



# Save the Pine Bush, Inc.

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November 10, 2025

Town of Guilderland Town Board  
Guilderland Town Hall  
5209 Western Turnpike  
Guilderland NY 12084

RE: Town of Guilderland Comprehensive Plan

Dear Supervisor Barber,

Again, thank you so very much for emailing the newest version of the section on the Pine Bush. We appreciate that the newest section on the Pine Bush contains a lot of detail about the Albany Pine Bush Preserve and the Pine Bush ecosystem.

Here are our comments. We have used strike through for words we think should be removed and underline for words we believe should be added.

We believe that a brief introduction is needed to explain the difference between the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission Study Area, the Albany Pine Bush Preserve, and the privately-owned undeveloped Pine Bush ecosystem in danger of destruction. Below is our suggested paragraph that should be added on Page 10, directly under the heading “The Albany Pine Bush Ecosystem.”

The Albany Pine Bush ecosystem is the best example of inland pitch pine-scrub oak barrens in the world. The Albany Pine Bush ecosystem is located between the Cities of Albany and Schenectady and primarily in three municipalities: the City of Albany, the Town of Colonie, and the Town of Guilderland. The ecosystem once covered 56,000\* acres of land, and is now about one tenth of its size.

The boundaries of the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission Study Area are Fuller Road on the east, Central Avenue on the north, Western Avenue to the south and Route 146 on the east.

Within the Study Area is the remaining approximately 6,920 acres of Pine Bush ecosystem. Only about 3,400 acres of the Pine Bush ecosystem has been protected and is dedicated to the Albany Pine Bush Preserve, leaving approximately 3,520\*\* acres of ecosystem that is privately owned and is in danger of being destroyed through development.

The single largest portion of privately-owned undeveloped Pine Bush ecosystem is located in the Town of Guilderland and constitutes approximately 1,795\*\* acres. The Town of Guilderland should strive to protect all of this remaining, undeveloped Pine Bush ecosystem.

*Citations:*

*\* see <https://savethepinebush.org/exhibit-map/>*

*\*\* Page 6 of Save the Pine Bush August 18, 2025 letter regarding Comments on the Guilderland Comprehensive Plan*

On Page 16, under the heading “Importance for the Town of Guilderland in Preserving Land within the Albany Pine Bush Preserve,” the following changes should be made. Land dedicated to the Preserve is already protected; it is the privately-owned Pine Bush ecosystem outside the Preserve that needs protection.

### **Importance for the Town of Guilderland in Preserving Land within the Pine Bush Preserve Ecosystem**

It is important for the Town of Guilderland to ~~Preserve~~ preserve land in the Albany Pine Bush ~~Preserve~~ ecosystem to protect a globally rare ecosystem, conserve endangered wildlife, manage stormwater, and maintain the region's character. The town is a partner in creating and managing the Preserve and its future land-use decisions have significant environmental consequences.

Continuing on Page 16, under sub-heading “Protecting a unique ecosystem:”

The Albany Pine Bush ~~Ecosystem~~ ecosystem is ~~one~~ of the best ~~remaining examples~~ example of an inland pitch pine-scrub oak barrens ~~ecosystem~~ in the world.”

Again, continuing on Page 16, under sub-heading “Preventing habitat fragmentation:”

Preserving land within the ~~pine-bush~~ Pine Bush helps connect fragmented barrens, creating a larger, more viable habitat. This improves the long-term survival prospects for the plant and animal species that live there.

In section 10, on Page 170, an Albany Pine Bush ecosystem overlay should be added.

### **Albany Pine Bush Ecosystem Overlay**

The Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission (APBPC) has determined that about 2000 acres need to be added to the Preserve and more than half of the remaining privately owned Pine Bush ecosystem is in Guilderland. The Town of Guilderland should set a goal of adding at least 1000 acres to the Preserve within the Town.

The APBPC Vision Map and descriptions, individual parcel data and accompanying map supplied by Save the Pine Bush, and other sources should be used to guide this process, and planning and zoning decisions. The most crucial areas are north and just south of the Thruway, along and behind Route 155 north of Route 20, and the area including the Hungerkill drainage basin.

On page 176, the last page of the Plan Figure 10.1, “The Future Land Use Map”, the following changes should be made:

1. The map labels areas that are already part of the Albany Pine Bush Preserve with the zoning classifications:

Hamlet Mixed Use (HMU), Mixed Residential (MR), and Suburban Residential (SR), and Parks-Green Space (PGS) along with Albany Pine Bush Preserve Management Area (PB).

Since this land is already in the Preserve and will likely never be developed, it all should be labelled Albany Pine Bush Preserve Management Area (PB).

2. The area that is currently hash marked and labelled Pine Bush Preserve Management Area (PB), should instead be labelled Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission Study Area.

We appreciate very much that an entire section on the Pine Bush has been added to the Guilderland Comprehensive Plan.

The Pine Bush is clearly very important to the people living here. Lynne Jackson was reminded on election day how important the Pine Bush was when she received her “I voted” sticker from the Albany County Board of Elections. The Pine Bush is so important that the elementary school student who designed the sticker included a blue butterfly in her drawing.

Sincerely,

Andy Arthur  
Lynne Jackson  
Russell Ziemba