

MEMORANDUM

TO: Town of Sand Lake Town Board
FROM: Sand Lake Planning Oversight Committee
DATE: March 25, 2026
RE: Comprehensive Plan Implementation – 2025 Report and 2026 Recommendations

SUMMARY OF 2025 COMMITTEE/TOWN ACTIVITY TO ADVANCE THE TOWN'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The POC continued to work on or support projects implementing the goals of the Town's 2019 Comprehensive Plan. As part of the POC's charge, the Committee reviewed the Plan in 2025 to consider whether the Plan continues to reflect the vision and goals of the Town and provide guidance regarding recommended actions and implementation strategies. Upon review, the POC determined that the Plan's vision and goals and many implementation projects and strategies remain solid and achievable. However, the Plan is a living document that is now six years old since adoption, and therefore some current Town priorities and projects may not be specifically recommended in the Plan but nonetheless support the vision and goals of the Plan.

The following is a summary of the initiatives and actions of 2025 that support the Comprehensive Plan:

- 1) The Town Beach Enhancement Project, developed as part of the Comprehensive Plan, was completed in the Fall of 2025 providing a formal cartop boat launch, enhanced amenities including renovated bathrooms that are now ADA compliant and other pavilion renovations, additional picnic tables and benches, improved swimming area and construction of safer access to the park with a new parking lot. In addition, sidewalks were constructed linking the Town Beach with the sidewalk system in West Sand Lake creating a safe pedestrian route to the Beach and improving the overall walkability of West Sand Lake.
- 2) The Town and its Community Trails Taskforce, which was originally created as a subcommittee of the POC, completed a Phase 1 Feasibility Study for a town-wide trails system.
- 3) The POC worked with Town and Averill Park Central School District to identify safety improvements on NY43 at the Averill Park High School/Citgo to address pedestrian crossings from the High School.
- 4) The new pickleball courts in Butler Park increase the recreational offerings for residents.
- 5) The submission of a NYS Consolidated Funding Application for funding from NYS Office Park, Recreation and Historic Preservation for additional Butler Park improvements.
- 6) The new nature trails and parking lot off Biittig Road expand the recreational offerings throughout the town.
- 7) The POC is pleased to see that other key projects identified in the Comprehensive Plan continue to be advanced in 2025 by the Town administration including:
 - a. Continued exploration of municipal water system alternatives;
 - b. Progress toward energy efficiency/sustainability with the establishment of the Climate Smart Communities Committee and completion of the LED lighting project; and
 - c. Advancing the Dog Park at the Eastern Union Turnpike Town Park and a partnership with the Averill Park Youth Soccer League to develop soccer fields in the Park will support youth recreation and increase community use of the Park.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2026

The committee has identified the following actions as priorities to begin or continue to pursue in 2026. Some of these actions are presently underway but are included to reiterate the POC's support for the activity. The POC recognizes that many of these actions will take multiple years to implement due to their complexity or funding requirements.

Recommendation 1: Apply for Pro-Housing Community status with the NYS Department of Housing and Community Renewal (<https://hcr.ny.gov/phc>) in order identify any additional steps that Town might take to provide opportunities for more and diverse housing options and to better position the Town for potential State grants.

Goal 5: Housing and Neighborhood stability, Action 5.1 Continue supporting the construction of housing that meets the needs of present and future Town residents of all ages, incomes and family sizes; and Action 5.2: Routinely evaluate the local housing market and affordability to guide future policy decisions.

Recommendation 2: Complete the Town's Climate Smart Community Committee's effort to become a Certified NYS Climate Smart Community.

This recommendation is consistent with the *Town's Comprehensive Plan*. See:

- *Goal 3 Community Services and Infrastructure, Action 3.4:* Continue to use alternative, renewable energy to power community infrastructure.
- *Goal 1: Economic Growth and Sustainability, Action 1.1* Maintain productive relationships with regional planning and economic organizations (i.e. Capital District Regional Planning Commission)

Recommendation 3: Coordinate and partner with NYS DOT and Rensselaer County to improve pedestrian, bicycle and automobile safety in the Hamlet of Averill Park as outlined in the Town Hamlets Linkage Study and Comprehensive Plan by pursuing the following:

- Meet with NYS DOT and Rensselaer County to discuss intersection realignment of NY 43 and Old Route 66 as proposed in the Town's Linkage study.
- Apply for funding from the NYS Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) for design and construction of the intersection realignment and pedestrian/bicycle improvements in the hamlet center.
- Seek a speed reduction on Eastern Union Turnpike approaching NY 43 before the Averill Park Fire House so that vehicle speeds are consistent with that of the hamlet center on NY 43.

This recommendation is consistent with the *Town's Comprehensive Plan*. See:

- *Goal 4, Transportation, Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety, Action 4.1:* Engage NYSDOT to re-evaluate ongoing traffic and any safety issues at key intersections along the NY Route 43 corridor and implement recommendations of the Hamlets Master Plan/Linkage Study.
- *Goal 4, Transportation, Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety, Action 4.2:* Continue to pursue the construction of sidewalks and road shoulder improvements to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety, including Hamlet Master Plan/Linkage Study recommendations, where feasible and as funding allows.

Recommendation 4: Begin implementing segments of the Town Trails Feasibility Study developed by the Town Trails Taskforce that will improve bicycle and pedestrian safety in key areas of the Town and connect community assets.

This recommendation is consistent with the *Town's Comprehensive Plan*. See:

- *Goal 4, Transportation, Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety, Action 4.2:* Continue to pursue the construction of sidewalks and road shoulder improvements to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety, including Hamlet Master Plan/Linkage Study recommendations, where feasible and as funding allows.

Recommendation 5: Consider submitting an application for funding under the NYS Department of State Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) and NY Forward Program to support public and private investments in our Hamlets.

The DRI and NY Forward programs would provide funding to support public investments such as public amenities and infrastructure including beautification, recreation/community facilities and streetscape projects; private sector development and upgrades of existing buildings and new construction for housing, business and commercial development and mixed use development; and developing community support services and resources such as day care centers, workforce development spaces, incubators etc.

The POC notes that in order to be eligible for this funding, the Town is positioning itself to become a certified Pro-Housing community.

The projects that might be identified in this application could be consistent with most goals within the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

Recommendation 6: Support Averill Park hamlet businesses by pursuing the construction of a municipal parking lot on the Town-owned parcel between Orient Avenue and Burden Lake Road.

This recommendation is consistent with the *Town's Comprehensive Plan*. See:

- *Goal 4, Transportation, Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety, Action 4.6:* Continue to move forward with plans to create a public parking lot in Averill Park to support further development of the hamlet consistent with the Linkage Study.

Recommendation 7: Continue to partner with NYS DOT to identify a funding solution for the design and construction of a traffic circle at the intersection of NY 43 and NY 150 to mitigate traffic congestion and safety issues.

This recommendation is consistent with the *Town's Comprehensive Plan*. See:

- *Goal 2, Economic Growth and Sustainability, Action 2.5:* Re-engage NYDOT to improve the intersection of NY Routes 43 and 150 in the Hamlet of West Sand Lake.
- *Goal 4, Transportation, Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety, Action 4.1:* Engage NYSDOT to re-evaluate ongoing traffic and any safety issues at key intersections along the NY Route 43 corridor and implement recommendations of the Hamlets Master Plan/Linkage Study.

Recommendation 8: Increase in-person community engagement opportunities at Town Board Workshops to learn and discuss important community topics.

Since the increased online access to monthly Town Board meetings, which is common across local governments, in-person attendance and citizen engagement at Town meetings has generally decreased. Utilization of Town Board workshops, traditionally a less formal meeting to discuss town business, could be a good opportunity to try to reinvigorate community engagement.

Recommendation 9: Continue to carefully monitor the development of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Troy Sand and Gravel Mined Land Reclamation Permit Application to extend blasting at their present facility.

The Town should review the Final Scoping document and Draft Environmental Impact Statement once available and provide input to the Lead Agency, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation as necessary to ensure that potential negative environmental impacts to natural and community resources are studied, evaluated and mitigated.

This recommendation is consistent with the *Town's Comprehensive Plan*. See:

- *Goal 7 Natural Resources Protection, Action 7.6* Maintain the Town's current regulatory approach balancing mining activities and impacts on the community.

Recommendation 10: Prioritize hazard mitigation and emergency service preparedness by identifying threats and reducing risks.

This can be accomplished through evaluation and investment in hazard mitigation infrastructure, support for our fire and EMS services, enforcement of our building, fire and property maintenance codes, and partnering and sharing services with our neighboring communities to enhance readiness and efficiencies.

This recommendation is consistent with the *Town's Comprehensive Plan*. See:

- *Goal 7, Natural Resource Protection, Action 7.3:* Protect hamlet centers by mitigating flood risks.
- *Goal 7, Natural Resource Protection, Action 7.1:* Continue to improve stormwater management and treatment to minimize pollutants into waterways, wetlands, and riparian areas, and to encourage use of best practices for future development.
- *Goal 3, Community Services and Infrastructure Action 3.3:* Pursue sharing services and resources with surrounding municipalities, local agencies and organizations to improve efficiency, increase the services provided and reduce redundancy
- *Goal 3, Community Services and Infrastructure Action 3.5:* Continue to implement hazard mitigation measures and implement relevant recommendations in the 2019 Rensselaer County Hazard Mitigation Plan.