



Town of Bethlehem
Comprehensive Plan Update
Community Forums Summary

Prepared By:
Bethlehem Department of
Economic Development and Planning

July 9, 2019

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE - PHASE 1 COMMUNITY FORUMS OVERVIEW

The Town's current Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2005, has provided the Town's elected and appointed officials with valuable context and guidance for development-related decisions and capital investment. It established a vision for the community's future, articulated guiding principles and goals, and recommended specific actions or strategies that would move the Town toward the community vision.

Now that the 2005 Comprehensive Plan is nearly 15 years old and the community faces new challenges and opportunities from an ever changing world, it is time to revisit the plan's content and revise it to provide the necessary context and guidance for focused, wise decision-making for the next 10 to 15 years. Updating the comprehensive plan requires a thorough and inclusive community discussion about the current state of the town, the community's values and aspirations for the future, and the strategies that should be used or actions that should be taken to achieve the community's vision for the future.

The first phase of the Comprehensive Plan Update began the community discussion. From Fall 2018 through Spring 2019, the Town held a series of seven community forums with participation from 250 residents to talk about what the future should hold for the Hamlets and the greater Town. Town Planning Staff and Planning Board members asked residents from Slingerlands, Selkirk, South Bethlehem, Delmar, Glenmont, North Bethlehem, and Elsmere:

- What do you like about your Hamlet? What do you like about Bethlehem?
- What is your vision for your Hamlet twenty years from now?
- What are your concerns about your Hamlet?
- What are the opportunities for your Hamlet?

The variety of responses to these questions from residents all over the community will form the basis for creating a plan that will effectively guide development and community-related decisions toward the community's vision for years to come. These responses which represent interests in **Neighborhoods, Transportation, Aging and Housing, Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, Environment, and Government**, when taken all together, reveal certain development or community-related themes that community members care about.

The following pages summarize the responses that Planning Staff or Planning Board members discussed or recorded for each of the discussion questions above. The recorded statements for each group within the seven Community Forums is provided in the Appendix.

Comprehensive Plan Update – Community Forum Themes

NEIGHBORHOODS

OUR LOCATION IS AN ASSET

Bethlehem residents in all of the hamlet areas noted the close proximity to the City of Albany, its employment, cultural, and entertainment resources; and the country, rural feeling and undeveloped lands. Residents enjoy quiet neighborhoods, quality and variety in its building architecture, small/local businesses, agricultural lands, and open space.

Slingerlands residents like their proximity to Five Rivers Environmental Education Center and residents in **Selkirk** enjoy proximity to Henry Hudson Park. Residents in **Delmar**, **Slingerlands**, and **Elsmere** frequently cited their proximity to the Albany County Rail Trail as a strength for their hamlet areas. **Glenmont** residents cited their proximity to rural undeveloped lands as an attraction.

WELL SERVED BY SCHOOLS

Schools in each of our school districts are seen as an asset throughout the town. In the Bethlehem Central School District schools are close to existing neighborhoods, making it feasible to walk or bike. The outstanding reputation of Bethlehem's schools is well known and seen as an attraction for new families to move to the area. Some residents are concerned about the pressures on the school system as the Town continues to experience residential development (a consequence of having a good school system). Other residents are concerned about school taxes and how the schools budget and spend money. There may be opportunities for more coordination and cooperation between the Town and the school districts to discuss some of these concerns.

THE PHYSICAL CHARACTER OF BETHLEHEM IS PART OF THE COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Although areas of Bethlehem differ in character from rural to suburban to village, residents in these areas highly value their physical character and also may value the character of other parts of town. Residents frequently cited the architecture, historic buildings, features such as porches, and trees (community forest). They describe the areas they enjoy as quaint, comfortable, intimate, charming, and small in scale. Bethlehem neighborhoods enjoy quiet surroundings. On the whole, residents of Bethlehem are proud of the small town, village, or rural feel of the community, and are averse to the level and style of development happening in Clifton Park or on Wolf Road. Residents do not want cookie cutter development. Preservation of historic homes and buildings within the Slingerlands Historic District was an interest to the **Slingerlands** hamlet. Retention of neighborhood character that may be impacted by adjacent subdivision development or individual lot in-fill development is a concern in **Glenmont** and **Delmar**. **South Bethlehem** benefits from low development pressure due to lack of public water and sanitary sewer, which keeps their hamlet from experiencing growth.

TYPE AND SCALE OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Residents vary on their attitudes toward future development. Depending on where they live, Bethlehem residents either want their area to stay as it is, have limited development, or have development of a specific type. **Glenmont** attendees are concerned that the Town is experiencing "over development". Generally, most hope the development that occurs is sensitive to its context. Some residents want low

density development and are concerned about how multifamily buildings or other compact development projects will fit into the surrounding context or ensure privacy. **Glenmont, Delmar, and Slingerlands** believe the current density for multi-family may be too high. Some forum attendees are concerned that multifamily buildings will attract renters, who won't be as invested in the community. Some residents have a vision that hamlet activity centers would have a natural transition between the mixed use area and the low density residential areas around them.

Residents tend to like the idea of mixed-use development (**Delmar, Slingerlands, Elsmere**) and the adaptive reuse of old or historic buildings. Forum attendees like development in the style of the Four Corners. Residents desire several kinds of non-residential development when discussing their vision of the future: unique small-scale commercial development in appropriate areas; cultural resource or civic destinations like museums, performing arts spaces, libraries, and community centers. A few residents wish to pursue commercial development or industrial zoning in the context of balancing the Town's tax base.

Overall, residents want to see new activity for underutilized sites and vacant buildings but are also concerned about the type of development that may occur on these sites. **Slingerlands and North Bethlehem** residents note the long standing and vacant Picotte building (formerly Blue Cross Blue Shield building). **Glenmont** residents see vacant land near Walmart as deserving of development, potentially for new commercial/community uses. **Glenmont** residents identify the Jericho Drive-In and are concerned about development should it close. The potential future of Normanside Country Club is on the minds of **Elsmere** residents and they are concerned about future development should the golf course close. **Elsmere and Delmar** residents have thoughts about improving Delaware Plaza. **North Bethlehem and Slingerlands** consider allowing other uses at the Vista Tech Park such as hotels/conference center or online-higher education. **North Bethlehem** is concerned about the future of Mosall's Grove property.

A VISION FOR GATHERING SPOTS

Residents across the town share an interest for destinations where they could go to meet others or experience a sense of community. A few residents are concerned there are not enough or adequate gathering spots or centralized meeting places in their area. **North Bethlehem** residents cite the New Scotland Road hamlet area as a future mixed use/commercial/community area – noting that land in North Bethlehem is mainly zoned single family residential. The North Bethlehem Fire House is a potential community gathering spot. **South Bethlehem** residents see an opportunity for a combined commercial use with the Post Office, which could naturally turn into a gathering spot when picking up mail. **Delmar** residents share an attraction to the walkable Four Corners area, and enjoy the local businesses and new restaurants/food services, and Rail Trail- which serves as a gathering spot as well. **Elsmere** residents envision beautification improvements to Delaware Plaza to help attract additional tenants.

AGING AND HOUSING

AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND VARIED HOUSING OPTIONS

Residents across the town are concerned about the availability of affordable housing, especially for seniors. Some residents are concerned that seniors may be forced out of Bethlehem due to the inability to afford housing costs. Some residents are concerned about the lack of diversity in the town and several attendees mentioned that the presence of various groups – younger adults, the elderly, and minority groups – would enhance the community, but those who desire to live or stay may not be able to due to housing cost.

When talking about housing and the types they would like to see, residents differ in opinion. Some see an opportunity for a variety of housing types, including affordable single family homes and multifamily properties that respect the surrounding context. Other residents only want low-density development that is spread out. Some residents are concerned about the density and size of future multifamily buildings and said they don't want high-rises. A number of residents like existing mixed-use development (that is located appropriately), and have a vision for additional well-placed mixed-use development.

AGING IN BETHLEHEM

Residents are concerned about the ability for seniors to age in place or the possibility that they could be displaced due to aging. Their visions for the future include targeted plans or initiatives that address aging in place, affordable housing options that could accommodate seniors or are specifically targeted for seniors, and more transportation options for seniors. Others desire accessory apartments and universal design for new homes. **Delmar** and **Elsmere** residents desire affordable senior housing in the vicinity of the Four Corners area and other core residential areas would allow seniors to take advantage of the walkability and services provided in these locations.

TRANSPORTATION

TRAFFIC SAFETY – SPEEDING, CUT-THROUGH, STREET CONNECTIONS, TRUCKS

Many residents are concerned about the speed and volume of traffic and universally identify traffic calming measures as solutions. Some residents are concerned about current and future congestion on main roadways (New Scotland Road in **Slingerlands**, Route 9W and Feura Bush Road in **Glenmont**, Elsmere Avenue in **Elsmere**). **Glenmont** would like a turn lane at the Feura Bush Road/Elsmere Ave intersection. Others are concerned that cut-through traffic is occurring in their residential neighborhoods and that local street speed limits are being exceeded, which impacts the character of residential neighborhoods. Many feel there is an opportunity to slow traffic speed and discourage speeding in residential neighborhoods with traffic calming design changes and speed limit reductions. Those in **Delmar** and **Glenmont** are conflicted about the interconnectedness of streets. Some residents would like to eliminate through traffic or limit road connectivity in residential neighborhoods. Other residents say they like the interconnectedness of streets and sidewalks as it helps for walking or driving (reflective of the Olde Delmar neighborhood pattern).

Residents are concerned about truck traffic in the town and envision that in the future, trucks are diverted around their neighborhood. Concerns from residents in **South Bethlehem** and **Selkirk** were centered on the long history of truck traffic impacts to the nearby residential homes along Rt. 396 (Bridge Street and Maple Avenue). **Selkirk** residents are displeased in the lack of progress on pursuing a Selkirk Bypass as a solution to relocate trucks traveling along Maple Avenue to/from NYS Thruway Exit 22. **South Bethlehem** residents experience the trucks from Callanan Industries. The truck traffic issue is also recently being experienced by **Glenmont** residents on Glenmont Road who have observed increased truck traffic to/from Route 9W and River Road.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY BETHLEHEM

Across the town, residents value existing bike and pedestrian facilities and want more. Students have the ability to walk or bike to school if they choose. One particularly popular desire is for residents to be connected to nearby destinations such as parks and commercial centers. This was especially true for residents near the Albany County Rail Trail in **Delmar**, **Elsmere** and **Slingerlands**. Some residents envision better wayfinding signage to make it easier to connect to destinations and raise awareness. There is a strong desire for more facilities (such as bike lanes, crosswalks, speed radar signs, rapid flashing beacons, signage, and lighting). Additionally, residents also envision streetscape improvements such as flags and flower beds in main street contexts and expanded street tree and community forestry programs to enhance walkable environments. A couple attendees desire to see the town require these amenities of development.

Specific locations for new or improved sidewalks included Feura Bush Road in **Glenmont**, Kenwood Avenue in **Elsmere**, Bridge Street in **South Bethlehem**, Thatcher Street in **Selkirk**, Blessing Road in **North Bethlehem**, and New Scotland Road in **Slingerlands**.

A number of residents are either concerned about the current lack of public transportation in their area or envision additional transit services or facilities in the future for their part of Town (**North Bethlehem**, **Elsmere**, **Glenmont**). Ideas raised include the location of park and ride facilities (**South Bethlehem**, **Selkirk** and **Glenmont**), better pedestrian connections to bus stops/shelters, connections between centralized destinations within Bethlehem, and improved education and promotion of existing transit options.

ENVIRONMENT

SUSTAINABILITY

Interest in a sustainable future for Bethlehem crosses all interest areas, including business, energy, transportation, infrastructure, and development. There is concern about sustainability and environmental issues such as poor air quality, but some residents in **Delmar** and **Elsmere** picture a future Bethlehem taking action and becoming a leader in sustainable communities. Some see an energy efficient Bethlehem powered by renewable energy, while others have a vision for a fully zero carbon town. Residents envision a number of strategies, including economic incentives for green development, by-right allowances for ground mounted solar PV, renewable energy powered street lighting, EV charging stations, and adding and replacing greenery and trees. They see a future with a multimodal network that safely connects destinations across Bethlehem to one another, protected wetlands,

funding programs for acquiring and preserving farms and forests (open space), and a town-wide stormwater management plan.

AGRICULTURE, OPEN SPACE, AND UNDEVELOPED LAND

Residents throughout Bethlehem like the proximity to the rural countryside, farms, forests, and parks and scenic areas in the less populated parts of town. Residents are concerned about the prospect of future development changing this rural agrarian character, irreversible impacts to the environment, and see active farmland and agritourism as a part of the Town's ideal future.

Protection of small wooded lots, rewarding property owners for keeping open space, purchase of development rights and identification and prioritization of open space are some of the strategies residents said were part of their vision for Bethlehem or opportunities the Town should pursue.

PARKS AND RECREATION

A DESIRE FOR ADDITIONAL RECREATION AREAS

Many residents love the parks in their area of Town and would like additional parks, improved park areas, and new connections between existing sidewalks and nearby recreation destinations.

Almost Town-wide, there is desire for access to nearby streams and greenways with walking trails. Residents mentioned they want amenities like dog parks, recreation fields and facilities, better lighting in parks, picnic areas, and community gardens. Some residents have ideas for new recreation locations, such as installing a trail on an abandoned rail bed in **South Bethlehem**. **Elsmere** residents desire for the Albany Waterline to be a formal recreation trail. **Glenmont, Elsmere, Slingerlands** see the need for new pocket parks with playgrounds in their area. A couple residents were concerned about maintenance issues with parks or park facilities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

AN APPRECIATION FOR SMALL BUSINESS

Small businesses are seen as part of the character and integral to the community. Some residents appreciate the level of opportunity for small businesses and that business owners live in town. There is interest in seeing additional small businesses, such as micro-breweries, upscale groceries, coffee shops, and unique retail stores. Strategies and opportunities include events, business clustering, agritourism, additional commercial/office space, increasing diversity of owners and/or employees, adjusting design standards, improvements to Delmar Farmer's Market, and leveraging town assets or non-traditional education resources. **Slingerlands** and **Elsmere** residents wish to see an economic development strategy based on the Albany County Rail Trail (locate businesses along the Rail Trail, wayfinding business signs to/from Rail Trail).

A number of residents were concerned about the tax base primarily consisting of residential, and would like to see an expansion of the tax base through appropriately located and designed non-residential development (commercial and industrial). Some residents are concerned about youth employment

levels and wish for more employment options for youth and young professionals. Some attendees are concerned about the Town's economic development approach. They feel there is too external a focus and that the IDA offers bigger incentives than it should. **South Bethlehem** expressed concern about the MED zoning district regulations.

GOVERNMENT

TOWN SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION ARE IMPORTANT

A lot of residents place high value on the services the town provide. They cite the emergency services, the library, and senior services as services they like. Some residents are concerned about communication between the Town and residents and want improvement so they have a better understanding of what's happening around Town. **South Bethlehem** attendees are concerned about zoning law standards, zoning districts, the appropriate level of flexibility (by-right uses) for desired land uses, proper approval processes, and adequate property maintenance enforcement on vacant lots. Many residents are concerned about taxes, but many residents also like the services the Town provides.

Town of Bethlehem
Comprehensive Plan Update

APPENDIX

Community Forums Agenda and
Break-Out Group Feedback

**Town of Bethlehem
Comprehensive Plan Update**



AGENDA

- I. Welcome (Supervisor David VanLuven)**
- II. What is a Comprehensive Plan?**
- III. Why Update the Plan?**
- IV. Land Development Review Process**
- V. Break Out Groups – Information Gathering**
 - What do you LIKE about [Your Hamlet] and Bethlehem?
 - What is your VISION for [Your Hamlet] in next 20 years?
 - What are your CONCERNS about [Your Hamlet]?
 - What are the OPPORTUNITIES for [Your Hamlet]?
- VI. Group Reporting**
- VII. Conclusions and Next Steps**

*TOWN OF BETHLEHEM
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE*

**SLINGERLANDS
COMMUNITY FORUM**

Join us in discussing the future of the Slingerlands community

THURSDAY

NOVEMBER 29, 2018

6:00 - 8:00 PM

**SLINGERLANDS FIRE HOUSE
1520 NEW SCOTLAND ROAD**

- LEARN ABOUT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE
- LEARN ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS
- SHARE YOUR INPUT AND PERSPECTIVE ON THE VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF SLINGERLANDS AND BETHLEHEM
- BE INVOLVED WITH HELPING TO STRENGTHEN THE SLINGERLANDS COMMUNITY



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Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan Update

Slingerlands Community Forum
Slingerlands Firehouse, 1520 New Scotland Road
November 29, 2018 – 6:00PM to 8:00 PM
Approximately 38 attendees

Break Out Groups – Information Gathering

- What do you LIKE about Slingerlands and Bethlehem?
- What is your VISION for Slingerlands in next 20 years?
- What are your CONCERNS about Slingerlands?
- What are the OPPORTUNITIES for Slingerlands?

Group #1

Liz Staubach and Scott Lewendon

Likes

- Safe neighborhoods
- Schools
- Quality of life
- Proximity to rural areas
- Proximity to urban areas
- Quiet
- Rail Trail
 - Connections
 - Recreation
 - Access/transportation

Vision

- No changes unless for good
- Improved communication with developers
- Mangia-more mixed uses
- Streetscapes
- Mixed use like Delaware Ave

- Continued multi-modal connectivity
- Age friendly community
- Parks
- Incentives for Green Economic Development

Concerns

- Speed
- Blue Cross Blue Shield Building
- Lack of Pedestrian Facilities
 - Signage
 - Crosswalk
 - Enforcement
- New Scotland Road/Kenwood Avenue intersection
- Congestion-current and future development-from hill towns to Albany
- Communication with County
- Community compatibility of Mangia development
- No parks

Opportunities

- Economic Development/Services for Rail Trail
- Greenway connections to rail trail/parks
- Civic spaces/Fire Department
- Urban Forestry
- Connection to Arboretum
- Expand street tree program
- Visual study for Slingerlands hamlet

Group 2

Leslie Lombardo and John Smolinsky

Likes

- Schools
- Small town feel/older homes, not cookie cutter
- Neighborhood character and charm
- Limited commercial is good/small scale is good
- Bike Path/sidewalks
- Open Space
- Size and scale
- Accessibility to city of Albany, Five Rivers and rural areas

Concerns

- Not enough affordable senior housing and housing in general
- Difficult pedestrian crossing of roundabouts
- Density in Hamlet Zone (proposed at Mangia)
- Not enough green space—don't like seeing garages and garbage cans at mansions along Fisher Blvd.
- Taxes too high in town

Opportunities

- Small Businesses related to Rail Trail
- Capitalize on character of Slingerlands history—make it a destination
- Rail Trail spur to Vista
- Rail Trail a connector to other parts of town
- Explore historic district—recommendations for regulations

Group 3

David VanLuven and Peggy Sherman

Likes

- Combination of old and new, history
- Not Wolf Road or other developed areas
- “Small town”—have avoided rapid development of other areas
- Sense of safety, community, identity
- Close to more rural and natural areas but also convenient to services
- Neighborhoods where people know each other
- Historic center
- Close to school
- Close to highways
- Sense of ownership of “our” community

Concerns

- Safety, traffic and pedestrian
- Sidewalks and safe bike routes
- Population growth driving density
- Deer
- Blue Cross building
- Diversity—more diversity would enhance community
- Safe places for children
- Aging population
 - Changing needs
 - May not be as concerned with schools
- Water infrastructure/sewer

Opportunities

- No right turn from Kenwood to New Scotland
- No left turn from New Scotland to Kenwood
- Vista connector with New Scotland requires New Scotland action
- Slow the speed of traffic with road design, gradual changes in speed limits
- Clean up easement next to 1535 New Scotland
- Signs about Slingerlands history and burial vault, history on rail trail
- Prohibit parking in front of businesses
- Senior housing and senior service/specific to Mangia site

Group 4

Rob Leslie and Brian Gyory

Likes

- The way it is
- Environment
- Character
- Welcoming nature
- Community feel
- People
- Town homes still part of town
- Bike Trail
- Architecture
- Doctors office/church re-use
- Commercial—good restaurants small scale
- Right size hamlet development

Concerns

- Traffic
- Highway
- Street infrastructure
- Bridge-narrow/dark
- Blue Cross Building
- Concern over high density

Vision

- Bike Trail
- Extension to connect trail to hamlet
- Sidewalks on both sides of the road Rte 85 and blessing
- Safety (bridge) not just historic preservation
- Look at larger traffic in and out of Bethlehem
- Safe to connect to and from trail
- Vista—Senior Housing
- Stormwater management plan

Architecture

- How to retain “feel”
- Do we want regulatory?
 - Vacant V. Existing uses
 - Concern over cost
 - Incentives-façade improvements program

*TOWN OF BETHLEHEM
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE*

**SELKIRK
COMMUNITY FORUM**

Join us in discussing the future of the Selkirk community

THURSDAY

DECEMBER 13, 2018

6:00 - 8:00 PM

SELKIRK FIRE HOUSE #1

126 MAPLE AVE

- LEARN ABOUT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE
- LEARN ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS
- SHARE YOUR INPUT AND PERSPECTIVE ON THE VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF SELKIRK AND BETHLEHEM
- BE INVOLVED WITH HELPING TO STRENGTHEN THE SELKIRK COMMUNITY



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Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan Update

Selkirk Community Forum
Selkirk Firehouse #1, 24 Bridge Street
December 13, 2018 – 6:00PM to 8:00 PM
Approximately 17 attendees

Break Out Groups – Information Gathering

- What do you LIKE about Selkirk and Bethlehem?
- What is your VISION for Selkirk in next 20 years?
- What are your CONCERNS about Selkirk?
- What are the OPPORTUNITIES for Selkirk?

Group #1

Rob Leslie and Brian Gyory

Likes

- Small Village Feel
- Not Clifton Park
- Rural areas
- Automotive garage (small independently owned services)
- Stewarts
- Mix of uses (small) to residential (good)
- Enough commercial
- Keep development at minimum
- Rural hamlet
- Henry Hudson Park
 - Boating
 - Park Use

Vision

- Gas station
- Traffic Calming
 - Speed devices

- New sidewalks to 9W
- Sidewalk (Thatcher direct to 9W)
- Keep trucks off of Thatcher going west
- Keep Thatcher as small residential road
- Trail to HH Park
- Preserve open/farm land
- Support open space conservation

Concerns

- Trucks J Brake use
- Speed/volume issue
- Support of Town
- Traffic Calming
- Sidewalk concerns
 - Trucks drive right on sidewalk
 - Drainage issues
- Safety

Opportunities

- Retain character
- Address traffic
- Value Selkirk park
- Follow rail line

Group 2

Leslie Lombardo and John Smolinsky

Likes

- Community Park
- Affordable
- Accessibility to other services
- Easy commute to Albany
- Henry Hudson Park
- Neighborhood Feeling

Concerns

- Lack of public transportation
- 9W traffic/truck traffic
- Bike/Pedestrian safety on 9W
- Air quality issues
- Accidents/speed on 144 and 9W
- Incomplete sidewalk
- Street lighting

Vision

- Resolve truck/residential conflict – Selkirk Bypass
- Better bike/pedestrian access
- More community activity opportunities
- Park n Ride

*TOWN OF BETHLEHEM
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE*

SOUTH BETHLEHEM COMMUNITY FORUM

Join us in discussing the future of the South Bethlehem community

THURSDAY

JANUARY 10, 2019

6:00 - 8:00 PM

BETHLEHEM GRANGE HALL

24 BRIDGE STREET, SELKIRK

- LEARN ABOUT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE
- LEARN ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS
- SHARE YOUR INPUT AND PERSPECTIVE ON THE VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF SOUTH BETHLEHEM AND THE TOWN
- BE INVOLVED WITH HELPING TO STRENGTHEN THE SOUTH BETHLEHEM COMMUNITY



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Town of Bethlehem
Comprehensive Plan Update

South Bethlehem Community Forum
Bethlehem Grange Hall, 24 Bridge Street
January 10, 2019 – 6:00PM to 8:00 PM
Approximately 60 attendees

Break Out Groups – Information Gathering

- What do you LIKE about South Bethlehem and Bethlehem?
- What is your VISION for South Bethlehem in next 20 years?
- What are your CONCERNS about South Bethlehem?
- What are the OPPORTUNITIES for South Bethlehem?

Group #1

Leslie Lombardo and Scott Lewendon

Likes

- Country but close to city
- Long time families
- Quaint
- Proximity to River
- Farmland and animals
- Riverfront character
- Park (not used)
- Balanced industry
- Historical character

Vision

- Fewer abandoned houses
- Walkable community
- Changes based on comp plan
- Keep rural character
- Higher recreation use of river
- Quiet roads
- Simple roads

- Bikeable roads/trails

Concerns

- Public sewer/water (none)
- Cost of sewer
- Abandoned houses
- Sidewalks/Pedestrian facilities—crosswalks
- Banks of river
- Speeding on side roads and cut through traffic
- More pedestrian facilities
- Only one senior housing facility
- Incomplete gas distribution

Opportunities

- S.B. Park—better facilities
- Greater riverfront access
- Park pavilion
- Dog park
- Families moving back
- Housing for seniors—affordable
 - Single families
 - Affordable
 - No large multifamily

Group 2

Nate Owens and John Smolinsky

Likes

- Intimate neighborhood
- Fewer NIMBYs
- Affordable
- Low development
- Blue collar community
- Neighbors helping neighbors

Vision

- No change-remain rural
- More industry—Creble Road

Concerns

- School signs at Becker
- Intersection safety—Lasher/396/9W
- Lack of amenities—gas/water/sidewalks
- “Open Space” invites misuse
- Truck Traffic
- Pedestrian safety
- Stream access
- Landfill and creek erosion issue
- Development in South Bethlehem
- Valuation
- Stepchild-lack of influence

Opportunities

- Neighborhood/community
- Trails-Develop abandoned railroad bed
- Develop South Bethlehem Park-include little kids
 - Pavilion
- Recognize differences in different areas of Town
- Reduce agriculture taxes
- Community activities for kids
- Senior services

Group 3

Liz Staubach and Karen Shaw

Likes

- Cost of living
- Good community
- Close to Albany, but room/space
- Know your neighbors, close-knit
- Good for kids—Norman Rockwellish
- Small village feel
- Feels good to know neighbors
- Semi-rural
- Safe—people out walking dogs
- Quiet streets
- Quality schools
- People mind their own business
- People are independent minded
- Welcoming

Vision

- Keep quality of life, but increase tax base
- Balance development
- Improve infrastructure-sewer/water
 - Could lead to reduction in rural feel
- Better connection with Selkirk and rest of the Town
- Flexibility of allowed zoning uses by right
 - More small businesses
 - Make it easier for businesses
- Keep fresh air feel
- More/better community organization
- Pedestrian facilities—cross walks/sidewalks
- Fencing at park/park improvements
- Traffic calming
- Improved communication in south Bethlehem and Selkirk

Concerns

- South Bethlehem like poor stepchild of Bethlehem—get the crumbs
- Don't get attention or resources
- Trains: horn blowing, train speed
- S. Bethlehem Park-Unsafe road, no crosswalk
- Not safe to ride bikes, not enough sidewalks-need fence around basketball area
- Change in truck traffic-heavy and fast
- Need better communicating w/in South Bethlehem.

- No Town center-don't see people as often
- More safety measures-roads unsafe for pedestrians
- Steep turn on Bridge Street
- Aging infrastructure
- Properties/buildings in disrepair, abandoned
- Balanced attention in this area of Town
- MED Zoning
- Zoning appropriate for small business

Opportunities

- Attract small businesses to serve community
- Develop the Rt 9W corridor
- Ensure zoning enables opportunity
 - Small grocery, pub, etc.
 - Create a neighborhood center
- More flexibility in zoning regulations, so can try new biz
- Expand on park area, stream is asset
- Old rail bed-connections? Town ownership?
- Audubon trail system/creek-great spot, connect advertise
- Make recreational/pedestrian connections to park and rest of town
- Solar panels-clay mine parcel, landfill parcel
- Take advantage of vacant/unused areas to improve small areas, small businesses, trails
- Be sensitive of existing character
- Stay consistent w/housing/biz types and styles
- Maintain rural atmosphere
- Help landowners keep land open by giving more flexibility for innovation-less restrictions
- Recognize landowner rights

Group 4

Rob Leslie and Brian Gyory

Likes

- Neighborhood
- Small Town feel
- Know neighbors
- Everything is close
- Hamlet-lot sizes
- Single family housing
- Rural nature
- Farmland
- Stability
 - Due to lack of infrastructure/water sewer
- Park
- Easy commute

Vision

- Communications-town to host it
- Email/connected electronically
- Can't communicate-bring people together
- Keep small town feel
- Maintain rural feel
- Walkable park in town

Concerns

- Transfer station expansion-compatibility-traffic use
- Sidewalk "lines"-repainted yearly to delineate
- Pedestrian safety
- No sidewalk/shoulders (396)
- Willowbrook-speeding—wish for flashing radar sign
- White line w/stop sign—brook and orchard
- Intersections safety concerns
 - S. Street and Willowbrook
 - S. Albany
- Farm animals
- Residents don't know of opportunities—Audubon trails
- Emergency services response time

Opportunities

- Park—pavilion at park—walking trails
- Trail connection-rails to trails at fishing access
- New sidewalks
- Small retail-general store

- Post office shared use community center
- Intersection South and Willowbrook
- Many properties for sale
- Safety improvements
- Maintain small town community anchors
- Grange—community center—senior citizen, library, shelter use
- Link amenities to town website
- Bike lines on 9w

*TOWN OF BETHLEHEM
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE*

**DELMAR
COMMUNITY FORUM**

Join us in discussing the future of the Delmar community

WEDNESDAY

JANUARY 30, 2019

6:00 - 8:00 PM

DELMAR REFORMED CHURCH

386 DELAWARE AVENUE

- LEARN ABOUT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE
- LEARN ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS
- SHARE YOUR INPUT AND PERSPECTIVE ON THE VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF DELMAR AND THE TOWN
- BE INVOLVED WITH HELPING TO STRENGTHEN THE DELMAR COMMUNITY



TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

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Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan Update

Delmar Community Forum
Delmar Reformed Church, 386 Delaware Avenue
January 30, 2019 – 6:00PM to 8:00 PM
Approximately 51 attendees

Break Out Groups – Information Gathering

- What do you LIKE about Delmar and Bethlehem?
- What is your VISION for Delmar in next 20 years?
- What are your CONCERNS about Delmar?
- What are the OPPORTUNITIES for Delmar?

Group #1

Leslie Lombardo and Scott Lewendon

Likes

- Attractive-Trees, housing, streets
- Not overdeveloped
- Walkability
- Excellent education/schools
- Small quaint town
- Diversity of architecture
- Good places to eat
- Rail trail
- Walk everywhere
- Home town feel
- Library
- Quiet
- Open space/agriculture

Vision

- More trees/trees ordinance
- Updated Comp Plan
- Aging in place

- Balanced growth
- Listening community
- Attractive place/good development/low density
- Economic feasible ownership
- Better recreation fields
- Better drivers
- Better dog park
- Energy efficiency community

Concerns

- Don't understand the Hamlet
- Traffic on residential streets
- Noise abatement
- Traffic at four corners
- Taxes high: need more commercial
- Traffic at rush hour
- Educate drivers
- Pedestrian safety at schools and enforcement

Opportunities

- Judicial commercial development
- Employment opportunities for youth
- Tax structure for elderly
- Dialogue with young people
- Discourage "fly by nights" (residents residing for short term while kids are in school, relocate after kids graduate)
- Affordable housing
- Community driven comp plan
- Public communication
- Grouping businesses

Group 2

Nate Owens and John Smolinsky

Likes

- Historical resources
- Nearby open space
- Bike trail access
- Bus access
- Roundabouts
- Town services
- Schools
- Walkability
- Transportation in/out of community
- Small business
- Village/small town character
- Presence of farms
- 4 corners activities
- First responders

Vision

- Slow commercial/apartment development
- Better pedestrian/bike connectivity as a requirement
- More affordable senior housing
- More interconnected multi-use trails local and regional
- Sidewalks on Kenwood to McGee Park
- Sidewalks to town parks
- Small town character
- Slow down traffic-traffic calming
- Safe and better bike/pedestrian facilities
- Sustainability-collective and shared vision

Concerns

- Maintenance and safety on trails
- Are we outgrowing our infrastructure
- Sustainability
- Loss of viable farmland and rural character
- Traffic-speed, safety, volume
- Taxes limit diversity
- Density of apartments
- High rises not desirable
- Conservation subdivision regulations should not allow 2 family developments

Opportunities

- Water access-Normanskill, Hudson River
- Identify and prioritize open space
- More aggressive grant
- Collaboration with MHLC and businesses
- Allow ground mounted solar in residential
- Street lighting via renewable
- Preservation of historic resources
- Agri-tourism
- Community forest
- Improved recreation facilities
- Turf fields, better quality lighting on fields
- Bike lanes
- Multi-use paths instead of sidewalks
- Strategic planning for long term growth to ensure a well designated community

Group 3

Liz Staubach and Karen Shaw

Likes

- School system
- Walkability
- Rail trail
- Trees
- Library
- Diverse housing
- Established neighborhoods
- Protected areas
- Open spaces
- Safe
- Four corners/small businesses
- Wildlife
- Prefer not having sidewalks
- Products and services
- Town services
- Mixed use neighborhoods
- Enclosed areas
- Dead end streets
- Warmth of community
- Senior services
- YMCA
- Sports facilities/parks
- Proximity to Albany
- Natural turnover of residents

Vision

- Consistent speed limit (30mph)
- Pedestrian safety
- Community center
- More sustainability-green practices
 - Re-zoning demonstration projects
 - Education
- Preserving character of neighborhoods
 - Open space protection
 - Keep dead end streets
 - Housing stock
- Connectivity for pedestrians (bikes, kids, walkers)

- Traffic calming
- Retail, private, unique-fill storefronts
- Sidewalk extended on Feura Bush road
- Connecting elected officials w/planning board members
- PDD process cut back
- Tree replacement program
- Age in place
- Public transportation

Concerns

- Multiple fire departments
- Loss of open space
- Loss of trees
- Planning Board accountability, due process
- Traffic-jams-rush hour (4 corners, cherry avenue)
- Truck traffic increases-cutting through—meads lane, Waldenmeier
- Lack of commercial tax base—IDA too great of incentives
- Ability to age in place-not have to move
- Limited public transportation
- Rail trail safety
- Taxes
- No community center
- Lack of amenities along the river
- Taxes high-farmers leaving
- Natural residential growth

Opportunities

- Community gardens
- Events as economic drivers/boost economy
- Grants-can be a regional/national leader
- Composting
- Bike route to Albany that is safe for commuters
- Attract destination retail-but make suitable for Bethlehem
- Need community center for events, performances
- Tollgate use
- Rail Trail-clearer connections to retail, bike racks, signage
- Hudson River-restaurants etc.
- Vista
- Examine hamlet zoning-walk to stores/retail etc.
- EV charging stations
- Sustainable Bethlehem
- School system-maintain excellence-magnet for new young families

- Enhance connection to Albany

Group 4

Rob Leslie and Brian Gyory

Likes

- Schools
- Parks
- Neighborhood
 - Families
 - Secluded dead end streets
 - Near wetlands
 - Stub streets
 - Quiet
- Walkable
- Rail trail connections
- Local “center”
- Small business—4 corners
- Pedestrians and Bikes
- Rural farmland close by
- Open space farms, fields, forests
- Services-library/schools
- Unique
 - 10 mins city of cows
 - Great balance
 - Growing thriving community
- Progressive government
- Senior services
- Tree lined street
- Library resources
- Lack of traffic in residential areas
- Friendly community
- Farmers markets
- Safety/police force
- Kid friendly streets
- Bypass-takes traffic off Delaware Ave
- Kid friendly
- Pocket Parks
- 5 Rivers
- Cul-de sacs
- YMCA
- Proximity to Albany
- Business owners live in Town

- True extended community spirit

Vision

- Maintain wetlands and greenspace
- Limit vehicular connectivity to maintain neighborhood feel
- Sustainability-maintain green space/agriculture/barns/historic structures
- Encourage agriculture and landowners rights-agro tourism
- Fund to buy land
- Fit in with character of surrounding
- Development within existing areas-in-fill
- Incentives to maintain large tracts of lands
- More by-right allowances-agri-tourism and feed store
- Stay true to reputation
- Design standards on buffers
- Retain forest
- Protection of forest/farmland
- Sustainable renewable energy
- More small business opportunities
- Connect Delmar to other parts of town
- Green infrastructure
- Delaware plaza should fit in town better

Concerns

- PDD's
- Connector streets
- Loss of ag, forest, ecosystems
- Transportation
- Mass transportation use
- Rail trail respect
- Taxes-vacant land
- Remaining ag land zoning-becomes more restrictive
- Reducing value of land
- Wetland development bad

Opportunities

- Vista, monolith buyout developed—trader joes, fresh market commercial
- Community center
- Meeting rooms to hold people—support arts
- Schools-town/schools relationship
- Small business friendly function before appearance, allow for creativity to get things off ground
- Affordable senior housing-rental/ownership
- Young folks-affordable-homeownership and renters

*TOWN OF BETHLEHEM
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE*

GLENMONT COMMUNITY FORUM

Join us in discussing the future of the Glenmont community

THURSDAY

MARCH 7, 2019

6:00 - 8:00 PM

GLENMONT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

328 ROUTE 9W, GLENMONT

- LEARN ABOUT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE
- LEARN ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS
- SHARE YOUR INPUT AND PERSPECTIVE ON THE VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF GLENMONT AND THE TOWN
- BE INVOLVED WITH HELPING TO STRENGTHEN THE GLENMONT COMMUNITY



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Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan Update

Glenmont Community Forum
Glenmont Elementary School
March 7, 2019 – 6:00PM to 8:00 PM
Approximately 42 attendees

Break Out Groups – Information Gathering

- What do you LIKE about Glenmont and Bethlehem?
- What is your VISION for Glenmont in next 20 years?
- What are your CONCERNS about Glenmont?
- What are the OPPORTUNITIES for Glenmont?

Group #1

Leslie Lombardo and Scott Lewendon

Likes

- Close to Albany and the country
- Walking-sidewalks
- Comfortable living
- Small community neighborhoods
- Not Clifton Park
- Good neighbors
- Limited density
- Larger lots
- Town services
- Town parks

Vision

- Unique-sense of place
- Place commercial where they will be occupied
- Active farmland
- Agritourism
- Unique commercial development

- Affordable housing
- Age in place opportunities
- More green spaces
- Dog parks
- Walking trails
- Site plan enforcement
- Infrastructure management-water quality
- Traffic calming
- Truck traffic diverted to 144/River Road

Concerns

- Better road markings
- Street connectivity causes neighborhood traffic
- More traffic/speed
- Truck traffic

Opportunities

- Hudson shores park
- Bike baths/bicycle connectivity
- Vacant land near Walmart
- Commercial office space

Group 2

Nate Owens and John Smolinsky

Likes

- Schools
- Easy access to downtown Albany
- Bigger properties
- Convenient travel/access to CDTA
- Open Space
- Shopping opportunities
- Town Park
- Library
- YMCA
- Emergency services

Vision

- Neighborhood commercial (like 4 corners-mom and pop stores)
- Park in Glenmont/passive recreation
- Aesthetically pleasing-higher quality
- More cultural destinations
- Better bike/pedestrian paths and access
- Better river access
- Make Glenmont like old Delmar

Concerns

- 9W management
- Speeding in large parking areas-use speed bumps
- Unsafe biking/walking
- Property eyesores
- Park maintenance-tennis courts
- Number of apartments—transient residents not invested in the community

Opportunities

- NYS Highway maintenance
- Glenmont parks
- Sewer service on 9W
- Commercial growth in appropriate areas
- Economic Development to expand tax base
- Community wi-fi
- Another library

Group 3

Liz Staubach and Karen Shaw

Likes

- Open land
- Rural character
- Enough nearby commercial-rarely need to leave Glenmont
- Schools, parks kid friendly
- Easy commute-near thruway exit
- BCSD and RCS schools are great
- Nearby nature
- Good business opportunities, shopping
- Relative affluent community
- Non-crowded, space between neighbors
- Traffic congested at times road infrastructure
- Opportunity for small businesses
- Henry Hudson Park

Vision

- Traffic control-big trucks on 9W
- Micro-breweries small businesses
- More roundabouts-more traffic calming with pedestrian consideration
- Better/safer walking options (9W/Wemple)
- Sidewalks-bike lanes
- More upscale grocery
- Attract younger people
- When development happens make it attractive
- Kendall Square-what will go into retail?
- Any hamlet development-walkable, attractive, natural transition with mixed use areas

Concerns

- Over development
- Feel like second cousin
- Development seems to be more apartments, transient
- Density-not too dense
- Wemple Road area: thoughtful planning-traffic and pedestrian accommodations
- Traffic-just going to get busier
- 9W lends itself to strip malls
- Feura Bush road: 9W-Cherry trucking restrictions
- Need more truck control, banned on Glenmont road
- Schools don't overcrowd as development increases
- Hague boulevard people cutting thru-traffic problem coming from Elm avenue east

- Feura bush at Elsmere-need a turn lane
- 9W and beacon-accidents, cut thru

Opportunities

- Lots of room for development-plan for a mix of residential and commercial
- Pedestrian connections, more sidewalks and crosswalks
- Developers should help pay for open space amenities
- Mixed use development
- More opportunities for young adults-jobs, professional-so kids stay
- Dog park-one dedicated for small dogs
- Proactive planning of intersection improvements
- Small business development-coffee shops
- Community center
- Office space for reverse commute
- Concurrent traffic and development planning
- Along the riverfront when businesses close/change plan for these future changes
- Trails along the river

Group 4

Rob Leslie and Brian Gyory

Likes

- Community feel
- Walkable/sidewalks
- Schools/family orientated
- Services-police, highway, fire, water
- Proximity to city/cultural/Adk “downtown’
- Hamlet-small community
- Close to Albany/train station
- People
- Diversity of architecture-housing character
- Agriculture-cows-farmland
- Fresh produce
- Jericho Drive-in theatre and ice cream stand (what is future?)
- Soccer facility
- Colonial acres

Vision

- Interconnected streets and sidewalks
- Safe bike network (wider shoulders)
- Better more objective planning-sidewalks and roads
- Better signage (wayfinding and destinations)
- Traffic signage meets DOT AASHTO standards
- Better communication-town wide email
- Town wide alerts
- Better communication with DOT on traffic
- Reward owners for keeping open space
- Fresh local markets in Glenmont
- Effort in Glenmont
- Family business
- Parks-local to Glenmont-picnic, playground
- Walkable, bikable
- Town buy development rights
- Agritourism to Glenmont
- Pocket parks
- Recreational facilities as part of projects-access to school resources
- Library outreach-mobile library
- Sidewalk Elsmere to town park along Feura Bush road
- Park and ride in Glenmont
- Multiuse business at Feura Bush and Elsmere

- Multiple speed zones by time of day
- Better pedestrian connections to bus

Concerns

- Overdevelopment
- Focus on other parts of town
- Not just development
- Variances in town

*TOWN OF BETHLEHEM
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE*

**NORTH BETHLEHEM
COMMUNITY FORUM**

Join us in discussing the future of the North Bethlehem community

THURSDAY

MARCH 14, 2019

6:00 - 8:00 PM

NORTH BETHLEHEM FIREHOUSE

589 RUSSELL ROAD, ALBANY

- LEARN ABOUT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE
- LEARN ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS
- SHARE YOUR INPUT AND PERSPECTIVE ON THE VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF NORTH BETHLEHEM AND THE TOWN
- BE INVOLVED WITH HELPING TO STRENGTHEN THE NORTH BETHLEHEM COMMUNITY



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Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan Update

North Bethlehem Community Forum
North Bethlehem Firehouse, 589 Russel Road
March 14, 2019 – 6:00PM to 8:00 PM
Approximately 17 attendees

Break Out Groups – Information Gathering

- What do you LIKE about North Bethlehem and Bethlehem?
- What is your VISION for North Bethlehem in next 20 years?
- What are your CONCERNS about North Bethlehem?
- What are the OPPORTUNITIES for North Bethlehem?

Group #1

Leslie Lombardo and Nate Owens

Likes

- Sense of Community
- Safe
- People look out for each other
- Proximity to resources (hospitals) but tucked away
- Nice Neighborhood
- Schools
- Suburban feel/country feel
- historic

Vision

- Street trees
- Connectivity to Delmar
- Waste/recycling bins
- Enforcement of laws re: yard waste
- Single family homes
- Well planned development
- Appropriate storage of motor vehicles

- Connectivity w/pedestrians
- Transit/trolley to Delmar
- New development compatible with surroundings
- Spread out development/privacy
- Development activity notices

Concerns

- Bike/ped
- Sidewalks/park access
- Blessing speed/volume-Russell Rd
- Blessing Road sidewalk
- Loss of historic church possible
- Sign/Gateway removal
- Lack of street lights on Bradhaven
- Sign position on Russell Road from Albany
- Blessing/Roundabout
- Waste water treatment odor—off of Russel near firehouse
- Infrastructure keeping pace with development
- Town communication with residents
- Easement issues/maintenance off of Russel
- Overgrown trees
- Odor
- Access to land inside existing lots
- Mailboxes getting plowed over

Opportunities

- ADA Accessibility
- Traffic lights and crosswalks
- Blue cross/blue shield zoning change-market viability
- Live/work/play mix use
- Sidewalks/trails all through Town
- Preservation of historic church
- More parks-lighting in parks
- Continued use of Mosall's Grove
- For New Scotland to retain rural zoning/character at border
- Space for buffer/pedestrian/protect mailboxes
- Curbs

Group 2

Rob Leslie and Brian Gyory

Likes

- Residential feel
- Suburban feel
- Connectivity-walking and driving
- Walking routes
- Not a lot of traffic
- Low population
- Age in place-senior housing
- Northway/thruway
- Location-central to regional /public services
- Town reputation
- Park with sidewalk
- Community character-trees

Vision

- Picotte Building redevelopment/re-use
- New Scotland Road mixed-use hamlet area to provide neighborhood community/commercial area-Windsor property
- Boat launch improvements (city)
- Shared services
- Normanskill-recreation-kayak
- Rail trail connections-Bike commute
- Bike lanes
- Bike friendly
- Walker friendly
- Smart technology
- Zero arbon
- Social interconnectivity-commercial centers

Concerns

- Traffic-Bradhaven and Russell Rd.
- Sewer odor at Blessing and 85
- Water sources? Taste and Quality
- Town Board design-Focus on Town Center—Advisory Group made up of all areas
- Street lights
- Vista Plan? Look at other allowed uses
 - Hotels/conference centers
 - Online higher-education building
- Age in place-zoning/temp handicap issues

- Granny population-aging in place
- Elderly improvements

Opportunities

- Sidewalks-Blessing Road
- Bike facilities-need wider shoulders
- Parallel trail-off road
- Public transportation-CDTA
- Find CDTA stop location-ARC Beverwick
- Access to Town services-compost mulch
 - Satellite locations-N. Bethlehem Park
- Sewer system-sewer/water concerns
 - Dutchbrook, Beverwick, Krumkill
- Educate residents-tax base 80%-Residential voice
- Traffic safety-signage at crosswalks
- Pedestrian flashing beacons
- More of a community feel—meeting place (New Scotland Road hamlet development)
- North Bethlehem fire house as community center
- Community residential center-where is available land
- Existing lands in commercial use

*TOWN OF BETHLEHEM
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE*

**ELSMERE
COMMUNITY FORUM**

Join us in discussing the future of the Elsmere community

THURSDAY

MARCH 21, 2019

6:00 - 8:00 PM

ELSMERE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

247 DELAWARE AVENUE, DELMAR

- LEARN ABOUT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE
- LEARN ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS
- SHARE YOUR INPUT AND PERSPECTIVE ON THE VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF ELSMERE AND THE TOWN
- BE INVOLVED WITH HELPING TO STRENGTHEN THE ELSMERE COMMUNITY



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Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan Update

Elsmere Community Forum
Elsmere Elementary School, 247 Delaware Avenue
March 21, 2019 – 6:00PM to 8:00 PM
Approximately 29 attendees

Break Out Groups – Information Gathering

- What do you LIKE about Elsmere and Bethlehem?
- What is your VISION for Elsmere in next 20 years?
- What are your CONCERNS about Elsmere?
- What are the OPPORTUNITIES for Elsmere?

Group #1

Nate Owens and John Smolinsky

Likes

- Ease of walkability and rail trail-food services
- Access to nature
- Access to city amenities
- Mature trees
- Park and ride
- CDTA bike racks
- History of area and buildings
- American Legion Hall
- Normanside Country Club
- Cemetery
- Access to Normanskill
- Re-use of old bridge
- MHLC preserves and more potential and Normanskill

Vision

- Balanced tax base
- Affordable senior housing

- More diverse community
- Pedestrian/bikes safe here, auto treat with respect
- Destinations for all ages-mixed use
- Similar to today
- Re-use and redevelopment of underserved areas
- Keep density the same
- Gathering spaces including outdoors
- Local parks/pocket parks
- Leader in sustainable communities
- Better planning including external costs
- Time of day speed limits

Concerns

- Safety-drivers-speed/volume
- External focus on economic development
- School taxes, spending, budgeting and management
- Lack of non-residential revenue
- Loss of open space
- Lack of zoning enforcement

Opportunities

- Align economic development to town assets
- Normanside Boulevard as a hamlet
- Take advantage of non-traditional education opportunities
- Low and moderate income housing
- Creative housing opportunities and cottages
- Economic development opportunities for youth

Group 2

Liz Staubach and Karen Shaw

Likes

- Like Albany-trees, walkable neighborhoods
- Best school district
- Kids can ride bikes to school, library, ice cream
- Community-not just town around and highway
- Normanside-want to remain open/wild
- Older homes-porches, sense of community
- Easy to get around
- Close to bus
- Unique stores
- Bicycle community easy
- Rail trail
- Neighborhoods adjoining businesses
- Albany water line
- Smaller scale houses (1 car garage)
- Mature trees

Vision

- Keeping single family homes
- Keep community character
- Stick with comprehensive plan-zoning
 - Esp. with PDD (keep original intent of zoning)
- Housing accommodation for aging population-affordability-more choices-diversity
- Keep aging family members near core residential
- Maintain architectural styles/character/shapes
 - No cookie cutter
- Promote affordability of housing
- Design with solar energy, take advantage of trees/shade
- No clear cutting of trees
- Maintain street trees-replace any that come down
- Planting trees, replacing, adding trees/greenery
- Pedestrian accessibility especially on/near Delaware avenue
- Campaign town-wide plant trees, native species
- Flags and flowers on main street
- Preservation of older homes-historical district
- Delaware plaza-improve lot, stores
- Industrial zoning

Concerns

- Change of golf course in the future-keep green
- Be careful with zoning-PDD concern
- Senior housing-keep it closer to core residential areas
- Delaware avenue need better pedestrian friendly-safer
- Too successful attract too much development
- Double poles-take down old poles
- Maintain character of businesses/restaurants
 - Support small unique businesses
- Delaware plaza-parking lot flooded, empty store fronts
- Infrastructure problems-gas leaks sewer
- Delaware avenue-sewer lines
- Selling of empty/double lots-loss of greenspace
- Road diet-congestion of traffic
- Lack of small park/playground
- Stormwater-old styles ditches, side streets, erosion
- Working with schools-communicate re: development
- Wildlife-deer-nowhere to go
- Zombie properties
- Infill-need to be thoughtful and planned
- Setbacks

Opportunities

- Delaware Plaza
- Rail trail-connection to businesses-signage to show where biz connects with rail trail
- Pocket parks/playgrounds-recreation
- Waterline – recreation trail
- Road diet if designed well-walkability, attractiveness
- Unique restaurants, shopping
- Rail Trail-needs better parking access (legion, firehouse)
- Maintain healthcare providers (assets)
- Delmar Farmers Market-could be better
- Encourage mixed economic diversity (inclusionary zoning)
- Plan for housing stock, low-rent commercial
- Take action with double utility poles
- Zombie houses-take control clean up
- Protecting small wooded lots-protect water quality, noise, density, possible acquisition for open space
- Car sharing, public transportation-education, encouragement

- CDTA-express bus
- Waste management-change pick up dates to weekend to keep school kids safe when walking
- Require developers to put in sidewalks

Group 3

Rob Leslie and Brian Gyory

Likes

- Walkable/bikeable
- Local business
- Beauty-community schools
- Small feel-not supersized
- Smaller lot sizes
- Municipal services-history composting
- Traffic not that bad-not Northway/787
- Accessibility to rest of world
- Elsmere hamlet is different than other Bethlehem hamlets
- Rail trail
- Delaware plaza
- Easy to move
- Its own community
- Everything you need is close by
- Character
- Normanside golf course-gift to community

Vision

- Enhance what we like
- Walkable but better
- More electric charging station
- Adopt latest technologies
- Building frontage-close to road
 - Front yard setback (30 no 20 yes)
- More greenspace-park-publicly accessible best preservation-still good
- Trees

Concerns

- Normanside Country Club future development/litigation from landslide
- School overcrowding
- Delaware avenue/traffic/safety
- Speed on Delaware
- Delaware access-speed volume
- Meaningful access to business
- Open space preservation
- Deer

Opportunities

- Zoning change at Normanside
- Protect open space
- Normanskill creek-fishing access and trails along Normanskill
- More parks/open space
- Tree plan-arborist
- Slower speed on Delaware to attract businesses
- Beautiful Delaware avenue
- Make Delaware work for everyone-residents-businesses-cars