Integrating Natural Resources into Comprehensive Planning

Presented by Community Planning & Environmental Associates

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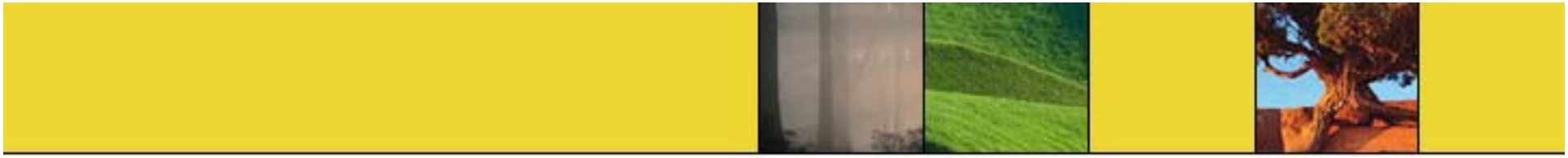
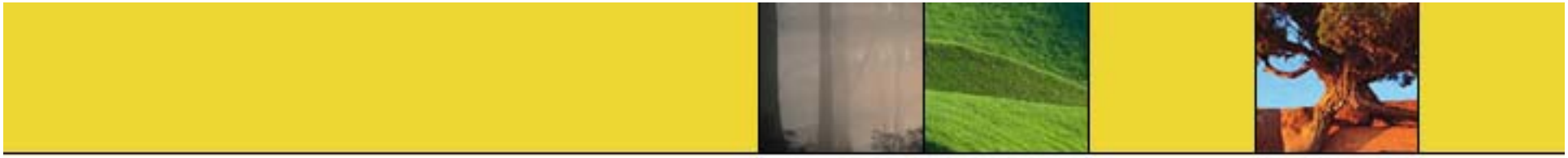
Community Planning & Environmental Associates



What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- A community document which defines municipal goals and objectives toward
  - Land use
  - Economic development
  - Recreation
  - Agriculture
  - Transportation
  - Natural resources
  - Housing
  - Infrastructure
- It identifies and determines local needs

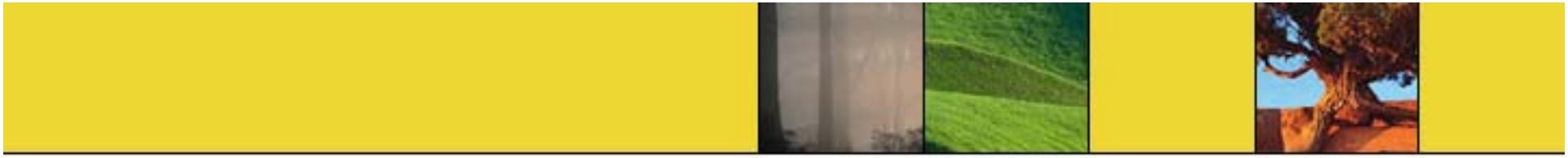


What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- It is focused on the future.
- It is a collective community vision and based on what the community desires for itself.
- It is a “roadmap” or guide for future decision making.
- It is NOT a law, and is NOT zoning.
- However, all land use laws must be in accordance with a comprehensive plan!

Why Plan for Natural Resources?

- 8 reasons:
  - Economic development
  - Fiscal soundness
  - Recreational opportunities
  - Tourism
  - Environmental protection
  - Agricultural development
  - Community character and culture
  - Quality of life
- Natural resource planning must not be done in a vacuum…it is appropriately handled through integration with the “Big Picture”…the comprehensive plan!



Benefits of Integrated Planning

- Allows our natural resources to be an integral, rather than isolated part of community planning.
- Allows strategic use of these resources to meet a wide range of goals.
- Increases awareness of roles of the environment and natural resources in community.
- Increases support of natural resources and open space.

Integrating Natural Resources in Comprehensive Plans

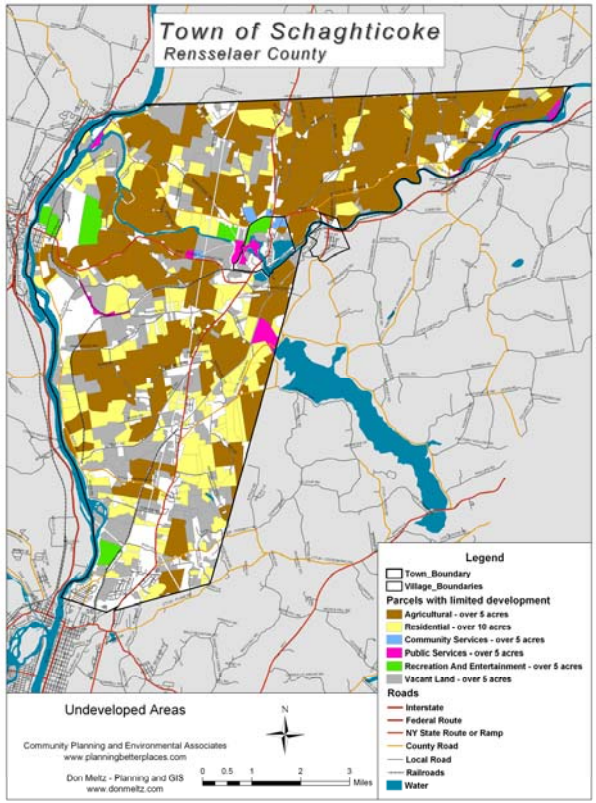
- Step 1: Data collection and Public Input.
- Step 2: Vision and Goal Setting.
- Step 3: Develop Strategies and Recommendations.

All Natural Resources Should Be Evaluated...

- Wetlands, water bodies, floodplains, surface and ground water resources
- Steep slopes, topography, etc.
- Important recreational lands such as shorelines, creek/river access, pathways/corridors, parks, historic or archaeological sites
- Agricultural lands, soils

Step 1: Data Collection and Public Input

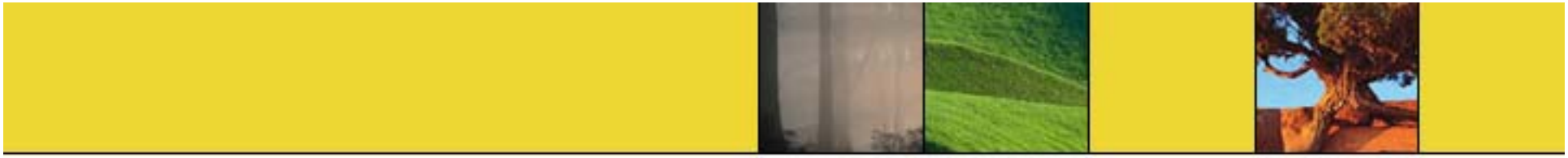
- Community data gathering
- Public input
  - Survey's
  - Visioning
  - Charettes
  - Focus Groups
- GIS/Mapping



What type of open space is desired? Where are critical resources? What are the needs and issues?

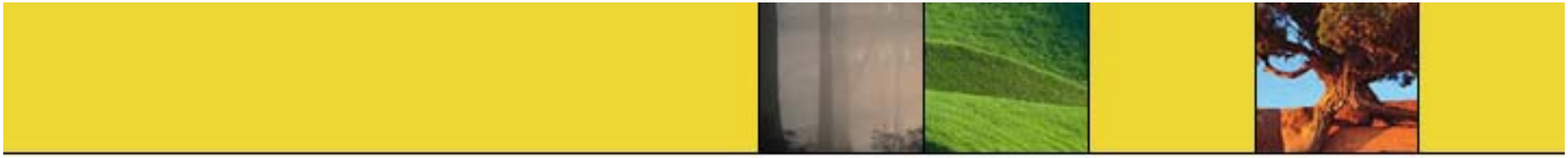
Use of GIS in Planning for Natural Resources

- Presented by Don Meltz, GIS Specialist and Planner



Step 2: Vision and Goal Setting

- What is the long-term vision the community desires for itself?
  - A vision is critical to know what to plan for.
- What role does natural resources play in that vision?
  - Is natural resources a quality of life issue? An economic driver? A base for tourism? A contributor to rural character? All?
- Goals need to be established to reach that vision and are a statement of what is the desired future state.



Step 2: Vision and Goal Setting

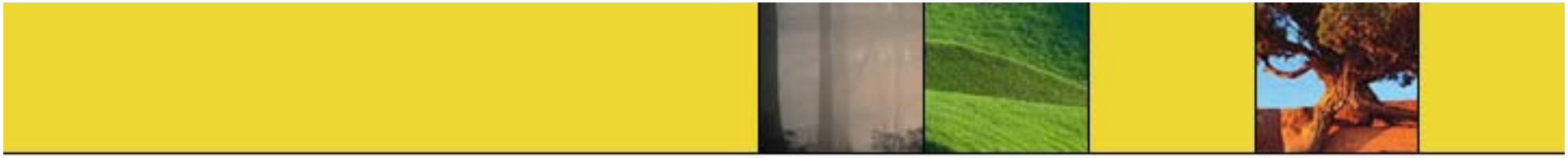
- Some examples…

"…Broadalbin residents will understand the town's distinctive characteristics, including woodlands and farmlands, and preserve them for agricultural use, open spaces and parks."

"…Sensitive environmental areas such as wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains, and ridgelines will be protected. Active farm operations will be encouraged and maintained. Open spaces including open fields remain vital components to the distinctive character and quality of life in Cairo."

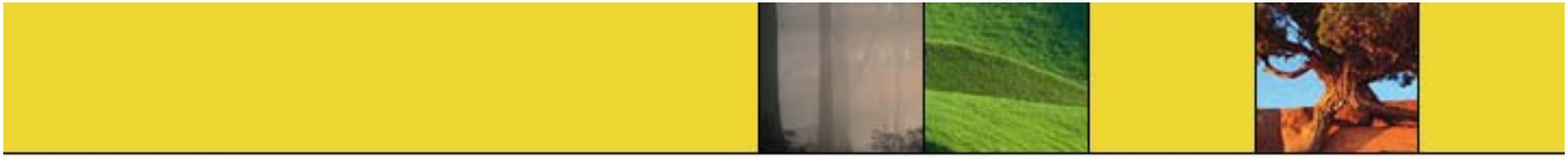
Step 3: Develop Strategies and Recommendations

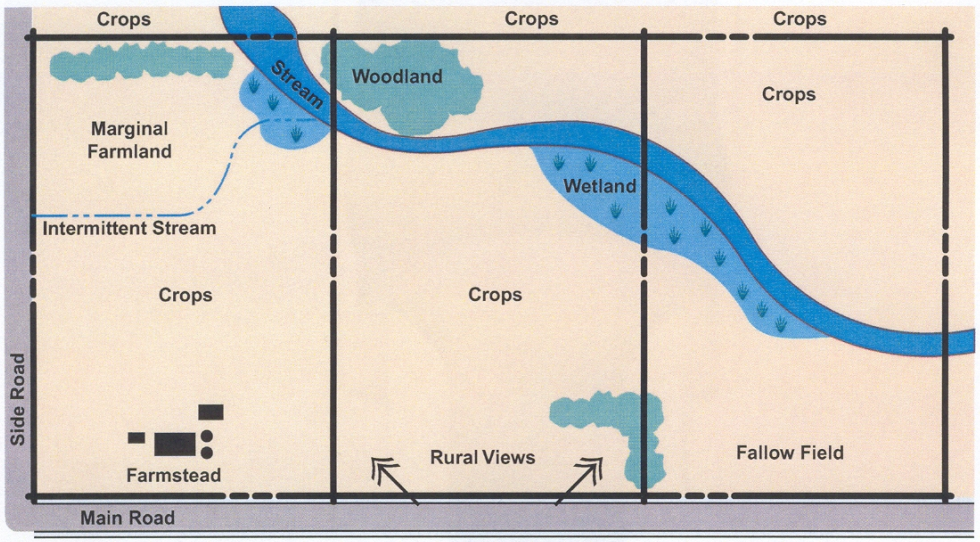
- Non-regulatory strategies
- Regulatory strategies
- Tips for developing successful strategies include
  - Make natural resources a component of the vision for the community.
  - Engage farmers and land owners early in the process.
  - Identify and cultivate leadership.
  - Balance community interests fairly with private rights.
  - Understand that many strategies related to natural resource planning can be controversial.



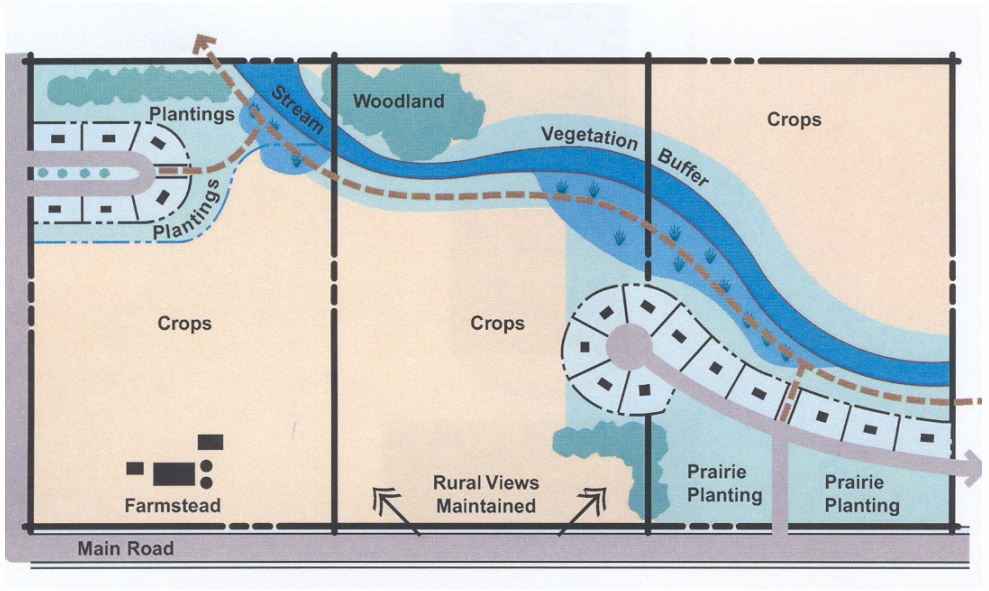
Step 3: Toolbox of Strategies

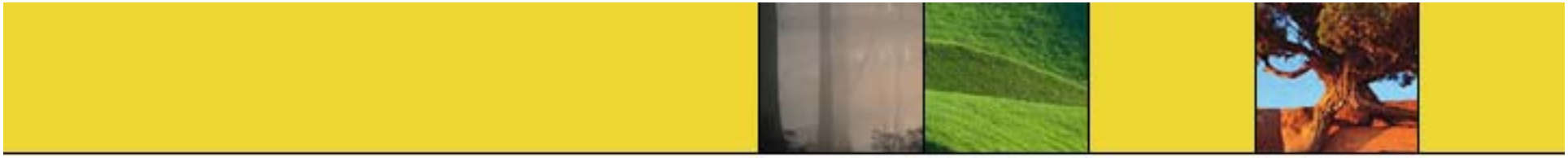
- Land Acquisition
- Use of Conservation easements and/or deed restrictions
- Establishment of Critical Environmental Areas (SEQR)
- Use of Overlay Zones
- Use of alternate and flexible subdivision designs
  - Clustering
  - Conservation subdivision design





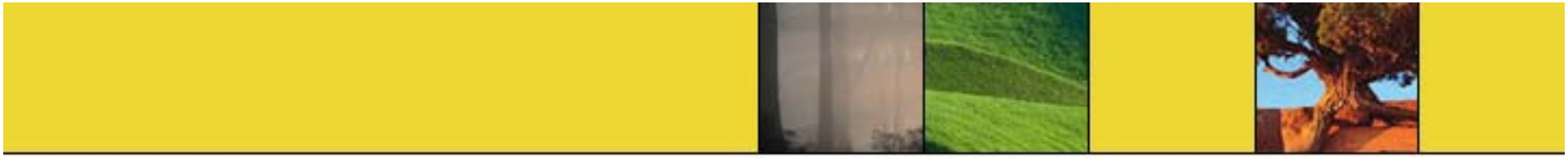
An Illustration of a Conservation Subdivision





Step 3: Toolbox of Strategies

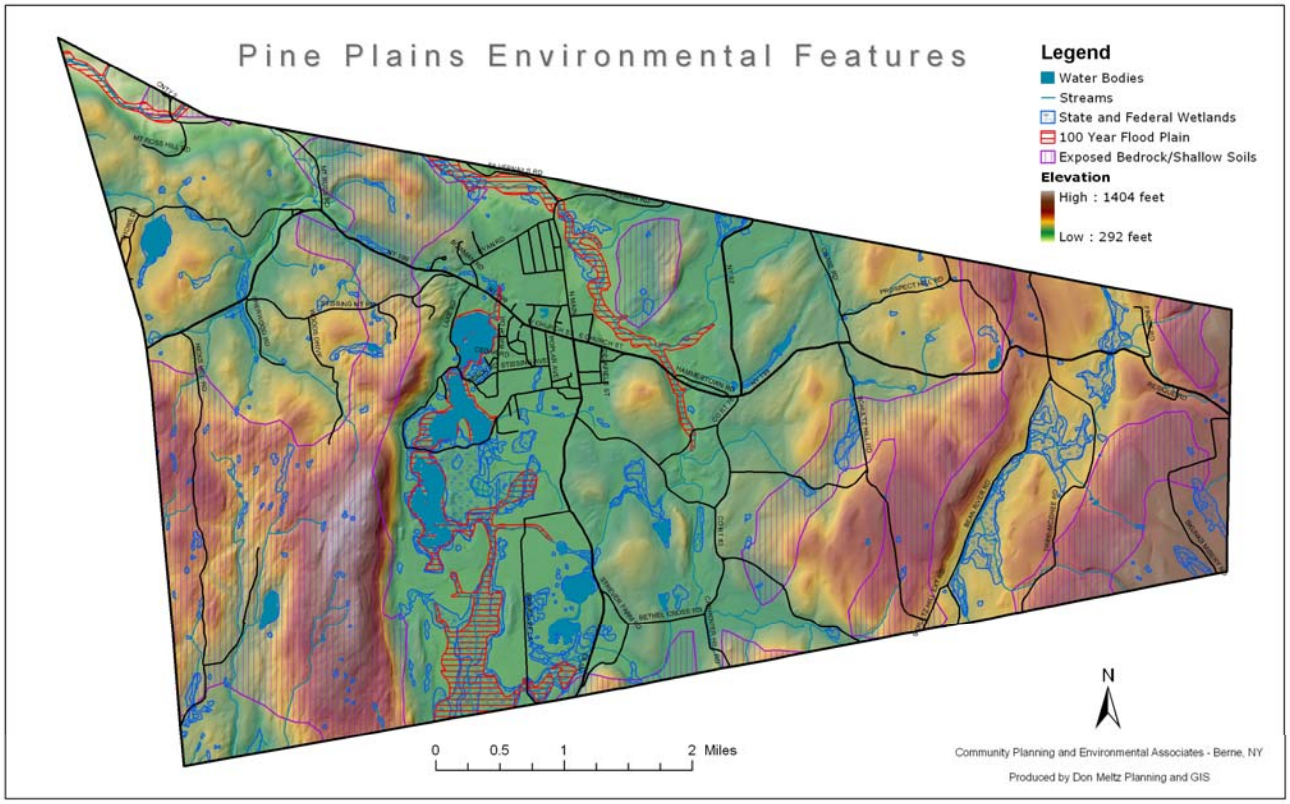
- Use of incentives as much as possible
  - Tax
  - Density Bonus
  - Accelerated review processes
- Performance standards
  - Open space ratio
  - Impervious surface ratio
  - Setbacks and buffers
- Change in density
  - Dwelling per acre (not min. lot size)
  - Sliding scale zoning
  - Environmental control formula



Step 3: Toolbox of Strategies

- Site Plan Review
- Planned Unit Development

Integrating Natural Resources in Future Land Use Maps in a Comprehensive Plan



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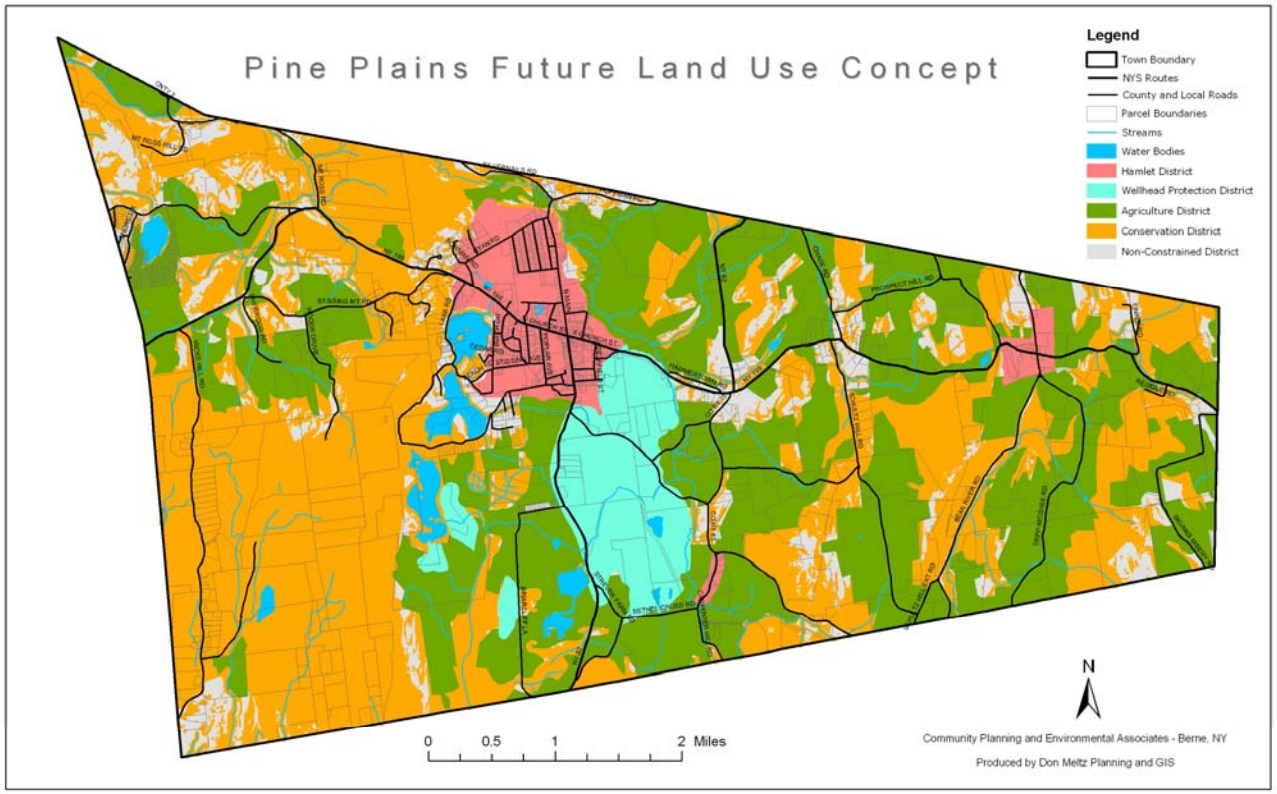
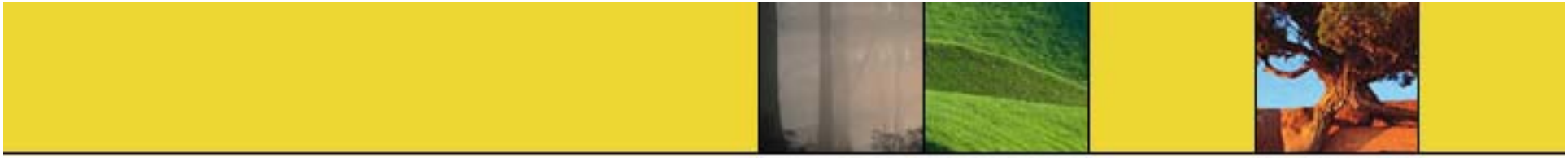


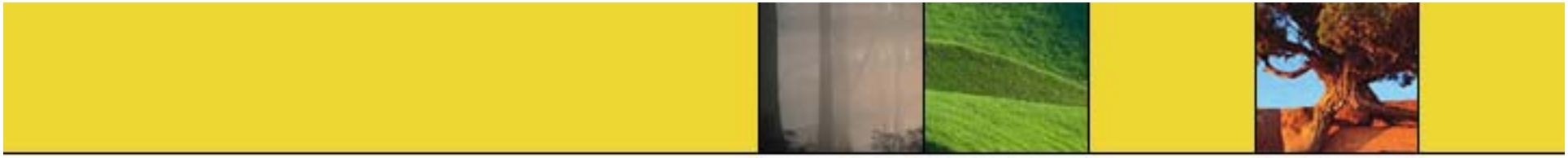


Details Now or Later?

- Many comprehensive plans include the inventory of natural resources and open spaces, and develop goals related to them BUT make general recommendations to develop more details and full plans (such as for an open space plan or an overlay zone) later.

- Others fully integrate all steps and strategies directly in the plan.

- A more detailed plan = easier implementation. Any controversy should come during comprehensive planning process!



Thank You!

- Questions and Answers