosting the Borderland Music & Arts Festival, which is a three-day festival celebrating the rich history of the WNY region. Going on for six years now, the festival welcomes over 10,000 attendees to the Town of Aurora each year.



TRAILS, WATERWAYS, AND OTHER RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail

The Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail is a planned 27-mile multi-use trail that will eventually connect the Town of Orchard Park in Erie County to the Town of Ashford in Cattaraugus County, utilizing the former right-of-way for the Buffalo, Rochester, and Pittsburgh Railroad. Currently under development, portions of the trail are open in the Towns of Orchard Park and Concord, and the Village of Springville. The portion of the trail that will traverse through the Town of Aurora will begin on the border of Aurora and Orchard Park on Ellicott Rd (NYS Route 240). Following the Buffalo, Rochester, and Pittsburgh Railroad right-of-way, the trail will pass through the Hamlets of Jewettville and West Falls before exiting the Town into the Town of Colden along Davis Rd (NYS Route 240). Once fully completed, the trail will provide residents and visitors of Aurora with 27 miles of uninterrupted access throughout multiple historic communities in Western New York.

Cazenovia Creek

Cazenovia Creek is the primary waterway traversing through the Town of Aurora and is comprised of two branches, the east and west branches which join in the Village of East Aurora, before joining the Buffalo River in the City of Buffalo. This waterway holds significant cultural and historic value to the Town as it was historically utilized for hydropower to run the various mills that once existed in the Town's hamlets. Today, the creek is frequently utilized for recreation, such as fishing, kayaking, and cooling off from the summer heat.

Owen Falls Sanctuary

Owen Falls Sanctuary is a 58-acre nature preserve managed by the Western New York Land Conservancy. Located just south of the Village of East Aurora, the sanctuary covers a portion of Mann's Creek as well as the woodlands, vernal pools, and wetlands that surround it. The sanctuary also hosts a 1.4-mile trail which provides spectacular views of two waterfalls and various rare wildlife native to the region.

Mill Road Scenic Overlook

Located along Mill Road, the overlook provides picturesque views of over 60 acres of land along the Town's rolling hills. While owned by the Town, the 60 acres, which include 18 acres of mature forest and over 30 acres of open meadows and marshland, is maintained by the Western New York Land Conservancy. Although there are no trails on the overlook, there is a small parking area and benches so visitors can take in all the excellent views.

Genesee Valley Land Conservancy Lands

The Genesee Valley Land Conservancy is a nonprofit group whose mission is to protect the habitat, open space, and farmland of the Genesee Valley region. While their focus is primarily along the Genesee River, there are several parcels within Aurora which are privately owned but forever preserved as open space through conservation easements. Overall, these preserved open spaces total 278 acres, most of which are found west of the Route 400 expressway, however, there are some also along Willardshire Rd near Knox Farm State Park.

West Falls Conservation Society

The West Falls Conservation Society is a 300-member conservation club located in the Hamlet of West Falls, offering opportunities for target shooting and sporting education. In operation since 1943, the society also hosts competitive leagues for various shooting sports in the spring and fall. The society's lands are significantly forested, which help contribute to the natural and rural character of the area.

East Aurora Fish & Game Club

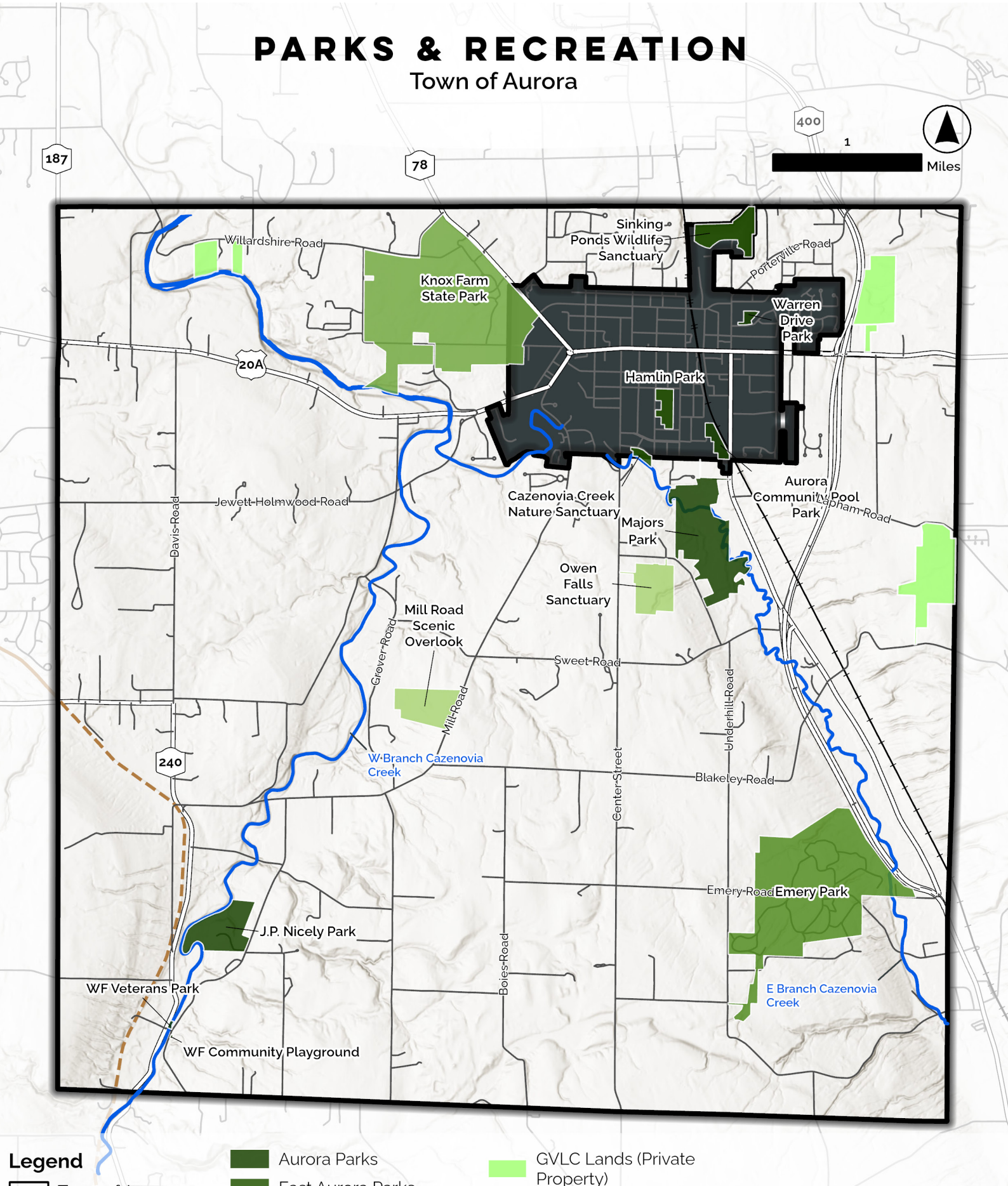
The East Aurora Fish & Game Club is a private member only club founded in 1905. Situated on 76 acres of woodland and hills in the Town of Aurora, the goals of the club is to preserve, promote, and provide a place for enjoyment of outdoor activities that support conservation.





PARKS & RECREATION

Town of Aurora



Legend

- Town of Aurora
- Village of East Aurora
- Aurora Parks
- East Aurora Parks
- Erie County Parks
- New York State Parks
- WNYLC Parks
- GVLC Lands (Private Property)
- Existing ECRT Trail
- Proposed ECRT Trail Extenstion

PARKS PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Understanding the performance and quality of services that parks and other recreational facilities within the Town of Aurora is a key factor to consider when trying to understand how these spaces can be improved to better serve the public. The National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) 2024 Agency Performance Review summarizes key finding on how well parks throughout the US are performing. These findings can assist park and recreation professionals in effectively managing and planning their operating resources and capital facilities. NRPA's review provides 29 different metrics to consider which are broken down by the total jurisdictional population. Some relevant and key metrics to consider for the Town of Aurora include:

1. A municipality typically offers one park for every 1,172 residents
2. A municipality typically offers 12.6 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents
3. A municipality typically offers 4.5 miles of trails for walking, hiking, and/or biking
4. A municipality's parks department typically budgets $135.53 per resident into their annual operating budget

Though not mentioned in the NRPA 2024 Review, access to parks is also another key metric to consider. The Town of Aurora is largely rural in character; therefore, there is not an abundance of sidewalks for residents to utilize when accessing parks. With that, parks in Aurora are largely only accessible by foot for residents who live immediately next to them. However, a driving analysis was conducted to determine the accessibility of parks in the Town of Aurora for residents by car, which is the main mode of transit in the Town.

Median Park Metric for Jurisdictions <20,000 Residents	Town Parks	Town, Village, County, State Parks & Nature Preserves
One park for every 1.172 residents	One park for every 2,788 residents	One park for every 1,072 residents
12.6 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents	16.9 acres for every 1,000 residents	103.5 acres for every 1,000 residents
At least 4.5 miles of trails	3.35 miles or trails (J.P. Nicely and Majors Park)	12.72 miles of trails
Annual operating expenses of $135.53 per resident	$47.00 per resident*	N/A

*Town's annual budget for Culture and Recreation as of 2025 is $655,435 – besides parks and recreational programming administration and maintenance, the budget also includes funding for celebrations (i.e. Independence Day) and the Town Historian.

Comparing the performance and quality of services for parks and recreational opportunities in the Town of Aurora to nationwide benchmarking metrics for jurisdictions with 20,000 residents or less, it demonstrates that Aurora falls short for the number of parks per capita but exceeds the acreage of parkland available to residents. Additionally, the Town is lacking in the availability of trails and the amount of funding allocated towards parks and recreation.

The Town of Aurora Recreation Department serves approximately 13,943 residents by maintaining 235.76 acres of parkland across five parks. This equates to approximately one park for every 2,788 residents and 16.9 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents. Based on nationwide metrics, Aurora falls short of the nationwide metric of one park for every 1,172 residents by over one thousand residents, however, it does exceed the metric of 10.6 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents by providing 16.9 acres for every 1,000 residents. When factoring in village, county, and state parks, as well as nature preserves in Aurora, the Town's metrics far outperform nationwide metrics for parkland availability and the number of available parks.

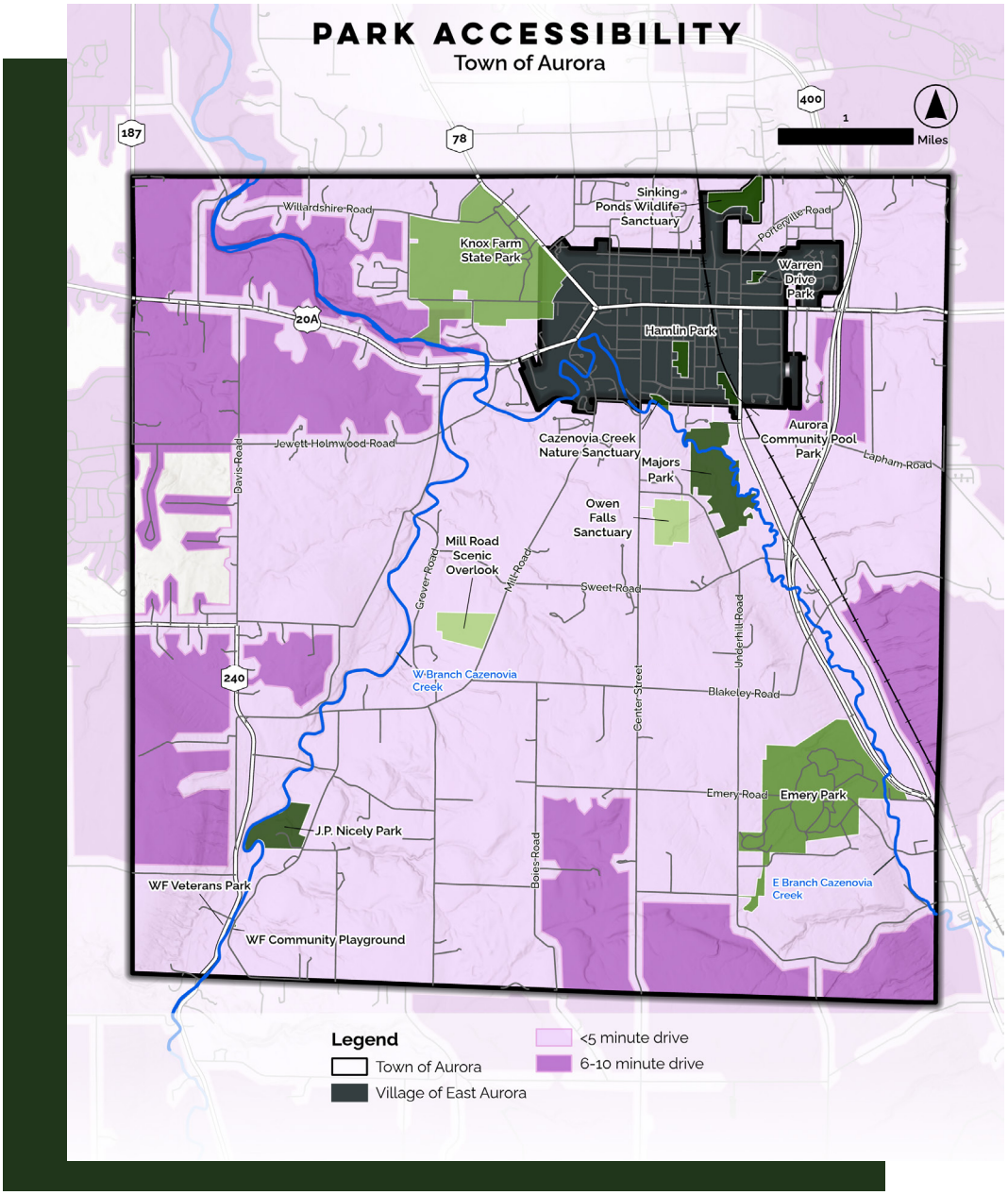


Considering trails, the Town falls short of the national metric for 4.5 miles of trails. Across the Town's parks there are approximately 3.35 miles of trails. Considering trails within county and state parks, as well as nature preserves in the town, the Town offers approximately 12.72 miles of trails. Once the portion of the Erie Cattaraugus Trail that will traverse through the Town is completed, Aurora will surpass 4.5 miles of available trails and will be able to offer residents the opportunity to connect to other trails outside the Town.

Lastly, the Town of Aurora dedicates approximately just one-third of the operating expenditure expected for parks & recreation in jurisdictions of 20,000 or less residents nationwide. Much of the land the Town's parks cover, especially its largest at Majors Park, embraces the area's natural environment and allow natural features and vegetation to permeate. This in turn reduces maintenance costs for the Town while also allowing residents to immerse themselves in truly natural settings through passive recreation.

PARKS ACCESSIBILITY ANALYSIS

One of the most important aspects of a great park system is its accessibility to the residents it serves. To determine the accessibility of parks in the Town of Aurora, a driveshed analysis was conducted for every town, village, county, and state-owned park in Aurora, as well as nature preserves. As seen in the adjacent map, 95.3% of residential parcels in the Town are within a 5-minute drive of a park in the Aurora (light pink); 100% of residential parcels are within a 10-minute drive of a park in Aurora (dark pink). Due to the Town's rural nature, there is a lack of a pedestrian network (sidewalks and trails) that connects residents to the Town's Park System, however, everyone in the Town does have convenient access to parkland with just a short car trip.



HISTORICAL ASSETS

There are no historic districts or sites in the Town of Aurora that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. However, there is one district and 42 sites that are eligible for historic designation with the National Register of Historic Places. Of the 42 eligible sites throughout the Town of Aurora, 31 of them are within Knox Farm State Park, which itself is eligible to be listed as a historic district. Below is a heat map indicating the location of historically eligible sites throughout the Town. Some notable sites include:

West Falls Train Depot: Reconstructed in 1917 following a fire which destroyed the original depot. This building functioned as a passenger station for visitors to the Hamlet of West Falls along the Buffalo, Rochester, and Pittsburgh Railroad, which ceased passenger operations in West Falls as of 1961.

The Dog Bar: Originally built in 1835 to serve as a hotel for hunters, farmers, salesmen, and loggers passing through the Hamlet of West Falls, the building has remained in operation as an upscale, yet cozy, restaurant by the same family since 1941.

Knox Farm & the Knox Family Mansion: Constructed in 1917 with late 19th and early 20th century colonial revival styles, the 14,400 sq ft Knox Farm Mansion was the former summer estate of the Knox Family, a prominent family involved in various businesses throughout the Buffalo area. Situated on the present-day 600+ acres plus Knox Farm State Park, the summer estate and 30 other buildings scattered throughout the park are eligible for historic designation. Today, the Knox Family Mansion is available to rent for various events such as weddings, while the park grounds are utilized for daily park activities and also hosts the annual Borderland Music and Arts festival which attracts 10,000+ attendees each year.

If these sites were to be listed in the State and National Register of Historic Places, they could be eligible for historic tax credits to assist in repairs and renovations. Additionally, preserving historic sites such as these would help the community to preserve its historic character, thus making the area more attractive to residents and visitors alike.

CULTURAL ASSETS

West Falls Center for the Arts: Located at 1863 Davis Road, the West Falls Center for the Arts is a nonprofit arts venue providing programming for veterans, kids, caregivers, and those with mental disabilities. In addition to providing this programming, the Center also hosts live music entertainment for residents and visitors of West Falls throughout the year.

The Blueberry Treehouse Farm: Located at 1897 Davis Road, the Blueberry Treehouse Farm is a multi-entertainment venue open to the public throughout the summer and fall months. The business's primary draw is its u-pick organic blueberry farm which is open from July to August where visitors to West Falls can harvest their own fresh blueberries. In addition, they also have a treehouse café and outdoor concert stage where visitors can purchase delicious food and listen to local music, all while enjoying the rural setting of Aurora. The café and farm bring in thousands of visitors to the West Falls area each year, helping stimulate the economic activity of other businesses nearby.

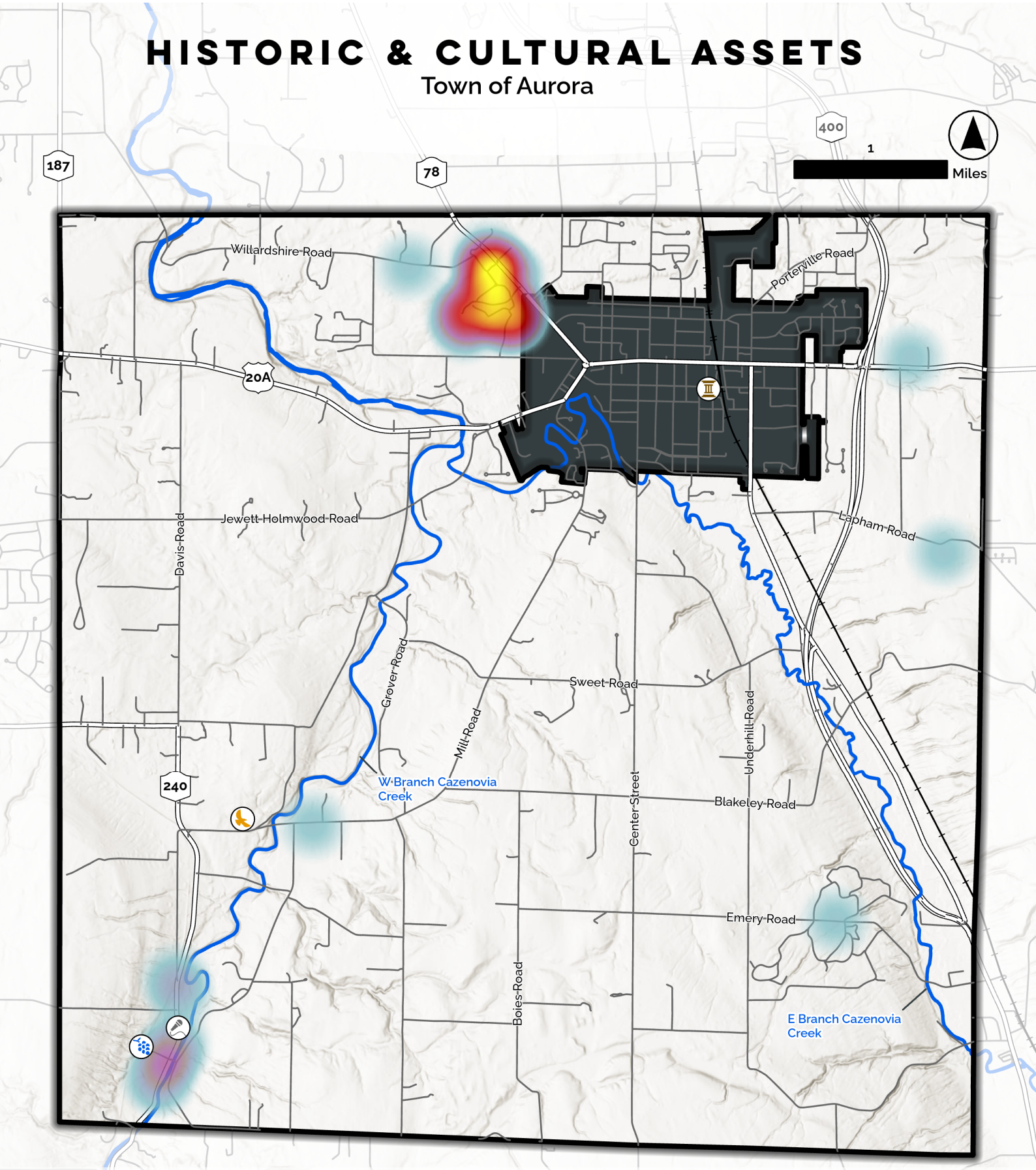
Aurora History Museum: Located in the Town of Aurora Municipal Building, the Aurora History Museum features Native American artifacts, personal possessions of the community's earliest settlers, and items related to local industry and business. In addition, showcasing the history of the Town, the Museum and the Town's Historian provide research resources and assistance for any visitors seeking to learn more about their ancestral history in the area.

Hawk Creek Wildlife Center: Located at 1963 Mill Road in the Hamlet of Jewettville, Hawk Creek Wildlife Center is an aviary wildlife center that promotes the conservation and education of flying birds through shows, animal interactions, and educational programs. Hawk Creek Wildlife Center is a recreational and entertainment experience which helps attract visitors to the Town.



HISTORIC & CULTURAL ASSETS

Town of Aurora



Legend

- Town of Aurora
- Village of East Aurora

Concentration of Eligible Historic Sites

Sparse

Dense

Cultural Sites

- Aurora History Museum
- Hawk Creek Wildlife Center
- The Blueberry Treehouse Farm
- West Falls Center for the Arts

WHAT WE HEARD

Throughout the planning process, residents and stakeholders of Aurora were continuously engaged to ensure the plan reflects their desires and vision for the community. Engagement opportunities included a public survey, stakeholder interviews and focus groups, and two public workshops. With regard to Recreational, Cultural, and Historical Resources, residents emphasized the importance of high-quality parks, cultural amenities, and preserved historic character as core elements of Aurora's identity.

- **Expand and Connect Trails:** Trails were the most requested recreational feature, with strong interest in expanding multi-use trails, walking and biking paths, and connections between parks and neighborhoods
- **Preserve Historic Assets:** Residents value the Town's heritage and support the adaptive reuse of historic structures, better promotion of historic sites like the Millard Fillmore House, and incentives to maintain historic homes
- **Improve Communication and Accessibility:** Resident suggestions included creating a centralized and accessible resource for sharing information about events and recreation and ensuring parks are welcoming and usable for all ages and abilities.

KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

"Opportunities" represent existing strengths or assets in the Town that can be further leveraged and supports the potential for new development, business creation, or achieving the plan's vision statement and goals.

Historic Preservation & Cultural Tourism: Formally listing eligible sites (i.e., portions of Knox Farm & West Falls Train Depot) on the National Register would unlock historic tax credits, bolster community pride, and attract visitors seeking heritage experiences.

Potential Rail Trail & Trail Connectivity: Tying in the Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail with existing park trails, can form a broader network joining hamlets, scenic overlooks, and historic points together—ultimately surpassing the 4.5-mile national standard for walkable and bikeable trails.

Local Artisan & Agri-Tourism Partnerships: Collaborations with farms, the West Falls Center for the Arts, and the Blueberry Treehouse Farm can produce workshops, seasonal festivals, or artisan fairs that highlight local goods and cultural traditions.

"Issues" represent either existing needs or gaps in the Town that limits to future development or the Town from achieving the plan's vision statement and goals.

Limited Pedestrian Connectivity to Recreational Sites: Many parks (i.e., Knox Farm & Majors Park) lack sidewalks or safe pedestrian routes, making it difficult for non-drivers—especially children and seniors—to reach recreational amenities.

Gaps in Trail Mileage and Linkages: Town parks collectively have about 3.35 miles of trails, below the 4.5 miles recommended by national metrics. Despite natural assets like Cazenovia Creek and scenic preserves, trail connections and signage remain inconsistent.

Insufficient Year-Round Indoor Facilities: Most local parks offer primarily outdoor amenities, leaving limited indoor gathering or recreational space (gyms, community centers) during winter months or inclement weather.

AGRICULTURAL & NATURAL RESOURCES

Understanding and managing the Town of Aurora's agricultural and natural resources is essential for preserving the rural charm, environmental integrity, and cultural identity that residents value deeply. Inventorying these resources—including farmland, forests, wetlands, water bodies, and wildlife—helps illustrate the town's ecological richness and supports informed decision-making that balances growth with stewardship. While agricultural uses and open lands continue to define much of the Town's landscape, they face increasing pressure from residential development, invasive species, and climate change. Informed planning and protection strategies are needed to conserve these vital resources, promote sustainable farming, and safeguard natural systems for future generations.

WATER RESOURCES

Watersheds

A watershed is a land area that channels all rainfall and snow melt to a given body of water. Water from creeks and streams flow from high ground to lower ground, into waterbodies like rivers that themselves feed into a larger waterbody such as a lake, bay, or ocean. The United States Geological Survey delineates watersheds by a system of decreasing geographic levels: national regions, subregions, basins, sub-basins, watersheds, and ending at sub-watersheds. Each of these features is assigned a hydrologic unit code (HUC), which is given two additional digits for each level in the system.

The Town of Aurora is primarily within the Buffalo River watershed (HUC-10) of the Niagara River/Lake Erie sub-basin (HUC-8). The Buffalo River watershed is in the southern portion of the Niagara River/Lake Erie watershed. It has a total area of 105,392 acres and includes 312 miles of waterways. Waterways within the watershed include the Buffalo River and Cazenovia Creek, the latter of which branches into its West Branch and East Branch in the Town of Aurora. To a smaller extent, portions of the Town are also in the Buffalo Creek and Smoke Creek-Frontal Lake Erie sub-watersheds.

Watershed Name	Total Area of Town Covered	Farmland		Forest		Developed Land	
		Acres	% of Total Area	Acres	% of Total Area	Acres	% of Total Area
Buffalo Creek	818 Acres	34.5	4.2%	376.8	46.1%	352.93	43.1%
Buffalo River	19,612 Acres	4,791.5	24.4%	10,271.6	52.4%	3,420.9	17.4%
Smoke Creek - Frontal Lake Erie	1,311 Acres	391.9	29.9%	613.2	46.8%	213.8	16.3%

Water Bodies

There are three large ponds and 60 small, unnamed ponds in Aurora. The large ponds are the Bob-O-Link Golf Course Pond, Christ the King Seminary Pond, and the East Aurora Country Club Pond. In addition to the West and East Branches of Cazenovia Creek, Aurora also contains portions of Smokes Creek, Pipe Creek, and Tannery Brook. Tannery Brook is in the northeast corner of the Town and primarily runs through the Village of East Aurora, where it connects with Cazenovia Creek. Smokes Creek is located on the western border of the Town of Aurora and primarily runs through Orchard Park and Lackawanna, before emptying into Lake Erie. Pipe Creek is located along the Town's southern border near the Hamlet of West Falls.

Water Quality

The NYSDEC classifies the quality of waterbodies with a grade of A-D. Class "A" waterbodies are a suitable source for water supply and contact recreation, while Class "D" waterbodies are only deemed suitable for recreational fishing. Both branches of the Cazenovia Creek are Class "B: waterbodies, meaning they are suitable for fishing as well as primary and secondary recreation.

Flood Zones

Floodplains are areas of low-lying land typically found adjacent to bodies of water that become inundated during times of high-water flow. Floodplains offer several ecosystem services that benefit the natural environment and residents of Aurora. These ecosystem services include regulating flood damage, recharging groundwater capacity, regulating sediment and nutrient levels, and maintaining wildlife habitats.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maps flood zones with boundaries that represent the 1% (100-year floodplain) and 0.02% (500-year floodplain) chance of an annual flood. Residents in communities like Aurora who participate in FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and reside within the 100-year floodplain are entitled to a low-cost federal flood insurance plan that protects their property if damaged by a flood. While flood zones can be mapped, they are not static. Land use, climate change, the level of impervious surfaces, precipitation levels, and run-off rates can all impact flood zones. Furthermore, areas outside of flood zones may flood during intense storms.

In the Town of Aurora, the 100-year floodplain boundary covers land (1,456 acres) directly surrounding the East Branch and West Branch of Cazenovia Creek. The West Branch of the creek is considered a Zone A area, or a Special Flood Hazard Area. The East Branch of the creek is mostly considered Zone AE, meaning it is in a Regulatory Floodway. Both Zone A and Zone AE areas are considered high risk and properties within these areas are required to have flood insurance while any new development is required to obtain a floodplain development permit from the Town. The 500-year floodplain is very small (315 acres) and is located only around the split of the East Branch and West Branch of Cazenovia Creek and small portions of the East Branch.

Wetlands

Wetlands provide habitat for wildlife, filter surface water runoff and help control flooding. They also provide scenic and educational value. Wetlands include forested swamps, open water marshes, wet meadows, and vernal pools. National Wetland Inventory (NWI) mapping by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service identify the location of several wetlands within the Town. Most mapped federal wetlands in Aurora are classified as PUB (pond), PSS (shrub swamp), PFO (forested or wooded swamp), or PEM (emergent marsh, fen, or wet meadow), and riverine beds. In Aurora, there are over 440 federally mapped wetlands which, in total, comprise approximately 2,368 acres of land in Aurora (10.9%).

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) only maps wetlands for informational purposes as of January 1st, 2025. The NYSDEC Environmental Mapper can be used to assist with locating these informational wetlands.

FEMA's Community Rating System

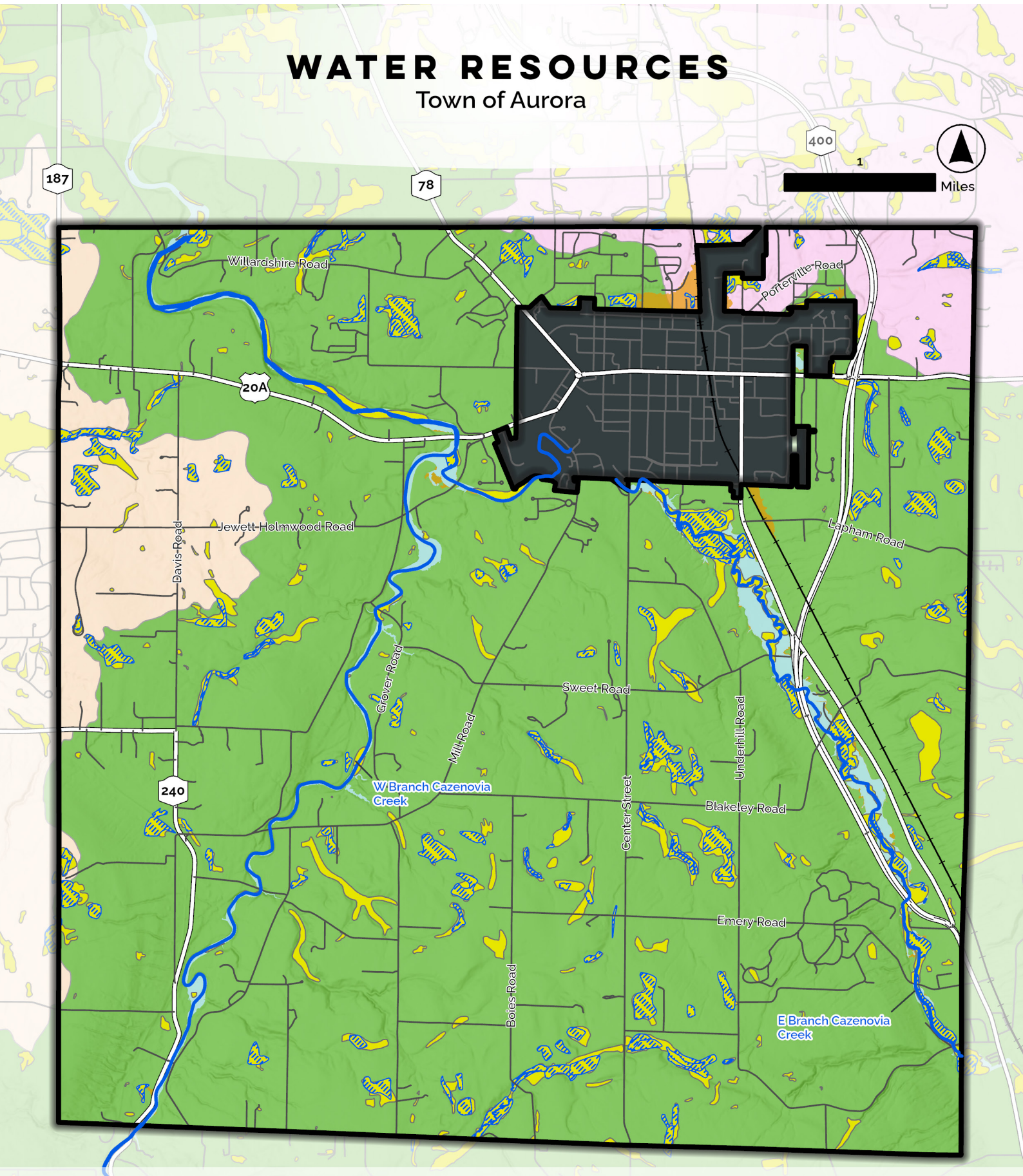
The Community Rating System (CRS) is a voluntary incentive program that encourages community floodplain management practices that exceed the minimum requirements of the NFIP. In communities that participate in CRS, NFIP insurance rates are discounted to varying degrees depending on the amount of "credit points" earned by the community. Credit points can be earned by a series of actions, including map information services, hazard disclosures, publicly sharing flood protection information, providing flood protection assistance, stormwater management, floodplain management planning, building dams and levees, and many more.

The Town of Aurora does not currently participate in the CRS program. The Town could become a participant of the program by appointing a CRS Coordinator to serve as the liaison between the community and FEMA. The application process begins by submitting a letter of interest to the FEMA Regional Office and the implementation of floodplain management activities that warrant at least 500 CRS credit points.



WATER RESOURCES

Town of Aurora



Legend

- Town of Aurora
- Village of East Aurora

HUC10 Watersheds

- Buffalo Creek
- Buffalo River
- Smoke Creek-Frontal Lake Erie

Wetlands

- NWI Wetlands
- DEC Informational Wetlands

Flood Zones

- 100-year Flood Zone
- 500-year Flood Zone

CLIMATE & AIR QUALITY

The Average yearly temperature in the Town of Aurora is 48.4˚F, with July highs around 78˚F and January lows around 15˚F. The Town receives approximately 44 in. of rain and 116 in. of snow each year, The annual average Air Quality Index for Aurora is 27, which means the air quality is satisfactory and poses little to no risk to human health.

Climate Change

Erie County, including the Town of Aurora, is included as part of Region 1 of NYSERDA's ClimAID Climate Regions. The ClimAID report was published in 2011 and updated in 2014 with new projections for climate changes to the year 2100. The report projects an increase in temperature for Region 1 between +4.3˚F to +6.3˚F by the 2050s and as much as +11.7˚F by 2100. Additionally, projections for increased precipitation range from +2% to +7% by the 2050s to as much as +19% by 2100. Precipitation is projected to increase mostly within the winter months, i.e. increased snowfall. By 2100, the state's growing season could increase by a month, which could prove to increase agricultural productivity; on the other hand, summers will be more intense and more strenuous for human activity, especially those with respiratory issues and allergies.

Aurora's Climate Smart Communities Participation

The Town of Aurora is a participant in New York State's Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program and has a Bronze Certification. The certification program recognizes communities for their accomplishments towards mitigating and adapting to climate change at the community level. Each level involves earning points and meeting certain requirements related to priority actions and CSC pledge elements. The Town of Aurora passed the Climate Smart Community Pledge in September 2022 and approved a CSC Task Force in October 2022. In October 2023, the Town of Aurora was awarded the Bronze Certification with 132 points earned from 19 completed actions.

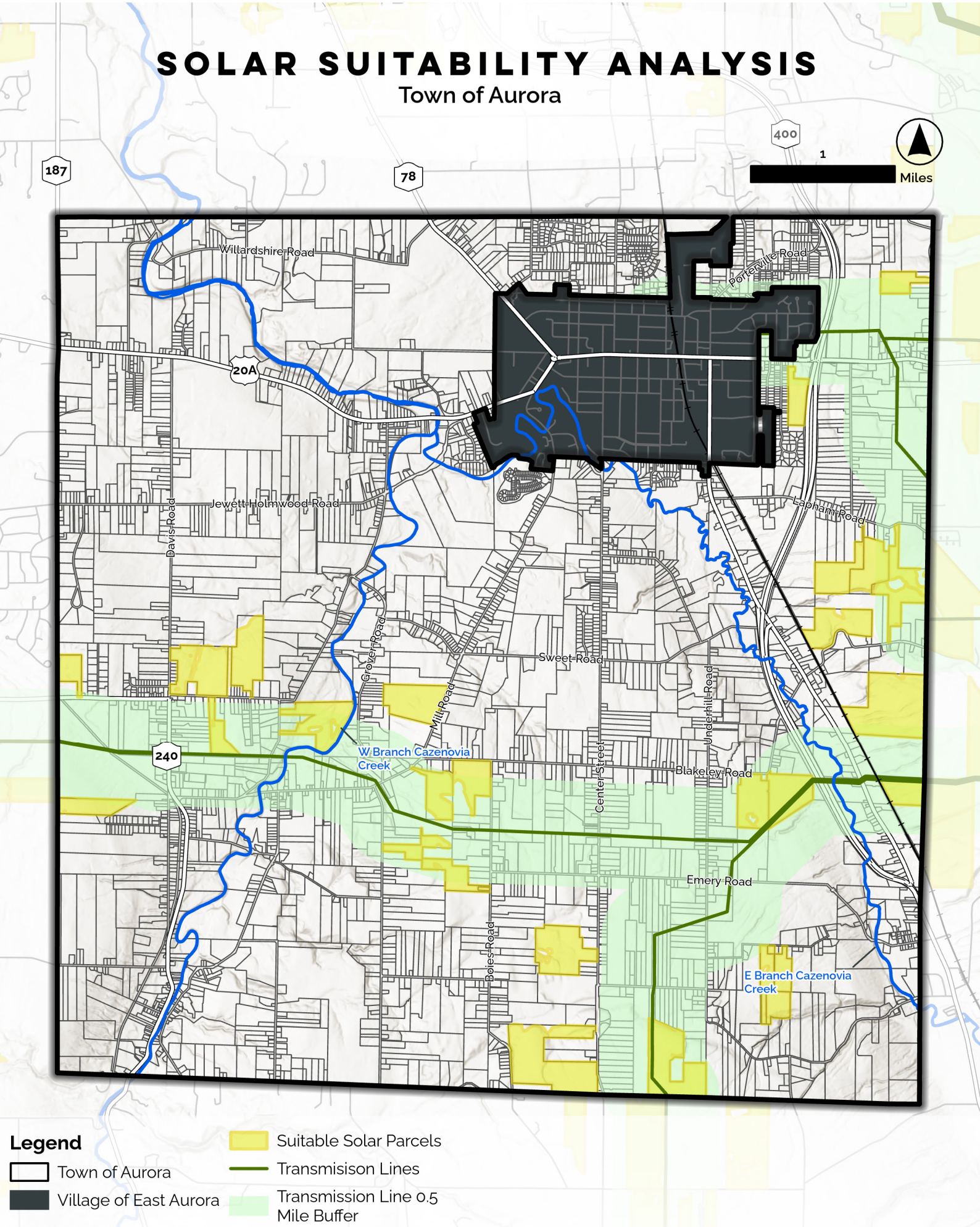
Solar Suitability Analysis

In 2019, Erie County sought to identify parcels throughout the County that would be suitable for solar farm development in excess of 20 acres and/or approximately 5 MW of energy. The objective of this analysis was to (1) identify areas for development to meet the State's renewable energy goals and (2) find alternative suitable land besides farms, so to ensure the land remains productive farmland. The criteria for a parcel to be considered suitable included (1) being greater than 20 acres, (2) within 0.5 miles of an existing transmission line, (3) not a wetland, and (4) is either vacant or undeveloped according to NYS tax parcel codes. Across the Town of Aurora, 29 parcels spanning 1,537 acres were identified as being potentially suitable for solar farm development. The majority of these parcels are found in the southern half of town, congregate along two transmission lines that cut through the town there.

In addition to traditional solar energy farms, a burgeoning trend in rural communities over the last several years has been the act of agrivoltaics. Agrivoltaics is the combination of agricultural practices with solar installations, that allows for dual land use, optimizing space and increasing agricultural yields. By leveraging synergies between solar generation and farming, communities can benefit from enhanced food and other agricultural product production while simultaneously generating renewable energy, creating a win-win scenario for local economies.

Soils & Topography

Soils are the foundation for ecosystems and can greatly impact projects such as drainage systems, septic systems, building basement and foundation construction, and agricultural yield. The Town of Aurora has over 100 different soil types. Using data from the Soil Survey Geographic Database (SSURGO) the Town's slope gradient can be calculated (in weighted averages), which is important given that slope heavily affects the potential for development and can incur additional construction costs. The elevation in the Town of Aurora varies from a less than 1% slope to up to 43%. The steepest slopes in Aurora are near the southeast of the Town, near the East Branch of Cazenovia Creek. To a smaller extent, there are also some steep slopes near the West Branch of the creek. Approximately 996 acres of the Town have slopes over 20%, constituting about 4.6% of total land in Aurora. Approximately 681 acres (3.1%) have slopes between 30% and 43%. The vast majority (over 92%) of land in Aurora has slopes of 12% or less.


SOLAR SUITABILITY ANALYSIS
Town of Aurora
187
78
400
1
Miles
Willardshire Road
Porterville Road
20A
Jewett-Holmwood Road
Davis Road
Lapham Road
Grover Road
Sweet Road
Mill Road
Underhill Road
240
W Branch Cazenovia Creek
Blakeley Road
Center Street
Emery Road
Boies Road
E Branch Cazenovia Creek
Legend
Town of Aurora
Village of East Aurora
Suitable Solar Parcels
Transmisison Lines
Transmission Line 0.5 Mile Buffer

Wildlife

There are two species which are considered Rare and Endangered that have been recorded in Aurora: the Bigeye Chub (Hybopsis amblops), a freshwater fish, and the Yellow Giant Hyssop (Agastache nepetoides), a perennial flowering plant. The Bigeye Chub is listed as Critically Imperiled or Imperiled in New York but secure throughout the world. The Yellow Giant Hyssop is listed as Threatened (likely to become Endangered in the foreseeable future) in New York, but secure throughout the world.

In The Town of Aurora, according to the New York iMapInvasives mapping tool, there are 35 confirmed documentations of invasive species. Invasive species are ranked by a tier system formulated by state agencies including the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and the NYS Natural Heritage Program. The tiers range from 4 to 1, with 4 being the most urgent, described as a "highly invasive species with great abundance in the region, [with the] management goal of local control." Of the 86 Tier 4 species which have been identified in the Western New York region, 29 have been identified in the Town of Aurora. This also means that over 80% of the invasive species in Aurora are considered the most urgent with management response being focused on local control.

Forested Land

There are 17,374 acres of land in the Town of Aurora that are forested. This equates to 79.9% of the total land in the town having at least 2% - 96% tree coverage. Tree canopy data through the NLCD is provided by the U.S. Forest Service at 30-meter resolution. Tree canopy cover is derived from multi-spectral satellite imagery and other available ground and ancillary information. Tree canopy refers to the layer of branches of leaves that cover the ground when viewed from above. Tree canopy is an important metric for communities not only because of the ecosystem services that trees provide (removal of pollutants, reduction of stormwater runoff, carbon sequestration, and more), but also because trees provide shade and cooling for homes, businesses, and users of sidewalks and streets. The presence of trees nearly universally increases property values and the desirability of a neighborhood. Tree canopy cover is calculated on a percentage scale from 0% to about 96%. In the Town of Aurora, about 4,366 acres have 0% tree cover, equating to about 21% of total land in the town. Conversely, 7,709 acres (35.5% of land cover) have 76% – 96% tree cover.

Agriculture and Farmland Protection

Agricultural Parcels

0.3% of all parcels in the Town of Aurora are classified as agricultural land uses. Prominent agricultural land uses still present in the Town include the Strawberry Banks Farm (equestrian breeding facility), several nurseries and garden centers, and a few remaining family farms. Overall, agricultural land uses cover 2.4% of all landcover in the Town (508 acres). The true total number of agricultural parcels and the total land area they cover cannot be determined as a significant portion of actively farmed land in the Town is classified as vacant land.

Agricultural Soils

The majority of farmland in the Town of Aurora is considered high-quality by the USDA Soil Survey. High-quality soils are characterized as "Prime," "Prime if drained," and "Farmland of statewide importance." Approximately 3,558 acres, or 16% of land within the Town, is considered prime farmland, which is land that is most highly suited for productive agriculture.

Calculated % Tree Cover	Acres	% of Total Acres in Town
0	4,366.0	20.1%
2% to 5%	4.46	0.02%
6% to 25%	1,489.9	6.85%
26% to 50%	3,233.1	14.8%
51% to 75%	4,937.5	22.7%
76% to 96%	7,709.1	35.5%

Note: Due to rounding differences, the percentage of total acres is not equal to 100%.



Agricultural Regulations

The Town of Aurora has a Right to Farm Law, adopted in 2007, which recognizes the importance of the agriculture industry to the Town and "limits the circumstances under which farming may be deemed a nuisance and to allow agricultural practices inherent to and necessary for the business of farming to proceed and be undertaken free of unreasonable and unwarranted interference or restriction."

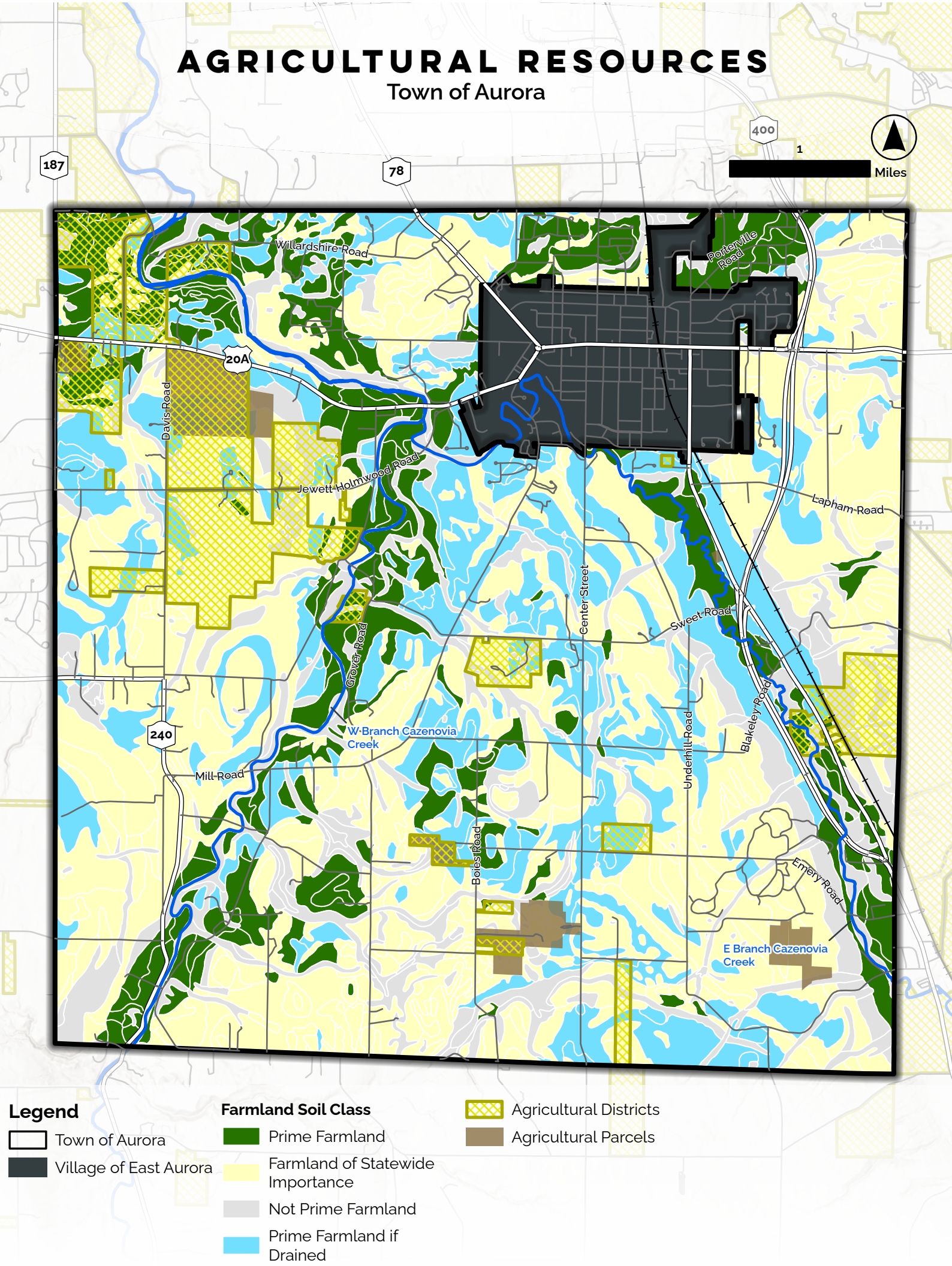
New York State Agriculture and Markets law authorizes counties to establish Agricultural Districts for the purpose of promoting agriculture. Erie County currently has four consolidated Agricultural Districts comprising approximately 265,661 acres. Each Agricultural District must be reviewed every eight years, at which time parcels may be added or removed. Land included in an Agricultural District must be "highly suitable for agricultural production" and "feasible for farming if conditions remain the same." Agricultural Districts protect agricultural parcels by prohibiting local governments from enforcing laws, ordinances, rules, or regulations which would "unreasonably restrict or regulate farm operations within an agricultural district; discourage private nuisance lawsuits; limit the impact of projects that receive public funding or require an eminent domain; and limit assessments for special improvement districts to dwellings and farm structures directly benefiting from the services. The Town of Aurora is in the Central Ag District (#5). As of 2022, there are 24 parcels in Aurora totaling 2,143 acres that are within the Ag District.

Type of Farmland	Acres	% of Total Acres in Town
Prime Farmland	3,558.8	16.40%
Farmland of Statewide Importance	9,674.3	44.50%
Prime Farmland if Drained	4,858.1	22.30%
Not Prime Farmland	3,649.1	16.80%



AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Town of Aurora



WHAT WE HEARD

Throughout the planning process, residents and stakeholders of Aurora were continuously engaged to ensure the plan reflects their desires and vision for the community. Engagement opportunities included a public survey, stakeholder interviews and focus groups, and two public workshops. With regard to Agricultural & Natural Resources, the community strongly values the preservation of farmland, forests, and natural ecosystems. Feedback emphasized both protection and responsible use of Aurora's rural and environmental assets.

- **Protect Farmland and Rural Character:** A major concern is the growing loss of farmland and open space due to subdivisions. Residents overwhelmingly support stronger land conservation measures and zoning tools to preserve Aurora's agricultural heritage and rural identity.
- **Promote Small-Scale Farming and Local Food Access:** Residents want to expand micro-farming, homesteading, and community gardening. There is support for reducing barriers to small-scale agriculture, such as lowering permit fees for chickens or gardens, and offering tax incentives for light agricultural use on residential properties
- **Conserve Natural Resources and Ecosystems:** Forests, wetlands, and stream corridors were identified as critical natural areas in need of protection. Residents advocated for expanded tree planting, invasive species management, and stronger stormwater controls to protect water quality and natural habitats.
- **Support Agritourism and Local Agriculture:** Community members see potential for farm-based tourism, local food events, and greater visibility for Aurora's agricultural economy. Many residents support farm-to-school programs and enhanced marketing of local farms and products.



KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

"Opportunities" represent existing strengths or assets in the Town that can be further leveraged and supports the potential for new development, business creation, or achieving the plan's vision statement and goals.

Solar Farm Siting on Less Productive or Vacant Lands: The County's solar suitability analysis identified 29 parcels suitable for solar. Directing large-scale renewable energy projects away from prime farmland helps the Town meet green-energy goals while minimizing loss of productive acreage.

Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Initiatives: Aurora is already Bronze CSC certified, and the Town should continue to support actions that would lead to silver certification. This would in turn position the Town well to pursue additional grants and programs—such as flood resilience projects, green energy development, and farmland preservation—that address both climate adaptation and agricultural needs.

Targeted Preservation of Key Farmland & Wildlife Corridors: With prime farmland, forested areas, wetlands often adjacent, Aurora can prioritize key parcels to conserve via easements, purchase-of-development-rights (PDR), or public-private partnerships, strengthening critical habitat connectivity.

"Issues" represent either existing needs or gaps in the Town that limits future development or the Town from achieving the plan's vision statement and goals.

Vulnerability in Flood-Prone Areas: Approximately 1,456 acres near the creek's floodplain are at high risk of flooding, yet Aurora does not participate in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS), missing out on opportunities for reduced flood insurance rates and enhanced flood mitigation.

Nutrient Runoff and Stream Protection: Although waterways like Cazenovia Creek provide vital ecosystem services, not all riparian corridors have protective setbacks or are recognized for conservation, risking erosion and reduced water quality.

Incremental Loss of Tree Canopy on Private Lands: While Aurora enjoys an overall high tree-cover percentage, ongoing residential development and clearing for utility installations can gradually reduce forest continuity, impacting habitat corridors and long-term ecological health.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Community Engagement is an essential part in the comprehensive planning process. This chapter highlights the various methods used to engage the Town of Aurora residents, giving them opportunities to share their insights, opinions, and aspirations for the community. The feedback gathered helped shape the plan's vision statement, goals, and recommendations. For a Comprehensive Plan to be effective, it must have strong community support. By incorporating public input, the actions and projects outlined are more likely to succeed, as they align with the community's needs and priorities.



FIRST PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

The first round of community engagement was held at East Aurora High School cafeteria in February 2025. The meeting was held in an open house format with no formal presentation. Instead, attendees were encouraged to engage with the various informational and exercise boards throughout the space.

This format allowed community members to 'drop in' at any time between a 2-hour window that worked for them and engage in several activities across several stations with assistance from consultants and project steering committee members.

More than 102 community members came to the open house to provide feedback at the five different stations.

The following stations were included at the open house:

1. Plan Overview
2. Vision Statement
3. SWOT Analysis
4. Community Profile Findings & Community Feedback
5. Mapping Exercise



Plan Overview

This station included a board addressing some common questions regarding the plan as well as a schedule of the plan's progress, indicating what work has been completed leading up the workshop and what is planned to occur throughout the rest of the planning process.



Vision Statement

At this station, attendees were presented with the plan's draft vision statement and asked to provide feedback on what they liked, what they disliked, and what was missing. Feedback gathered from this station was used to craft the final vision statement.

SWOT Analysis

At this station, attendees were asked to complete a SWOT analysis which asks participants to identify what they believe to be the Town's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Understanding residents' perceptions of all these components helped to better align the plan's recommendations to specific issues and opportunities perceived by the community.



Community Profile Findings & Community Feedback

At this station, attendees were presented with key findings and maps from each of the section of the Community Profile. These sections include: Land Use & Zoning, Housing & Neighborhoods, Recreational, Historical & Cultural Assets, Agricultural & Natural Resources, Transportation Systems, and Public & Municipal Services. Each section had a board with leading questions that attendees were asked to respond to in order to further understand their priorities and vision for the future.

Mapping Exercise

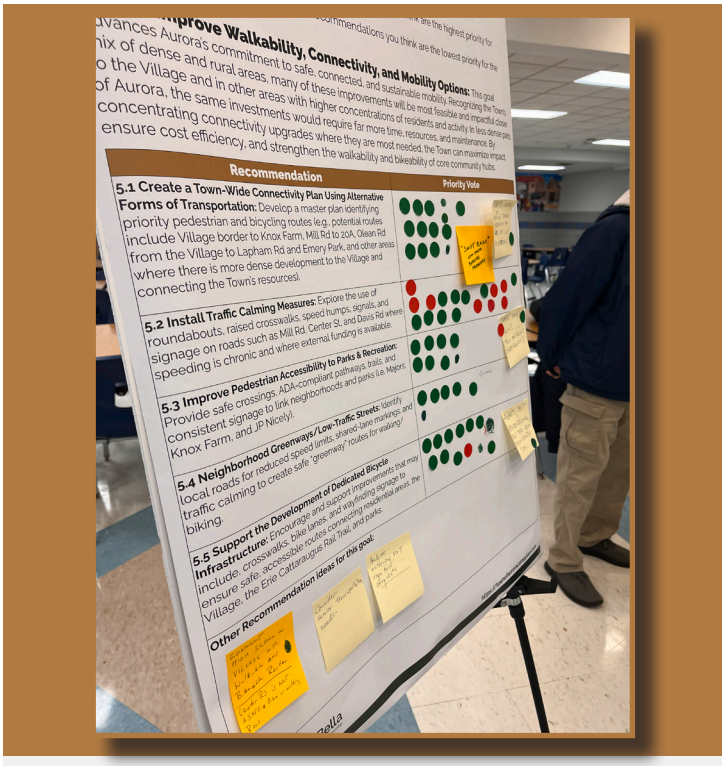
At this final station, attendees were presented with two maps. The first map asked attendees to locate where their favorite place in Aurora is and explain why. The second map asked attendees to locate areas in Aurora that they think need improvement and explain why. This information was very helpful in identifying shared viewpoints and potentially overlooked areas in the Town for future investment.



SECOND PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

The second and final Open House was held in October 2025. This open house presented draft materials from the comprehensive plan, including the future land use map and the recommendations developed for each of the plan's goals. The meeting was held in an open house format with no formal presentation. Instead, attendees were encouraged to engage with the various boards around the room and provide their feedback.

Over 80 community members attended the open house to provide their feedback on the plan's proposed future land use and help us prioritize which recommendations they think the Town should seek to accomplish first. This feedback provided invaluable information that helped clarify and finalize the latter section of the comprehensive plan.







STAKEHOLDER & FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

To ensure the plan considered a diverse array of opinions and insights from residents and other stakeholders who held special knowledge or interest with Aurora, stakeholder and focus group interviews were conducted. During the interview process, 29 stakeholders identified by the Steering Committee were reached out to by the consultant team, with 23 ultimately being interviewed. Interviews consisted of nine individual interviews and four focus groups, including: Agriculture & Natural Resources, Housing & Neighborhoods, Village of East Aurora, Town of Aurora Department Heads.

Key takeaways from these interviews included (See Appendix C for a full summary):

1. **Balancing growth with the preservation of Aurora's small-town and rural character**
2. **Diversifying housing options for a thriving community**
3. **Enhancing parks & recreation for future needs**
4. **Promoting environmental sustainability & climate resiliency**
5. **Investing in infrastructure and digital connectivity**
6. **Strengthening hamlets as vibrant, self-sufficient hubs**
7. **Supporting the local agricultural economy and protecting farmland from development pressure**
8. **Strengthening coordination between the Town and Village**

COMMUNITY SURVEY

As the final component of the community engagement plan for the Town of Aurora Comprehensive Plan Update, a community survey was administered from November 2024 to March 2025 to ensure a wide-ranging response rate from as many residents in the Town as possible. Surveys were available to be completed online as well as paper copies which could be picked up at the Town Hall and the first public workshop. The community survey was promoted via press release, the Town and project website, the Town's CodeRED notification system, and via a mailer that was sent to every residential household in Aurora, outside of the village. Overall, the community survey campaign yielded 865 responses, 827 of which were from the online survey while an additional 38 were collected via paper survey.

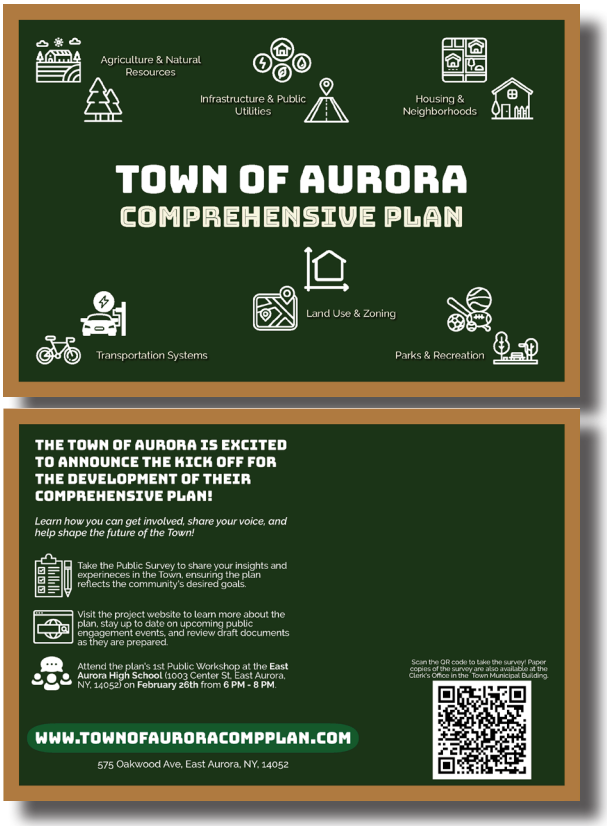
The survey included questions concerning each of the primary topics covered in the Community Profile. Key takeaways from the survey responses that helped inform the development of the plans' recommendations include (See Appendix B for a full summary):

1. **There is a strong attachment to the rural and small-town character of Aurora**
2. **Residents have a strong preference for conservation and open space preservation**
3. **There is a desire to limit new development**
4. **Identified need for senior and first-time homebuyer housing**
5. **Preference for new housing to be located near the Village or in existing neighborhoods**
6. **A strong satisfaction with the Town's parks, but a desire for more trails and natural areas**
7. **The need for improved walkability and traffic calming in key areas**
8. **Broad support for protecting natural resources**
9. **Open space preservation is a key priority**
10. **Stormwater drainage issues are localized but impactful**

ALTERNATIVE OUTREACH STRATEGIES

Project Website

To support broad and ongoing participation, a project website (**https://townofauroracompplan.com**) was launched that served as the central hub for the comprehensive plan. The site explained the plan's background and process, hosted the public survey, listed and updated upcoming events, offered a direct contact form to reach the consultant team or join the email notification list, and published draft materials as they became available for review. In total, the website drew over 1,900 visits from approximately 1,500 unique visitors, demonstrating strong community interest and providing an accessible, one-stop portal throughout the planning process.



Town-wide Mailer

To introduce the planning effort early and equitably, a mailer was sent to every household in the Town of Aurora (outside the Village of East Aurora). As one of the public's first touch points with the comprehensive plan update, the mailer explained why the Town was undertaking the effort, directed residents to the project website to learn about the process, sign up for email updates, and take the online public survey, and invited them to attend the upcoming Public Open House #1. This broad, direct outreach ensured that all households—regardless of internet use or prior engagement—received clear, actionable information on how to get involved from the very start.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this framework is to offer a forward-looking guide for elected officials, town committees, local leaders, residents, business owners, and other stakeholders in the Town of Aurora. It serves as a foundation to achieve the Town's overarching vision and support sound decision-making. This Plan is informed by feedback from the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, Town Officials, Town Committees, stakeholders, and the public at large. It emphasizes the importance of community engagement in fostering positive change and preserving the community's assets, resources, and values. A successful Comprehensive Plan should address both the short-term and long-term needs of the Town, with varying levels of detail. The policy framework elements for the Town of Aurora Comprehensive Plan include:

VISION STATEMENT

- **Definition:** A vision statement is an aspirational statement describing the community's desired future. It reflects the shared values and priorities of the community and provides overarching direction for the plan.
- **Forecasted Timeframe**: Typically, 10-20 years, aligning with the comprehensive plan's horizon.
- **Intended Actions**:
  - » Sets the "big picture: for the plan overall and inspires the formation of the plan's goals.
  - » Does not identify specific steps but serves as a touchstone for evaluating decisions.

GOALS

- **Definition:** A goal is a broad statement that translates the vision statement into specific, achievable outcomes. Goals address major themes or topics, such as housing, transportation, or economic development.
- **Forecasted Timeframe**: 5-10 years, providing a more specific interpretation of the vision statement over time.
- **Intended Actions:**
  - » Serves as a benchmark to track progress towards achieving the vision statement.
  - » Establishes the priorities that shape the formation of the plan's recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Definition**: A recommendation is a measurable tasks or projects, designed to achieve the stated goal if falls under. It often includes timelines, responsible parties, and resources.
- **Forecasted Timeframe:** 1-5 years
- **Intended Actions:**
  - » Translates goals into actionable steps
  - » Assigns accountability and guidelines for implementation

VISION STATEMENT

The Town of Aurora is—and will continue to be—a vibrant, welcoming, and family-oriented community that cherishes its rural character, historic neighborhoods, and rich cultural legacy.

Guided by values of environmental stewardship, sustainable growth, and respect for its unique identity, Aurora will preserve its scenic landscapes, support high-quality schools, and provide housing that meets the needs of residents at every age and stage of life.

With inviting parks, well-connected recreational paths, and thriving small-scale commercial areas, the town will foster prosperity for families, individuals, and businesses alike. Economic development will reflect the community's character—balancing growth with charm, limiting sprawl, and promoting multi-generational living in a resilient and inclusive environment.







GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Town of Aurora's Comprehensive Plan provides a vision and roadmap for guiding growth, preserving community character, and investing in a sustainable future. At its core, the Plan strikes a balance between two priorities: accommodating change through targeted, well-managed development and protecting the rural landscapes, open spaces, and cultural heritage that make Aurora unique.

Housing & Growth: The Plan directs new housing to targeted, denser areas near the Village and other core hubs where infrastructure and services already exist. This approach provides diverse and affordable housing choices while preserving the Town's farmland, forests, and rural open spaces.

Natural Resources & Climate Action: Aurora will strengthen its resilience by managing and replanting trees, conserving additional lands, improving stormwater policies, and expanding climate-smart programs. Renewable energy development will be guided by thoughtful siting standards that limit large-scale facilities on prime farmland while encouraging community-scale and agrivoltaic solar projects. These actions safeguard the Town's environment while positioning it as a leader in climate-smart practices.

Agriculture & Rural Character: Recommendations supporting farmland preservation, small-scale agriculture, and rural heritage assets reinforce Aurora's identity as a farming community. Land-use strategies such as prohibiting flag lots and cul-de-sacs further protect open space and ensure that new development patterns fit within the Town's rural framework.

Infrastructure & Resilience: Smart, sustainable infrastructure investments—including capital facility planning, resilient drainage systems, EV charging, and safe energy storage—prepare Aurora for the future while protecting residents from climate risks. These improvements are aligned with open-space and conservation goals, ensuring that modernization does not come at the cost of community character.

Connectivity & Transportation: A stronger network of pedestrian, bicycle, and greenway connections will improve safety, mobility, and access to parks and community destinations. Many of these improvements will be concentrated closer to the Village and denser neighborhoods, where they are most cost-effective and impactful, while rural areas will continue to retain their low-density, natural landscapes.

Across all areas, the Plan emphasizes that Aurora's future depends on thoughtful choices—directing growth where it is necessary and can be supported, conserving land and natural resources, and investing in smart infrastructure and mobility. By working together, the Town can preserve what residents value most while ensuring that Aurora remains a vibrant, resilient, and welcoming community for generations to come.







GOAL 1: SUPPORT HOUSING FOR ALL LIFE STAGES AND INCOMES

This goal lays out a framework for how the Town of Aurora can responsibly guide housing development to meet the needs of current and future residents. The central goal is to provide a greater diversity of housing options—ensuring affordability, accessibility, and choice—by concentrating new growth in carefully planned denser zones. At the same time, the Plan emphasizes the protection of the Town's rural character, open spaces, and agricultural heritage.

By focusing development in targeted areas, the Town can strengthen existing neighborhoods, enhance walkability and infrastructure efficiency, and support vibrant mixed-use centers—while preserving the natural landscapes and small-town feel that define Aurora's identity. This balanced approach seeks to meet the demand for housing in a way that sustains both community vitality and the rural qualities residents value.

Recommendation 1.1 – Support Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs): Update zoning regulations to permit ADUs by right (with basic design/size regulations), create a streamlined permitting process, and offer educational workshops for homeowners on how to develop an ADU on their property.

Recommendation 1.2 - Encourage "Missing Middle" Housing: Amend zoning to allow more duplexes, triplexes, and courtyard homes near the Village core, hamlet centers, and along transportation corridors.

Recommendation 1.3 - Facilitate Senior Housing Development: Identify and rezone targeted areas within or adjacent to the sewer district for senior living facilities; amend zoning or create an overlay district to encourage a range of independent and assisted-living options.

Recommendation 1.4 - Workforce Housing Near Commercial Centers: Amend zoning regulations to designate overlay zones or provide incentives (e.g., streamlined approvals) for developments that include workforce housing close to the Village, hamlet centers, and existing employment corridors.

Recommendation 1.5 - Establish a Housing Task Force: Establish a Housing Task Force (staff and volunteer-based) to conduct ongoing review of code changes, identify grant opportunities, and monitor rehab and preservation support fund distribution.

Recommendation 1.6 – Seek Pro-Housing Community Designation: Have the Town of Aurora become a Pro-Housing Community by adopting the States resolution, sending the letter of intent to NYS HCR, and submitting required materials (zoning map + code summary and the last five years of housing permits) to obtain certification; maintain status with annual updates. This in turn will help the Town obtain grant funding for housing support projects.

GOAL 2: STRENGTHEN ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AND RESILIENCE

This goal outlines strategies to safeguard Aurora's natural environment while preparing the community for sustainable growth. The initiatives emphasize proactive tree management, expanded land conservation, and the responsible siting of renewable energy projects. At the same time, they reinforce the Town's commitment to stormwater management, climate resilience, and sustainable waste reduction.

Together, these actions seek to preserve Aurora's rural and ecological character while enabling the community to adapt to modern challenges. By investing in tree replacement, open-space protection, micro-farming opportunities, and agrivoltaic solar projects, the Town balances environmental stewardship with innovation. Measures such as a Town-wide stormwater plan, FEMA Community Rating System enrollment, and streamlined solar permitting ensure that infrastructure and development move forward in a way that protects residents, farmland, and waterways.

The overall goal is a resilient, sustainable Aurora: a community that conserves its forests, farms, and open spaces while embracing renewable energy, climate action, and smart infrastructure policies that protect residents today and for generations to come.

Recommendation 2.1 - Expand Land Conservation Efforts by updating the Town's Open Space Plan: Review the Town's original Open Space Plan to identify new lands that have been conserved since and to identify new lands for future conservation. To conserve future lands, partner with the Western New York Land Conservancy, Genesee Valley Land Conservancy, and private landowners to place easements on critical agricultural or forested land.

Recommendation 2.2 - Update Zoning for Micro-Farming & Homesteading: Revise code to more readily allow small-scale agriculture (poultry, crops, gardens), clarifying lot-size requirements and best practices.

Recommendation 2.3 - Support the Town's Climate Smart Communities Task Force: Complete and track actions required for Silver Ranking by the State's Climate Smart Communities program.

Recommendation 2.4 – Develop Stormwater Runoff Policies in Growth Areas: Update zoning to require stormwater impact assessments and green infrastructure measures for any new development over a certain size in designated growth zones.

Recommendation 2.5 - Limit Solar & Wind Farm Development with a Renewable Energy Siting Overlay District: Amend zoning and create a GIS-based overlay district to restrict large-scale solar/wind installations based on criteria such as agricultural soils ratings, proximity to transmission lines, and existing disturbances. The overlay should prohibit solar/wind farms on prime farmland land and direct developments instead towards brownfields, areas with less productive soils, and/or sites identified through the solar suitability analysis.

Recommendation 2.6 - Promote Community-Scale and Agrivoltaic Solar Projects: Amend zoning to encourage solar installations co-located with agricultural activity (agrivoltaics) and community-scale solar (under 5 MW) serving local residents. Provide design guidelines for fencing, pollinator habitats, and visual buffers.

Recommendation 2.7 - Establish a Town-wide Tree Management & Replacement Plan: Inventory street/forested/park and public area trees, prioritize replanting native species in areas impacted by removals and invasive species, and develop a maintenance schedule.

Recommendation 2.8 – Develop Infrastructure & Tree Preservation Guidelines: Adopt rules mandating consultation with the Town's tree management plan prior to utility expansions or broadband line installations that involve large-scale tree trimming or removal in the public right-of-way or on public lands.

Recommendation 2.9 - Establish a Tree Advisory Committee: Establish a Town Tree Advisory Committee by local resolution/ordinance to guide the development, implementation, and enforcement of the recommended Town-wide Tree Management & Replacement Plan and Tree Preservation Guidelines.

Recommendation 2.10 - Become a member of FEMA's Community Rating System: Enroll the Town in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS) or a similar replacement agency at the state level to earn flood insurance discounts for residents and improve local floodplain management practices. Establish a CRS Coordinator, submit a letter of interest, and implement credited activities such as public outreach, flood protection assistance, and stormwater planning.

Recommendation 2.11 - Support Sustainable Waste Management Initiatives: Expand the Town's waste diversion efforts through initiatives such as composting programs, hazardous waste collection events, electronics recycling, and public education campaigns. Promote reduction, reuse, and recycling practices across households and small businesses.

GOAL 3: PRESERVE RURAL CHARACTER AND OPEN SPACES

This goal focuses on protecting Aurora's rural identity and agricultural heritage through thoughtful land-use and community policies. Key actions include prohibiting flag lots and cul-de-sac developments in favor of connected, conservation-style subdivisions; strengthening support for local farmers through the Right-to-Farm Law, agricultural district programs, and incentives for beginner farmers; and mapping and promoting the Town's rural and historic assets for residents and visitors alike. These measures are designed not only to protect farmland and scenic landscapes, but also to integrate with broader goals outlined in other parts of the Plan—such as land conservation, stormwater management, and tree preservation—to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to open-space protection. By connecting these efforts, Aurora can safeguard farmland, conserve natural corridors, and highlight cultural landmarks while maintaining a development pattern that aligns with the Town's rural character.

The overall intent is to reinforce Aurora's identity as a community that values its farmland, forests, waterways, and history, while adopting land-use practices that ensure these assets are preserved and celebrated for future generations.

Recommendation 3.1 - Discourage Flag Lots & Cul-de-Sac Developments: Amend subdivision regulations to discourage new flag lots and cul-de-sacs. Require connected or conservation-style layouts

Recommendation 3.2 - Continue Right-to-Farm Law, Promote the Agricultural District Program & Incentivize Beginner Farmers: Provide property tax abatements or small grants for underutilized farmland when leased to small-scale or beginning farmers, promote farmers participation in the Agricultural District program, and explore partnership with Providence Farm Collective's style incubator farms.

Recommendation 3.3 - Map & Promote Rural Heritage Assets: Produce and distribute brochures or an interactive online map highlighting the Cazenovia Creek corridor, scenic drives, and heritage sites throughout the Town.

GOAL 4: INVEST IN SMART, SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

This goal provides a roadmap for strengthening Aurora's infrastructure in ways that are both sustainable and resilient. Central to this goal is the adoption of a municipal capital facilities plan that prioritizes upgrades to public buildings and critical infrastructure, while incorporating climate-resilient standards such as culvert improvements, drainage management, and expanded EV charging options.

This goal also establishes clear standards for emerging technologies like battery energy storage systems, ensuring they are safely and appropriately sited—encouraging placement in industrial zones while protecting residential and conservation areas. By integrating battery storage into both zoning and emergency preparation plans, Aurora positions itself to enhance energy resilience and support community hubs during crises. Importantly, these infrastructure investments are designed to work in tandem with other priorities of the Comprehensive Plan, including open-space preservation, farmland protection, and conservation-focused development. By aligning capital improvements with environmental and land-use goals, the Town can modernize infrastructure without compromising the rural character and ecological assets that define Aurora.

The overall intent is to future-proof Aurora's infrastructure—delivering safe, efficient, and climate-smart facilities that meet community needs while reinforcing the Town's commitment to preserving its natural landscapes and heritage.

Recommendation 4.1 - Adopt a Municipal Capital Facilities Plan: Develop a 5–10-year plan prioritizing upgrades to government buildings and facilities, with an emphasis on the Town of Aurora Library and Highway Barn.

Recommendation 4.2 - Comprehensive Capital Improvements & Resiliency Planning: Incorporate climate resilience standards in the capital facilities plan (i.e. culvert upgrades, drainage channels, public EV charger,)

Recommendation 4.3 - Support, Where Feasible, the Expansion of EV Infrastructure: Install publicly available EV charging stations at libraries, parks, municipal parking lots, and offer incentives for commercial sites to add chargers.

Recommendation 4.4 - Define Battery Storage in Local Code and Develop BESS Use Standards: Add definitions for Battery Energy Storage Systems (Tier 1 and Tier 2) to the zoning code and develop siting, safety, setback, and screening requirements. Reference NYS Unified Solar & Storage Permit model. Prohibit battery storage in residential and conservation areas; encourage placement in the Industrial Innovation future land use.

Recommendation 4.5 - Permit Battery Storage in Industrial Zones as an Accessory or Standalone Use: Amend zoning to allow Tier 1 and 2 battery storage systems in the Industrial Innovation Zone. Coordinate permitting with utility and site readiness requirements.

Recommendation 4.6 - Integrate Battery Storage into Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Plans: Work with emergency responders to assess the use of BESS at critical facilities (e.g., Town Hall, Senior Center). Explore microgrid feasibility to serve key community hubs.

GOAL 5: IMPROVE WALKABILITY, CONNECTIVITY, AND MOBILITY OPTIONS

This goal advances Aurora's commitment to safe, connected, and sustainable mobility. It calls for the creation of a Town-wide Connectivity Plan that prioritizes pedestrian and bicycle routes linking neighborhoods, parks, and the Village, while addressing chronic speeding through targeted traffic-calming measures. Improved pedestrian access to recreational spaces, the designation of low-traffic neighborhood greenways, and the development of dedicated bicycle infrastructure are also key strategies for creating safer, healthier, and more active communities.

Recognizing the Town's mix of dense and rural areas, many of these improvements will be most feasible and impactful closer to the Village and in other areas with higher concentrations of residents and activity. In less dense parts of Aurora, the same investments would require far more time, resources, and maintenance. By concentrating connectivity upgrades where they are most needed, the Town can maximize impact, ensure cost efficiency, and strengthen the walkability and bikeability of core community hubs. These efforts complement other areas of the Plan that focus on conserving open space, protecting farmland, and guiding development to targeted zones. By enhancing mobility where it makes sense, the Town not only improves quality of life but also reduces reliance on cars, minimizes environmental impacts, and strengthens the connection between residents and Aurora's natural and cultural resources.

The goal is to build a transportation network that reflects Aurora's values—safe, accessible, environmentally responsible, and aligned with its rural character—while providing residents with more ways to move around the community and connect with the landscapes and amenities that make the Town unique.

Recommendation 5.1 – Create a Town-Wide Connectivity Plan Using Alternative Forms of Transportation: Develop a master plan identifying priority pedestrian and bicycling routes (e.g., potential routes include Village border to Knox Farm, Mill Rd to 20A, Olean Rd from the Village to Lapham Rd and Emery Park, and other areas where there is more dense development to the Village and connecting the Town's resources). Additionally, the Town should work with NFTA to determine the feasibility of developing a park-and-ride lot.

Recommendation 5.2 – Install Traffic Calming Measures: Explore use of roundabouts, raised crosswalks, speed humps, signals, and signage on roads such as Mill Rd, Center St, and Davis Rd where speeding is chronic and where external funding is available.

Recommendation 5.3 – Improve Pedestrian Accessibility to Parks & Recreation: Provide safe crossings, ADA-compliant pathways, trails, and consistent signage to link neighborhoods and parks (i.e. Majors, Knox Farm, Emery, and JP Nicely).

Recommendation 5.4 – Neighborhood Greenways / Low-Traffic Streets: Identify local roads for reduced speed limits, shared-lane markings, and traffic calming to create safe "greenway" routes for walking/biking.

Recommendation 5.5 - Support the Development of Dedicated Bicycle Infrastructure: Encourage and support improvements that may include, crosswalks, bike lanes, and wayfinding signage to ensure safe, accessible routes connecting residential areas, the Village, the Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail, and parks.

Recommendation 5.6 – Seek Opportunities to Develop Public Parking Areas in Hamlet Centers: Identify and pursue opportunities to establish small-scale, well-landscaped public parking areas within the Town's hamlet centers to support growing commercial and residential activity. Work in conjunction with NYSDOT and/or the Erie County Department of Public Works (ECDPW), depending on road jurisdiction, to ensure parking improvements are designed with safe access, pedestrian connections, and minimal visual impact.

FUTURE LAND USE

The Future Land Use Map does not have regulatory authority on its own, but it serves as a planning tool to guide long-term land use decisions, support community development goals, and inform future updates to the Town's zoning code. In New York State, Future Land Use Maps help municipalities establish a vision for growth, preservation, and redevelopment by identifying appropriate land use patterns and guiding zoning decisions. Aurora's future land use categories were developed by starting with the Town's existing zoning code, and then making adjustments based on the input collected from the steering committee, key community stakeholders, and community members throughout the process.

NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL

The Neighborhood Residential (NR) land use designation would permit higher-density housing similar to the Town's existing R-3 Residential District. This future land use designation would extend higher-density housing development to areas around the edge of the Village of East Aurora, within Erie County Sewer District No. 8, and the former Christ the King Seminary Campus. Permitted uses include single-family homes, townhouses, ADUs, duplexes, triplexes, cottage courts, senior living communities, and apartments. This designation builds on the walkability and vitality of East Aurora—the Town's economic and cultural hub—while leveraging existing sewer infrastructure to support compact development. By encouraging diverse housing types in this area, the Town can meet the needs of young families, support aging in place, improve housing affordability, and limit sprawl to protect farmland and forested land.

Preferred Uses:

- Single-family & manufactured homes
- Townhomes
- ADUs
- Duplexes and triplexes
- Cottage courts and apartments
- Senior living communities
- Home occupations
- Civic, community and institutional facilities









Other Considerations:

- Encourage small lot development to support compact neighborhoods and affordability.
- Encourage buildings to front the street at reduced setbacks with porches or stoops to create a strong neighborhood feel and enhanced walkability.
- Encourage cottage court layouts (small, detached homes around a shared courtyard) to provide alternatives to traditional subdivisions.
- Allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) by right on all lots, with flexibility in form (i.e., detached, above-garage, basement units).
- Support energy-efficient and climate-resilient building practices, including provisions for EV charging, roof-mounted solar, and green infrastructure.
- Permit small-scale community facilities (i.e., daycare centers and neighborhood clinics) that support local residents.
- Instead of parking minimums, consider parking maximums to minimize the amount of open space that needs to be developed to accommodate the parking lot.

MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

The Medium Density Residential (MDR) land use designation would permit housing density similar to the Town's existing R-2 Residential District. In addition to the Town's existing R-2 districts, this future land use designation would extend southward along NYS 240 towards the Hamlet of West Falls. Permitted uses include single-family homes, duplexes, ADUs, home occupations, and civic, community or institutional facilities.

Preferred Uses:

- Single-family & manufactured homes
- ADUs
- Duplexes
- Home occupations
- Civic, community and institutional facilities

Other Considerations:

- Encourage buildings to front the street at reduced setbacks with porches or stoops to create a strong neighborhood feel and enhanced walkability.
- Allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) by right on all lots, with flexibility in form (i.e., detached, above-garage, basement units).
- Support energy-efficient and climate-resilient building practices, including provisions for EV charging, roof-mounted solar, and green infrastructure.

LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

The Low Density Residential (LDR) land use designation would permit housing density consistent with the Town's existing R-1 Residential District. Developed to support the traditional rural single-family living commonly seen throughout the Town, this designation covers much of the existing extent of the Town's R-1 district, minus the areas around the Village and along Center St that have been converted to NR and other parcels that have been converted to AR. Permitted uses include single-family homes, home occupations, and civic, community or institutional facilities.

Preferred Uses:

- Single-family & manufactured homes
- Home occupations
- Civic, community and institutional facilities

AGRI-RESIDENTIAL

The Agri-Residential (AR) land use designation would permit housing density and traditional agricultural, floricultural, and horticultural uses consistent with the Town's existing Rural Residential and Agriculture Districts. As both districts allow nearly the same uses, combining these two districts together would help reduce unnecessary regulations. To account for the need to keep agricultural uses appropriately screened from residential areas, the keeping of domestic animals shall be subject to the existing acreage limitations currently within the Town's zoning code for all lots with a residential structure. Lots without a residential structure shall be allowed full agricultural use of the whole lot, as stipulated by the Town's existing Agriculture zoning district. This designation reflects strong resident support for the Right to Farm law and the protection of Aurora's agricultural and environmental heritage.

Preferred Uses:

- Single-family & manufactured homes
- ADUs
- Duplexes
- Agricultural, floricultural, and horticultural pursuits

- Home occupations
- Civic, community and institutional facilities

Other Considerations:

- Require all buildings to be oriented to preserve open space and minimize land disturbance.
- New construction within the AR must consider the site's environmental resources and constraints, ensuring negative impacts are minimized and assets are preserved.
- Encourage conservation easements and participation in agricultural districts to protect prime farmland soils and forested lands, promoting long-term land stewardship.
- Require buffering between residential uses and active farm operations to reduce conflicts and reinforce the Right to Farm law.
- Support agri-voltaic and agrivoltaic systems (solar power integrated with agriculture) with clear siting guidelines, screening requirements, and provisions for continued farm use.

CORRIDOR COMMERCIAL

The Corridor Commercial (CC) land use designation would permit uses similar to the Town's existing C-1 and C-2 Commercial Districts. In addition to the Town's existing commercial districts, this designation has extended along NYS Routes 16 & 240, to provide additional space for future commercial endeavors. The two commercials districts have been combined into one land use designation for simplicity, but as zoning recommendations are implemented, it will be the responsibility of the Town to determine which parcels would fall within the square footage threshold established by the existing zoning regulations (5,000 & 20,000 sq ft). This designation is intended to facilitate nodes of commercial activity by permitting small- and medium-scale businesses that serve both residents and travelers. Development in these areas should be compact, visually cohesive, and rely on shared parking to reduce sprawl and preserve the rural character of the Town. With sewer services constrained along these corridors, commercial uses will be limited in scale, supporting the community's preference for local businesses over big-box franchises.

Preferred Uses:

- Small-scale retail and personal services
- Cafés, bakeries, and small restaurants
- Professional offices
- Artisan-scale production
- Health and wellness services
- Small-scale repair and auto services
- Home and garden centers
- Mixed-use buildings with ground-floor commercial and residential or office above
- Civic, community and institutional facilities
- Single family homes, manufactured homes, townhomes, ADUs, duplexes, and cottage courts

Other Considerations:

- Locate higher intensity uses closer to the Village and reduce intensity/make commercial use more restrictive as you move away from the Village.
- Restrict drive-thru and high-traffic commercial uses to prevent congestion, protect pedestrian safety, and preserve the quiet, rural feel of the corridors.
- Restrict data centers and other energy intensive uses that do not generate jobs and may cause noise, odor, and visual nuisances to nearby properties.
- Prioritize access management through shared driveways, cross-access easements, and coordinated entrances/exits along busy corridors.

INDUSTRIAL INNOVATION

The Industrial Innovation (II) land use designation would permit light industrial, clean energy production, advanced manufacturing, and artisan-scale production within the Town's underutilized C-3 District along Route 240 as well as additional adjacent parcels that are not currently within the district. To promote economic diversification, the area should be thoughtfully designed, consider low-impact development that incorporates green infrastructure, shared amenities, and uses strong environmental buffers to protect surrounding rural land uses. New residential development will not be permitted in this designation, ensuring potential odors, noises, and other noxious nuisances do not affect the residential population, and the area remains focused on employment-generating uses that align with the Town's projected demand for over 173,000 sq ft of industrial space in the coming decade.

Preferred Uses:

- Light manufacturing
- Advanced manufacturing and technology
- Utility-scale solar energy production
- Artisan-scale production
- Research and development facilities
- Warehousing and distribution centers
- Business incubators or tech flex spaces
- Industrial support services
- Office space accessory to industrial operations

Other Considerations:

- Examine the feasibility of tying into the adjacent sewer district in the Town of Orchard Park to support expanded operations limited only to industrial uses.
- Encourage green infrastructure practices, such as stormwater retention basins, bioswales, and permeable pavement, to manage runoff and reduce environmental impact.
- Encourage site layouts that support shared infrastructure and amenities, such as shared access roads, parking, or logistics facilities.
- Encourage multi-tenant buildings or business incubators to support startups, small-scale producers, and flexible industrial growth.
- Promote low-noise operations, and require noise mitigation measures (e.g., sound walls, equipment location) where needed.

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

The Open Space & Recreation (OSR) land use designation applies to existing parks, public lands, and nature reserves that should remain undeveloped to protect the Town's natural resources and provide recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. This designation supports passive recreation and expanding trail connections, including the Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail and other trails to connect the Town's parks and neighborhoods. Aurora's abundant open space is a defining characteristic and highly valued by residents. Preserving and enhancing these areas ensures continued public enjoyment, safeguards environmental quality, and strengthens the Town's investment in accessible, connected green spaces.

Preferred Uses:

- Public parks, trails and green spaces
- Nature preserves
- Scenic overlooks

Other Considerations:

- In addition to the areas mapped on the Future Land Use Map, the Town should consider mapping and regulating other open space and natural resources for continued conservation. These areas may include

prime farmland soil, active agricultural parcels, and significant natural features such as waterways, scenic views, mature wooded areas, and other parcels identified by the Town's Open Space Committee.

- Promote trail connectivity between parks, neighborhoods, and regional systems like the Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail.
- Incorporate wayfinding signage and interpretive elements to enhance public understanding of the Town's natural and cultural resources.
- Encourage native plantings and pollinator habitats in open space landscapes to enhance biodiversity.
- Collaborate with conservation organizations and regional partners to secure funding and expand protected open space.

HAMLET OVERLAY

The Hamlet Overlay (HO) land use designation would follow the same regulations as laid out by the West Falls Hamlet Overlay, with the addition of extending it to include several parcels north of the existing overlay as well as the Hamlet of Blakeley which is located in the eastern half of the town. The overlay district is designed to serve as a rural service hamlet that preserves the character and quality of area, including through the adoption of architectural guidelines to control aesthetics, landscaping, and connective features. The overlay will encourage the development of uses that are in harmony with the surrounding area, improve the visual character of the area, promote walkability, protect adjoining residential uses, and enhance the area by encouraging service-oriented uses.

Preferred Uses:

- Retail, services, and restaurants
- Entertainment and cultural facilities
- Offices
- Mixed-use buildings
- Single-family attached and detached, ADUs, duplexes, and small apartments
- Civic, community, and institutional facilities

Other Considerations:

- Allow new developments to conduct a transportation demand study (TDS) in order to obtain a variance on the reduction of minimum parking spaces required.
- Have buildings face the street.
- Promote sidewalk development.
- Encourage streetscape amenities such as street trees, decorative lighting, benches, and trash cans.
- Consider multi-modal opportunities to connect the hamlets to the rest of the Town.
- Develop building design standards to be consistent with the historic and traditional character of the hamlets.

CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT OVERLAY

The Cluster Development Overlay (CDO) is a floating overlay designation intended to encourage flexible, conservation-oriented residential development in areas where public sewer service connection is available. It may be applied—through both Planning Board review and adoption by the Town Board following a public hearing and compliance with all applicable environmental review procedures—to residentially designated areas, such as Neighborhood Residential or Rural Residential, where the underlying land use supports housing but where the preservation of environmental resources is a priority. Adoption of the CDO onto a specific property requires the submission of a rezoning application, review for consistency with the Town's comprehensive plan, and formal amendment of the Town's zoning map by the Town Board.

The CDO allows residential units to be grouped—or "clustered"—on a portion of a development site, permitting the remainder of the parcel to be permanently preserved as open space, farmland, and/or recreational area. This overlay should also consider adding a regulation that requires the developer to provide funding for trails that would connect the neighborhood to existing parks and other neighborhoods

in the area. This approach promotes more compact development patterns while protecting sensitive lands, scenic views, and ecological functions while also promoting diversified mobility. The overlay should determine the minimum acreage a parcel must be to permit the use of this overlay, and the total area to be dedicated for recreational space that is funded by the cluster development.

By promoting land conservation, efficient infrastructure use, and community amenities, the CDO advances the Town's goals of rural preservation, housing flexibility, and sustainable growth, while ensuring that each application is subject to a transparent public process, thorough planning analysis, and legislative approval before being mapped onto any property.

Preferred Uses:

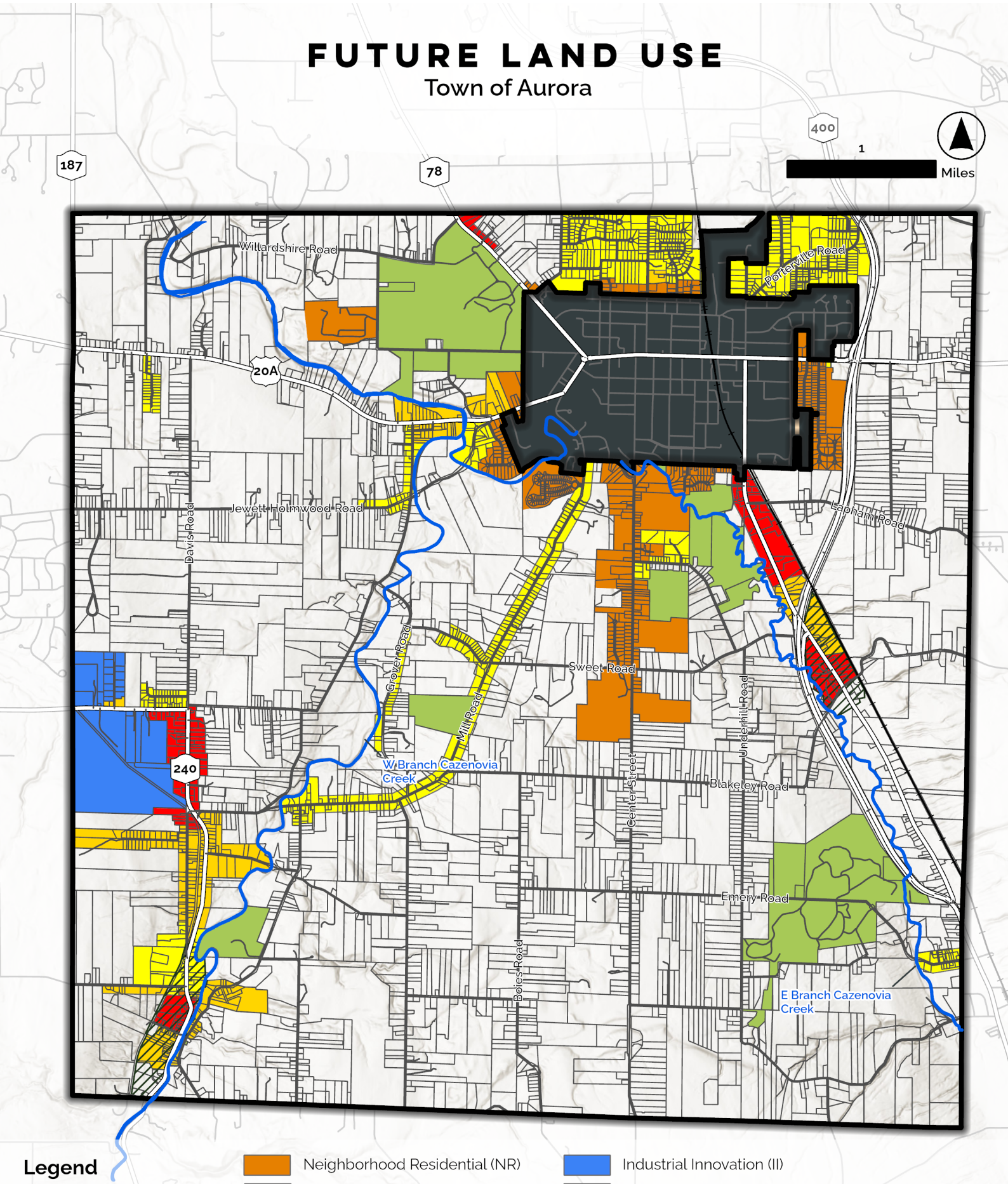
- Detached single-family homes
- Manufactured homes
- Duplexes, triplexes, and other small-to-medium scale multi-unit complexes (including townhouses, cottage courts, and apartments)
- Senior living communities
- Accessory dwelling units (ADUs)
- Community amenities (e.g., small parks, pavilions, trails)
- Passive recreation areas (e.g., walking trails, meadows)

Other Considerations:

- At least 40% of the site must remain permanently undeveloped and designated for open space and conservation. At a minimum, 10% of the site should be designated for active or passive recreational uses. Developers should be required to provide funding for the design and construction of trails, where feasible, that will connect the new development to existing neighborhoods or recreational areas.
- Open space preservation should prioritize protecting sensitive features such as steep slopes, wetlands, stream corridors, mature woodlands, and scenic views.
- Development should seek to maximize connectivity with existing neighborhoods and/or other recreational sites.
- Allow smaller individual lot sizes and setbacks than the underlying zoning allows.
- Developers must submit a conservation analysis showing how natural resources will be preserved, as well as a conceptual open space/trails plan.
- Encourage the use of bioswales, rain gardens, and permeable pavement to reduce stormwater runoff.

FUTURE LAND USE

Town of Aurora



Legend

- Town of Aurora
- Village of East Aurora
- Neighborhood Residential (NR)
- Medium Density Residential (MDR)
- Low Density Residential (LDR)
- Agri-Residential (AR)
- Corridor Commercial (CC)
- Industrial Innovation (II)
- Open Space & Recreation (OSR)
- Hamlet Overlay (HO)
- Cluster Development Overlay (CDO) - Floating Zone Not Mapped

ACTION PLAN

Communities are constantly reshaping themselves as new challenges arise and opportunities emerge. However, it is important to manage this change by addressing the things that are known and can be planned for today. Five overarching goals were developed for this plan based on data analysis, input at community events, survey responses, stakeholder interviews, and guidance from the steering committee and Town officials. Achieving these goals will assist the Town of Aurora in achieving the vision statement laid out for this plan.

In order to accomplish each of these five goals and the plan's overall vision statement, an action plan was developed to help guide the Town in completing recommendations identified to achieve each goal.

The recommendations under each goal will help Aurora understand where to allocate resources to achieve the community's goals and desired outcomes. The following is meant to provide additional information on the expected time frames, who will lead the recommendation and who are possible partners, potential funding sources necessary to accomplish each action, and possible opportunities for in-kind support. This Action Plan should be updated as part of the regular review of the Plan.

This Action Plan is intended to be read in two-page view as the implementation matrix for each recommendation is spread across two pages. If the document is not already in two-page view, adjust the viewing settings to improve the overall readability of the Action Plan.

GOAL 1: SUPPORT HOUSING FOR ALL LIFE STAGES AND INCOMES

1.1 Support Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

Update zoning regulations to permit ADUs by right (with basic design/size regulations), create a streamlined permitting process, and offer educational workshops for homeowners on how to develop an ADU on their property.

1.2 Encourage "Missing Middle" Housing

Amend zoning to allow more duplexes, triplexes, and courtyard homes near the Village core, hamlet centers, and along transportation corridors.

1.3 Facilitate Senior Housing Development

Identify and rezone targeted areas within or adjacent to the sewer district for senior living facilities; amend zoning or create an overlay district to encourage a range of independent and assisted-living options.

1.4 Workforce Housing Near Commercial Centers

Amend zoning regulations to designate overlay zones or provide incentives (e.g., streamlined approvals) for developments that include workforce housing close to the Village, hamlet centers, and existing employment corridors.

Time frame	Responsibility	Funding Sources	In-Kind Support
Short-Term (1–2 years)	• **Lead:** Town Board • **Support:** • Building/Code Enforcement • Planning Board • Local Housing Advocates • Aurora Housing Task Force (if established)	• Town budget & In-house resources • Erie County Municipal Planning Grant • NYS Smart Growth Program	• Housing advocates (e.g., affordable housing nonprofits) to offer homeowner education on costs, permitting, and potential rental models.
Short-Term (1–2 years) for code changes; **Medium-Term** (3–5 years) for project approvals	• **Lead:** Town Board • **Support:** • Building/Code Enforcement • Planning Board • Aurora Housing Task Force (if established) • Rural Outreach Center	• Town budget & In-house resources • NYS Smart Growth Program • Erie County Municipal Planning Grant	• Local realtors or developers to host public info sessions on the financial feasibility of smaller-scale multi-family housing.
Short-Term (1–2 years) for site identification; **Medium-Term** (3–5 years) for construction	• **Lead:** Town Board • **Support:** • Planning Board • Senior Center • Housing Nonprofits • Potential Developers • Aurora Housing Task Force (if established) • Rural Outreach Center	• Town budget & In-house resources • NYS Smart Growth Program • Erie County Municipal Planning Grant	• Senior Center volunteers to coordinate needs surveys, gather community input, and help with outreach. • Local service clubs (e.g., Rotary, Lions) to sponsor "senior-friendly" improvements or donate furnishings for new facilities.
Short-Term (1–2 years) to incorporate zoning changes; **Medium-Term** (3–5 years) to see projects built	• **Lead:** Town Board • **Support:** • Building/Code Enforcement • Planning Board • Local Employers • Aurora Housing Task Force (if established) • Rural Outreach Center	• Town budget & In-house resources • NYS Smart Growth Program • Erie County Municipal Planning Grant	• Planning students from local universities assisting in site inventories or feasibility analyses.

1.5 Establish a Housing Task Force

Establish a Housing Task Force (staff and volunteer-based) to conduct ongoing review of code changes, identify grant opportunities, and monitor rehab and preservation support fund distribution.

1.6 Seek Pro-Housing Community Designation

Have the Town of Aurora become a Pro-Housing Community by adopting the States resolution, sending the letter of intent to NYS HCR, and submitting required materials (zoning map + code summary and the last five years of housing permits) to obtain certification; maintain status with annual updates. This in turn will help the Town obtain grant funding for housing support projects.

GOAL 2: STRENGTHEN ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AND RESILIENCE

2.1 Expand Land Conservation Efforts by updating the Town's Open Space Plan

Review the Town's original Open Space Plan to identify new lands that have been conserved since and to identify new lands for future conservation. To conserve future lands, partner with the Western New York Land Conservancy, Genesee Valley Land Conservancy, and private landowners to place easements on critical agricultural or forested land.

2.2 Update Zoning for Micro-Farming & Homesteading

Revise code to more readily allow small-scale agriculture (poultry, crops, gardens), clarifying lot-size requirements and best practices.

Time frame	Responsibility	Funding Sources	In-Kind Support
Short-Term (1–2 years) to form; **Ongoing** oversight	• **Lead:** Town Board • **Support:** • Planning Board • Senior Center • Housing Advocates • Rural Outreach Center • University Representatives	• Town budget & In-house resources • Philanthropic grants to train Task Force members or conduct public outreach	• Local housing nonprofits provide training or templates for Task Force procedures and outreach.
Short-Term (1–2 years) to apply; Annual maintenance thereafter	• **Lead:** Town Board • **Support:** • Town Clerk • Building/Code Enforcement • Planning Board • Erie County DEP	• Town budget & In-house resources	• NYS HCR office hours and staff guidance during application and maintenance; use the Model Pro-Housing Resolution as provided.
Ongoing; Evaluate priority parcels annually	• **Lead:** Open Space Committee • **Support:** • Town Board • WNY Land Conservancy • Genesee Valley Land Conservancy • Cornell Cooperative Extension • Erie County DEP	• OPRHP EPF grant • NYSDAM Farmland Protection Implementation Grants • USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Easement Programs. • Private land trust partnerships • Philanthropic open-space grants. • Town budget & In-house resources	• Land trust staff assisting with conservation easement paperwork at reduced or no cost.
Short-Term (1–2 years)	• **Lead:** Building/Code Enforcement • **Support:** • Planning Board • WNY Land Conservancy • Cornell Cooperative Extension • Erie County Soil & Water District • Local Farmers	• Town budget & In-house resources • NYS Smart Growth Program • Erie County Municipal Planning Grant	• Cornell Cooperative Extension and Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District staff advising on best practices for small-scale agriculture.

2.3 Support the Town's Climate Smart Communities Task Force

Complete and track actions required for Silver Ranking by the State's Climate Smart Communities program.

2.4 Develop Stormwater Runoff Policies in Growth Areas

Update zoning to require stormwater impact assessments and green infrastructure measures (i.e. rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable pavements) for any new development over a certain size in designated growth zones.

2.5 Limit Solar & Wind Farm Development with a Renewable Energy Siting Overlay District

Amend zoning and create a GIS-based overlay districts to restrict large-scale solar/wind installations based on criteria such as agricultural soils ratings, proximity to transmission lines, and existing disturbances. The overlay should prohibit solar/wind farms on prime farmland land and direct developments instead towards brownfields, areas with less productive soils, and/or sites identified through the solar suitability analysis.

2.6 Promote Community-Scale and Agrivoltaic Solar Projects

Amend zoning to encourage solar installations co-located with agricultural activity (agrivoltaics) and community-scale solar (under 5 MW) serving local residents. Provide design guidelines for fencing, pollinator habitats, and visual buffers.

Time frame	Responsibility	Funding Sources	In-Kind Support
Medium-Term (3-5 years) for major actions; **Ongoing** for additional points	• **Lead:** CSC Task Force • **Support:** • Town Board • Building/Code Enforcement • University at Buffalo Research Institute (UBRI)	• NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities Grants • CSC implementation grants • NYSDEC CSC Grants (for advanced actions) • Philanthropic climate-related grants	• UBRI and local environmental groups (Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper) to provide research/ data analysis for climate assessments.
Short-Term (1–2 years)	• **Lead:** Building/Code Enforcement • **Support:** • Planning Board • Town Engineer • Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper	• Town budget & In-house resources • NYS Smart Growth Program • Erie County Municipal Planning Grant • NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) Green Innovation Grants • CSC implementation grants • FEMA Hazard Mitigation grants	• Erie County Soil & Water Conservation staff to provide engineering guidance. • Local volunteers can assist with rain garden plantings or bioswale maintenance.
Short-Term (1–2 years) for site identification	• **Lead:** Town Board • **Support:** • Building/Code Enforcement • Planning Board • CSC Task Force • WNY Land Conservancy • Erie County DEP	• NYSDAM Farmland Protection Planning Grants • Erie County Municipal Planning Grant • NYS DOS Smart Growth Program • Town budget & In-house resources • NYSERDA Clean Energy Siting Program	• Agricultural Advisory Committees and local environmental groups providing volunteer research on best practices for renewable-energy siting.
Short-Term (1–2 years) to incorporate zoning changes; **Medium-Term** (3–5 years) to see projects built	• **Lead:** CSC Task Force • **Support:** • Town Board • Planning Board • Building/Code Enforcement	• NYSERDA NY-Sun Community Solar Incentives; Clean Energy Siting Program ; CEC grants • CSC implementation grants • USDA REAP (Rural Energy for America Program) • Erie County Municipal Planning Grant • NYS DOS Smart Growth Program	• Cornell Cooperative Extension for agrivoltaics best practices. • Local farmers and solar developers for pilot projects.

2.7 Establish a Town-wide Tree Management & Replacement Plan

Inventory street/forested/park and public area trees, prioritize replanting native species in areas impacted by removals and invasive species, and develop a maintenance schedule.

2.8 Infrastructure & Tree Preservation Guidelines

Adopt rules mandating consultation with the Town's tree management plan prior to utility expansions or broadband line installations that involve large-scale tree trimming or removal in the public right-of-way or on public lands.

2.9 Establish a Tree Advisory Committee

Establish a Town Tree Advisory Committee by local resolution/ordinance to guide the development, implementation, and enforcement of the recommended Town-wide Tree Management & Replacement Plan and Tree Preservation Guidelines.

2.10 Become a member of FEMA's Community Rating System

Enroll the Town in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS) or a similar replacement agency at the state level to earn flood insurance discounts for residents and improve local floodplain management practices. Establish a CRS Coordinator, submit a letter of interest, and implement credited activities such as public outreach, flood protection assistance, and stormwater planning.

2.11 Support Sustainable Waste Management Initiatives

Expand the Town's waste diversion efforts through initiatives such as composting programs, hazardous waste collection events, electronics recycling, and public education campaigns. Promote reduction, reuse, and recycling practices across households and small businesses.

Time frame	Responsibility	Funding Sources	In-Kind Support
Short-Term (1–2 years) for plan development; **Ongoing** for implementation	• **Lead:** Town Board • **Support:** • Open Space Committee • CSC Task Force • Tree Advisory Committee (if established) • Local environmental groups	• NYS DEC Urban and Community Forestry; CoRe; and Invasive species grants • USDA Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry grant • Arbor Day Foundation grants or corporate sponsors (e.g., utilities) for tree planting.	• Master Gardeners or local horticultural groups providing planting expertise. • Scouts or school environmental clubs volunteer for tree-planting events.
Short-Term (1–2 years)	• **Lead:** Town Board • **Support:** • CSC Task Force • Tree Advisory Committee (if established)	• NYS DEC Urban and Community Forestry Grants	• An established Tree Advisory Committee to draft guidelines or inspection procedures (if established).
Short-Term (1–2 years) to form and adopt bylaws; **Ongoing** oversight thereafter.	• **Lead:** Town Board • **Support:** • Planning Board • Village Tree Board • CSC Task Force • Open Space Committee	• Town budget & In-house resources	• Village Tree Board mentorship (templates for bylaws, agendas, species lists, volunteer days)
Short-Term (1–2 years) to enroll; **Medium-/Long-Term (3–5+ years)** to achieve higher CRS classification	• **Lead:** Town Board • **Support:** • Building/Code Enforcement • Stormwater Management Officer • CSC Task Force • Town Engineer	• FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Grants • CSC Implementation Grant • Town budget allocations for administrative costs	• Technical guidance from FEMA, UBRI, and NYS DEC regional floodplain staff • Volunteer support from CSC Task Force or a Floodplain Advisory Committee
Short-Term (1–2 years) to pilot programs; **Ongoing** implementation and education	• **Lead:** CSC Task Force • **Support:** • Town Board • Highway Department • Erie County DEP • Local Environmental Groups	• NYSDEC Municipal Waste Reduction & Recycling State Assistance Grants • CSC Implementation Grant • USEPA Solid waste infrastructure and education/outreach grants • Town budget for annual collection events or pilot programs	• Volunteer staffing for waste events and education drives • Partnerships with regional recyclers, compost processors, or environmental groups for training, bins, or marketing materials

GOAL 3: PRESERVE RURAL CHARACTER AND OPEN SPACE

3.1 Discourage Flag Lots & Cul-de-Sac Developments

Amend subdivision regulations to discourage new flag lots and cul-de-sacs. Require connected or conservation-style layouts.

3.2 Continue Right-to-Farm Law, Promote the Agricultural District Program & Incentivize Beginner Farmers

Provide property tax abatements or small grants for underutilized farmland when leased to small-scale or beginning farmers, promote farmers participation in the Agricultural District program, and explore partnership with Providence Farm Collective's style incubator farms.

3.3 Map & Promote Rural Heritage Assets

Produce and distribute brochures or an interactive online map highlighting the Cazenovia Creek corridor, scenic drives, and heritage sites throughout the Town.

GOAL 4: INVEST IN SMART, SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

4.1 Adopt a Municipal Capital Facilities Plan

Develop a 5–10-year plan prioritizing upgrades to government buildings and facilities, with an emphasis on the Town of Aurora Library and Highway Barn

Time frame	Responsibility	Funding Sources	In-Kind Support
Short-Term (1–2 years)	• **Lead:** Town Board • **Support:** • Building/Code Enforcement • Planning Board	• Town budget & In-house resources • Erie County Municipal Planning Grant • NYS Smart Growth Program	
Ongoing	• **Lead:** Town Board • **Support:** • Cornell Cooperative Extension • Erie County Ag & Farmland Board and Office of Agriculture • Western New York Land Conservancy • Erie County Soil & Water Conservation District • Local Farmers	• NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets grants • USDA Rural Business Development and Micro-entrepreneur grants • American Farmland Trust Farmland for a new Generation NY	• Cornell Cooperative Extension and Western New York Land Conservancy staff offering free workshops on farmland preservation, best practices, etc. • Agricultural Advisory Board volunteering to review new incentives.
Short-Term (1–2 years)	• **Lead:** Town Historian • **Support:** • Local museums • Historical societies • Greater East Aurora Chamber of Commerce	• I LOVE NY Tourism grants • Erie County Cultural Funding • Local philanthropic or tourism-related grants	• Historical societies providing historical research and writing for interpretive signs. • Volunteers from local scouting troops installing signage or kiosks.
Short-Term (1–2 years)	• **Lead:** Town Engineer • **Support:** • Town Board • Department heads	• NYS DOS Local Government Efficiency Grants for multi-year capital planning. • Town's capital budget • NYS CSC grants • NYS Consolidation grants	

4.2 Comprehensive Capital Improvements & Resiliency Planning

Incorporate climate resilience standards in the capital facilities plan (i.e. culvert upgrades, drainage channels, public EV charger, etc.).

4.3 Support, Where Feasible, the Expansion of EV Infrastructure

Install publicly available EV charging stations at libraries, parks, municipal parking lots, and offer incentives for commercial sites to add chargers.

4.4 Define Battery Storage in Local Code and Develop BESS Use Standards

Add definitions for Battery Energy Storage Systems (Tier 1 and Tier 2) to the zoning code and develop siting, safety, setback, and screening requirements. Reference NYS Unified Solar & Storage Permit model. Prohibit battery storage in residential and conservation areas; encourage placement in the Industrial Innovation Zone.

4.5 Permit Battery Storage in Industrial Zones as an Accessory or Standalone Use

Amend zoning to allow Tier 1 and 2 battery storage systems in the Industrial Innovation Zone. Coordinate permitting with utility and site readiness requirements.

4.6 Integrate Battery Storage into Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Plans

Work with emergency responders to assess the use of BESS at critical facilities (e.g., Town Hall, Senior Center). Explore microgrid feasibility to serve key community hubs.

Time frame	Responsibility	Funding Sources	In-Kind Support
Short-Term (1–2 years) for plan update; **Medium-Term** (3–5 years) for upgrades	• **Lead:** Town Engineer • **Support:** • Town Board • Highway Department • CSC Task Force	• FEMA BRIC for infrastructure upgrades. • NYSDEC resiliency grants for infrastructure upgrades. • REDC consolidated grants for multi-benefit resiliency projects.	• CSC Task Force volunteers collecting data on critical infrastructure
Medium-Term (3-5 years)	• **Lead:** Town Board • **Support:** • Highway Department • CSC Task Force	• NYSERDA CEC and Charge Ready DC &Faster Charger Grants • NYS DEC CSC & Municipal ZEV Grants	• Utility companies providing partial cost-share or free technical assistance for charging station installations. • Auto dealers or local EV clubs to host demonstration events.
Short-Term (1–2 years)	• **Lead:** Town Board • **Support:** • Planning Board • Building/Code Enforcement • CSC Task Force • Fire Districts	• NYSERDA Energy Storage Incentive Program • NYSDEC CSC Implementation Grant • Erie County Municipal Planning Grant • NYS Smart Growth Program	• NYSERDA & NYS Fire Prevention and Control for safety training • Utility providers offering grid-interconnection advice
Short-Term (1–2 years)	• **Lead:** Town Board • **Support:** • Building/Code Enforcement • Planning Board • Erie County IDA • REDC	• NYSED Infrastructure Grants • Erie County Municipal Planning Grant • NYS Smart Growth Program • NYS CFA Strategic Planning & Feasibility Studies	• Engineering students or regional tech firms assisting with capacity assessments
Medium-Term (3-5 years)	• **Lead:** CSC Task Force • **Support:** • Emergency Management Coordinator • NYSERDA CEC technical assistance • NYSEG	• FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) • NYSERDA Microgrid/ Resiliency Grants	• University energy programs conducting feasibility analysis

GOAL 5: IMPROVE WALKABILITY, CONNECTIVITY, AND MOBILITY OPTIONS

5.1 Create a Town-Wide Connectivity Plan Using Alternative Forms of Transportation

Develop a master plan identifying priority pedestrian and bicycling routes (e.g., potential routes include Village border to Knox Farm, Mill Rd to 20A, Olean Rd from the Village to Lapham Rd and Emery Park, and other areas where there is more dense development to the Village and connecting the Town's resources). Additionally, the Town should work with NFTA to determine the feasibility of developing a park-and-ride lot.

5.2 Install Traffic Calming Measures

Explore use of roundabouts, raised crosswalks, speed humps, signals, and signage on roads such as Mill Rd, Center St, and Davis Rd where speeding is chronic and where external funding is available.

5.3 Improve Pedestrian Accessibility to Parks & Recreation

Provide safe crossings, ADA-compliant pathways, trails, and consistent signage to link neighborhoods and parks (i.e. Majors, Knox Farm, and JP Nicely).

5.4 Neighborhood Greenways / Low-Traffic Streets

Identify local roads for reduced speed limits, shared-lane markings, and traffic calming to create safe "greenway" routes for walking/biking.

Time frame	Responsibility	Funding Sources	In-Kind Support
Short-Term (1–2 years) for plan; **Long-Term** (5+ years) for construction	• **Lead:** Town Board • **Support:** • Planning Board • Highway Department • NFTA	• NYS DOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) • Federal Safe Streets and Roads for All grants (SS4A) for planning-level connectivity studies.	• County planning staff or volunteer committees assisting with sidewalk inventories. • Local running/ biking clubs collecting data on pedestrian needs.
Medium-Term (3–5 years)	• **Lead:** Town Board • **Support:** • Building/Code Enforcement • Erie County DPW • NYSDOT	• NYS DOT • Federal Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). • County-level traffic safety funds or matching municipal capital budgets.	• Neighborhood groups supporting demonstration "pop-up" traffic calming to test designs.
Medium-Term (3–5 years)	• **Lead:** Open Space Committee • **Support:** • Town Board • Highway Department • Building/Code Enforcement • Local Recreation Groups	• NYS OPRHP Parks & Trails Grants for ADA-compliant access improvements. • Philanthropic grants i.e Ralph Wilson Foundation • Local capital budget lines.	• Disability advocacy groups advising on accessibility best practices, possibly at no charge. • Volunteer labor for trail clearing or small footbridge building.
Short-Term (1–2 years) pilot; **Long-term** (5+ years) expansion	• **Lead:** Highway Department • **Support:** • Planning Board • Town Board • Building/Code Enforcement • Gobike Buffalo	• Municipal capital improvements budget	• Neighborhood associations helping design and install planters or signage. • Local artists designing creative crosswalks or street murals.

5.5 Support the Development of Dedicated Bicycle Infrastructure

Encourage and support improvements that may include, crosswalks, bike lanes, and wayfinding signage to ensure safe, accessible routes connecting residential areas, the Village, the Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail, and parks.

5.6 Seek Opportunities to Develop Public Parking Areas in Hamlet Centers

Identify and pursue opportunities to establish small-scale, well-landscaped public parking areas within the Town's hamlet centers to support growing commercial and residential activity. Work in conjunction with NYSDOT and/or the Erie County Department of Public Works (ECDPW), depending on road jurisdiction, to ensure parking improvements are designed with safe access, pedestrian connections, and minimal visual impact.

Time frame	Responsibility	Funding Sources	In-Kind Support
Medium-Term (3–5 years)	• **Lead:** Town Board • **Support:** • Town Engineer • Highway Department • Planning Board • East Aurora Pedestrian & Bicycle Board • Gobike Buffalo • Erie County DPW • CSC Task Force	• Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grants • NYS DOT Pedestrian and Bicycle Funding Programs • Erie County Complete Streets Support on County roads • Town Capital Improvement Funds	• Technical assistance and design input from the East Aurora Pedestrian & Bicycle Board and GoBike Buffalo • Community volunteers for data collection, trail counts, or public outreach
Long-Term (5+ years)	• **Lead:** Town Board • **Support:** • Highway Department • Planning Board • NYS DOT • Erie County DPW • CSC Task Force	• CSC Implementation Grants • Town Capital Improvement Funds	• University students or CSC Task Force volunteers can help conduct parking audits to determine the demand for expanded parking areas.

ACTION PLAN TIME FRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In order to accomplish each of the five goals identified for the Town and the plan's overall vision statement, an action plan was developed to help guide the Town in completing action items identified to achieve each goal. Information provided for each recommendation provides context with regard to it helps achieve, who the responsible entities are and what support is available, potential sources of funding, and the time frames in which the actions should be completed. The following list is meant to further assist the Town in identifying which actions they should prioritized first to meet the Plan's vision.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (1-2 YEARS)

1.1 Support Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

1.5 Establish a Housing Task Force

1.6 Seek Pro-Housing Community Designation

2.1 Expand Conservation Efforts by Updating the Town's Open Space Plan

2.2 Update Zoning for Micro-Farming & Homesteading

2.4 Develop Stormwater Runoff Policies in Growth Areas

2.5 Limit Solar & Wind Farm Development with a Renewable Energy Siting Overlay District

2.7 Establish a Town-Wide Tree Management & Replacement Plan

2.8 Infrastructure & Tree Preservation Guidelines

2.9 Establish a Tree Advisory Committee

2.11 Support Sustainable Waste Management Initiatives

3.1 Discourage Flag Lots & Cul-de-Sac Developments

3.2 Continue Right-to-Farm Law, Promote Agricultural District Program & Incentivize Beginner Farmers

3.3 Map & Promote Rural Heritage Assets

4.1 Adopt a Municipal Capital Facilities Plan

4.4 Define Battery Storage in Local Code and Develop BESS Use Standards

4.5 Permit Battery Storage in Industrial Zones as an Accessory or Standalone Use

MEDIUM-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (3-5 YEARS)

1.2 Encourage "Missing Middle" Housing

1.3 Facilitate Senior Housing Development

1.4 Workforce Housing Near Commercial Centers

2.3 Support the Town's Climate Smart Communities Task Force

2.6 Promote Community-Scale & Agrivoltaic Solar Projects

2.10 Become a Member of FEMA's Community Rating System

4.2 Comprehensive Capital Improvements & Resiliency Planning

4.3 Support, Where Feasible, the Expansion of EV Infrastructure

4.6 Integrate Battery Storage into Emergency Preparedness & Resilience Plans

5.2 Install Traffic Calming Measures

5.3 Improve Pedestrian Accessibility to Parks & Recreation

5.5 Support the Development of Dedicated Bicycle Infrastructure

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (5+ YEARS)

5.1 Create a Town-Wide Connectivity Plan Using Alternative Forms of Transportation

5.4 Neighborhood Greenways/Low-Traffic Streets

5.6 Seek Opportunities to Develop Public Parking Areas in Hamlet Centers

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

1. ORGANIZE

The first step of implementing this plan involves establishing a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee (CPIC). The Town Board should officially appoint the CPIC and task them with developing an organizational strategy and meeting schedule. It is recommended that the proposed CPIC be composed of elected officials, department heads, board/committee members, business owners, community organizations, and residents. Holding CPIC meetings as a separate function from Town Board meetings will allow for a more open dialogue in a format more suited to tackling community development issues. An additional benefit of an appointed CPIC is that members do not necessarily turnover with every election cycle, which allows for the continuity required to pursue long range plans and projects. The Town Board will be responsible for funding the costs of this committee, which may necessitate a secretary, and other potential costs incurred. This committee will meet two to four times per year, but in the first and second years may need to meet more regularly. This committee will be responsible for helping to set up the processes, actions, and tools necessary to ensure that the Plan is implemented, revised as necessary, set priorities for the coming year, report on the plan, and help to assign tasks to responsible parties.

Another major responsibility of the CPIC will be to continually keep the Town Board updated on the plan's progress. To keep the Town Board updated, the following reports should be produced:

1. CPIC Annual Report

- What recommendations were completed this year.
- What recommendations were started but not completed, and why.
- What recommendations will the committee be focusing on next year.
- Identification and tracking of metrics to measure the success of implemented recommendations.
- Recommended revisions to the Action Plan.
- Updates to the Community Profile.

2. Annual Funding Request

- Identification of how much funding will be required to complete the recommendations and what grant funding to pursue to accomplish the recommendation.
- Development of this report should align with the Town budget development schedule.

3. Biannual Reports from Aurora Departments & Committees to the CPIC

Town Departments and Committees should produce biannual reports to the CPIC that indicate progress on recommendations assigned to them, what funding they require to accomplish assigned recommendations, and calling out any issues that may be holding them back from completing the recommendations.

4. CPIC Meeting Reports/Minutes

Following each CPIC meeting, a summarization of the meeting should be produced and shared with the Town Board at their next Board meeting. This will help to ensure everyone in the Town is able to stay up to date with the plan's progress and so any issues that do arise can be dealt with in a timely manner.

2. PRIORITIZE

The CPIC will need to work with the Town Board to evaluate the recommendations of the plan and assign a priority level to each. Recommendations can be assigned priority on the basis of feasibility (i.e. low cost and within local capacity vs. high cost and outside Town jurisdiction) or by timing (i.e. short, medium, or long term) as they are on page 102. The CPIC should also periodically revisit and adjust priorities according to changing conditions or the availability of grant funding.

3. DEVELOP & LEVERAGE PARTNERSHIPS

Compared to the surrounding municipalities of Buffalo (pop. 278,349), Amherst (pop. 129,595), and Hamburg (60,034), Aurora is a small community. As such, there is limited budget for full-time professional staff to address municipal issues. Partnering with other municipalities and regional entities could help Aurora take advantage of grant programs, share technical expertise, and exchange ideas. The Town will need to ensure their representation at meetings of regional groups and stay abreast of opportunities to partner on projects and grant applications.

The following organizations were identified as potential support partners for the plan's recommendations. This is not an exhaustive list of every possible organization that could support Aurora in undertaking this plan's recommendations, but it is meant to show the numerous opportunities the Town does have to partner up to support the completion of recommendations.

- East Aurora Village Tree Board
- East Aurora Pedestrian & Bicycle Board
- Greater East Aurora Chamber of Commerce
- Erie County Department of Environment & Planning
- Erie County Department of Public Works
- Erie County Agricultural & Farmland Protection Board
- Erie County Industrial Development Agency
- Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority
- University at Buffalo Research Institute
- Local Recreation & Environmental Groups
- Local Farmers
- WNY Land Conservancy
- Genesee Valley Land Conservancy
- Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Erie County Soil & Water Conservation District
- Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper
- Rural Outreach Center
- Ralph Wilson Foundation
- NYSDOT

4. PURSUE FUNDING

As a smaller community, Aurora has a limited amount of funding to pursue all of the recommendations of this plan. Therefore, for each recommendation, potential funding sources are called out which the Town and CPIC should investigate further for eligibility and applicability. Certain grant programs may require matches, while some grants can be matched using local volunteer efforts or even funding from a different source (i.e. matching a state grant with a federal grant). See the "Funding Sources" of the Action Plan for an overview of some of the grant opportunities available for each recommendation.

5. BENCHMARK SUCCESS

After adopting this Comprehensive Plan, the Town should promptly review and update its development regulations—zoning, subdivision, and related codes and ordinances. The Plan's policies and Future Land Use Map provide direction for these updates so the regulations better reflect Aurora's needs and aspirations. As zoning is updated, the CPIC should monitor development activity in the revised districts to evaluate whether the changes are working.

Beyond code updates and tracking their impact, the Town and CPIC should also benchmark progress toward each goal of the plan. Clear metrics and regular reporting will turn this plan from a vision into a managed program. The ideas that follow are a starting point for selecting goal-specific indicators; they are not exhaustive.

Goal 1:

- *Housing mix shift:* number of new duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, apartments, and ADUs; change in the percent of housing type diversity; share of new units in growth areas vs rural areas; cost of new housing.
- *Senior & workforce housing:* number of projects and where; units provided and for which income ranges; change in the percent of cost-burdened households.

Goal 2:

- *Land conservation:* measure number of acres preserved for open space protection; areas identified for agrivoltaics; number of large-scale solar & wind projects that were approved/denied; percent tree canopy growth.
- *CSC progress:* number of actions completed, points earned, and how long it takes to reach silver status.
- *Waste diversion:* measure how many tons of waste was diverted via composting, e-waste, and events.

Goal 3:

- *Farmland protection:* acres of farmland brought back into productive use; number of newly enrolled ag district participants.

Goal 4:

- *Capital Facilties Plan:* adopted (y/n); number of project funded; delivery rate.
- *Resilience upgrades:* Number of culverts improved, number of EV chargers installed.

Goal 5:

- *Improved ped/bike network:* miles of new bike lanes and multi-use trails; improvements to the parks accessibility analysis; head counts of daily use.
- *Traffic & safety:* Number of traffic calming projects implemented, change in injury crash rates, number of new parking spaces added to hamlets.

APPENDIX

Appendix A:

Town of Aurora Comprehensive Plan

Climate Vulnerability Assessment

I. Introduction

Human-made emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are causing warming that is not typical of the historical record. The Town of Aurora has begun taking steps in addressing climate change, which will affect all areas of the world, even towns like Aurora. As part of its Comprehensive Plan update, on which work began in late 2024, the Town has initiated the development of a Climate Vulnerability Assessment. This document will fulfill the requirements of and outline for Section PE7 Action: Climate Vulnerability Assessment, set forth by the New York State Climate Smart Communities Program.

The Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Program is an interagency initiative of New York State to support local efforts to meet the economic, social, and environmental challenges of climate change. Municipalities can adopt the CSC pledge and submit a variety of actions for CSC certification. The Town of Aurora's Town Board unanimously passed the CSC pledge on September 26th, 2022. A task force was approved in October 2023 to implement the actions necessary for obtaining certification status with the NYS Climate Smart Communities Program. The Town was awarded Bronze-level Certification the same month and the task force continues to work towards achieving Silver-level Certification, which is the highest level of certification available. The Aurora Climate Smart Communities task force has shared extensive educational resources on the physical and social vulnerabilities related to climate change in the Town of Aurora and the Western New York region on its website.

The purpose of the Climate Vulnerability Assessment is to assist the Town in analyzing and developing responses for and resilience against extreme weather events and other climate-induced impacts to come, the frequency and intensity of which are only projected to increase due to climate change. While the Town does have a disaster advisory committee, it has not actively met for several years and lacks the resources to accomplish its duties. This Climate Vulnerability Assessment should prove useful in guiding future emergency management decisions for the Town of Aurora.

This assessment begins with a review of relevant studies, including the Erie County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (2022), the Erie County Climate Action Plan and Climate Vulnerability Assessment (2023), Town of Aurora Climate Smart Community Task Force's website, and the New York State ClimAID Report (2011). Climate hazard and physical vulnerabilities were identified and described primarily based on the Erie County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (ECMHMP). Following this, a social vulnerability assessment is included, primarily based on the ECMHMP, CSC Task Force website, and Town of Aurora Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, findings from the Comprehensive Plan's community engagement process as related to climate change are summarized and discussed. Finally, the assessment concludes with a summary of findings, paths forward for the Town of Aurora and its community organizations and stakeholders, and a timeline to reassess vulnerabilities and update the assessment report.

II. Relevant Studies

A. Erie County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (2022)

First developed and adopted in 2007, Erie County recently updated their Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2022. This plan aims to reduce the impacts of natural disasters and increase the resiliency of all municipalities within Erie County. Components of the plan include a countywide profile, a risk assessment for all potential hazards, and identified strategies to implement to reduce the impacts of

natural disasters. Hazards identified as high-risk in the Town of Aurora include flooding and utility failure. Vulnerabilities include increasing occurrences of severe summer weather (such as thunderstorms and tornado watches) which cause utility failure; extreme winter weather; flooding along Tannery Brook; the school system not participating in federal emergency management guidance; water shortages during hazard events; a lack of adequate backup power for the Buffalo Road and Emery Road temporary emergency housing locations; and frequent flooding events which damage residential properties.

B. Erie County Community Climate Action Plan and Climate Vulnerability Assessment (2023)

The Erie County Community Climate Action Plan was developed in 2023. The plan aims to serve as a high-level roadmap to help guide and prioritize the County's climate actions. As part of the Erie County Climate Action Plan, a Climate Vulnerability Assessment was conducted for the entirety of Erie County. The assessment identified the county's climate threats and hazards and examined the county's ability to handle the hazards at the county level. For the county, four hazard categories were identified as most high-risk: temperature, particularly extreme heat; precipitation, particularly local and downstream flooding; wind, particularly shifting wind patterns and high thunderstorm winds; and biological threats, particularly invasive species and vector-borne diseases.

C. Town of Aurora Climate Smart Community Task Force Website

The Town of Aurora's Climate Smart Community Task Force maintains a very in-depth website providing climate change awareness and education materials, challenges and opportunities being faced by the Town of Aurora regarding climate change, and information on the task force itself, including meeting minutes and CSC certification details. For example, the task force identifies flooding as a critical issue. Challenges relating to flooding include increasing flood occurrences, rising sea levels, the impact of floods on buildings and critical facilities, and more. Opportunities include critical culvert/bridge repairs, protection of the Town's water resources by the Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, and shoreline restoration projects which have been successful.

D. NYS ClimAID Report (2011)

ClimAID: the Integrated Assessment for Effective Climate Change Adaptation Strategies in New York State was undertaken by the New York State Energy Research and Development Agency (NYSERDA) in 2011 as a state-level assessment of climate change impacts, specifically designed to assist in the development of adaptation strategies. Topics addressed in the report include water resources, coastal zones, ecosystems, agriculture, energy, transportation, telecommunications, and public health. For Western New York, the report predicts a significant increase in average annual temperatures and precipitation levels up to the 2080s. The greatest threats to the region identified by the report are increased summer drought risk and high-value crops needing increasing irrigation, which aligns with the high agricultural productivity of Western New York. An addendum to this report was published in 2014, wherein new models were utilized to refine climate projections. This update is also referenced in this assessment.

III. Identified Climate Hazards and Impacts

A. Previously Identified Climate Hazards and Impacts Summary

The Town of Aurora Climate Smart Communities Task Force has identified eight environmental spheres that affect the Town, each with challenges and opportunities laid out. These can be separated between

climate hazards and **climate impacts.** Climate hazards are weather patterns and events, including extreme storm events, extreme temperatures, and flooding. Climate impacts are the physical and social components which experience the impacts of these climate hazards including water and soil, agriculture, invasive species, climate migration, and social justice.

This report will focus on the flooding hazard within the Town of Aurora due to its being identified as a high-risk hazard by the ECMHMP and because of the significance of the watershed to the Town. Flooding was also identified as a primary concern amongst residents and stakeholders in the community engagement process (refer to Section VI). Hazard concerns were ranked in the ECMHMP based on "an assessment of the likelihood of occurrence for each hazard, along with its potential impacts on people, property, and the economy as well as community capability and changing future conditions… each municipality ranked the degree of risk to each hazard as it pertains to their community."

In this subsection, the seven other climate hazards and impacts identified by the Aurora CSC Task Force are detailed. Flooding is described in greater detail in Subsection B.

i. Climate Hazard: Extreme Weather Events

Extreme weather events include floods, blizzards, droughts, wildfires, and heatwaves. While these events are very different in terms of their physical impacts and conditions, they are all influenced by the water cycle, which itself is heavily affected by climate change – specifically, trends in temperature. While "climate change" can often refer to the same thing as "global warming," i.e., an observable increase in average temperature over time, the term "global warming" often gives the incorrect impression that the effects of climate change will always be *warm,* such as increased wildfires and heatwaves. However, the water cycle occurs not only within seasons or a year, but also over multiple years and even decades; therefore, its effects are not always warm. Blizzards, increased snowfall, extreme winds, tornadoes, etc., are affected by the water cycle as well.

Snowfall is not expected to decrease in Erie County. Winter storms are anticipated to be shorter yet more intense. Precipitation is expected to increase by up to 17% in the region by the 2080s[1], with more precipitation in the fall and summer than the current rates. Additionally, due to the proximity to Lake Erie, Erie County is located within an "extreme wind hazard area". Wind speeds are projected to increase during the winter and summer with increases in the temperature. Wind direction is shifting to more northeasterly winds, which will likely increase damage to infrastructure, houses, and trees. Off-season storms are also expected to increase. Since the year 1990, the frequency of tornadoes has been increasing in the area as well. Significant impacts to substrate (pavement, asphalt, etc.) and agricultural soils are expected due to heavier precipitation (erosion). Additionally, the cycle of freezing and thawing can potentially create a substantial loss of crops, soil quality, and prime farmland.

ii. Climate Hazard: Extreme Temperatures

Erie County and the Town of Aurora are and will continue to be exposed to extreme temperatures, both hot and cold. Extreme temperature events will most affect certain groups of people:

- The elderly, who are less able to withstand extreme temperatures due to health conditions and, more often than younger people, lack access to emergency shelters;
- Infants and children up to 4 years of age;

[1] Horton, R., D. Bader, C. Rosenzweig, A. DeGaetano, and W.Solecki. 2014. Climate Change in New York State: Updating the 2011 ClimAID Climate Risk Information. New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), Albany, New York.

- People with chronic medical conditions;
- Low-income residents that do not have access to proper heating and cooling; and,
- The general public who may work or exercise during extreme temperature events.

Extreme cold poses health hazards such as wind chill, frostbite, and hypothermia. Power outages are also common during extreme cold events, which are particularly dangerous for those without proper shelter and/or are stranded or trapped in their car. Older buildings and mobile homes are also more vulnerable to extreme cold. Transportation issues are one of the most obvious issues related to extreme cold. Additionally, extreme cold and ice can significantly impact vegetation, in particular, trees and agricultural crops, which can die off or have a substantially decreased yield for farmers.

Extreme heat events are expected to increase in Erie County and the Town of Aurora in the coming decades. This poses a particular challenge as the municipalities in the Western New York region are more experienced in handling cold weather events. Most heat-related deaths occur from long exposure to extreme heat with little or no air conditioning. Town of Aurora's particular vulnerabilities to extreme heat include isolation for the elderly living in rural areas, socioeconomic vulnerability, and urban heat island effects within the Village of East Aurora. Furthermore, extreme heat can have an impact on buildings in terms of increased energy demand for cooling and insufficient capabilities of mobile homes to withstand heat. Utilities can sometimes fail during extreme heat due to intense usage of air conditioning systems.

iii. Climate Impact: Water and Soil

As mentioned in the sections on extreme storm events and extreme temperatures, the water and soil of Erie County and the Town of Aurora will be heavily affected by climate change. Water and soil are crucial assets to any community because they affect so many other elements of the community, from agriculture to infrastructure.

According to the Town of Aurora CSC website, climate change does and will continue to affect water quality in various ways, including:

- Flooding: Runoff from pesticides, animal waste, fertilizers, and more could be picked up by water during flooding events.
- Algal blooms: Higher surface water temperatures and increased nutrient loading from agricultural runoff may increase algal blooms, which deoxygenate water, produce toxins, and damage other organisms and their habitats, thus taking over entire aquatic ecosystems.
- Winter snowpack: The loss of winter snowpack due to premature melting and/or lack of snowfall will reduce groundwater and runoff throughout the spring and summer, resulting in lowering water levels in water bodies during the growing season.
- Drought: As supply of water decreases, concentration of contaminants increases.

Similarly, soil can and will be affected by climate change as well.

- Soil erosion: More frequent extreme weather events will cause soil erosion by causing precipitation levels that cannot be absorbed by the soil quickly. Water flows across the surface and takes a layer of soil with it – this will potentially affect the steep terrains and ravines that make up much of Aurora's rural area the most.
- Soil organic carbon: Loss of soil carbon causes declines in nutrient availability, biological activity, physical structure, water-holding capacity, aeration, and agricultural productivity.

- Soil nutrients: Extreme rain events can reduce soil nutrient levels.
- Acidity and alkalinity: An increase in precipitation and moisture is expected to increase soil acidity, which will affect natural ecosystems and agricultural productivity.

iv. Climate Impact: Agricultural Productivity

The agriculture industry and a rural lifestyle are both key elements of the Town of Aurora that residents seek to preserve. However, climate change projections indicate that average annual temperatures could increase by up to 10°F by the 2080s. Although it might at first glance sound like a benefit for farmers to have an extended growing season, other side effects of climate change can and do impact agriculture negatively.

Warmer, longer growing seasons mean an increase in irrigation, slower plant growth, and greater potential for diseases and invasive species to flourish on agricultural crops. Bacteria, fungi, insects, and weeds tend to take advantage of warmer weather and often thrive in increased moisture. A longer season and hotter weather could also affect pollinators, such as bees and butterflies, and their lifecycles, which are generally matched with the timing of crop plantings – a crucial step for agricultural productivity, especially fruits and vegetables. Additionally, farm workers and livestock animals will be impacted by increased heat both in terms of physical effects but also by increased prevalence of pests (mosquitoes, ticks, etc.). For both human workers and livestock animals, resources will need to be increasingly dedicated to cooling down, namely, water availability and fans/air conditioning.

The Town of Aurora and Erie County at large will be affected by warming weather trends, as the area is quite agriculturally productive – maple syrup, Christmas trees, apiaries, and autumn tree tourism are identified as Aurora's largest agricultural markets. Local agriculture will also be affected by extreme cold, which may cause crop damage or kill crops entirely; early spring warming can also cause premature budding which can kill crops if it is followed by a freeze.

v. Climate Impact: Invasive Species

As mentioned above, invasive species are likely to become more of an issue as climate changes. As temperature and precipitation increase, species niches change, food chains shift, habitats move, and entire ecosystems are altered in a domino effect. Invasive species can cause significant damage to agricultural crops and even entire ecosystems for various reasons: lack of a natural check on the population such as a predator; they may fill a species niche that native species cannot, such as early or late season growth; they may thrive in a habitat that humans have altered; and, invasive species tend to have a high reproduction rate, disperse rapidly and effectively, and/or are able to tolerate many different environmental conditions. Invasive species can be plants, animals, insects, bacteria, and fungi.

Importantly, invasive species can occasionally be vectors for diseases (both human and animal). Vector-borne diseases require infrastructure to prevent, treat, and eradicate, especially diseases that are new to a population that would have no history with understanding them. In Erie County, the deer tick, which carries Lyme disease, is already present, but may be replaced in the next few decades with the Asian longhorned tick, which causes the always-fatal East Coast Fever and other parasitic diseases in cattle.

Invasive plants choke out native species and reduce biodiversity in wetlands and forests. In the Town of Aurora, several species are already present: Japanese knotweed and Japanese stiltgrass (both associated with aquatic areas), Tartarian honeysuckle, multiflora rose, and common buckthorn. Tree of Heaven is a popular residential landscape tree which is the preferred host plant to the devastating spotted lanternfly. Other invasive species that are present include the Norway maple, giant hogweed,

wild parsnip, and emerald ash borer. Hemlock wooly adelgid, box tree moth, spotted lanternfly, spotted wing drosophila, and European cherry fruit fly; and, beech bark disease and beech leaf disease, both caused by fungi.

vi. Climate Impact: Climate Migration

Climate migration is the migration of peoples from areas of the world due to climate-change related environmental shifts to areas that are more environmentally hospitable. Among others, rising sea levels, droughts, and extreme heat are reasons why people have migrated, and will continue to migrate, to climate oasis areas. Climate migration is anticipated to only increase over the coming decades as climate change intensifies. The greater Buffalo region, as a substantially more climate-resilient and less vulnerable area than other parts of the world, can be expected to receive many of these migrants, including the Town of Aurora, at least in small part. Increased population can cause increased housing costs, increased development pressures, and possibly displace existing low and moderate-income residents.

vii. Climate Impact: Social Justice

Related to climate migration, climate change has and will continue to affect social justice and deepen social inequalities. Climate oasis areas like the greater Buffalo region have the potential to experience substantial increases in property values, which can lead to gentrification. This displacement can cause or exacerbate other social vulnerabilities, particularly in the areas that are left behind in favor of areas with fewer climate vulnerabilities. The social vulnerability assessment done for Erie County reveals high potential for social vulnerability near Buffalo's downtown, but also in rural areas, including the Town of Aurora. That said, the Town of Aurora also has extensive social support infrastructure, including social services, food and clothing pantries, affordable housing options, senior services, and more. These resources, whether publicly maintained or operated by non-profits, can be strengthened and broadened in the coming years to accommodate a larger, and more culturally diverse, population.

B. Flooding

i. Definition of Flooding

Flooding has been identified as the primary climate hazard for the Town of Aurora. Flooding is defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the agency also responsible for administering the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

The risk of flooding in a particular area is defined in terms of the 100-year and 500-year floodplains. In river systems (which affect the Town of Aurora), as opposed to coastal systems, flooding is expressed in flow rate, which is then used to estimate the water elevation during a flood. A 100-year flood level has the probability to be reached or exceeded once per 100 years on average. In other words, the likelihood of the flood occurring has a 1 in 100 chance, or 1% probability, in any given year. The same goes for the 500-year flood, which has a 1 in 500 chance or 0.2% probability of occurring in any given year. The *floodplain* is the geographic area that is estimated to be affected by the 100-year or 500-year flood in any given year. Per the ECMHMP, the boundaries of floodplains can be altered as a result of changes in land use, the amount of impervious surface, improvements in technology for measuring topographic features, and the utilization of different hydrologic modeling techniques.

The 1% and 0.2% chances of a flood occurring in any given year do not mean that a flood in a particular area will only happen once every 100 or every 500 years. Variations always occur and the climate is affected by a myriad of other factors, including previous climate cycles. Within a 100-year floodplain,

there is an approximately 26% chance of flooding within any given 30 consecutive years – the length of most mortgages in the United States.

The regulations of the NFIP are based on the 100-year flood. Residents of communities that participate in the NFIP are automatically eligible for the program. Further, any business or home with a government-backed mortgage that is in the 100-year floodplain is required by law to have flood insurance.

Floods are defined in a leveled system based on the use of hydrographs, which are measured by gages located throughout Erie County. Hydrographs show how a water level changes over time at a specific location. The following terms must be defined for clarification purposes:

- **Action Stage** - the stage which, when reached by a rising stream, lake, or reservoir, represents the level where the NWS or a partner/user needs to take some type of mitigation action in preparation for possible significant hydrologic activity.
- **Minor Flooding** - minimal or no property damage, but possibly some public threat.
- **Moderate Flooding** - some inundation of structures and roads near stream. Some evacuations of people and/or transfer of property to higher elevations.
- **Major Flooding** - extensive inundation of structures and roads. Significant evacuations of people and/or transfer of property to higher elevations.
- **Record Flooding** - flooding which equals or exceeds the highest stage or discharge at a given site during the period of record keeping.

ii. Risk of Flooding due to Climate Change

Per the Town of Aurora's Climate Smart Communities website:

> "Increasing air temperatures intensify the water cycle by increasing evaporation and precipitation. This can cause an increase in rain totals during events with longer dry periods in between those events….The amount of rainfall in a 100-year event is projected to increase, while the number of years between such storms is projected to decrease."

According to the NYS ClimAID Report's Updated Climate Projections Report (2014), the projected increase in precipitation for ClimAID Region 1, which includes Erie County, is 2% to 12% by the 2050s and 1 percent to 17 percent by the 2080s. The baseline precipitation for this region, calculated between 1971 and 2000, is 34.0 in. annually, meaning the potential increase could be to between 34.7 in. and 38.1 in. annually by the 2050s and up to 39.8 in annually by the 2080s. As the Updated Climate Projects Report states, "although the increase in total annual precipitation is projected to be relatively small, larger increases are projected in the frequency of extreme precipitation events (defined as events with more than 1, 2, or 4 inches of rainfall) at daily timescales."

The increase in heavy downpour has and will continue to affect drinking water, increase the risk of riverine flooding, flood key transportation systems, and increase delays and hazards related to extreme weather events.

iii. National Flood Insurance Program Summary

The Town of Aurora has been a participating community in the NFIP since 1974. The NFIP Floodplain Administrator is the Town of Aurora's Code Enforcement Officer. Other Building Department personnel also help fulfill this role. The role of the NFIP Floodplain Administrator is to reduce the risk of flooding, such as by adopting and enforcing higher floodplain management standards than NFIP minimum

requirements, maintaining rigorous enforcement, promoting open space, encouraging responsible building practices, promoting the purchase of flood insurance, and others. However, the ECMHMP states that the Town does not have any certified floodplain managers on staff. The Town also does not have "adequate resources to determine future damage due to climate change and would need occasional training in basic floodplain management." The Code Enforcement office does provide permit review as part of NFIP administration services.

While the Town is a participating community in the NFIP, they do not participate in the Community Rating System (CRS) program. The Community Rating System (CRS) is a voluntary incentive program that encourages community floodplain management practices that exceed the minimum requirements of the NFIP. In communities that participate in CRS, NFIP insurance rates are discounted to varying degrees depending on the amount of "credit points" earned by the community. Credit points can be earned by a series of actions, including map information services, hazard disclosures, publicly sharing flood protection information, providing flood protection assistance, stormwater management, floodplain management planning, building dams and levees, and many more.

According to the ECMHMP, the town does not have any barriers to running an effective NFIP program and does not have any NFIP compliance violations. The town's most recent Community Assistance Visit was March 18, 2008, had a CAC (Community Assistance Contact) visit on May 4, 2005, and is due for another visit soon. The local law number for the local flood damage prevention ordinance is Chapter 68 of the Town Code and was last amended on April 8, 2019. Finally, the town does not exceed the floodplain requirements set by FEMA and does not have any other plans or ordinances that support the NFIP program.

The Town of Aurora does not maintain a list of properties which have been damaged in floods, nor does it maintain a list of property owners interested in flood mitigation. The Town has also not had any substantial damage determinations and has not mitigated any properties. According to the Town of Aurora, as described in the ECMHMP, Town officials consider the existing flood maps (created by FEMA) adequate to address the risk of the flood in the town.

iv. History of Flood Events

According to NOAA, the National Climatic Data Center, Erie County experienced 104 flood events between 1950 and 2020, including 10 lakeshore floods, 40 floods, and 54 flash floods. For Erie County (not specifically for the Town of Aurora), the estimate probability of experiencing a flash flood in any given year is 76%; for a non-flash flood, the probability is 56%. These probabilities will likely increase as the effects of climate change compound. Likewise, the direct and indirect impacts of floods are likely to increase, the latter of which include hazards such as infrastructure deterioration or failure; utility failures, power outages, water quality and supply concerns; and transportation delays, accidents, and inconveniences.

v. Flood Risk Zones

Flood zones are defined by FEMA using three different categories: A, V, and X, which are indicated on flood insurance rate map (FIRM) panels, the official flood zones maps issued by FEMA. Zones A and V indicate high-risk (within the 100-year floodplain). The difference between Zones A and V is that Zone V areas are coastal, potentially with high waves, and are at high risk of other extreme events, such as hurricanes. Zone A indicates low-lying land that is near lakes, ponds, and rivers, potentially with low waves. *Shaded* Zone X indicates low risk (within the 500-year floodplain; 0.2% to 0.99% chance), while *unshaded* Zone X indicates very low risk (less than 0.2% chance).

The ECMHMP identifies several flood-prone areas in the Town of Aurora. These include properties along Cazenovia Creek – both the East Branch, south of the Village of East Aurora, and the West Branch, south of West Falls. Tannery Brook is also a flood-prone area in the Town of Aurora, although most of the length of the brook is located within the Village of East Aurora. Per the ECMHMP, "Tannery Brook has continuously seen major flooding and properties along the waterbody have and continue to be vulnerable to frequent flooding around the creek, especially the nursing home…Frequent flooding events have resulted in damages to residential properties. These properties have been repetitively flooded as documented by paid NFIP claims."

According to the ECMHMP, the Town of Aurora includes 21,739 acres in total land area. Of the total land area, 645 acres, or 3.0%, are within the 1% annual chance flood zone (Zone A). There are 745 total acres within the 0.2% annual chance flood zone, or 3.4% of total land area. There are 0 acres in a Zone V area, since there are no coasts within the Town of Aurora.

IV. Physical Vulnerability Assessment

Physical vulnerability is the susceptibility of physical infrastructure to potential and actual climate hazards and extreme events. Climate change has and will continue to damage or disrupt physical infrastructure, and the Town of Aurora will need to plan to enhance the resiliency of these systems.

In the ECMHMP, hazards are identified and ranked based on a formula including the likelihood of occurrence for each hazard, its potential impacts on people, property, and the economy, the existing level of resiliency among the community, and projected environmental changes due to climate change. The following physical vulnerability assessment (PVA) will be a summary of the conclusions drawn in the ECMHMP and the Town of Aurora's Climate Smart Communities website.

For purposes of better understanding the PVA, the following terms must be defined:

- **Exposure** refers to whether an asset or system is located in an area that is likely to experience the effects of a climate change hazard now or in the future.
- **Sensitivity** refers to how an asset or system fares when exposed to a climate hazard.
- **Adaptive capacity** refers to the ability of an asset or system to adjust to actual or expected climate stresses.

Overall, the adaptive capacity of the Town of Aurora to flooding is considered medium: capacity may exist, but it is not used or could use some improvement.

A. Property/Building Damage

According to the ECMHMP, "exposure to the flood hazard includes those buildings located in the flood zone or those that are built downstream in other flood inundation areas such as dam failure inundation areas. Potential damage is the modeled loss that could occur to the exposed inventory measured by the structural and content replacement cost value."

In the Town of Aurora, the general building stock includes 4,280 buildings with a total estimated replacement cost value (RCV) of nearly $2.5 billion. There are approximately 18 buildings (0.4% of all buildings) within the 1% chance flood risk area (Zone A), with a total RCV of approximately $13.5 million (0.5% of the total RCV). Additionally, there are 47 buildings in the 0.2% chance flood risk area (1.1% of all buildings), with a total RCV of approximately $35.5 million (1.4% of the total RCV).

Using HAZUS software, a standardized loss estimation tool developed and used by FEMA, the ECMHMP estimates that there is a loss value of $2.1 million due to the 100-year flood in the Town of Aurora, approximately 0.1% of the total RCV. Approximately $520,000 of this would be residential building loss, $645,000 would be commercial building loss, and the remainder, about $893,000, would be all other building uses, including agricultural, industrial, religious, educational, and governmental.

B. Infrastructure Damage

According to the ECMHMP, "critical facilities" are typically defined as "facilities considered critical to the health and welfare of the population and that are especially important following a hazard…. critical facilities include essential facilities, transportation systems, lifeline utility systems, high-potential loss facilities, and hazardous material facilities." Grouped in with these assets are also police stations, fire stations, emergency medical services, schools/colleges, senior facilities, and medical facilities.

The ECMHMP identifies US Route 20A and various county roads as important transportation routes which run through the Town of Aurora. According to the ECMHMP, "roads that are blocked or damaged can isolate residents and can prevent access throughout the planning area to many service providers needing to get to vulnerable populations or to make repairs." US Route 20A may be impacted by a 1% annual flood chance event.

Damage to or blockage of critical infrastructure, namely roadways, railroads, and utilities, can and will have serious consequences for residents in the event of a flood. These events may cause loss of communication, energy, heating/cooling, access to food, water, or shelter, access to medical services or supplies, lack of security and safety, lack of means of evacuation if necessary, and possibly even exposure to hazardous materials. These assets are described collectively as "lifelines" in the ECMHMP.

There are 95 critical facilities within the Town of Aurora and 81 lifelines (see Figure 1). Of these, 17 critical facilities (17.9% of total) and 17 lifelines (21.0% of total) are in the 1% annual chance flood areas. These 17 critical facilities, which are also listed as lifelines, are various unnamed bridges throughout the Town of Aurora.[2] These fall under the transportation category of lifelines. However, according to the ECMHMP, these critical facilities are not expected to face potential loss due to flooding.

[2] Data provided by Tetra Tech, Inc., developer of the ECMHMP. This information was not publicly available in the ECMHMP.

Facility Name	Address	Jurisdiction	Latitude	Longitude	Critical Facility Type	Lifeline
3	2.7 MI E JCT RT5 20A+ I87	Aurora (T)	42.76172	-78.645	Bridge	Y
24S	3.7 MI S JCT RTS 400 +20A	Aurora (T)	42.71726	-78.5864	Bridge	Y
24N	3.7 MI S JCT RTS 400 +20A	Aurora (T)	42.7174	-78.5862	Bridge	Y
22S	2.2 MI S JCT RTS 400 +20A	Aurora (T)	42.73745	-78.6006	Bridge	Y
22N	2.2 MI S JCT RTS 400 +20A	Aurora (T)	42.73753	-78.6002	Bridge	Y
Unnamed	1.5 MI. S OF EAST AURORA	Aurora (T)	42.74076	-78.6042	Bridge	Y
33-2	.8 MILE S OF EAST AURORA	Aurora (T)	42.75661	-78.6226	Bridge	Y
47-1	3.8 MI SW OF EAST AURORA	Aurora (T)	42.72403	-78.6693	Bridge	Y
67-3	.3 MI WEST OF SOUTH WALES	Aurora (T)	42.7092	-78.5853	Bridge	Y
85-2	1.9 MI NW OF SOUTH WALES	Aurora (T)	42.73344	-78.5969	Bridge	Y
144-1	IN WEST FALLS	Aurora (T)	42.70165	-78.6821	Bridge	Y
368-3	1.5 MI SW OF EAST AURORA	Aurora (T)	42.75446	-78.6515	Bridge	Y
368-4	1 MILE SW OF EAST AURORA	Aurora (T)	42.75733	-78.645	Bridge	Y
373-4	2.1 MI NE OF JEWETTVILLE	Aurora (T)	42.7453	-78.6555	Bridge	Y
377-1	2.8 MI W OF EAST AURORA	Aurora (T)	42.77952	-78.6831	Bridge	Y
379-2	.4 MILE S OF SOUTH WALES	Aurora (T)	42.70324	-78.5803	Bridge	Y
706	.6 MI EAST OF JEWETTVILLE	Aurora (T)	42.71823	-78.6705	Bridge	Y

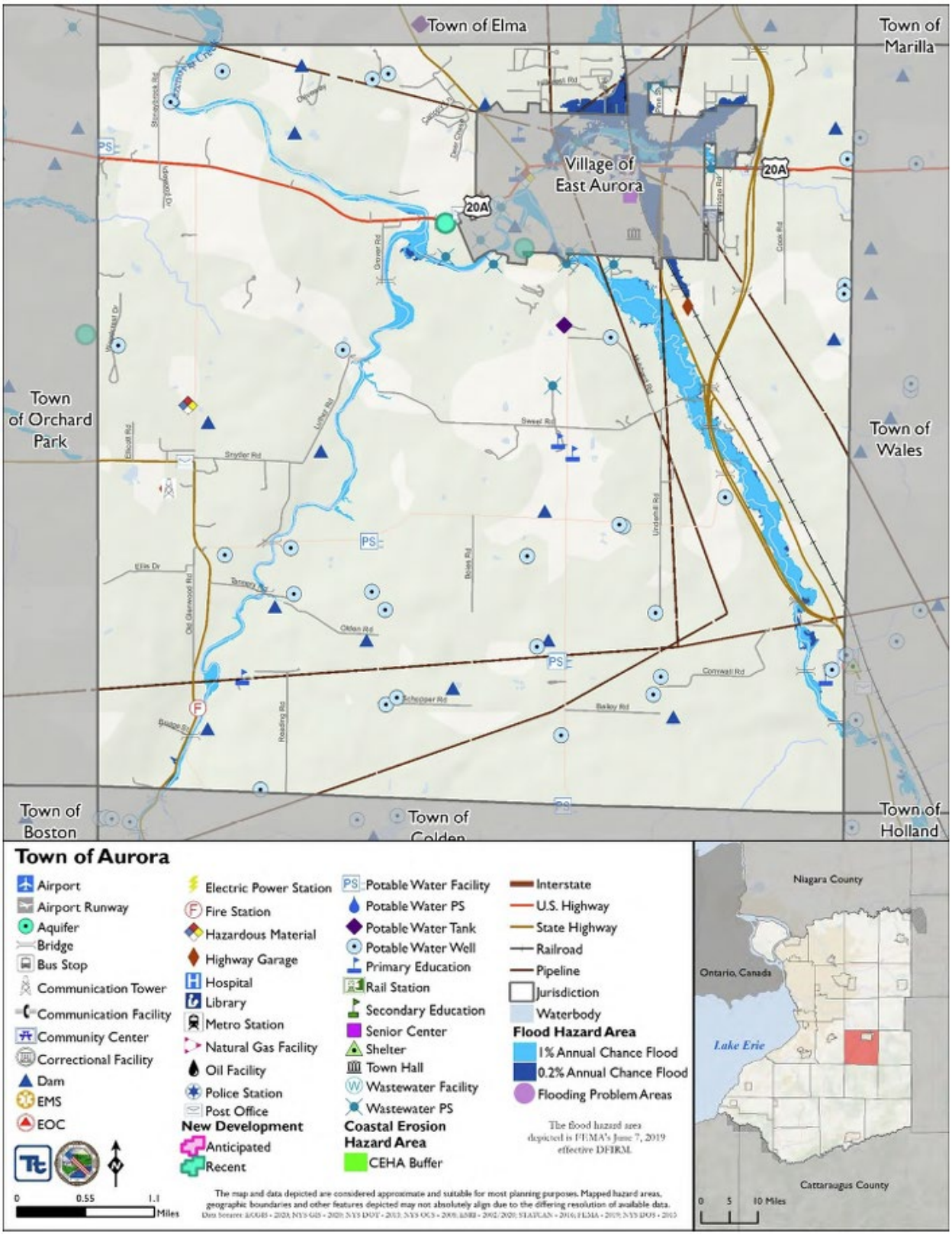


Figure 1. Town of Aurora Hazard Area Extent and Location. Source: Erie County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (2022), p. 9.8-16

The ECMHMP indicates that several specific issues relating to the critical facilities in the Town of Aurora have been identified by Town leadership:

- The town is not currently participating in the Federal Readiness and Emergency Management in Schools (REMS) program which would help schools conduct necessary mitigation measures and determine readiness around disasters.
- The town has had issues with water supply during hazard events and has had to rely on other municipalities for emergency water supply. With increasing extreme weather and drought, the town needs to first determine the areas that need potable water supply.
- The town does not have adequate backup power for the emergency shelter locations on Buffalo Road and Emery Road. These areas are not equipped with electricity and thus are not able to handle emergency shelter needs during disasters.

C. Economic Loss

Flood events can substantially affect the local and regional economy, disrupting or damaging the building stock, which creates tax loss, impacts to utilities and infrastructure; business infrastructure; impacts on tourism and events; and environmental impacts which can affect many different industries, particularly agriculture. Commercial and industrial buildings may need to be renovated or rebuilt, which disrupts their associated services.

The ECMHMP considers debris cleanup in the event of a flood to be a major expense and impact to the economy. Using HAZUS, the ECMHMP estimates the amount of structural debris that would be created during a flood event. Debris includes finishes, such as drywall and insulation; structural, such as wood and brick; and foundations, such as concrete slab and block, rebar, etc. During the 1% annual chance flood event, it is estimated that 296 tons of debris would be created in the Town of Aurora: 191 tons of finishes, 54 tons of structural debris, and 50 tons of foundation. This does not include non-structural debris or debris caused by winds and storms, such as trees, power lines, etc.

D. Public Health and Safety

Perhaps no impacts are as important as the direct health and safety impacts that floods can have on the public. While floods are dangerous and potentially disastrous, the ECMHMP states that the risk of injury and death is substantially lowered if proper warning, precautions, and communication takes place. Injury is most likely to occur when people try to cross flooded roadways. Dam failure can also take place, which can cause loss of life and property damage, however, these impacts are not discussed in the ECMHMP. Models to estimate the losses associated with public health and safety are not standardized by FEMA, so the best mitigation of these effects is proper education, prevention, and preparation, on the part of both the Town of Aurora and residents.

Secondary impacts of flooding and dam failure can be just as catastrophic as the flood itself. The increased moisture, standing water, and lack of ventilation can create a haven for mold to grow, posing a substantial threat to all building occupants, particularly children, expecting mothers, the elderly, and the immuno-compromised. Mold spores can create allergic reactions, asthma attacks, and exacerbate other respiratory issues. In the event of a flood, buildings must be properly cleaned and dried out to prevent mold growth; this is an expense that not all are aware of or able to afford.

During flood inundation, floodwaters themselves can become polluted, which can cause many other cascading effects. Pollutants may include sewage, feces, pesticides, fertilizers, oil, asbestos, rusting materials, and other hazardous materials. According to the ECMHMP, health risks associated with flood

events also include unsafe food, contaminated drinking and washing water and poor sanitation, mosquitoes and other animals, carbon monoxide poisoning, secondary hazards associated with re-entering and cleaning flooded structures, and the mental stress and fatigue associated with a significant and potentially traumatic natural disaster.

E. Land Use, Environment, and Agriculture

If the Town of Aurora continues to develop by building more structures, impervious surfaces will increase, thus potentially increasing the frequency and/or severity of flood events. Additionally, there are several dams within the Town of Aurora. Dam failure could cause substantial water pollution and debris issues, as described above. Contaminated water and sediment and potentially severe soil erosion can be destructive for local ecosystems. The Town of Aurora highly values its agricultural heritage and industry, and the natural systems which support agriculture could be heavily affected by this damage.

F. Insurance Claims

According to the ECMHMP (data from September 2021 was utilized), there are 12 active NFIP policies within the Town of Aurora, with 12 claims and $96,661 total paid out for losses. There are 7 "repetitive loss" properties within the Town. FEMA defines a repetitive loss property as "an insurable building for which two or more claims of more than $1,000 were paid by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) within any rolling ten-year period, since 1978." Only one of these 12 properties is located in the 1% flood boundary.

The 12 policies held in the Town of Aurora are comparable to the median number of policies held in all other jurisdictions in Erie County, which is 8. The median number of claims per jurisdiction in Erie County is 18, compared to 12 in Aurora, and the median number of losses paid out per jurisdiction is $73,956, compared to $96,661. Based on these comparisons, the Town of Aurora has slightly more than the median number of NFIP policies. Slightly fewer than the median number of claims have been made, but the losses paid out were substantially higher than in other jurisdictions. However, some communities in Erie County, such as those on the coast of Lake Erie or with major creeks, have very high numbers of policies, claims, and losses paid. For instance, the Town of Amherst had the highest number of policies (846) and number of claims (448), while the Village of Gowanda had the largest number of losses paid (over $2.3 million).

Table 9.8-9. NFIP Summary

Municipality	# Policies	# Claims (Losses)	Total Loss Payments	# RL Properties	# Policies in the 1% Flood Boundary
Town of Aurora	12	12	$96,661	7	1

Source: July and September, 2021 NFIP Data.

V. Social Vulnerability Assessment

Social vulnerability is the culmination of conditions which affect a person's ability to withstand sensitivity and exposure to the impacts of climate change. Climate conditions affect all residents, but not all residents are affected equally.

According to the Los Angeles County Climate Vulnerability Assessment (October 2021), factors that affect susceptibility to climate change conditions include:

- Inequities in infrastructure and access, caused by differences in education levels, income and wages, economic opportunities, healthcare, transportation, and other services;
- Exclusion from political and decision-making power;
- Inequities in environmental and living conditions; and,
- Differences in individual health, age, and ability.

Socioeconomic factors can create tangible differences in how people become aware of, protect themselves against, and experience the direct and indirect effects of natural disasters, including floods.

It is necessary to include underrepresented and marginalized populations who may be at greater risk from climate change impacts because they are the most likely to experience the most devastating effects of a climate hazard, both during and after the hazard event itself. This is not due to an inability to cope or be resilient to impacts on their own, but rather that various factors can make certain populations systematically more susceptible than others.

A. Vulnerable Populations

The Los Angeles County Climate Vulnerability Assessment utilizes a helpful index for understanding what socioeconomic identifiers might be used to predict a population's sensitivity to climate hazards. "Sensitivity" is used both in terms of psychological sensitivity, i.e., ability to cope, as well as the ability to prepare for or recover from climate hazards.

Age	Children, the elderly, older adults living alone
Community and language	Foreign-born, female, female householder, library access, voter turnout rate, limited English proficiency
Occupation	Outdoor workers (including workers in agriculture, fishing, mining, extractive or construction occupations), unemployment
Education	No high school diploma
Health	Disability, asthma, cardiovascular disease, no health insurance
Housing	Living in group quarters, mobile homes, cost-burdened, renters
Income and wealth	Median income, poverty
Race/ethnicity	Black, Asian, Hispanic/Latinx, Indigenous
Access to information	No internet subscription
Transportation	Households without vehicle access or transit access

According to the Town of Aurora Comprehensive Plan's Community Profile, the population of the Town of Aurora plus that of the Village of East Aurora was 13,394 as of 2020. The Town and Village grew quickly between the decades of 1900 to 1970, but growth has slowed down substantially since 2000, with a 1.5% decrease in population between 2000 to 2010 and a 1.2% increase between 2010 and 2020. While the Town is not growing rapidly, it is remaining stable. As described above, the Town anticipates that the population will increase at least somewhat over the next few decades due to the influx of climate migrants, which may change the Town's overall demographics.

As of 2022, the median age of Town of Aurora residents is 50.3 years old, a 22% increase in median age since the year 2000. The 45 to 64-year-old age group is the largest age group in Aurora, making up just over a third of the total population. In the coming decades, the 65+ year old age group will be the largest population in the Town, a shift which will be accompanied by increasing needs, such as for medical services, care facilities, and transportation.

The average size of households in Aurora has decreased very slightly since 2010, from 2.58 to 2.54 in owner-occupied households (a decrease of 1.6%) and from 1.85 to 1.81 in renter-occupied households (a decrease of 2.2%). The dominant household type in Aurora is married couples, however, only 26.3% of these households have children under the age of 18, so most households are likely empty nesters. People aged 19 and younger, including all children and infants, make up 20.9% percent of the total population of the Town.

Nearly 50% of Aurora residents over the age of 18 have a bachelor's or advanced degree, substantially higher than the same achievement in Erie County as a whole, which is 35.8%. Only 3.6% of the Town's population over the age of 18 do not have a high school diploma.

The Town of Aurora's racial makeup is 95.2% white. Combined, all other races, including Black, American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, and others, make up 1.7%. People identifying as two or more races make up 3.1% of the Town's population.

Adjusted for inflation, the median household income in Aurora is $104,899. For comparison, the median household income in Erie County is $78,552. The median household income in Aurora has gone up by over 8% since the year 2000. Over 60% of the Town's households have annual household incomes between $50,000 and $199,000, and 17.9% have household incomes over $200,000. The Town of Aurora is one of the wealthiest suburbs in the greater Buffalo region.

In terms of employment, the largest employment sectors that residents work in are Education, Health, & Social Services (32.6%), Manufacturing (12.6%), Professional & Administrative (9.8%), and Arts, Entertainment, and Food Services (9.24%). Sectors such as Construction (8%), Transportation & Warehousing (1.3%), and Agriculture (0.04%) make up small percentages of employment for residents of Aurora.

Of the residents of the Town of Aurora, approximately 5,450 work outside of the Town and only 1,199 both live and work within the Town. About 3.0% of residents walk, bike, or ride to work, and approximately 15% work from home. Of the total number of working residents, approximately 82% have access to a personal vehicle or shared vehicle for work. The percentage of households with access to a vehicle is at least that high when including non-working residents and residents who don't drive to work every day but still own a vehicle.

Given the preceding information, it is fair to say that the Town of Aurora is generally wealthy, highly educated, and mostly White with high accessibility to resources. Therefore, for the most part, the residents of the town have lower sensitivity to climate hazards. The most vulnerable populations in Aurora are likely therefore:

- (1) the elderly, especially those that live alone;
- (2) children;
- (3) the immunocompromised and disabled; and
- (4) people who work in high-exposure industries such as agriculture, construction, and transportation.

The Town and its stakeholders should plan on how to specifically address these populations in case of a significant flooding event.

B. Population Exposed to 1% and 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Event

Based on GIS data and satellite imagery of the Town of Aurora, there are approximately 220 residential parcels in Zone A or AE (100-year flood), or approximately 7% of the 3,159 residential parcels in the Town. There are approximately 139 parcels in the shaded Zone X area (500-year flood), or 4.4% of residential parcels.

C. Impacts of Flood on Vulnerable Populations

The effects of a flood can be particularly devastating for vulnerable populations. As mentioned previously, this is not because of their own inability to cope with or be resilient in the event of a flood, but rather because they may systematically lack the resources necessary to evacuate beforehand, protect themselves against a flood, and/or recover in the aftermath of a flood. A non-exhaustive list of potential effects on vulnerable populations is provided below.

The elderly, especially those that live alone	Elderly people may have fewer resources to be forewarned of floods, such as due to lack of internet access. They may also lack the resources to evacuate the area swiftly by not being able to drive or by not owning a vehicle. Elderly people who live alone are more likely to be isolated from others, though they are not always. They may have less of a support network to help them prepare for a flood, evacuate if needed, and clean up/recover after a flood. Additionally, many elderly people do not work and therefore have limited to no income that they can leverage to protect themselves or recover. Elderly people who live in care facilities tend to have a substantially lower degree of independence and their protection and preparedness are at the discretion of the care facility. Elderly people living in care facilities may also be disabled and need medical care that may not be available during a flood event. For both elderly people living independently or in a care facility, the aftermath of a flood can substantially impact on their health as they may be physically weaker and more susceptible to illnesses caused by mold, pollution, etc.
Children	Children are entirely dependent on their caretakers in the case of a flood. For school children, in the case of an emergency, their protection and emergency preparedness are at the discretion of school administrators or other authoritative adults. Children, particularly those under age 5, are also more susceptible to illnesses

	caused by the aftermath of a flood, such as respiratory issues, asthma, allergic reactions, etc.
The immunocompromised and disabled	Because disability exists on such a wide spectrum, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly how each person is vulnerable to flood events; however, their safety, preparation, and medical attention may be at the discretion of others. Some disabled people live independently; sometimes they are in the care of a family member, sometimes a care provider. The immunocompromised are particularly vulnerable to health issues that may be caused by a flood, such as mold, asthma, pollution, allergies, etc. They may require special medical treatment or access to support that may not be available during emergencies.
People who work in high-exposure industries	High-exposure industries include those in which employees spend most of their time outside. High-exposure occupations tend to have greater jobsite risk, as well as greater exposure to the elements, including natural disasters. Employees who work mainly outside have a high degree of exposure to floods, as their jobs may depend on being on the frontline of the flood event. They may also be isolated or stranded during a flood because they do not have all their resources at hand or have much ability to prepare with short notice. After a flood event, high-exposure occupations may be responsible for clearing debris, repairing or rebuilding infrastructure, and/or may be left unable to work at all, which can cause economic and mental distress.

VI. Community Engagement Summary

Community engagement is an essential part in the comprehensive planning process. This chapter highlights the various methods used to engage the Town of Aurora residents in the process of developing the Comprehensive Plan. Residents were given opportunities to share their insights, opinions, and aspirations for the community. The feedback gathered helped shape the plan's vision statement, goals, and recommendations. For a Comprehensive Plan to be effective, it must have strong community support. By incorporating public input, the actions and projects outlined are more likely to succeed, as they align with the community's needs and priorities. For the Town of Aurora Comprehensive Plan, a public survey, stakeholder interviews, focus group meetings, and two public workshops were held.

A. Takeaways from the Comprehensive Plan Public Survey

- **Flooding Impacts**: Nearly 30% of respondents reported experiencing stormwater drainage or flooding issues. The most impacted areas are the Hamlets of West Falls (23.8%) and Jewettville/Griffins Mills (15.3%).
- **Climate Change Concerns**: 47% of respondents indicated climate change impacts as a top environmental concern, following loss of open space and wildlife habitats (73%) and water pollution (48%).
- **Stormwater Infrastructure**: Many comments pointed to a need for improved stormwater control and highlighted localized issues—especially around older infrastructure and in areas near wetlands and creeks.

B. Takeaways from the Comprehensive Plan Stakeholder Interviews

- **Flood Management is a Priority**: Flood management was identified as a key need in infrastructure planning. Stakeholders called for climate resiliency to be a central focus, especially in water systems, stormwater control, and protection of floodplains.
- **Environmental Vulnerabilities**: The Agriculture & Natural Resources Focus Group interview highlighted increased flooding, stream bank erosion, and degraded habitats as threats to the Town. They supported conservation as a climate adaptation strategy.
- **Calls for Action**: Stakeholders suggested using vegetative stream buffers, preserving mature trees, and improving zoning regulations to support resilience to climate shifts.

C. Takeaways from the Comprehensive Plan Public Workshop #1

- **Threats Identified by the Public**:
  - Overdevelopment and loss of green space
  - Climate change refugee influx putting pressure on infrastructure
  - Flooding and water runoff from poorly managed development
  - Environmental degradation from pesticides and deforestation
- **Community Values**: Residents emphasized the need for nature preservation and limiting development in sensitive areas like floodplains and wetlands

D. Public Workshop #2 Feedback on Plan Recommendations

- **Plan Recommendations Related to Climate Vulnerability and Identified as High Prioritization**
  - Develop Stormwater runoff Policies in Growth Areas
  - Complete a Town-wide Stormwater Master Plan
  - Establish a Town-wide Tree Management Plan
  - Re-activate and Support the Town's Disaster Advisory Committee
  - Conduct a Townwide Flood Vulnerability Study
- **Plan Recommendations Related to Climate Vulnerability and Identified as Medium Prioritization**
  - Support the Town's Climate Smart Communities Task Force
  - Establish Infrastructure & Tree Preservation Guidelines
  - Become a Member of FEMA Community Rating System
  - Expand Community Education and Outreach on Flood Preparedness
  - Establish a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
- **Plan Recommendations Related to Climate Vulnerability and Identified as Low Prioritization**
  - Comprehensive Capital Improvements & Resiliency Planning
  - Secure funding to Enhance Emergency Management Planning

VII. Conclusion

A. Summary of Findings

Flooding events were identified by the Town of Aurora Climate Smart Task Force and the Erie County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (2022) as the primary climate hazard for the town. Climate change will affect the Town of Aurora in many ways, including increased extreme weather events and temperatures, changes to water and soil, impacts on agricultural productivity, increased prevalence of disruptive invasive species, the potential increase in population due to climate migration, and a cascading effect of social justice issues. However, flooding is the most top-of-mind issue for the Town of Aurora currently because of several flooding instances in recent history and because of the prominence of Cazenovia Creek and Tannery Brook in the Town's geography. Climate change is anticipated to increase the number and severity of flood events because increasing temperatures intensify the water cycle, thus increasing total precipitation and the intensity of rainfall.

The risk of flooding is quantified by FEMA, which has published FIRM panels illustrating the areas of the Town most at risk of the 1% chance annual flood and the 0.2% chance annual flood. Of the total land area, 645 acres, or 3.0%, are within the 1% annual chance flood zone (Zone AE). There are 745 total acres within the 0.2% annual chance flood zone, or 3.4% of total land area. Floods have already caused destruction and losses of residential properties in the Town of Aurora and have the potential to cause substantial losses to other types of properties, with the monetary value of loss estimated in the millions of dollars. Flooding can also cause infrastructure damage, such as to roads and utilities, which can isolate residents during a flood event and leave them without critical lifelines. Further, floods can cause substantial economic loss, in terms of disrupting the typical functioning of commercial activity, but also the loss of tax base and the cost of cleanup after a flood. Floods also pose substantial risks to public health and safety, the most obvious being injury and loss of life, but also secondary impacts such as molding, allergies, respiratory illnesses, pollution, lack of sanitation, mosquitoes, and more. All these impacts can affect land use in substantial ways, which is of special interest to the Town of Aurora because its residents highly value the Town's agricultural land and open spaces.

Behind all physical vulnerabilities of the Town of Aurora to a flood event, there are over 13,000 residents (Town of Aurora plus Village of East Aurora) who could have their lives and livelihoods negatively affected. Although climate change effects, including floods, will impact all people, they will not impact all people equally. By conducting a social vulnerability assessment, it was determined that the Town of Aurora is generally wealthy, highly educated, and mostly White with high accessibility to resources. Therefore, for the most part, the residents of the town have lower sensitivity to climate hazards. The most vulnerable populations in Aurora are likely therefore the elderly, especially those that live alone; children; the immunocompromised and disabled; and people who work in high-exposure industries such as agriculture, construction, and transportation. These groups of people are most at risk of not being able to evacuate in case of an emergency; be stranded or isolated during a flood event; have lowered or no access to necessary medical care; be more likely to contract illnesses or be impacted by negative health issues; have their protection and safety in the hands of others; and possibly have high exposure to the frontlines or aftermath of a flood event. The Town and its stakeholders should plan on how to specifically address these populations in case of emergency.

B. Recommendations

1. **Re-activate and Support the Town's Disaster Advisory Committee:**
   The Town should review the membership, roles, and capacity of its Disaster Advisory Committee to ensure it is active, representative, and well-resourced. The committee should meet regularly, coordinate with emergency response agencies, monitor risks, assist with mitigation planning, and educate the public on preparedness and recovery. It should integrate climate resilience into emergency protocols and prioritize outreach to vulnerable populations (e.g., seniors, disabled residents, isolated households).

   Responsibility:
   - **Lead Agency:** Town Board
   - **Support Agencies:**
     - Erie County Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Service
     - Town Code Enforcement Office/Floodplain Administrator

   Potential Funding Sources:
   - NYS Department of State Local Government Efficiency Grants
   - FEMA's Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) Program
   - NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) CSC Implementation Grants

2. **Conduct a Townwide Flood Vulnerability Study:**
   The Town should seek funding and commission a detailed flood vulnerability assessment to map at-risk areas and critical infrastructure (e.g., roads, utilities, shelters) along Cazenovia Creek and Tannery Brook. The study should recommend interventions like elevating roads, retrofitting culverts, and installing green infrastructure to manage runoff. The Town should prioritize engagement with owners of repetitive loss properties and identify mitigation pathways (e.g., buyout, elevation, floodproofing).

   Responsibility:
   - **Lead Agency:** Town Board
   - **Support Agencies:**
     - Town Engineer & Town Floodplain Administrator/Code Enforcement Office
     - FEMA Region II
     - Erie County Soil & Water Conservation District
     - Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper
     - CSC Task Force

   Potential Funding Sources:
   - FEMA's Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Grant Program
   - NYS DEC Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) Grants
   - US EPA Climate Resilience Grant Programs

3. **Expand Community Education and Outreach on Flood Preparedness:**
Create a public outreach campaign to inform residents—particularly seniors, renters, and households near flood-prone areas—about flood risks, insurance options, emergency alerts, and personal mitigation steps. Collaborate with community groups to distribute materials at the library, Senior Center, farmers markets, and school events.

Responsibility:

- **Lead Agency**: Town Board
- **Support Agencies:**
  - CSC Task Force
  - Code Enforcement Office/Floodplain Administrator
  - Aurora Public Library & West Falls-Colden Community Library
  - East Aurora Union Free School District
  - Local non-profits and faith-based organizations

4. **Secure funding to Enhance Emergency Management Planning:**
The Town should update and enhance its emergency management, including integration of climate hazards, evacuation protocols, sheltering strategies, and coordination with the school system. Enhanced planning should also include an assessment of emergency shelter readiness.

Responsibility:

- **Lead Agency**: Town Board
- **Support Agencies:**
  - Erie County Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Service
  - Fire & Police Department
  - CSC Task Force
  - Disaster Advisory Committee

Funding Sources:

- FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Grants
- NYS Homeland Security Grant Program
- HUD Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery

5. **Establish a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT):**
The Town should create a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) to train residents in disaster preparedness and emergency response. This volunteer-based program empowers residents to assist emergency personnel during natural disasters, including floods and power outages, by supporting evacuation, first aid, shelter operations, and basic fire safety. It also builds local capacity and enhances resilience through public education and community-based readiness.

Responsibility:

- **Lead Agency**: Town Board
- **Support Agencies:**
  - Disaster Advisory Committee
  - Erie County Citizens Corps Council

- Fire & Police Department
- Senior Center

Funding Sources:

- NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services

C. Document Monitoring & Updates

Establishing an implementation and monitoring framework is essential to ensuring that this Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) remains a living document that evolves with changing conditions, science, and community needs. This framework outlines how the Town of Aurora will monitor progress, integrate new information, and engage the community in re-evaluating climate risks and adaptation strategies.

i. Next Steps After Plan Adoption

Following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan along with this Climate Vulnerability Assessment, the Town of Aurora will:

- Disseminate the plan to all relevant Town departments, boards, and community partners.
- Assign departmental and/or board responsibility for each recommendation and initiate an implementation plan.
- Identify staffing and technical support needs for implementation and monitoring activities.
- Apply for state and federal grants to support the identified recommendations.
- Begin outreach to residents and organizations in flood-prone and vulnerable areas, particularly repetitive loss properties.

ii. Timeline for Reassessment

The Climate Vulnerability Assessment will be formally re-evaluated on the following schedule:

- **Routine Reassessment:** At least once every **10 years**.
- **Triggered Reassessment**: The Town will update the assessment **prior to the 10-year mark** if any of the following occurs:
    - A major flooding or extreme weather event that causes substantial damage or emergency response;
    - A significant update to New York State climate projections (i.e., ClimAID)
    - Complete of a Town Flood Vulnerability Study
    - Introduction of new floodplain maps, hazard models, or tools by FEMA or other relevant agencies;
    - A material shift in population demographics or community vulnerability (e.g., climate migration or the development of a new senior housing facility in a flood prone area).

iii. Components of Each Update

Each reassessment will:

- Incorporate the latest regional climate science and projections.

- Evaluate the Town's exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity across infrastructure, facilities, natural systems, and social demographics.
- Document any major weather events (i.e., floods, heatwaves, utility failures) experienced since the last update and how they impacted community assets and residents.
- Re-assess vulnerable populations (i.e., elderly, children, disabled and immunocompromised, frontline workers, and any other applicable groups not previously mentioned in this assessment) to reflect shifting demographics, access to resources, or new risks.
- Re-prioritize community assets and critical systems if risks or vulnerabilities have changed.
- Include a section summarizing implementation progress for each recommendation identified in the assessment.
- Engage in community outreach to gather public feedback through surveys, public meetings, or workshops, especially from high-risk neighborhoods.

vi. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Lead Agency**: Town of Aurora Disaster Advisory Committee
- **Support Agencies**: Town Board, Climate Smart Communities Task Force, Code Enforcement Office, Erie County Department of Environment and Planning, Erie County Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Service, and community organizations
- **Reporting**: A written summary of progress and conditions will be prepared and shared publicly via the Town website and community newsletters.

Appendix B:
Town of Aurora Comprehensive Plan
Public Survey Summary Report

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Overview

Introduction

The Town of Aurora began the process to develop their own standalone comprehensive plan in October of 2024. A comprehensive plan is an official, long-range 'blueprint' for a municipality's future created by its local government. Comprehensive plans detail the community's vision for the future, including development, land use, and community priorities. A good comprehensive plan includes an extensive public engagement plan that will help the Town understand current issues, gain information from the public, clarify its vision, goals, and priorities for the future, and inform recommendations and implementation strategies. As a component of the public engagement plan, a public survey was administered from November of 2024 to March 2024 in order to gather the necessary input from the community.

Survey Methodology

During a four-and-a-half-month period from November 1st, 2024, to March 16th, 2025, surveys were distributed and collected from residents and non-residents of Aurora who wanted to provide their input on the future of their town. The survey was hosted online using SurveyMonkey, while paper copies were also available at all times. To maximize survey participation, various methods of distribution were utilized. These methods include (**1**) providing paper surveys at the Town Municipal Building's Clerk's Office and Senior Center, (**2**) promoting the survey through press releases, the project website, and the Town website, (**3**) using the Town's CodeRED notification system to inform every resident that has signed for the notification system about the survey, (**4**) distributing flyers around various public and municipal spaces promoting the survey. (**5**) emails blasts to those who have signed up for the plan's email notification system, (**6**) and sending a mailer about the survey to every household in the Town. Overall, the survey campaign yielded **865** survey responses, 827 of which were collected from the online survey while 38 were collected via paper survey. This report is an attempt to synthesize the diverse range of perspectives of those from Aurora and identify the most pressing issues that this plan can help address.

Key Findings

Strong Attachment to Rural and Small-Town Character – Most residents appreciate Aurora's rural nature, wildlife, and small-town feel, valuing its balance between peaceful living and accessibility to nearby urban centers. Preserving this character should be a key consideration in future planning efforts.

Strong Preference for Conservation and Open Space – The majority of residents (74%) believe that the Town should prioritize conservation and open space, followed closely by recreation (66%). This indicates a clear desire to preserve natural areas and maintain Aurora's rural character.

Desire to Limit New Development – Half of Aurora residents believe new development should be limited to maintain the Town's character, with a preference for infill development in already developed areas rather than large-scale expansion. This aligns with concerns over traffic congestion, loss of farmland, and environmental impacts.

Need for Senior and First-Time Homebuyer Housing – While single-family homes remain the most preferred type of new housing (63%), there is strong demand for senior housing (45%) and housing for first-time homebuyers, with 71% and 68% of respondents expressing concern over the lack of these options. This suggests that future housing development should address aging populations and younger residents looking to establish themselves in the community.

Preference for New Housing Near the Village and Existing Neighborhoods – Nearly half of respondents (47%) believe new housing should

be focused near the Village of East Aurora, with 40% supporting infill development in existing neighborhoods. This aligns with concerns over preserving rural areas and maintaining the character of the Town while accommodating growth in a controlled manner.

Strong Satisfaction with Parks but a Desire for More Trails and Natural Areas – While 77% of respondents are satisfied with the quality of parks and recreational facilities, there is a clear demand for expanded outdoor recreation opportunities. The top priorities include more trails and bike paths (67%), additional nature reserves (54%), and improved community amenities like playgrounds and outdoor fitness areas. Many respondents also emphasized the need for better maintenance and inclusiveness in existing facilities.

Need for Improved Walkability and Traffic Calming in Key Areas – Although 52% find it easy to walk or bike around town, a significant portion (24%) find it difficult. Areas around the Village of East Aurora were identified as places that most need pedestrian and biking improvements (64%), followed by the hamlets and neighborhood centers. Traffic calming measures were most frequently requested for Main Street, Center Street, and Olean Road.

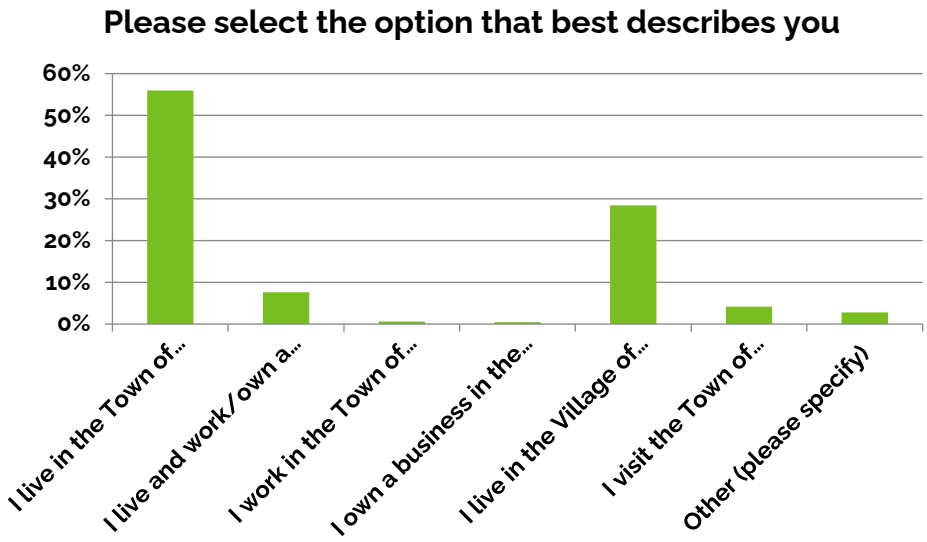
Broad Support for Protecting Natural Resources – Nearly all respondents (97%) believe protecting natural resources, including water quality and wildlife habitats, is important, with 83% stating it is *very important*. This underscores the need for conservation-focused policies in future land use planning.

Preserving Open Space is a Key Priority – The top environmental concerns include the loss of open space and wildlife habitats (73%), followed by water pollution (48%) and climate change impacts (47%). Many respondents expressed a desire for stricter controls on development to better protect farmland and natural areas.

Stormwater Drainage Issues Are Localized but Impactful – While most residents (71%) have not experienced significant stormwater drainage or flooding issues, nearly 30% have, with frequent issues reported in the Hamlets of West Falls (23.8%) and Jewettville/Griffins Mills (15.3%). This suggests a need for targeted stormwater management improvements in these areas.

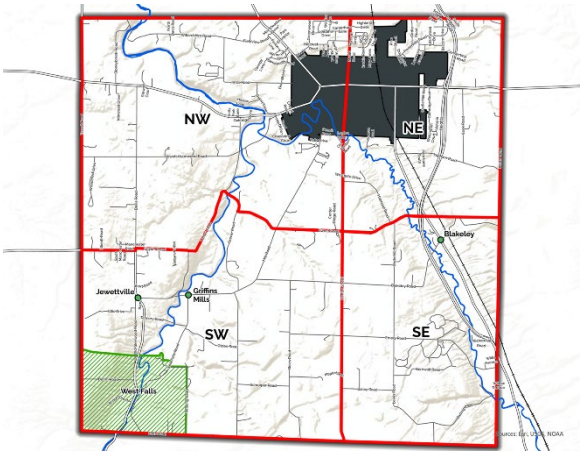
Tell us About Your Town

Of the 865 respondents who took the Town of Aurora Comprehensive Plan Public Survey, 63.7% live in the Town of Aurora while 28.4% live in the Village of East Aurora. The remaining survey respondents either just work in the Town (0.58%), own a business in the Town (0.46%), visit the Town often (4.16%), or other (2.7%). The responses noted throughout the rest of this section are from those only who indicated that they live in the Town of Aurora.



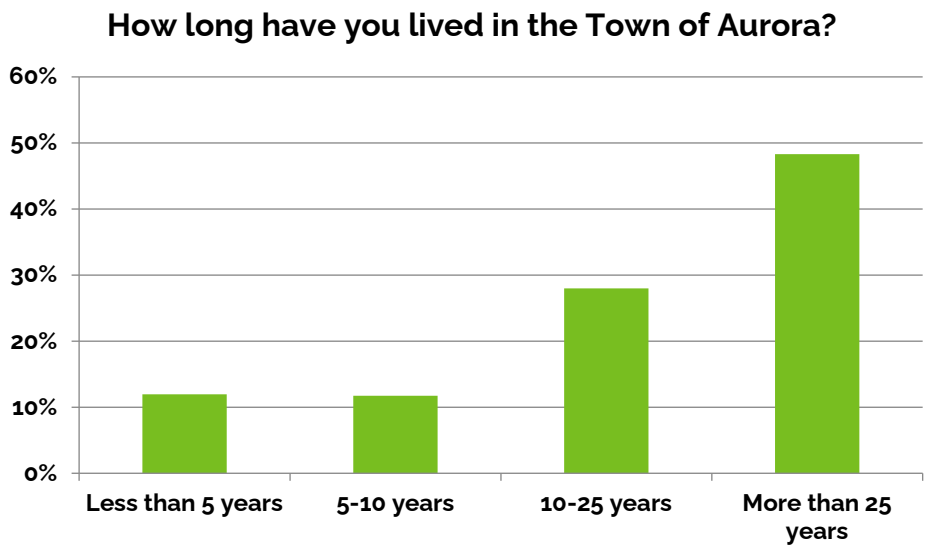
Indicate Where You Live in Aurora

Town residents participating in the public survey indicated they live in the northeast (NE) section of the Town (31%) with the northwest (NW) following close behind (26%); 19% live in the southwest (SW) and 14% live in the southeast (SE) portion of the Town. Some respondents specified their Hamlet, with 5% indicating they live in West Falls; 3% in Jewettville or Griffins Mills; and 2% in Blakeley.



How Long Have You Lived in the Town of Aurora and What Best Describes Your Housing Tenure?

Nearly half (48%) of respondents have lived in the Town for more than 25 years, while 30% indicated they've lived in the Town between 10-25 years; 12% have lived in the Town between 5-10 years and the remaining 12% for less than five years. An overwhelming majority- 90%- are homeowners, while 2% are renters and 7% live with family or friends.



What Are Three Things You Like the Most About Living in Aurora?

When asked what three things they liked most about living in Aurora, a great majority of respondents said they like the rural nature, wildlife, and small town feel of the community the most, along with its close proximity and the accessibility to the events and businesses of major centers like the Village of East Aurora and the City of Buffalo. Respondents also singled out the family friendliness, quiet, and safety of the community.

What Are Three Things You Would Like to See Improved in Aurora?

When asked what three things they would like to see improved in the Town, improvements to the roads was the number one response followed by improvements to trails and parks, and improved parking in the Village.

In 15 Years, What are Three Words you Would Like to be Able to Use to Describe the Town?

In 15 years, residents would like to be able to describe the Town as safe (18%), friendly (17%), and quaint (10%).



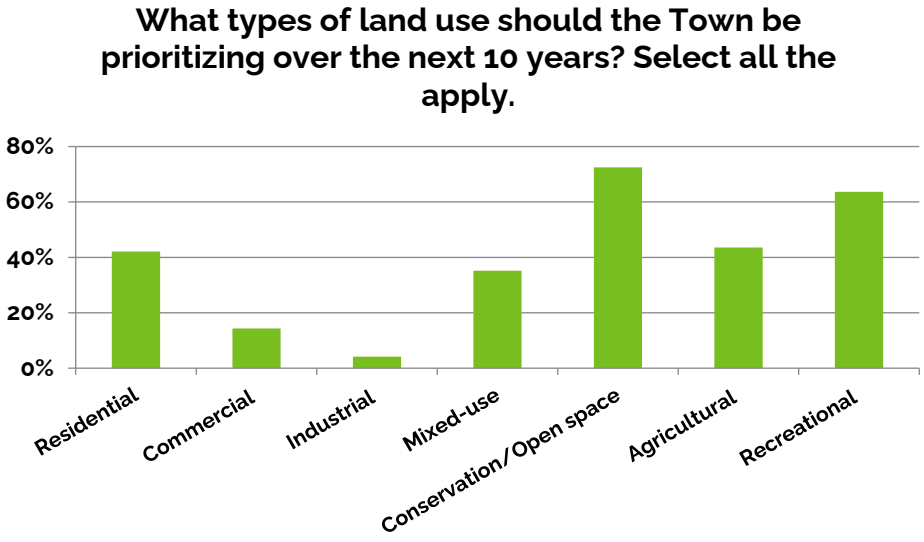
Land Use & Zoning

Do You believe the Town's Zoning Regulations are Effectively Guiding Community Development?

More than half of respondents (57%) are not sure if the Town's zoning regulations are effectively guiding community development; however, 23% said the Town's regulations were effective in guiding community development with 19% responding no.

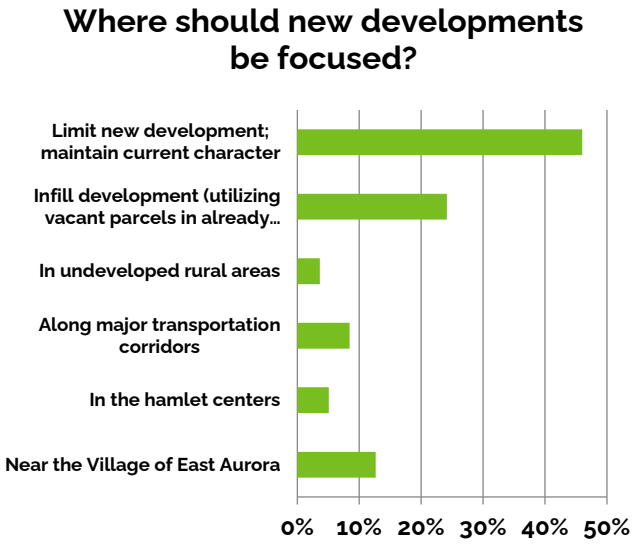
What types of land use should the Town be prioritizing over the next 10 years?

When asked what type of land use the Town should be prioritizing over the next 10 years, 73% said conservation and open space, 64% said recreation and parks, and 43% and 42% said agricultural and residential uses respectively; 35% said mixed use with commercial uses on the bottom and residential uses on the upper floors should be prioritized. According to just Aurora residents, the land use they believe should be prioritized are conservation and open space (74.2%) and recreation (65.9%).



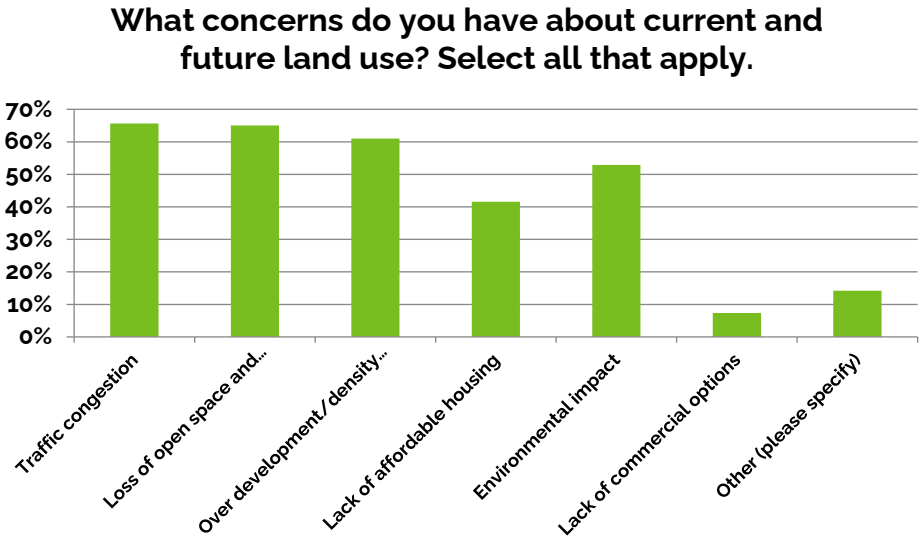
Where should new developments be focused?

Of the respondents that weighed in on where new development should be focused, 46% said new development should be limited and the current character should be maintained. Another 24% said development should be limited to infill development on vacant parcels in developed areas and 13% said new development should be located near the Village of East Aurora. 50% of Aurora residents said that new development should be limited. As for non-town residents (i.e. potentially new residents) they also think new development should be limited (39.5%), but a significant amount also think it should be focused on infill development (31%).



What concerns do you have about current and future land use?

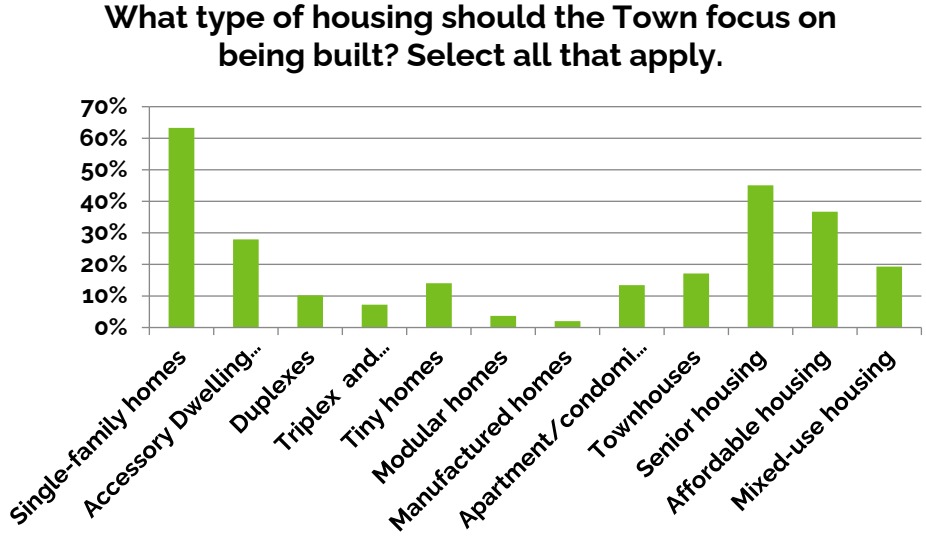
When asked about concerns with current and future land use, 65% of respondents said both traffic congestion and loss of open space and farmland; 61% said over development and density issues were a concern; and 53% said they were concerned with the environmental impact of future land uses. Still another 42% said lack of affordable housing was a concern within the Town. Comments left by respondents also included concerns over rising taxes and housing developments that take away from the character of the Town.



Housing & Neighborhoods

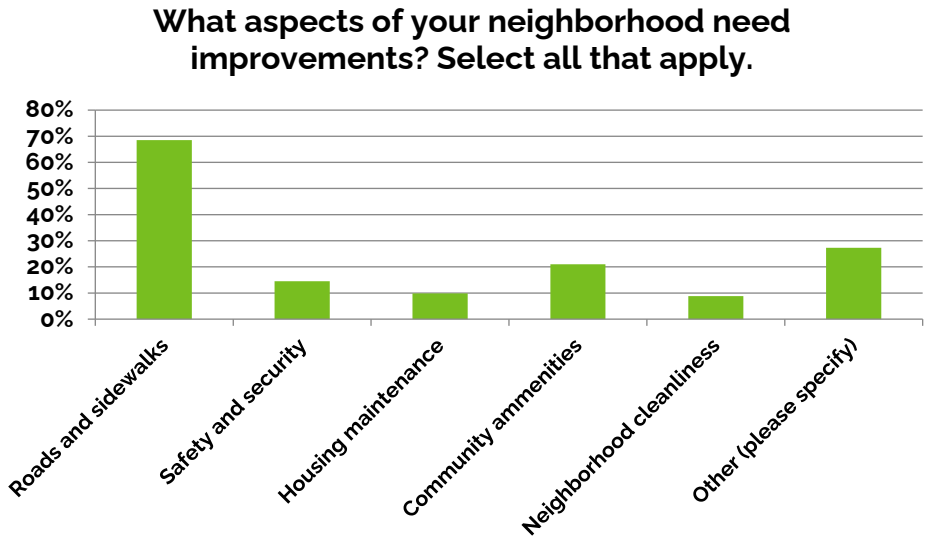
How satisfied are you with the quality of housing in your neighborhood and What New Housing Should the Town Focus on Being Built?

An overwhelming majority of residents (85%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of housing in their neighborhoods. Opinions varied on what type of housing the Town should focus on building: 63% of respondents favored single-family housing, 45% said senior housing, 37% thought affordable housing was necessary, 28% thought accessory dwelling units (ADUs) should be considered, and mixed-use housing and townhouses were popular only with 19% and 17% of respondents respectively. Comparing town resident responses to responses from the villagers and non-residents. Those who live in the Village or do not live in Aurora at all were more open to the idea of different housing. Opposed to the overall response rates, villagers and non-residents would like to see more ADUs (34%) and mixed-use housing (26.8%) and thought there was a more pressing need for senior housing (51.9%) and affordable housing (44.6%).



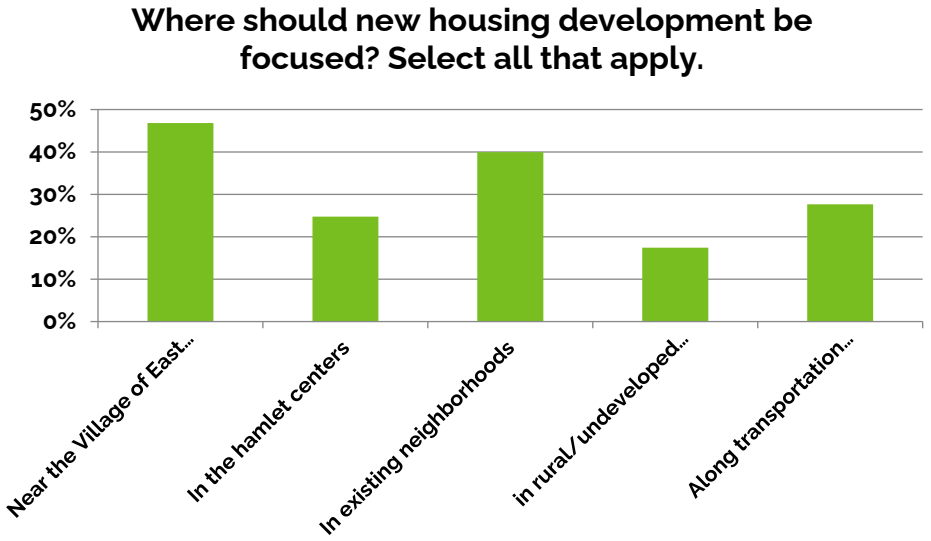
What Aspects of Your Neighborhood Need Improvements?

When asked what aspects of their neighborhoods needed improvement, 69% said roads and sidewalks. Another 21% said community amenities and 15% said safety and security needed improvement. 27% said other; those 164 comments range from the most frequent complaint of speed limits needing to be lowered or adhered to, to pedestrian safety measures, and respondents just weighing in to say that their neighborhood is fine.



Where Should New Housing Development be Focused?

As to where new housing development should occur, most respondents (47%) said near the Village of East Aurora; 40% said in existing neighborhoods; 28% said along transportation corridors; 25% said hamlet centers would be appropriate for new housing; and 17% said it would be ok to develop new housing in currently rural/undeveloped areas.



How Concerned Are You About the Following Housing Issues?

Several potential housing issues were presented to get survey respondents' opinions on how concerned they were with each issue. Respondents were asked to indicate if they are "very concerned", "somewhat concerned", "not concerned", or "not sure".

Lack of Affordable Housing: 64% were somewhat or very concerned, while 33% were not concerned with the lack of affordable housing within the Town.

Rising Housing Costs: 75% of respondents were somewhat or very concerned about the rising costs of housing, while 23% were not concerned.

Housing Quality: 47% of respondents were somewhat or very concerned about the quality of housing within the Town, while 49% were not concerned.

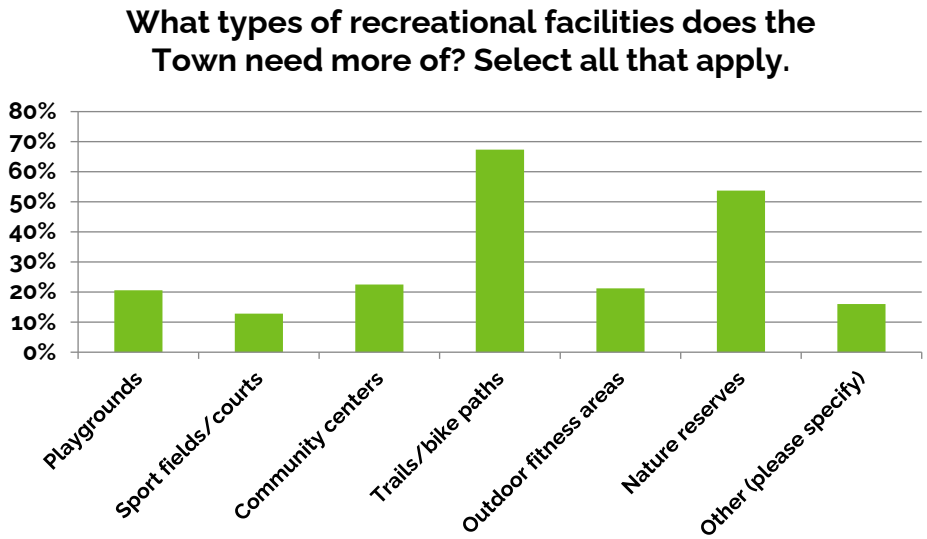
Lack of Housing for Seniors: 71% expressed concern with the lack of senior housing within the Town while 25% were not concerned and 4% were not sure.

Lack of Housing for First-Time Homebuyers: 68% of respondents said they were somewhat or very concerned about the lack of housing for first-time homebuyers, while 29% were not concerned and 3% were not sure.

Parks. Recreation, and Cultural Assets

How Satisfied Are You with the Quality of Parks and Recreational Facilities in Aurora and What Type of Recreational Facilities Does the Town Need More of?

When it comes to satisfaction with the quality of the Town's parks and recreational facilities, 77% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied, while only 8% were dissatisfied. Still there are several types of recreational facilities and assets that respondents think the Town needs more of. 67% said that the Town needs more trails and bike paths; 54% said that they'd like to see more nature reserves; and receiving nearly identical support was the need for community centers (23%), playgrounds (21%), and outdoor fitness areas (21%). Within the 101 written responses, most people think there are enough facilities and playgrounds, they just need to be better maintained and more inclusive, while others think the Town should expand pools and splash pad options, and the number of pickleball courts. Comparing Town residents' responses to village and non-resident responses, more village and non-residents (75%) think the town needs more trails compared to town residents (64%)



Transportation Systems & Walkability

How do You Primarily get Around in the Town?

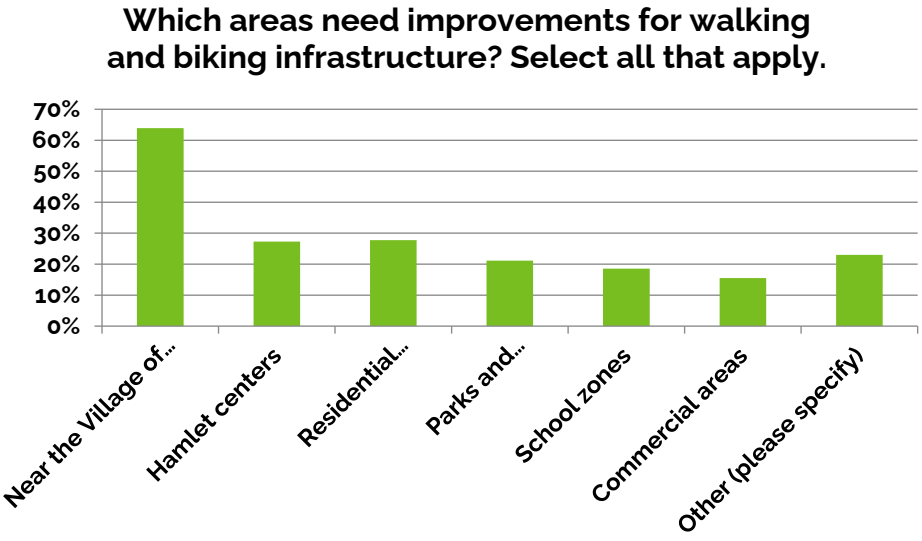
An overwhelming 95% of survey respondents report that they use a personal vehicle to get around the Town while 54% also walk and 30% use a bike to get where they need to go. Only 1% ride share or use public transportation, and a number of write-in responses said they would be willing to bike more if it were safer.

How Satisfied Are You With the Conditions of the Town's Roads and Streets?

When asked about their satisfaction with the conditions of the Town's roads and streets, 42% said they were satisfied with road conditions, 31% were dissatisfied and 27% were neutral about the condition of roads.

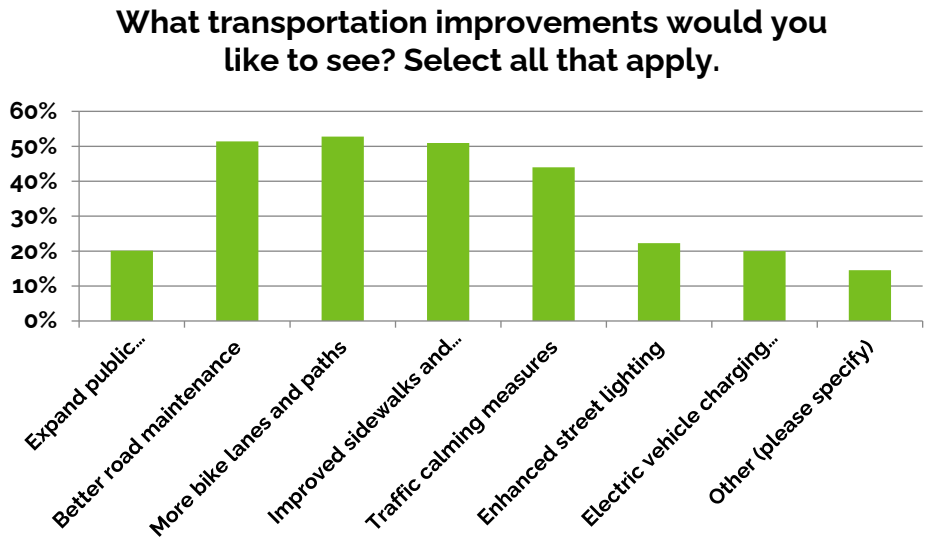
How Easy is it for You to walk or Bike Around the Town and Which Areas Need Improvements for Walking and Biking Infrastructure?

How easy is it to walk or bike around the Town? A little over half of respondents (52%) said it was easy or very easy, while 24% found it difficult or very difficult; 24% didn't express an opinion. When asked to select the areas that need improvement in the Town's walking and biking infrastructure, 64% said near the Village of East Aurora needs the most improvement; Hamlets and neighborhood centers (27% and 28% respectively) were next in line, and parks and recreational areas were next with 21% of respondents weighing in. There were 135 write-in comments, most calling out major areas in the Town in which sidewalks and bike lanes should be included in improvements for safer pedestrian and bicycle travel, including near the high school and on major roadways.



What Transportation Improvements Would You Like to See and What Areas Would Benefit From Traffic Calming Measures?

The major transportation improvements that are most desired, according to the survey, are better road maintenance (51%), more bike lanes and paths (53%), improved sidewalks and crosswalks (51%), and traffic calming methods (44%). There were 412 responses to the areas in the Town that would benefit from traffic calming measures, with Main Street and the Village being the most mentioned. Center Street and Olean Road were also mentioned several times.



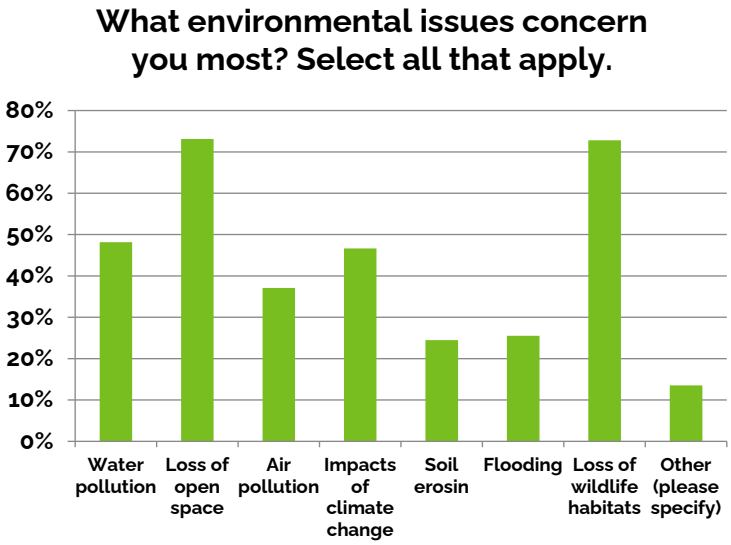
Agriculture & Natural Resources

How Concerned Are You About the Loss of Farmland and Natural Areas to Development and How Important is it for the Town to Protect its Natural Resources?

An overwhelming 87% of survey respondents said that they were concerned about the loss of farmland and natural areas to develop in the Town, with 59% of them being very concerned. Almost 97% of respondents said that it's important that the Town protects its natural resources including water quality and wildlife habitats, with 83% stating it's very important to them.

What Environmental Issues Concern You the Most?

A list of several environmental issues was given and survey respondents could choose any number of them that they felt were their most important concerns. The two most frequently chosen were loss of open space and loss of wildlife habitats (73%) with water pollution (48%), the impacts of climate change (47%), and air pollution (37%) following.



If You Could Change One Thing About How Agricultural and Natural Resources are Managed in the Town, What Would It Be?

Asked to change one thing about how agricultural and natural resources are managed in the Town, the majority of responses to this open-ended question said protecting open space and limiting development on green space and farmland were important changes to consider.

Utilities, Government Services & Infrastructure

Have Your Experienced Issues with Stormwater Drainage or Flooding?

About 71% of residents have never or rarely experienced any stormwater drainage or flooding issues, while 29% have experienced with 7% experiencing issues frequently. Respondents who live in the Hamlets of West Falls (23.8%) or Jewetville and Griffins Mills (15.3%) were the residents who most indicated issues with stormwater drainage or flooding.

Are Government Services Easily Accessible and If You Could Change One Thing, What Would It Be?

The majority of respondents (86%) find that government services such as police, fire, medical, are easily accessible, while less than 1% say they are not.

When asked to comment on changing one thing about utilities or government services, most said they were happy with the services, but wished utilities and taxes were cheaper, and wanted to have improved service and more options when it came to internet and phone services. Still others wanted to see more stormwater control to prevent flooding.

Tell Us About Yourself

Of the 653 respondents that answered the following questions, the majority (35%) were 65 years old or older, 23% were aged 55-64, and 18% were ages 35-44. There was a gap in the number of young people that took part in the survey, with fewer than 0.5% under the age of 18 and only 2% between the ages of 18-24. 60% of survey respondents are employed while 38% are retired; 86% are white, 10% preferred not to say what race they are, and less than 0.5% were any other race or ethnicity. About 86% of respondents held a college degree with 39% holding a graduate or doctorate degree.

Appendix C:
Town of Aurora Comprehensive Plan
Stakeholder Interview Summary Report

Participants

Interviewees:

- Jesse Griffis – East Aurora Tree Board, Chair
- Jen Gurbacki – Hall Ricketts Gurbacki P.C.
- Doug Ford – Town Resident
- Dave Newell – Loptr LLC, CEO
- Gary Schutrum – B&G Club
- Bryan Smith – GHD Consulting Services, Vice President
- Peter Sorgi – Aurora Arsenal Soccer Cluib, President
- Bill Kramer – Former Town Building Inspector
- Rachel Chrostowski – Western New York Land Conservancy

Agriculture & Natural Resources Focus Group:

- Sharon Bachman – Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Mark Gaston – Erie County Soil and Water District, Field Manager
- Jeanne Leccese-Beiter, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, Senior Program Manager

Housing & Neighborhoods Focus Group:

- Donna Bodecker – Town of Aurora Senior Center, Recreation Leder
- Victoria Sturman – Greater East Aurora Chamber of Commerce, Executive Director

Village of East Aurora Focus Group:

- Peter Mercurio – Village of East Aurora, Mayor
- Randy West – Village of East Aurora Planning Board, Chair
- Kristin Cameron – Village of East Aurora Board, Trustee
- Allen Ott Jr. – Village of East Aurora Planning Board, Member

Town of Aurora Department Head Focus Group:

- Donna Bodecker - Town of Aurora Senior Center, Recreation Leder
- Chris Musshafen – Town of Aurora Recreation Department, Director
- Stephen Pigeon – Town of Aurora Assessor's Office, Assessor
- Raymond Wrazen – Town of Aurora Town Board, Councilmember
- Rich Miga – Town of Aurora Building and Code Enforcement, Assistant Code Enforcement Officer.

Contacted: 29 **Interviewed:** 22

Key Takeaways

1. Balancing Growth with Preservation of Aurora's Small-Town and Rural Character
Stakeholders highly value Aurora's rural, scenic character and small-town feel, yet there is recognition that controlled residential growth and economic development are necessary. The community is concerned about development pressure on green space, the rising cost of housing, and the need for zoning updates to guide future growth in a way that preserves Aurora's identity.

2. Diversifying Housing Options for a Thriving Community
Stakeholders indicated that Aurora's housing market is increasingly financially inaccessible for first-time homebuyers, young families, and seniors looking to downsize. Limited housing diversity is also making it difficult for businesses to attract employees.

3. Enhancing Parks & Recreation for Future Needs
While Aurora's parks are well-maintained, some need upgrades, and there is interest in expanded recreational opportunities like trails, splash pads, and a community center. The lack of indoor gathering spaces was also noted.

4. Promoting Environmental Sustainability & Climate Resiliency
Many stakeholders emphasized the importance of green initiatives such as tree planting, flood management, solar energy, and sustainable infrastructure. There is strong support for protecting natural resources and preparing for climate impacts.

5. Investing in Infrastructure and Digital Connectivity
Reliable internet access is a growing concern, with some residents experiencing connectivity issues. Stakeholders also highlighted the need for infrastructure investments, particularly in water, sewer, tree maintenance and county/state roads.

6. Strengthening Hamlets as Vibrant, Self-Sufficient Hubs
Stakeholders acknowledged the Town's hamlets already serve as unique, community-focused centers, reducing the need for residents to travel to the Village for services. Stakeholders see an opportunity to further develop these areas while maintaining their character.

7. Supporting the Local Ag Economy and Protecting Farmland from Development Pressure
Agriculture remains a defining feature of Aurora, but farmland is threatened by development, largely perceived due to the expensive and tight housing market. Stakeholders see opportunities to grow the agricultural economy through agritourism, local food initiatives, and conservation strategies.

8. Strengthening Coordination Between the Town and Village
The Village serves as Aurora's cultural and economic hub, and its future is closely tied to the Town's. Stakeholders emphasize the need for continued collaboration to maintain shared services, manage growth, and preserve the area's character.

General Questions

From your perspective, what are the Town's greatest strengths and assets?
Most of the stakeholders and focus groups identified the small town feel and rural, scenic character of the Town as a major asset. The number of parks, farms, and small businesses were also areas of strengths along with quaint commercial centers such as the Hamlets and the Village of East Aurora, where basic needs can be met. Proximity to locally sourced produce and farm to table options is also a draw.

Another major strength acknowledged is the civic mindedness of the local organizations and people that live in the Town and their willingness to serve on boards, volunteer their time, and boost their communities. Residents are pleased with the number and quality of services the Town provides and praise the ease of travel and convenient travel corridors and feel of safety.

What are the Town's Greatest Weaknesses?
Although answers varied across stakeholders, more than one response focused on the Town's lack of a comprehensive plan and doing things "the way they've always been done" as a weakness considering the challenges that the Town is facing. Development pressure on green space, the increasing cost of housing, and limited availability of transportation infrastructure for any other mode but cars were also seen as a weakness as it limited the number of new people moving into the Town and available for employment. Some stakeholders felt that the Town and the Village of East Aurora were competing with each other instead of working together. Two stakeholders said there were no weaknesses in the Town.

What opportunities do you see the Town being able to capitalize on?
Stakeholders identified several opportunities including zoning updates to guide development and conservation areas; solar energy development; attracting more services to commercial areas so that residents wouldn't need to leave the Town for medical, shopping, and other services; the need for increased residential development; encouraging economic development that is consistent with community vision; and attracting additional internet providers.

What challenges does the Town face that may hinder progress?
Fiscal challenges and fear of change were the most identified challenges that the Town may face. Others suggested lack of access to resources without a vehicle and lack of sewer and water access as other issues that may hold the Town back from its goals. Stakeholders stressed that the Town and Village must work together for progress and the Town should identify what progress means and move in that direction.

Other challenges mentioned include lack of opportunities for kids in childcare, parking, traffic, deer overpopulation, development from Elma moving into the Town, and the need for updated zoning in conjunction with a comprehensive plan.

If the Town had extra money in its budget, what would you define as the highest priority for spending?
Stakeholders most frequently mentioned planting more trees and investing in existing parks as the highest priority for spending. Other responses include raises for Town employees, making high school and subdivisions more accessible to the village by adding sidewalks, maintaining infrastructure such as roads and sewers, adding new programs and services instead of embellishing existing ones, policing loud vehicles, tax reductions, and improving and preserving green space.

What types of development would you like to see more of or less of in Aurora?
Several stakeholders agreed that more residential development was needed and could be an asset if it was controlled. Some stakeholders wanted to see more reuse of existing historic structures such as barns that would keep the existing character but add needed small business or residential space. Other stakeholders had conflicting views saying that no new development was needed, and the Town should focus on ag development or conversely that the Town needed density and mixed-use style development and less agricultural or industrial development.

What are the biggest transportation challenges you experience when traveling within Aurora, such as traffic congestion, road conditions, or lack of sidewalks?
Stakeholders appeared to agree that roadways were well maintained but that there was minimal shoulder space for bicyclists to safely traverse the roads and dedicated bike lanes and facilities should be explored. Several stakeholders called for more sidewalks, crosswalks within and around the Village but agreed that throughout most of the Town, they were impractical. Another stakeholder pointed out that there were not many bus routes available and roadways and public parking lots in the Village were very congested on weekends.

What types of recreational activities or facilities do you feel are missing or underrepresented in Aurora?
Although the most popular answer among stakeholders was that there were no activities missing in Aurora, there were several others with suggestions, such as moving pickleball courts to South Street; additional bike paths in the southern part of town; splash pads in parks; a community pool; more athletic fields within the Hamlets; and additional places where nature hikes can occur.

How would you envision a successful Aurora in the next 10-20 years, and what role do you think this comprehensive plan should play in achieving that vision?
Although articulated in different ways, the most common theme among stakeholders was that they think the comprehensive plan should allow the Town to grow with minimal impact on the land and residents, and within public water and sewer areas. Many agreed that a Comprehensive Plan should go hand in hand with an updated zoning code to match the goals of the plan and that the plan should be reviewed every six months to make sure decisions are on track.

One stakeholder pointed out that if there is an increase in residential units, other things need to go with it, including additional public transit and improved parking. Another was concerned about bringing down the cost of housing and still another wanted to see an increase in walking paths and bicycle opportunities.

Do you have any concerns about how this comprehensive plan will be implemented, or do you see any challenges in putting it into action?
Challenges that were acknowledged by stakeholders included residents that may be hesitant to accept change; getting a plan approved and followed by the Town; how the partnerships necessary to carry out the plan would be forged; and money.

Housing & Neighborhoods Focus Group

Strengths
The Housing and Neighborhoods Focus Group celebrated the Town's rural, large lots with an abundance of nature right near your home as a big draw. They also called out the number of old but well-maintained historic homes and properties. They applauded the Hamlets for being unique and providing residents' needs without having to leave or go to the Village.

Weaknesses
The housing focus group lamented that first time home buyers are priced out of the market and that seniors don't have the ability to downsize within their community, so they're staying in their homes and not selling, which is hurting the market. They call for ADU's to be allowed to allow seniors the ability to stay with family. The amount of land on each property could also be seen as a detriment as not everyone can take care of a lot of land and there should be a diversity of lot sizes. Businesses are having trouble recruiting new talent because there are no homes to purchase and a lack of transportation options.

Threats
The focus group stated that there are not enough young families moving in and that owners of new businesses in East Aurora weren't able to move to the community they worked in. Housing that does go on the market is overpriced due to demand and additional housing would reduce the overvaluation.

Opportunities
The group identified planned developments with mixed use that could make rural areas more accessible, focusing on the Hamlets for new development. Design guidelines for new housing could be used to reflect the historic nature of existing homes. They also suggested zones of intensity of development on corridors leading into the Village which would alleviate the high price of rent within the village while still taking advantage of proximity.

What types of housing do you think Aurora needs the most?
Senior and affordable housing was the emphasis of the group, while also acknowledging that housing should be complemented with transportation improvements.

Imagine you're reading a newspaper about housing and neighborhoods in Aurora 10 years from now. What would you want the headlines to say?
"Aurora Friendly to All! They can offer all avenues of housing – newcomers, resident graduates, and seniors."

"We are thriving and welcoming – Keeps on growing while honoring the past."

Infrastructure & Public Utilities

Are there specific infrastructure or utility areas that you believe require immediate improvement or attention? If so, which ones and why?
Stakeholders focused on infrastructure and public utilities emphasized the need for additional internet providers, cited spotty cell service, called on the need for more trees and more maintenance for trees, and identified sidewalks as needing improvement.

How would you rate the overall reliability of essential services like water, electricity, waste management, and internet access? Are there any recurring issues?
All stakeholders agreed that the reliability of services has been good and said they haven't experienced any issues.

To what extent do you think the town's infrastructure planning should focus on climate resiliency (for example, flood management, stormwater systems, and green energy)?
Stakeholders said the focus on climate resiliency is critical and the Town should have a heavy focus on environmental impacts. They specifically call out water systems, flood lands, water and snow management to hone in on.

Are there emerging technologies or sustainable infrastructure practices you think Aurora should consider to improve municipal services?
Stakeholders mentioned several different technologies or practices that Aurora should consider including solar farms, Town-wide composting, more trees to provide shade, and using mass timber for large structures.

Are there any specific issues or opportunities in Aurora that you feel we haven't covered today as they relate to Infrastructure & Public Utilities but should be included in the comprehensive plan?
A specific issue raised is putting in new internet services or other infrastructure and then cutting down trees as a result. This stakeholder thinks the Town should hire their own arborists to maintain the trees and trim them instead of being cut down because of communication services being added.

Land Use & Zoning

How well do you think current zoning regulations reflect Aurora's character and the community's vision for growth? Are there zoning or land use changes that you believe would enhance the quality of life in Aurora?
Stakeholders focused on land use and zoning offered these comments: utility zoning needs work for better siting; while appreciative of the lack of big box stores, now how do we promote local retail stores; and area and use variances seem to offer flexibility.

Are there any specific areas within Aurora that you feel are overdeveloped or underutilized?
The focus group offered many varying suggestions with some liking the new development on Mill Road; others pointing out that if there is new development it should offer a healthy mix of uses. Development should occur in commercial centers like the hamlets and the village, supporting growth where there is already retail and existing housing and reducing transportation needs. One stakeholder said reuse of older vacant buildings should occur before anything new is built and another offered that Olean Road and Center Street near the school should be a focus area for new development. Another stakeholder said that new development is already occurring outside of the Town limits and that sidewalks should be installed to connect Town residents to that development.

Are there any specific issues or opportunities in Aurora that you feel we haven't covered today as they relate to land use & zoning but should be included in the comprehensive plan?

One stakeholder wants to see Aurora have a community/recreation center to consolidate uses and reduce costs for maintenance of services and facilities.

Parks & Recreational Facilities

How would you describe your overall satisfaction with the current parks and recreation facilities in Aurora?
Most stakeholders agreed that the parks were well maintained but that some needed upgrades like the community pool and adding bicycle facilities. One said that parks should contain all tennis courts instead of pickleball courts to avoid resident complaints, and another offered that the soccer club has a great field set up at Knox Farm.

How accessible do you find Aurora's parks and recreational spaces for all residents, including children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities?
Stakeholders say that accessibility is satisfactory for a town of this size, but they can't speak from a disabled perspective. Another stakeholder offered that improvements can always be made to make parks more accessible.

Do you feel that Aurora's parks and recreational areas are well-maintained? What specific areas, if any, could use better maintenance?
Stakeholders agreed that the parks are well maintained but that some of them need updates, such as Warren Drive Park and West Falls Park.

What types of community events or recreational programming would you like to see offered in Aurora's parks and public spaces?
Two stakeholders said that there is already an engaged community, and they couldn't think of anything to add to it, while another said that bicycle facilities and related programming would be nice.

Are there any specific issues or opportunities in Aurora that you feel we haven't covered today as they relate to Parks & Recreational Facilities but should be included in the comprehensive plan?
Stakeholders offered three responses:

- No- facilities for existing population is adequate
- Lack affordable venues in the Town for meeting spaces for groups/forums
- Knox soccer area should be included as a Town asset with an objective of seeking ownership from the state

Transportation Systems

How would you rate the overall quality of roads and street infrastructure in Aurora? Are there specific areas that need improvement?
There is agreement that the conditions are good, but some roadside vegetation could be used for maintenance.

What is your experience with traffic flow and safety in Aurora's school zones or near other high-traffic public areas, such as parks and community centers?
No difficulty with traffic flow or safety.

How safe do you feel walking or biking in Aurora, especially in areas with higher traffic? What infrastructure improvements could make these activities safer?
Each stakeholder offered a much different take on whether or not they felt safe:

- I don't walk on the roads much because there are so many parks to enjoy.

- Will go to village to walk
- Biking I don't feel safe at all- widened and paved shoulders would increase safety for both walkers and bikers
- Well maintained shoulders help
- Feels safe enough

What future transportation initiatives or innovations would you like to see in Aurora to improve the quality of life, such as EV charging stations, complete streets, or multi-use paths?
Several suggestions for transportation initiatives were offered including multi use paths, rail trail, EV charging stations, and complete streets around the schools, however some stakeholders said that situations in which the Town didn't own the roads, or a path would require an easement would be a tough sell and difficult to implement.

Agriculture & Natural Resources Focus Group

Strengths
People enjoy living here because of the natural resources, open space, and the many parks located within the Town. The proximity to locally grown produce and meat is also a bonus.

Weaknesses
The Agriculture and Natural Resources Focus Group identified weaknesses such as the need for updated zoning, high housing prices driving out families, limited farmland being threatened with development, and lack of environmental stewardship. Habitat conservation strategies were stressed as a weakness that needs to be remedied to respond to climate change, increased flooding in parts of the Town, and stream bank erosion. The need to manage invasive species was also recognized.

Threats
The decreasing availability of land to farm and the threat of solar farms on available fertile land was identified as a threat to the Town and the agricultural foundation on which it was built. The focus group was concerned about farmland not being protected as farms were sold and subdivided and called for the need for education and outreach. Some in the group said that Aurora used to feel much more rural but was losing that feeling.

Opportunities
The focus group identified several opportunities including connecting with landowners, the opportunity for small scale farming and niche markets, and supporting agritourism events and bringing agriculture awareness into the schools. They think the Town should first focus on identifying conservation districts and areas where development is prohibited instead of the other way around.

What role do you believe Aurora's agricultural sector should play in the town's economic development?
Stakeholders focused on agriculture and natural resources and point out that the Town's economy is "built on the backs of farmers" and that creating a farm friendly community is vital to retaining the Town's rural character. Supporting the local ag economy makes it easier for farmers to continue farming.

Do you think there are opportunities for more agritourism (like farm tours, pick-your-own farms, or farmers' markets) in Aurora?
Yes, stakeholders say there are plenty of opportunities for Town initiatives to support seasonal agritourism activities.

In what ways do you think the town should address climate change impacts on agriculture and natural resources, such as shifting weather patterns or increased flooding?

Stakeholders agree that the Town should consider conservation of natural lands as a means of managing climate change, as those lands can better absorb rainfall from severe storm events. Vegetative stream buffers also minimize erosion and improve water quality. They also advocate for retaining mature trees as they recycle more carbon.

What types of natural areas or resources (e.g., wetlands, forests, wildlife habitats) do you feel are most important to protect in Aurora?
Stakeholders identified forests, stream corridors, wetlands, and prime agricultural soils as the most important to protect in the Town.

Are there partnerships or initiatives (like community-supported agriculture or land trusts) that you think could benefit Aurora's agricultural and natural resource conservation efforts?
WNY Land Conservancy is a proud partner, while Providence Farm Collective out of Orchard Park may be able to provide additional opportunities to access farmland. New farmers are using a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) approach to farming, with community members purchasing shares of produce from the farm.

Imagine you're reading a newspaper about agriculture and natural resources in Aurora 10 years from now. What would you want the headlines to say?
Although the specific headlines are varying, all in the focus group agree that they want to see agriculture operations remain a strong part of the Town in the future, with Smart Growth concepts and low-impact development preserving viable farmland.

Do you have any best practices/models from other areas related to agriculture and natural resources that could be utilized in Aurora?
Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) for agriculture, conservation easements, and matching land seekers and farmers with owners of prime farmland are seen as best practices that could be replicated in the Town.

What are some issues/topics that you believe we should specifically cover in the plan that have not been mentioned yet?
Stakeholders believe that the Town should identify priorities for conservation first rather than on areas for redevelopment and make conservation of natural and agricultural resources a priority.

The nursery businesses within the Town rank high in the state, and focus on native plants and pollinators, and long-term sustainability. The focus group also called out fishing as an economic opportunity and sledding hills and trails throughout the Town. They believe there should be a focus on economic development and small business support for farming.

Town Department Heads

What are the Town's greatest strengths and assets?
Town department heads identified several things that were strengths and assets that already exist in the Town. One of them was the diversity of zoning districts that allow people the opportunity to build within the Town. The areas in which to build are rather restricted as there is limited sewer and water accessibility and concentrated areas of commercial development, preserving the rural character, green space, and slower pace of life in the Town which has been identified as one of its core assets. People have great pride in their communities and are active in Town activities.

What do you see as the biggest challenges facing the Town over the next 10-20 years?
One of the biggest challenges facing the Town is its aging population. Since growth is so limited, there are few opportunities to downsize, and the few new homes that are built are very expensive. There is no dedicated senior housing or affordable housing within the Town, which limits the number

of new, younger homebuyers able to move in. There is also limited public water and sewers, which is a drawback to new homeowners.

What infrastructure investment or maintenance needs do you foresee as critical to the Town's continued success?
More initiative on flood plains and wetlands is needed. We also need to address the negative impacts of climate change including stormwater management. The NW portion of the Town has no water lines as the state decided they didn't want to expand them past Knox Farm.

There is an aging population and a lack of housing that suits their needs. Since they can't move, there is no housing for young people to move in. There is aging and declining housing on Old Glenwood Road that aren't selling because the lots are small, and the homes are too close together.

What services or facilities will be needed to support seniors in the future?
We will need increased shuttle or van service from the senior center, a larger senior center with recreational programming, and affordable housing and progressive care facilities. There are currently not many downsizing options; housing demand outweighs supply. We are looking at rezoning to allow in-law suites to alleviate that.

Are there areas in Town where you believe growth or redevelopment should be encouraged or restricted? What types of development would you like to see?
We should encourage growth along major roads and within population centers like the Village. Olean Road is underdeveloped and within the sewer district, which would be a good place for housing. Residential growth is self-limiting as there are minimum lot sizes because of septic system limitations. It's hard for homeowners to expand their homes because of the septic systems, so subdivisions are cost prohibitive.

What are the biggest transportation challenges you experience when traveling within Aurora, such as traffic congestion, road conditions, or lack of sidewalks?
Safety leading to high school is a huge transportation challenge; a lot of kids walk, but there are no sidewalks. The Town doesn't own all the roads so adding sidewalks is not always feasible. Topography also restricts the installation of sidewalks. There is a lack of public transportation. Winter is hard on roads leading to harsh conditions on the roads not maintained by the Town. There are no issues with congestion.

What are the biggest operational challenges your department faces?
We need more employees at the senior center- most are volunteers. The Building and Code Enforcement Department should have a full-time clerk, Town provided vehicles, and an electrical inspector. The Department should be self-funding, however this would cause permit prices to increase significantly so it isn't practical.

Are there new technologies or systems that could improve your department's efficiency or effectiveness?
We would love to have an online payment option for permits and applications; it would increase our efficiency. Currently, the department only takes cash or checks which delays the process. The current software meets daily needs for operations.

How effectively does your department coordinate with other Town departments and where could it be improved?
The Building and Code Department has strong working relationships with both the Town and Village departments and is the point of contact for the public regarding zoning and land use questions.

Are there any specific issues or opportunities in Aurora that you feel we haven't covered today as they relate to land use & zoning but should be included in the comprehensive plan?
The state of the Town's County and State roads are not good.

How would you envision a successful Aurora in the next 10-20 years, and what role do you think this comprehensive plan should play in achieving that vision?
We envision the same. Not much different, maybe more grocery options.

Do you have any concerns about how this comprehensive plan will be implemented, or do you see any challenges in putting it into action?
Without money or resources, how will any suggestions get done? What happens after the plan is adopted? Will we have to make changes to the zoning map? We need better communication on what a comprehensive plan is so we can push against the pushback.

Village of East Aurora Focus Group

Strengths
We have a supportive development plan; the Village encourages development in the Village, housing can be concentrated in the village, and there's a gentle density transition between the Village and the Town. The Village acts as the cultural and population center for the Town. We share services. It's cost effective and efficient, although we would like to see the expansion of the East Aurora Fire Department.

Weaknesses
The Route 219 expansion in Springville bypassed the village and lead to huge chain development and loss of small businesses, the Town and Village don't want that. As development within the Town increases, walkability will decrease. The Town and Village need to work together to mitigate that. Other safety aspects are also needed like bike lanes and sidewalks leading to the high school. The Town's existing character is also important.

Threats
Housing affordability is a huge threat. The downsizing options for seniors and the ability for new families to move in is nonexistent. The construction of McMansions should be avoided. There is a lot of development pressure from big box stores. The Town should allow less plaza development outside of population centers and look at light industrial or housing instead.

Opportunities
We want the Town to have input on the Village plan. Smart expansion of the water and sewer lines makes sense as does industrial development. We should continue to maintain and prioritize the area's natural beauty, retain Hamlet centers, and improve architectural standards.

What is the #1 issue in the Village that would like to see addressed in this plan?
The Village is the economic driver for the Town and that should be retained. The Town should not allow unsupportable density. The weekday traffic along Main Street should also be addressed.

Imagine you're reading a newspaper about the State of the Town 10 years from now. What would you want the headlines to say?
The trees all grew back, cooperation equals success, and the charm and community between the Town and Village has been preserved.