

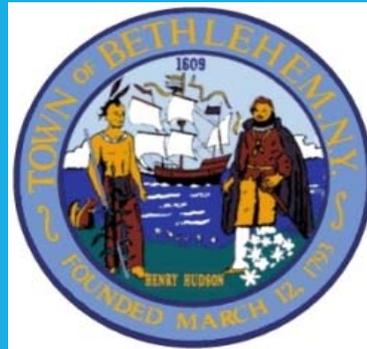
# TOWN OF BETHLEHEM COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE

Meeting #1

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NOVEMBER 20, 2019



# What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- A guidance document (blueprint) for the future of our community
  - Follows Town Law – Article 16 §272-A.
- The Plan provides for identifying:
  1. Evaluate Current State – What do we cherish? What are issues/concerns about the future?
  2. Identify the Desired Future State - What does the Town want to be like in the future – what is its vision?
  3. Determine Action Plan – Capital Projects, Policies, Zoning/Subdivision Regulations
  4. Describe how to Implement – Responsibility, Funding, Timeframe
- Addresses wide range of community topics

# Why Have a Comprehensive Plan?

- Families plan for their children's education, home improvements, buying a house,
- Businesses plan for growth and success
- Communities plan for...
  - Population trends/changes
  - Community character
  - Tax base
  - Transportation – driving, walking, bicycling
  - Recreation
  - Infrastructure

# 2005 Comprehensive Plan

- Current Plan adopted in 2005
- Established a vision for Town's future until 2020
- Identified goals and recommendations to help Bethlehem achieve the community's vision for the future

SARATOGA  
ASSOCIATES

TOWN OF BETHLEHEM  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
AND  
GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT  
STATEMENT

Bethlehem, New York  
August 2005



Adopted by the Bethlehem Town Board  
August 24, 2005

Landscape Architects, Architects,  
Engineers and Planners, P.C.

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# 2005 Comprehensive Plan - Vision

In the Year 2020, the Town of Bethlehem is a community of:

- attractive residential neighborhoods,
- vibrant hamlets,
- successful mixed-use commercial centers,
- modern industrial facilities, and
- productive rural lands.

These are well connected by:

- regional highways and local streets,
- adequately serviced by public transportation, and
- linked by a network of sidewalks and trails.

Situated at the heart of the Capital District, Bethlehem offers :

- Good schools
- Safe neighborhoods
- Good community services
- Abundant recreational opportunities
- Thriving local businesses
- Attractive and healthy natural areas

# Accomplishments of 2005 Comp Plan

- Land Use regulations
- Delaware Avenue hamlet area plans and infrastructure improvements
- Route 9W Corridor Study – intersection improvements
- Open Space Conservation
- Bicycle and Pedestrian mobility
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan

# Why Update the Plan?

- As the community changes and grows, its needs and desires change:
  - Needs of an aging demographic
  - Transportation
  - Housing
  - Recreation
  - Services
  - Infrastructure
- Are there new goals and recommendations?
- Provide a fresh vision (next 15-20 years)

# Discussion

- What do Committee Members want to see come out of this Comprehensive Plan Update process?

# Summary of Key Issues from Community Forums



# Key Issues from Community Forums

- Transportation
- Getting The Development We Want
- Environmental Leadership
- Aging Gracefully in Bethlehem
- Government and Schools

# Transportation

- Areas with increasing traffic volumes/congestion
- Neighborhood connectivity
- Managing vehicle speeds/traffic calming
- Demand for sidewalks, crosswalks, bike infrastructure, speed control devices, lighting
- Supporting connections and infrastructure to bus stops and park and rides



# Getting The Development We Want

- Retention of neighborhood character with new development
- Affordable housing and housing options
- Neighborhood gathering places
- Historic Preservation
- Concern about dense development/conservation subdivision/Planned Development Districts
- Small business focus, and need to continue to diversify tax base (commercial/industrial)



# Environmental Leadership

- Advancing sustainability via renewables, multimodal transportation network, EV charging stations, trees, protected wetlands, stormwater management
- Conserving farms and forests
- Expanded recreation – greenway trails, dog parks, and recreation fields



# Aging Gracefully in Bethlehem

- Aging in place – housing type (townhome, multi-family)
- Affordability and location of housing in relation to services



# Government and Schools

- Communication
- Effectiveness and flexibility in regulations

# Discussion

- Are any key issues missing?
- Are any issues unimportant or not right for the Update?
- Which issues are connected and should be discussed together so residents can explore tradeoffs?

# Roles, Process, and Next Steps



# Roles

## Comprehensive Plan Update Committee

- Provide feedback to Staff and consultant
- Ambassadors for the project to the community

## Planning Department

- Day to day management of project (*Engage other Town Departments, as needed*)
- Existing Conditions – “Current State”
- Identify key issues, establishing a vision, and policies and priorities

## Consultant (to be determined)

- Provide expertise in specific planning areas
- Lead public participation efforts
- Draft the plan

# Process

- Committee to update the Plan (Consultant/Town Staff draft plan)
  - Standing monthly meetings (1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday month)
  - Hire a consultant (RFP, Interview, Contract Agreement)
- Committee to schedule community forums, meetings, public hearing (required)
- Committee to advance updated draft to Town Board for consideration
- Town Board approval process (required items)
  - Public Hearing
  - Albany County Planning Board Review
  - State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR)
- Implement the Plan

# Discussion

- Thoughts about process
- Particular skills or roles we'd like to see from consultant(s)
- Committee monthly meetings (1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of month?)

# Next Steps

- Finalize *Draft Town of Bethlehem Demographic and Growth Analysis*
- Prepare RFP to hire a planning consultant
- Next meeting January 15<sup>th</sup>?

Thank You.

