

DRAFT REPORT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (CPOC)

August 15, 2007

CPOC Members

**Town Supervisor, John H. Cunningham
Councilman Kyle Kotary**

**Director of Economic Development and Planning, George Leveille
Assistant Director of Economic Development and Planning, Mike Morelli**

Town Engineer, Erik Deyoe

Town Highway Superintendent, Gregg Sagendorph

Parks Administrator, Nan Lanahan

Planning Board Chair, Parker Mathusa

Zoning Board of Appeals, Chair Mike Hodom

Former BPAC Member, Howard Engel

Former BPAC Member, Patricia Salkin

Citizen Representative, Karen Beck

Citizen Representative, Nicholas Behuniak

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Section I:
Introduction-The
Comprehensive Plan
Oversight Committee
(CPOC)

In August 2005, the Town of Bethlehem adopted its first-ever Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan, the Plan) as well as substantial amendments to its Zoning Law and Subdivision Regulations. The adoption culminated an eighteen-month public process and conversation about the future of the community. Dozens of public meetings were held to gather opinion and achieve consensus on the key elements of the plan.

BPAC

The Town Board established a nine-member advisory committee, the Bethlehem Planning Advisory Committee (BPAC) to assist Town staff and a consulting team lead by Saratoga Associates in crafting the Plan. The following persons were members of BPAC:

Mark Bryant
Katherine Daniels
Howard Engel
Parker Mathusa
John Mead
Patricia Salkin
John Smolinsky
Anders Tomson
Pat Waniewski

BPAC-COMP PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of the Comp Plan are summarized in an Executive Summary to the Plan. The Executive Summary is attached as Exhibit A to this report. The Plan's recommendations were organized in the following manner:

- **Immediate Action** - this entailed recommendations for the simultaneous adoption of amendments to the Town's Zoning Law and Subdivision Regulations;
- **Priority Actions/Tier I Recommendations** - these are the primary recommendations for

which there was broad consensus and an accompanying near term action item;

- **Mid-Term Actions/Tier II Recommendations** - these relate to important community topics and issues for which additional public input is required for future Town Board implementation;
- **Ongoing Actions/Tier III Recommendations** - these relate to the ongoing administration and operations of Town government.

CPOC

In recommending the formation of a Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee (CPOC), the Executive Summary of the Comp Plan simply states:

“This committee would assist the Town Board and help guide the plan implementation effort”.

Additional background information is provided in Section 6 (Implementation and Action Plan) of the Comp Plan including the following:

“The Town Board should establish a Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee to help guide the plan implementation effort. The Committee could include selected Town staff, the Town Supervisor, the Chair of the Planning Board, the Chair of the Zoning Board, and other critical appointments...A Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee could be the body that evaluates the plan regularly and could provide guidance to the Town Board regarding when it is appropriate to revisit the plan.”

As the Town began approaching the 2nd anniversary of the adoption of the Plan, the Town Board determined that it was an appropriate time to establish the oversight

responsibilities recommended in the Plan. Consequently, the Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee (CPOC) was established by the Town Board at its meeting of April 25, 2007.

CPOC MEMBERS

The following persons have been appointed to the CPOC:

- Town Supervisor, Jack Cunningham
- Councilman, Kyle Kotary
- Director of Economic Development and Planning,
George Leveille
- Assistant Director of Economic Development and
Planning, Mike Morelli
- Town Engineer, Erik Deyoe
- Town Highway Superintendent, Gregg
Sagendorph
- Parks Administrator, Nan Lanahan
- Planning Board Chair, Parker Mathusa
- Zoning Board of Appeals Chair, Mike Hodom
- Former BPAC Member, Howard Engel
- Former BPAC Member, Patricia E. Salkin
- Citizen Representative, Karen Beck
- Citizen Representative, Nicholas Behuniak

OVERVIEW OF RESPONSIBILITIES

In establishing CPOC, the Town Board contemplated that it would have the following responsibilities:

1. Hold four to six committee meetings and at least one public meeting to gather information and input for a report to the Town Board;
2. Review a Department of Economic Development and Planning prepared draft “report card” or status report on comprehensive plan implementation progress using the executive summary of the comprehensive plan as a framework for review;

3. Develop draft recommendations for consideration of the Town Board and hold a public meeting to obtain public input on the draft recommendations;
4. Prepare a final report for publication in early Autumn 2007 to coincide with the two-year anniversary of the adoption of the Comp Plan.

REPORT FORMAT

The report is organized as follows:

Section I: Introduction- Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee (CPOC) - this section provides background information on the Comp Plan and the oversight responsibilities of CPOC.

Section II: Status of Major Planning Initiatives - this section provides a status report on the major Comp Plan planning initiatives that have been advanced by the Town.

Section III: Review of Development Activity and Trends - this section provides data and analysis regarding building trends in the Town.

Section IV: Findings and Recommendations - this section outlines the findings and recommendations of CPOC.

There are also four exhibits to the report that provide more detailed information than the body of the report. The exhibits include:

- Comprehensive Plan Executive Summary, August 2005

- Detailed Status Report on Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan
- Status of Residential Development Projects Affected by the Town's Moratorium
- List of Processed Land Divisions

Section II:
Status of Major
Planning Initiatives

Section II: Status of Major Planning Initiatives

Since the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan in August 2005, several major initiatives have been undertaken. The following is a brief overview of the major implementation initiatives undertaken to date.

1. **AMENDMENTS TO TOWN ZONING LAW AND SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS:**

A substantial redrafting of the Zoning Law and Subdivision Regulations occurred simultaneously with the adoption of the Comp Plan. A variety of new zoning districts were created to implement the recommendations of the Comp Plan. Among the many amendments were the following:

- a. Creation of Hamlet, Commercial Hamlet and Rural Hamlet mixed use districts;
- b. Creation of the Riverfront Rural District that requires five (5) acres of land for every dwelling unit;
- c. Creation of Mixed Economic Development Districts as mixed use destinations for business development, subject to a master plan that must be approved by the Town Board;
- d. Creation of regulations for lots bordering streams to protect stream corridors, wetlands, steep slopes and flood plains;
- e. Creation of regulations for grading, erosion and sediment control;
- f. Introduction of design guidelines and standards throughout the zoning law; and,
- g. Creation of sign regulations.

A second round of amendments were accomplished during 2006. These

amendments included both technical corrections and other more substantive issues including the following:

- a. Established regulations for the overnight parking of commercial vehicles in residential districts;
- b. Amended the Planning Board fee schedule to charge a single application fee for combined site plan and special use permit reviews;
- c. Exempted the seasonal planting of crops in residential districts from site plan review so long as there is no construction or alteration of any structure and requires the Planning Board to refer to the Department of Agriculture and Markets guidelines for projects requiring site plan review;
- d. Provided the Planning Board with authority to modify flag lot requirements to encourage improved project design;
- e. Established supplementary regulations related to residential lighting and streetlights;
- f. Amended regulations to prohibit parking in non-residential districts of vehicles, trailers and portable signs in areas other than those specifically designated and approved for parking;
- g. Added numerous new and materially amended definitions;
- h. Added a new residential district requiring large lot (2 acre) residential development; and,

- i. Established supplementary regulations for any application requesting approval of Senior Citizen housing. Among other things, these regulations allow for occupant age restrictions to ensure an appropriate environment for senior citizens.

2. **ROUTE 9W LINKAGE STUDY:**

The 9W Linkage Study was a Tier I recommendation of the Comp Plan. The Town was successful in applying for a Linkage Study from the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC), the region's designated transportation planning organization. To assist CDTC and the Town in implementing the study, the Town Board appointed a citizen's advisory committee to assist in building consensus on study recommendations. The Town's Department of Economic Development and Planning (DEDP) has provided staff support for the study.

The purpose of the study is to assess needs and develop preferred alternatives for both transportation improvements and land uses in the 9W corridor. A key element of the study is a feasibility analysis of a possible "northern alignment" for the Selkirk Bypass. The Selkirk By-Pass project was originally conceived as a solution to safety concerns caused by heavy truck traffic on Maple Ave. in Selkirk. It was originally proposed almost ten years ago as a route south of Maple Ave., which was very unpopular with area residents. The Comp Plan process broadened community thinking about the project and expanded its objectives to include traffic mitigation and economic development. In order to accomplish these revised objectives, it was clear that locating the By-Pass north of Maple Ave. would be required.

The thirteen member advisory committee has met on seven occasions to date and two or three additional committee meetings are planned. There have also been two public workshops to date and two additional are planned. The committee and the consulting team lead by Wilbur Smith Associates and CDTC will be formulating a draft plan for public review and consideration by the Town Board in Autumn 2007.

In addition to representatives from involved state, regional and local agencies, the following citizens are members of the advisory committee:

Keith Bennett
Mike Daley
Tom Dolin
Linda Jasinski
Nancy Kuivila
Peter Lauricella
Darlene Valet

3. **LOCAL WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM: (LWRP)**

The preparation of a LWRP was Tier I recommendations of the Comp Plan. The Town was successful in applying for a grant from the NYS Department of State (DOS), the State agency that has planning jurisdiction over the State's coastal zones including the Hudson River. The purpose of the study is to develop recommendations and policy guidance related to future land use in the riverfront corridor. The adoption of the LWRP and the designation of a Waterfront Revitalization Area (WRA) by the Town will require the consistency review of proposed development projects within the WRA. As part of this initiative, a master plan concept is being developed for Henry Hudson Park.

To assist the Saratoga Associates led consulting team in developing the LWRP, a

Waterfront Advisory Committee (WAC) was organized and appointed by the Town Board in May 2006.

The WAC has held eight committee meetings to date and plans to hold two or three more before finalizing its recommendations. Three public meetings and focus groups have been held to date and one or two more will be scheduled to gather input on the study recommendations. The draft LWRP will be published for public comment in September and is scheduled for submission to NYS DOS shortly thereafter for their review and consent. The LWRP is scheduled for formal adoption by the Town during Winter 2007-2008.

In addition to representatives from involved state, regional and local agencies, the following citizens are members of the WAC:

Charlotte Buchanan
Ken Daves
David DeCancio
Tom Donovan
Lisa Evans
Ted Jennings
Paul Murray
Theresa Pillittere
Howie Vagele, Sr.

4. **VISTA TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS/NEW SCOTLAND ROAD HAMLET MASTER PLAN:**

The Comp Plan established as a matter of Town policy the importance of expanding and diversifying the Town's tax base. There was strong consensus among community stakeholders and leaders that leveraging the public investment in the Slingerlands By-Pass Extension was an appropriate priority and the concept of the Vista Technology Campus emerged as a Tier I recommendation of the Comp Plan. The Town has worked closely with the Vista developer, Vista Tech Campus

LLC to advance the project through the development review process. The Town Board made its State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) findings in June 2007 and approved the master plan for the Vista Technology Campus in July 2007. The project as approved entails the development of 1.4 million square feet of office, technology, research and development, and small-scale retail services on a 400-acre parcel that will have direct access from the Slingerlands By-Pass Extension. The new section of the By-Pass to the rear of Price Chopper Plaza is scheduled for completion in October 2007. The remaining improvements on Maher and New Scotland Roads are scheduled for completion in early 2008. The Vista will be submitting the site plan application for the project's first phase in Autumn 2007 and plans to break ground in early 2008.

With the unveiling of the Vista project and the completion of the NYS DOT environmental review process for the long awaited improvements to Route 85, the Town held several meetings with residents and landowners along New Scotland Road over the past two years. These conversations resulted in the Town initiating the New Scotland Road Hamlet Master Planning process. Utilizing the intensive, interactive workshop methodology known as a planning "charrette", the Town organized two major public events for New Scotland Road stakeholders in early Autumn 2006. With the assistance of the New York Planning Federation and expert facilitators, input and ideas were gathered from the public and area landowners and utilized as a basis for a design workshop held over a two-day period. More than 100 residents and land owners participated in the program and an

illustrated master plan concept for the hamlet area was developed by the end of 2006. With the strong consensus of the participants in hand, the Town now utilizes this master plan concept as a guideline for discussing new development opportunities in this hamlet zone. Key features of the master plan concept include mixed-use development (apartments over storefronts), public gathering places, and a pedestrian friendly design and scale.

5. **CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION (CACC):**

The establishment of the CACC was a Tier I recommendation of the Comp Plan and was implemented in January 2006 when the Town Board appointed eleven residents to the CACC and named John Smolinsky as the first Chairman. Mr. Smolinsky served until early 2007 when he resigned to accept an appointment to the Town Planning Board. Libby Liebschutz was subsequently appointed CACC Chairman by the Town Board.

In recommending the formation of the CACC, the Comp Plan indicated that it would be directed by the Town Board to explore conservation projects and opportunities with willing landowners. The CACC is an advisory body that provides advice and recommendations to the Town Board. It does not have independent regulatory powers, but plays a critical role in the Town's discussion of open space protection and environmental concerns. The Town Board has delegated three tasks to the CACC to date. The initial task was to assist in the development of an integrated pedestrian network in the Slingerlands area.

Given the amount of development interest in this area as well as the Rt. 85 improvements,

the Town Board directed the CACC to assist DEDP and its consultant Edwards & Kelcey in developing the plan. With the CACC's assistance, the report, entitled Slingerlands Pedestrian Network, A Pedestrian Mobility Plan for the Slingerlands Hamlet was completed in December 2006 and accepted by the Town Board. The plan was designed so that it could be incorporated into an application for Federal grant funding for pedestrian improvements. The next funding cycle for a project of this type is anticipated in 2008.

The second task assigned to the CACC was the preparation of a report identifying programs and methods that could assist in funding open space protection projects. The CACC worked diligently on this task and presented its report Open Space Protection Programs- Funding and Tools to the Town Board on October 25, 2006.

The report is a comprehensive "toolbox" of funding opportunities, methods and techniques for protection and acquisition of open space and also lists several logical next steps. The CACC hosted a public workshop on the report in January 2007 that was well attended.

In Spring 2007, the Town Board assigned a third task to the CACC, the preparation of a map identifying existing recreation and conservation lands in the Town. The CACC is expected to complete Task 3 in Autumn 2007.

The following citizens are currently members of the CACC:

Libby Liebschutz, Chairman
Mike DiPaolo
Jeff Freedman
Nancy Heinzen
John Mead

Valerie Newell

Ted Putney

Paul Sieloff

David Erik VanLuven

Mike Waldenmaier

Caleb Wistar

Section II: Review of Development Activity and Trends

In 2003, Theresa Egan successfully ran for Town Supervisor on a platform that called for the preparation of a long-term “blueprint” for managing the Town’s growth. Within the first few months of her administration, the Town Board authorized the preparation of a Comprehensive Plan in accordance with New York State Law.

In the years leading up to 2004, there was growing sentiment in the community that haphazard growth and the lack of a long term plan for managing growth would compromise the unique quality of life that Town residents had become accustomed to. An earlier effort (late 1980’s - early 1990’s) to develop a comprehensive plan known as Land Use Management Advisory Committee (LUMAC) produced some high quality planning documents but the Town Board chose not to adopt it as an official plan.

The community dialogue both leading up to and then during the comprehensive planning process that commenced in 2004 recognized a growing concern about an over dependence on traditional suburban single family subdivisions. In effect, the residential sector was at once bearing the substantial burden of financial support for public services and contributing to the expansion of sprawl like symptoms. In this vein, the Comp Plan clearly identifies the need to diversify the tax base by encouraging quality commercial development in appropriately planned areas of Town. This would ultimately result in a more balanced ratio of non-residential to residential property and ostensibly reduce the burden of the residential taxpayer.

The Comp Plan also recognized the changing demographics of the Town and encourages a more diversified approach to meeting the community’s housing needs. It encourages a

variety of housing types, senior housing, cluster style design and mixed use housing in hamlet zones.

This section will look at development trends in the Town to see if there are any indications of movement towards the diversification identified in the Comp Plan. It will begin by reviewing the status of the nineteen residential projects whose processing was halted by the Town-wide residential moratorium that was in effect from April 2004 through September 2005. It will also review building permit and Planning Board data and trends in recent years.

STATUS OF PROJECTS AFFECTED BY THE RESIDENTIAL BUILDING MORATORIUM

The establishment of the residential building moratorium in April 2004 affected nineteen residential development projects that were in the review pipeline. Exhibit C to this report includes a status report on the nineteen projects. Some highlights of this review are as follows:

- One project (Beacon Heights) that originally entailed the development of 425 housing units has now been reconfigured into an application for a zone change to Mixed Economic Development District and is more than 50% commercial development;
- The application for a project entailing more than 580 mixed housing units (Clapper Meadows) has recently been withdrawn by the sponsor;
- The application for a 250 unit apartment complex on Wemple Road (Hammocks) has been withdrawn;
- The application for a 22 lot single family subdivision on Barent Winne Road has

been withdrawn and only three housing lots are being developed;

- A condominium project proposed near the intersection of 9W and Wemple Road has been withdrawn;
- Five applications that were originally conceived as single family subdivisions are in various stages of conversion to a variety of housing types including townhomes, condominiums and courtyard style homes;
- Four applications for single family homes are proceeding, accounting for approximately 150 lots;
- One project (Van Dyke Spinney) is proceeding with the development of 202 rental units that can only be occupied by senior citizens.

Clearly, there is a strong indication that these projects as a whole are transforming in a manner that is consistent with the recommendations of the Comp Plan. There is a substantial reduction in the amount of single-family development proposed, and an increase in the variety of housing types as well as an overall reduction in the amount of development proposed.

PLANNING BOARD ACTIVITY

A review of Planning Board activity since the enactment of the moratorium in 2004 points to some potential trends that support the growth management recommendations of the Comp Plan.

1. **Approved Subdivisions:** Since April 2004, the Planning Board has approved nine subdivisions that only account for 34 residential building lots. This is less than 12 lots per year on average, a very modest number.

2. **Approved Site Plans:** Since April 2004, the Planning Board has approved twenty-two site plan applications for what are principally commercial projects. This accounts for approximately 165,000 square feet of new commercial development.

According to the Town's Department of Economic Development and Planning (DEDP), the development community is showing increasingly strong interest in alternative housing types such as townhomes, condominiums and apartments. Current projects of this nature under review by the Town include Van Dyke Spinney, Hamden Woods and the Pines at Normanside. This trend is more than likely impacted by four major factors:

1. The location and physical characteristics of remaining developable residential lands in the Town, especially in the northern, more urbanized areas;
2. Real estate market trends in the region and the Town;
3. The impact and value of the community goals and objectives as enumerated in the Comp Plan and as articulated by Town staff through the Development Planning Committee (DPC) and other interactions with developers and land owners; and,
4. The changing demographics of the Town's population that suggests a growing need for senior and "empty nester" housing types.

While it is still relatively early in the post-moratorium period, the trends are clearly

positive and consistent with the policies and recommendations of the Comp Plan.

BUILDING PERMIT ACTIVITY

The initial review of building permit activity looked at three periods: the twenty months leading up to the residential building moratorium, the eighteen month period of the moratorium, and the twenty three months since the lifting of the moratorium. This initial analysis demonstrated fairly consistent commercial development activity and a dramatic downward trend in one and two-family housing activity. A review of each follows:

1. **Commercial Building Permits:** Since August 2002, there has been a slight upward trend in the number of commercial building permits issued on a monthly basis ranging from approximately 4.38 permits per month in the pre-moratorium period to 4.91 permits per month in the post moratorium period. The value per application was also reviewed and there is a wide range of average values. For example, the average commercial building permit in the pre moratorium period was almost \$500,000, compared to \$163,000 during the moratorium and \$210,000 in the post moratorium period. Using value per permit issued is subject to wide variations due to the periodic large-scale projects that occur. For example, the Bethlehem Energy Center and large elements of the general commercial district on Rt. 9W were permitted during the pre-moratorium period.

All in all, the trend towards increasing commercial building permits is a positive trend that was expressly recommended in the Comp Plan. Clearly, to impact the diversification of the tax base, the Town will be looking to assist in increasing the average value of new commercial permits issued. In the next five to ten years, the Vista Tech Campus alone will have a major impact on increasing commercial values.

2. **Residential Building Permits:** Since the pre moratorium period commencing in August 2002, there has been a dramatic decrease in residential building permit activity. Because this was so dramatic, the review was extended back to the year 2000 in an attempt to validate the apparent trend. Beginning in the year 2000, the Town issued an average of 15.17 one and two-family building permits per month. This decreased by 12% to 13.33 permits per month in 2001. In the pre-moratorium period of 2002 until March 2004, permits decreased by 5% to 12.67 per month and then during the moratorium, decreased by another 63.8% to 4.58 permits per month. Since the lifting of the moratorium, permits have increased by 33.8% to 6.13 permits per month, still less than half of the average activity in the early 2000's. Throughout this period, the average permit value has trended upwardly from approximately \$165,000 in 2000 to \$211,747 in the post moratorium period. Much of this increase in value can be attributed to increasing construction costs, which

have escalated by as much as 45% since 2002.

There is a clear trend towards reduced one and two family residential building permits in the Town, which from the perspective of the Comp Plan is a very positive trend. Again, there are a variety of factors that might be influencing this trend including among others, the following:

1. The location and physical characteristics of remaining developable residential lands in the Town. For example, the high market appeal Bethlehem Central School District is largely built out and the Ravena Coeymans Selkirk District is significantly less infrastructure ready for new development;
2. Real estate market trends in the region and the Town; there has been a well documented downturn in residential building at the national, state and local levels;
3. The land division process that was established by the Comp Plan and related land use control amendments has resulted in fourteen approved land divisions since September 2005 (See Exhibit D). This tool enables a landowner to sell off one lot at a time (no more than one per year or more than four in a ten year period) and might in some cases result in a landowner holding onto their land rather than selling to a sub-divider;

4. Limitations on infrastructure extensions. The choices the Town makes regarding extension of water and sewer infrastructure will have a profound effect on where new residential development will occur. The zoning that accompanied the adoption of the Comp Plan established desired locations and intensity of growth throughout the Town. Implicit in this is the identification of appropriate areas for extension of water and sewer districts.

CONCLUSION

There are clearly positive trends regarding Town growth based on the development activity quantified above. These trends are consistent with the growth policies established in the Comp Plan. However, this data reflects development activity over a relatively short period of time (5-7 years) and is clearly being influenced to some degree by external factors such as a general downturn in the housing market. There is an ongoing need for the continued diligence of the Town in both managing and monitoring growth and development activity to ensure long-term consistency with the Comp Plan.

Section IV: Findings and Recommendations

PART A: CPOC FINDINGS

Exhibit B to this report is a detailed status report on the Town's implementation of the recommendations contained in the Comp Plan Executive Summary, which is included as Exhibit A. The following is CPOC's assessment of the Town's implementation activities to date and is organized by the type of Comp Plan recommendation.

1. IMMEDIATE ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS:

The immediate action recommendation of the Comp Plan was the update of the Town's Zoning Law and Subdivision Regulations to reflect the recommendations of the Comp Plan. A substantial re-drafting of both the Zoning Law and the Subdivision Regulations occurred simultaneously with the adoption of the Comp Plan in August 2005. At the time of adoption, there was a list of land use regulation issues that required further consideration and the Town Board requested that DEDP conduct another update within the ensuing six to twelve month period. This update was accomplished during the first eight months of 2006 and the further amended Zoning Law and Subdivision Regulations were adopted by the Town Board in August 2006.

Given the relative ease of transition to utilization of the Town's new land use regulations and the relative absence of problems experienced, CPOC concluded that that this immediate action recommendation has been substantially accomplished, although the form in which it has been accomplished varies from what was originally envisioned. CPOC recommendations regarding land use and development controls are included in Part B below.

2. PRIORITY ACTIONS/TIER I

RECOMMENDATIONS:

There were nine Tier I recommendations in the Comp Plan (see Exhibit A). Implementation of the several major planning initiatives included in this group is documented in Section III of this report. Overall, CPOC finds that substantial progress has been made in implementing the Tier I recommendations. At the forefront of this progress has been the approval of the Vista Technology Campus master plan, the establishment of the CACC and its completion of two major tasks to date, the nearing completion of the 9W Linkage Study and the LWRP planning initiatives, and the improvements to the Planning and Building Department information systems. CPOC recommendations regarding Tier I items are included in Part B of this section.

3. MID-TERM ACTIONS/TIER II

RECOMMENDATIONS:

There were eleven Tier II recommendations in the Comp Plan. These items were identified as mid-term actions because, by definition, additional community consensus would be sought before the recommendation would be advanced. Several Tier II recommendations have advanced including the New Scotland Road Hamlet Master Plan, which is completed, and a successful application for funding the Delaware Ave. Linkage Study, which will commence shortly. The CACC's work in preparing the report Open Space Protection Programs – Funding and

Tools, and in assisting DEDP in preparing the report Slingerlands Pedestrian Network – A Pedestrian Mobility Plan for the Slingerlands Hamlet, are both critical steps related to implementation of Tier II recommendations. Considering the intensity of the Town's effort to implement several Tier I recommendations in the less than two years since plan adoption, CPOC finds that excellent progress has been made in advancing the Tier II recommendations of the Comp Plan. Some of CPOC's recommendations in Part B of this Section relate to further advancement of Tier II recommendations.

4. **ONGOING ACTIONS/TIER III RECOMMENDATIONS:**

In framing the Tier III recommendations, the Comp Plan identified a series of ongoing operational actions that could be taken by the Town government in furthering the goals, objectives and recommendations of the Plan. Among the items advanced to date are the following:

- Maintaining and enhancing pedestrian connections;
- Implementation of Phase II Stormwater Management Regulations;
- Coordination with fire and emergency services;
- Providing educational services related to septic system maintenance;
- Coordination with the Bethlehem Chamber to promote local business and employment; and,
- Encouraging continuing education of Planning Board and Zoning Board members.

Overall, CPOC finds that very good progress has been made in implementing the Tier III recommendations of the Comp Plan.

**PART B: CPOC
RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. **ZONING LAW AND SUBDIVISION
REGULATIONS**

- ⇒ Consider continuation of annual technical reviews commencing in Autumn 2007.
- ⇒ Re-evaluate the conservation subdivision regulations; consider organizing a workshop with "experts" and stakeholders to devise a more user-friendly package for developers and landowners.
- ⇒ Re-evaluate the incentive zoning regulations as they relate to conservation design and affordable housing; develop a better understanding of the affordable housing needs of the community; consider organizing a workshop with "experts" and stakeholders perhaps in tandem with the conservation subdivision topic.
- ⇒ Consider practical amendments to the mixed economic development district regulations based on the Town's initial experience with the Vista Technology Campus application.
- ⇒ Consider extension of design standards to additional districts,

especially the hamlet district that will be the subject of the Delaware Ave. linkage study later this year.

- ⇒ Request formal input from Planning Board (PB) and Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) regarding their experience with the new land use controls.
- ⇒ Consider rezoning lands that are in proximity of the Selkirk By-Pass once the Town establishes the preferred route later this year.

2. **ROUTE 9W LINKAGE STUDY**

- ⇒ Complete the study in Autumn 2007 and take official action to adopt and proceed with implementation of recommendations including the preferred alignment of the Selkirk By-Pass.
- ⇒ Commence action to understand and mitigate any adverse impacts on residents and property owners resulting from the establishment of the preferred alignment of the Selkirk By-Pass.
- ⇒ Formulate strategies to implement and finance other study recommendations along the main line including intersection improvements at Feura Bush Road and the intersection of 9W and Rt. 32.

3. **LOCAL WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM (LWRP)**

- ⇒ Complete the study in Autumn 2007 and take official action to adopt and proceed with implementation of recommendations.
- ⇒ Seek financing to implement recommendations of the LWRP including

the development of a park master plan for the Town owned land on Simmons Lane, and bulkhead improvements at Henry Hudson Park.

4. **PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

- ⇒ The Town has invested in a new automated system of managing projects through the land use approval process. The use of this module as part of a universal information management platform has many benefits and can be an efficiency and capacity building tool. The Town is strongly encouraged to fully utilize this module as an integral part of its commitment to improving the development review process as recommended in the Comp Plan.

5. **VISTA TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS AND NEW SCOTLAND ROAD HAMLET**

The **Vista Tech Campus Master Plan** was approved by the Town Board in June 2007. The Town should continue to assist in the implementation of the project by:

- ⇒ Assisting the developer in the process of extending, financing and building public improvements for the project.
- ⇒ Working with the developer and regional economic development and real estate interests to market the property to both internal and external markets.

- ⇒ Acting as a conduit for the \$1 million Albany County Infrastructure Grant.

The Town sponsored a master planning “charrette” that established the **New Scotland Road Hamlet Master Plan Concept** in Autumn 2006. This proved to be an effective community planning activity. The Town should continue to advance the master plan concept by:

- ⇒ Reconvening a meeting of the principal landowners in the hamlet area to encourage continued cooperation in implementing the plan.
- ⇒ Encouraging consolidation of the site to increase potential for hamlet wide planning and coordination.
- ⇒ Encouraging the owners of 1251 New Scotland Road (former Blue Cross Blue Shield Building) to advance redevelopment of the property.
- ⇒ Considering the development of an incentive program in conjunction with the Bethlehem IDA to assist in advancing the master plan concepts.

6. **CREATION OF OFFICIAL MAP**

- ⇒ The issue of developing an official map has taken on greater significance with the likely recommendation of a preferred alignment for the Selkirk By-Pass as a result of the 9W Linkage Study. In order to protect the corridor from development encroachment, the Town should consider establishing an Official Map, as recommended in the Comp Plan, as a means of preserving the corridor for the installation of public improvements. Other key corridors suggested in the Comp Plan

should also be evaluated as part of this process.

7. **CITIZEN’S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION (CACC)**

- ⇒ The CACC has been effective in undertaking the three tasks assigned to it by the Town Board to date and it has been an excellent forum for expression of a cross section of community viewpoints regarding open space protection. However, it has at times been constrained by its interpretation of the Town Board resolution that established the CACC on August 24, 2005. Consequently, CPOC recommends that the Town Board re-consider Resolution No. 28 of 2005, which defined the limits of authority vested in CACC by the Town Board. The Town Board can clarify and reaffirm the limits or revise them as deemed appropriate.
- ⇒ CPOC recommends that the CACC be given more flexibility to independently carry out the task assigned to it by the Town Board.

8. **CITIZEN’S GUIDE TO LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS**

Early on in the Comp Plan process, it became apparent that there would be a major overhaul of the Town’s land use and development regulations as a first step in plan implementation. BPAC and others thought that a non-technical guide to the Town’s land use and development regulations would be a useful tool for interested residents and the

development community. With several open issues remaining after the August 2005 adoption of the amended zoning law and subdivision regulations, another lengthy amendment process occurred during 2006. Numerous public meetings were held and many issues were vetted in great detail. The Town also employed its web site to communicate information about land use control issues being considered and used this second round of amendments to further educate the community on the major land use amendments that had been adopted.

⇒ It remains very important that the Town continue to take a very public approach to educating the community at large on its land use controls through public meetings and workshops, use of the Town's web site and publications, and through meetings with community organizations, citizens, and the development community.

⇒ As part of the recommended 2007 technical review, the Town should revisit the notion of a "Citizen's Guide" and recommend methods, perhaps including a glossary of key terms and other publications, to familiarize the public with Town land use controls in a non-technical manner.

9. **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

⇒ The CPOC believes that its formation and function are important to the continued implementation of the Comp Plan. It also recommends that the Town Board charge it with continuing to meet on a periodic basis (quarterly or semi-annually) to monitor progress in implementing the Comp Plan recommendations.

⇒ The CPOC should also be charged with developing an annual progress report and by 2009, it should begin considering the need for a formal Comprehensive Plan update.

10. **IDENTIFICATION OF AREAS FOR INFILL DEVELOPMENT AND RE-DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

⇒ As a matter of sound planning and use of the built environment, the Town should continue to identify and encourage new investment where infrastructure capacity and development, including buildings, already exist. Of particular concern is the site of the former Blue Cross-Blue Shield building at the intersection of New Scotland and Maher Roads in Slingerlands. With the impending completion of Slingerlands By-Pass extension project and the development of the Vista Tech Campus, this property is a leading candidate for adaptive re-use.

11. **DELAWARE AVE. LINKAGE STUDY**

⇒ With several major planning initiatives nearing completion, CPOC strongly encourages the Town Board to commence the Delaware Ave. Linkage Study as soon as possible.

⇒ CPOC also recommends that the Town, the to be formed Citizens Advisory Committee, and the planning consultants consider further steps to expand the study's impact

on areas to the east extending to the municipal boundary with Albany. The limits of the study are from Elsmere Ave. on the east to Adams Street on the west.

12. **HAMLET MASTER PLANNING**

⇒ The use of an intensive planning charrette (workshop) to develop the New Scotland Road Hamlet Master Plan Concept proved to be a very affordable and effective method of consensus building and idea generation. The Delaware Ave. linkage study will provide for intensive study of the Delaware Ave. hamlet district between Elsmere Ave. and Adams St. CPOC recommends that the Town identify another hamlet district for a similar master planning effort during 2008.

13. **CREATION OF A FARM AND OPEN SPACE PROTECTION PROGRAM**

⇒ There has been increased community conversation in recent months regarding the development of a town-wide open space plan. CPOC recommends that the Town Board take steps to initiate the open space planning process. The CACC has functioned effectively as a working group and should play an instrumental role in the open space planning process. A Town of Bethlehem open space plan should be uniquely suited to the desires, needs and values of the Bethlehem community. It should also carefully consider the Comp Plan's guidance in this regard as it relates to the involvement of willing landowners.

⇒ As part of the open space planning process, the Town should inventory and

map all parkland set asides associated with approved development projects in Town. The Town should also formalize policy with regard to trail and open space corridor objectives, which can provide a guide to the Planning Board in reviewing new development projects.

14. **MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS**

⇒ Pedestrian and bicycle safety remains a very important goal of the community. The Town should continue to make pedestrian and bicycle improvements in strategically located areas such as Maple Ave. in Selkirk, Elsmere Ave., Feura Bush Road, Kenwood Ave. and Wemple Road in Delmar, and Delaware Ave. from Fisher Boulevard to the Bethlehem YMCA. The Town should continue to seek grants to leverage its budgeted funds and it should consider methods to prioritize desired pedestrian improvements on an annual basis.

⇒ Consider development of a Town-wide pedestrian/bicycle/bridal path master plan to guide decisions and prioritization of improvement projects.

15. **COORDINATE WITH FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICE PROVIDERS**

⇒ Conversations have begun with fire and emergency service providers

regarding the long-term implications of the Town's growth. While no major action items have emerged with regard to fire services, a committee has been formed to consider ways to improve emergency medical services in Town. It is anticipated that the committee will be making recommendations later this year that can result in improved service provision at lower cost to the Town taxpayers. CPOC strongly encourages continued investigation and implementation of productivity measures related to both Town and related municipal services including fire and emergency services. The Comp Plan provides the Town and its service providers with a well thought out guide to future growth. It remains very important that the Town's fire and emergency service providers consider efficient and effective ways to provide future services tied to the Town's planned patterns of growth.

**Exhibit A:
Town of Bethlehem
Comprehensive Plan Executive
Summary, Adopted August 24,
2005**

Over the last several months, the Town of Bethlehem has come together in an effort to define comprehensively a future for the community. What kind of community does Bethlehem want to be? The answer to this question helps to provide a context for the many decisions that the community will make now and in the future. It helps guide and prioritize the investments that must be made to enhance the Town's future.

This is the first comprehensive plan completed by the Town of Bethlehem. As such, many longstanding issues related to change in the community have been discussed and debated. In fact, twelve (12) public workshops, fourteen (14) Bethlehem Planning Advisory Committee meetings, and two written surveys have been conducted thus far to facilitate this discussion. This emphasis on public involvement has improved everyone's understanding of the variety of viewpoints about growth and development in the community. A full description of the public process is located in Section 2 of this document.

The Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan seeks to achieve broad consensus about the development of the town over the next ten or fifteen years. It is understood that not all individual interests can be accommodated through its recommendations. It is further understood that the plan is a living document and must be reevaluated from time to time to address changing circumstances. However, the recommendations within this comprehensive plan do indeed direct the community toward an overall vision to which the most residents of Bethlehem can agree. It has been crafted with the intent of achieving **balance** – balance between urban, suburban, and rural perspectives; balance between the need and desire for economic growth, for tax base expansion and diversification, and for the stewardship of finite land and environmental resources; and balance between the short-term and long-term health, safety, and welfare of the community.

The Town's vision for the future is captured in the following statement:

***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 convenient access to all that the region has to offer. It is recognized for the excellence of its schools, the quality of its public safety and community services, the abundance of its recreational opportunities, the productivity of its local businesses, ten miles of Hudson River waterfront, and the beauty and health of its natural environment. This exceptional quality of life contributes to the economic growth and prosperity of the town and the region, assuring that the community can continue to meet the increasingly diverse needs and expectations of its residents in a fiscally sustainable manner.

* **Note:** The Vision Statement is written as if it was the year 2020 and one was describing the Town of Bethlehem. This is how we hope to be able to describe Bethlehem in fifteen years.

The Town of Bethlehem developed a set of Guiding Principles to assist the community as it takes steps to achieve the vision articulated above. These principles are over-arching, and should be considered in all decision-making as the comprehensive plan is implemented. The Guiding Principles include: **Adaptability, Diversity, Environmental Sustainability, Fiscal Responsibility, Intermunicipal Cooperation and Community Partnerships, and Respect for Private Property.** These guiding principles are defined in Section 3 of this document.

Finally, to achieve the vision set forth by the community, multiple goals were established to guide decision-making. The goals address a variety of issues, and the recommendations in the comprehensive plan attempt to direct short-term and long-term actions toward achieving these broad goals.

The goals, in no particular order of priority, are to:

- > Achieve a balanced tax base
- > Create a business-friendly environment
- > Encourage compact, mixed-use commercial and residential development/redevelopment
- > Ensure that there is a reliable supply of high-quality water
- > Expand public, private or non-profit active and passive recreational resources and community services available in the town
- > Improve mobility – the ability of people, regardless of age and status, to engage in desired activities at moderate cost to themselves and society - throughout the town
- > Improve the development review process
- > Maintain existing public water and sewer infrastructure in developed areas of the town. Plan for fiscally responsible capital improvements to expand such infrastructure in a manner that is consistent with this plan
- > Manage and protect significant environmental systems
- > Promote commercial and industrial growth in specifically designated locations
- > Promote energy efficiency and conservation, and the use of renewable energy in the town
- > Provide opportunities for the development of a variety of housing options in the town
- > Recognize the town's significant cultural resources, historic resources, and natural resources
- > Utilize flexible land use regulations and creative land development techniques to retain the economic value of rural land
- > Work with willing landowners to conserve quality open spaces throughout the town

More detail about the community goals listed above is available in Section 3 of this plan.

Plan Priorities

The following summary organizes the plan's principal recommendations so as to provide clear policy guidance to the Town Board and the Town's staff related to both the level of priority and timing of implementation for the various recommendations. More detail about the plan recommendations can be found in Section 4 of this document. The Plan Recommendations Map is located in Section 5. Additional detail about implementation of the plan is located in Section 6. In the event of any perceived ambiguity in

any of the recommendations as presented throughout the plan, the construction of the plan will be guided by the intent expressed in this Executive Summary.

Immediate Action:

- > Update the Town's zoning and subdivision regulations to reflect the recommendations set forth in this comprehensive plan; key recommendations include the following:
 - *Hamlet Zones*: mixed use high density zones of a variety of scales and designs; encourage a variety of housing types; and mixed use buildings
 - *In-Town Residential*: high density (6 dwelling units (DU) per acre); traditional residential neighborhoods that border hamlet zones; public water and sewer; and improve pedestrian amenities
 - *Residential*: medium density (3 DU per acre); conservation design density incentive (4 DU per acre); public water and sewer required for new developments (existing developments grandfathered); and minor subdivision permitted (see definition below)
 - *Rural*: low density residential (1 DU per 2 acres); conservation design density incentive (1.25 DU per 2 acres); generally no public water and sewer; minor subdivision permitted (see definition below); specific rural mixed uses permitted as of right, others permitted but require special use permit; and with extension of water and sewer Town to consider re-zoning
 - *Riverfront Rural*: very low density residential (1 DU per 5 acres); conservation density incentive (1.5 DU per 5 acres); minor subdivisions permitted (see definition below); all rural uses permitted; and generally no public water and sewer
 - *Rural Light Industrial*: minor residential subdivision permitted (see definition below); specific light industrial uses permitted; all rural uses permitted except for major residential subdivision; generally no public water and sewer; and buffering and setbacks required when adjacent to residential district
 - *Density versus Lot Size*: provide flexibility in subdivision design by focusing more on the number of dwelling units per acre rather than minimum lot size per dwelling unit; will assist in encouraging conservation subdivision design
 - *Conservation Subdivision Design*: utilize flexible lot sizes and density incentives to encourage conservation of land in subdivision design; the required open space set aside will be 50% of total site area in suburban residential zones (with public water and sewer) and 40% in rural and riverfront rural zones (no public water and sewer); and densities will be calculated against total unconstrained land. To make it easier to achieve or exceed the minimum open space set aside, and to promote housing diversity in the town, a mix of attached housing

types such as well-designed duplexes and townhomes will be permitted in conservation subdivisions in addition to detached single-family homes.

- *Land Division*: allow in suburban residential, rural, riverfront rural and rural light industrial zones; permit the division of a parent parcel into not more than four lots (exclusive of the parent parcel) during any ten-year period; while there will be no minimum lot size for lots created by land division, it will not be approved without appropriate Health Department approvals for well and septic systems
- *Incentive Zoning*: include in the zoning ordinance a provision for density incentives related to open space protection (the use of conservation subdivision design) and for other negotiated public benefits (trails, utility ROW, road corridor, etc) resulting from the development; can be applied to all major zoning districts.
- *Mixed Economic Development Districts*: allow for a mix of office, light industry, and technology business as primary uses and high-density residential and neighborhood commercial as secondary uses; specific areas include the area to the west of the Slingerlands By-Pass Extension, the east side of 9W from Wemple Rd. to Glenmont Rd., the area near the intersection of Wemple Road and Rt. 9W, and, the lands on the west side of Rt. 144 between Clapper and Wemple Roads
- *Develop zoning to protect stream corridors, wetlands, steep slopes and flood plains*: consistent with existing federal and state regulations, generally accepted engineering and design practices, and the town's current review practices; formally define characteristics of lands constrained for development due to steep slopes, stream corridors, wetlands and other natural constraints; this will form the basis for a site's developable (unconstrained) land area
- *Design Standards*: as a deliverable of the comprehensive plan, design standards will be established for two zoning districts: hamlets and commercial. The Planning Board will be responsible for design review in these districts as part of special use permit and/or site plan review. An additional board (additional layer of review) is not contemplated. In the future design guidelines/standards should be considered for other districts, particularly where mixed uses are allowed.

Priority Actions / Tier 1 Recommendations: These are the primary recommendations of the comprehensive plan for which there is broad consensus and an accompanying near term implementation action item.

- > Conduct a Linkage Study for the Route 9W Corridor that includes a feasibility analysis of possible "northern alignment" option for the Selkirk Bypass: The Town has applied for funding to conduct a Rt. 9W Linkage Study to assess needs and develop preferred alternatives for both transportation improvements and land uses in the 9W corridor. If the funding is achieved, the study should be conducted during 2005-2006. The Rt. 9W Linkage Study could result in refined land use recommendations for this important corridor. At the Town Board's discretion the study may be treated as a comprehensive plan amendment, and it could lead to further zoning amendments

impacting lands in the corridor. As a follow-up to the Linkage Study, the Town should consider preparing a Selkirk Hamlet Master Plan once the Selkirk By-Pass location is resolved.

- > Create an Official Map: In accordance with Town Law §270, the Town should develop an Official Map that shows the location of existing and proposed streets and other public facilities. This initiative should track with the Rt. 9W Linkage Study.
- > Develop a Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP): The Town has applied for funding from the New York State Department of State to assist in the development of an LWRP for the riverfront area. The LWRP will provide more clarity about future growth and land use preferences in the riverfront area. The LWRP could also result in refined land use recommendations. At the Town Board's discretion the study may be treated as a comprehensive plan amendment, and it could lead to further zoning amendments impacting lands in the riverfront area.
- > Actively coordinate development of the proposed Vista Technology Park in Slingerlands with planning and development of the proposed New Scotland Road Hamlet: To assist in expanding and diversifying the Town's tax base, implement Slingerlands By-Pass Extension and development of the VTC. The Town should work with a focus group of stakeholders to develop a build-out concept for the remaining developable lands especially along New Scotland Road.
- > Establish a Citizens Advisory Committee on Conservation (CACC): The Town Board should appoint an advisory committee to explore conservation projects, and opportunities with willing landowners, as identified by the Town Board. In considering appointments to the CACC, the Town Board should identify appointees that are broadly representative of the various neighborhoods and hamlets of the Town so as to ensure a broad cross-section of community viewpoints. The CACC may provide advisory information to the Town Board as requested, but will not have independent regulatory powers. An immediate opportunity has emerged for the CACC to assist in the development of an integrated network of trails and pedestrian facilities in the Slingerlands area. In addition, the CACC can assist with longer-term activities at the Town Board's request such as exploring funding opportunities for open space protection programs, working to develop a Farmland and Open Space Protection Program, and developing an inventory of open space and farmland resources.
- > Establish a Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee: This committee would assist the Town Board and help guide the plan implementation effort.
- > Update Planning Department and Building Department Information Systems: Current information about the Town's growth helps to form the basis for good decision-making. Bethlehem is a growing community and it is important to track information about this growth. A system should be established to digitally record the progress of development projects from the approval process through to completion. The data included in this system could later be linked to the Town's geography through the development of a Geographic Information System (GIS). The Town's zoning map could also be updated in a digital manner. A Town GIS would also be used to efficiently manage the Town's facilities and infrastructure.

- > Develop a “Citizen’s Guide to Town of Bethlehem Land Use and Development Regulations:” This brochure, developed by Town staff, would assist not only staff, but also board members, residents and developers in understanding the Town’s zoning and subdivision regulations. This document would make the development process more clear for developers, Town officials and staff. As follow-up to the publication of this brochure, the Town could coordinate with the Chamber of Commerce and the Industrial Development Agency to reach out to the development community in an effort to further clarify the development process.

- > Identify locations for infill development and redevelopment activities and encourage the use of such locations: As an alternative to greenfield development, the Town should assist and encourage redevelopment of existing vacant and underutilized sites like the Glenmont (Ames) Plaza in Glenmont, the former Blue Cross building in Slingerlands, and the former Daiseytek building on West Yard Road near Feura Bush.

Mid-Term Actions / Tier II Recommendations: (these recommendations relate to important community topics that have emerged through the planning process but for which more focused consideration and consensus building is required for future Town Board implementation; these recommendations are of a more long term nature)

- > Consider development of hamlet master plans for specific hamlets
- > Consider adopting local right to farm and right to practice forestry laws and encourage participation in Agricultural Districts
- > Revive efforts to create a business improvement district demonstration project along Delaware Avenue
- > Conduct a Delaware Avenue Linkage Study
- > Consider reducing street width in new residential developments
- > Consider developing of a Town recreational trail system and identify potential funding mechanisms
- > Consider a Town-wide referendum to create funding for land acquisition and preservation of open space and parkland
- > Consider developing an inventory of farmland, open space, recreational uses and natural resources
- > Consider creating a farm and open space protection program including the purchase of development rights and the use of conservation easements
- > Conduct a Town-wide inventory of historic and cultural resources
- > Consider development of a community center to provide community, youth, and senior programs and activities

Ongoing Actions / Tier III Recommendations: (these are recommendations that relate to Town administration, programming and ordinary operations)

- > Maintain and enhance pedestrian connections within and between neighborhoods, recreation facilities, and hamlet centers
- > Prepare for and comply with the new Phase II Stormwater Management Regulations

- > Promote the use of alternative, renewable energy sources for public and private buildings
- > Coordinate with fire and emergency services providers regarding long term growth needs and facilities planning
- > Encourage the use of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards for both new and redeveloped buildings in town
- > Assist developers in understanding and identifying available funding opportunities supportive of sustainable design and construction
- > Provide educational services related to septic system maintenance and the prevention of illicit discharges into the Town's storm drainage system
- > Initiate a "buy local" program and develop an agricultural economic strategy
- > Provide adequate bicycle facilities and establish signed system of routes throughout the Town
- > Coordinate with the Bethlehem Chamber to promote local business and employment
- > Establish a Park Master Plan coordinated with community growth projections
- > Coordinate with school districts, neighboring communities, and other community and regional organizations
- > Enhance entranceways and community gateways
- > Investigate the current condition of and improve as necessary, the technology infrastructure available in Bethlehem
- > Encourage continuing education for members of the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals

Long-Term Action:

- > Review this comprehensive plan within five to ten years: As the community changes and grows, its needs and desires change. The comprehensive plan should be a flexible and adaptable document that reflects such changes. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the Town of Bethlehem review and update, if necessary, the comprehensive plan. An assessment of the progress achieved on the implementation actions would also be beneficial.

Exhibit B:
Detailed Status Report
on Implementation of
Comprehensive Plan

Exhibit B: Detailed Status Report on Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

IMMEDIATE ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS, AUGUST 2005			
<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Next Steps</u>	<u>Estimated Completion Date</u>
Update the Town's zoning and subdivision regulations to reflect the recommendations set forth in the this comprehensive plan including the following:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Amended Zoning Law and Subdivision Regulations were adopted by the Town Board on August 24, 2005 ▪ Additional amendments and technical corrections were adopted by the Town Board on August 23, 2006 	A minor technical correction is scheduled for late Fall 2007	The Comp Plan recommendation has been successfully implemented.
Hamlet Zones	Hamlet, Commercial Hamlet and Rural Hamlet zoning districts have been established	Monitor functionality of district	The Comp Plan recommendation has been successfully completed.
In-Town Residential	Core Residential District established with the adoption of the amended zoning law in 2005	Monitor functionality of district	The Comp Plan recommendation has been successfully implemented.
Residential	Residence A, B, and C districts established with the adoption of the amended zoning law in 2005	Monitor functionality of district	The Comp Plan recommendation has been successfully implemented.
Rural	Rural District established with the adoption of the amended zoning law in 2005	Monitor functionality of district	The Comp Plan recommendation has been successfully implemented.
Riverfront Rural	Riverfront Rural District established with the adoption of the amended zoning law in 2005	Monitor functionality of district	The Comp Plan recommendation has been successfully implemented.
Rural Light Industrial	Rural Light Industrial District established with the adoption of the amended zoning law in 2005	Monitor functionality of district	The Comp Plan recommendation has been successfully implemented.
Density versus Lot Size	Included in subdivision regulations amended in 2005 and again in 2006 amendments that established Average Density Subdivision	Monitor functionality of regulation	The Comp Plan recommendation has been successfully implemented.
Conservation Subdivision Design	Established with the 2005 subdivision regulation amendments. Has not been proposed for any residential development project to date and may not be useable in its current form.	Should be re-evaluated as part of the 2007 technical corrections	Winter 2007-2008

Exhibit B: Detailed Status Report on Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Next Steps</u>	<u>Estimated Completion Date</u>
Land Division	Established with the 2005 subdivision regulation amendments. Has been used numerous times and is working very effectively.	Monitor functionality of regulation	The Comp Plan recommendation has been successfully implemented.
Incentive Zoning	Established with the 2005 zoning law amendments. Has not been proposed for any residential development project to date. Open space protection and affordable housing incentives should be reevaluated.	Should be re-evaluated as part of the 2007 technical corrections	Winter 2007-2008
Mixed Economic Development Districts	Established in the 2005 zoning amendments and refined in the 2006 zoning amendments. Two major MED projects in the approval process.	Should be modified based on experience as part of technical corrections in Fall 2007.	The Comp Plan recommendation has been implemented. Refinements might be considered in late Fall 2007.
Develop zoning to protect stream corridors, wetlands, steep slopes and flood plains	Established with the 2005 zoning law amendments.	Should be monitored for further refinement as experience grows.	The Comp Plan recommendation has been successfully implemented.
Design Standards	Established with the 2005 zoning law amendments.	Should be monitored for further refinement as experience grows.	The Comp Plan recommendation has been successfully implemented.

PRIORITY ACTIONS/TIER 1 RECOMMENDATIONS, AUGUST 2005

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Next Steps</u>	<u>Estimated Completion Date</u>
Conduct a Linkage Study for the Route 9W Corridor that includes a feasibility analysis of possible "northern alignment" option for the Selkirk Bypass	The Town Board established a citizen's advisory committee and the study commenced in 2006. Several public meetings and workshops have been held.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare preferred alternatives for the Selkirk By-Pass and develop final recommendations for the main line ▪ Hold additional public workshops 	Recommendations should be finalized and the study completed by late summer 2007
Create an Official Map	The discussion of Selkirk By-Pass route selection has raised interest in implementing this tool	Determine utility related to preservation of proposed Selkirk By-Pass alignment and other key corridors	The Town should evaluate and decide whether or not to create an official map by the end of 2007

Exhibit B: Detailed Status Report on Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Next Steps</u>	<u>Estimated Completion Date</u>
Develop a Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP)	Commenced in Fall 2006 with grant from NYS Department of State; Saratoga Associates was selected to assist in preparing the LWRP, and advisory committee has been formed and has been meeting regularly	Prepare draft recommendations including Henry Hudson Park master plan and policies for consideration by the Town Board and forward draft recommendations to New York State for review and approval	The draft LWRP should be completed by October 2007 and the formal LWRP adopted in Winter 2007-2008
Update Planning Department and Building Department Information Systems	Refresher training for the Building Division has been implemented. A new HTE planning and engineering module has been purchased, designed, installed and is now in service	Require staff use of the systems and provide for periodic training	This project has been largely implemented although a commitment to continuous improvement will result in ongoing staff training and system enhancements
Actively coordinate development of the proposed Vista Technology Park in Slingerlands with planning and development of the proposed New Scotland Road Hamlet	The Town Board will be considering final SEQR steps in late May and will shortly thereafter be considering approval of the proposed master plan for the project. The New Scotland Road hamlet master plan has been completed and designed to interface favorably with the Vista	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue encouraging site consolidation to assist in moving the hamlet plan forward ▪ Meet with Picotte Cos. About former Blue Cross building ▪ Assist Vista Tech Campus in completing utility and access improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vista SEQR was completed in June 2007 ▪ The Master Plan was approved in July 2007 ▪ Hamlet plan to continue to evolve over next 24-36 months
Establish a Citizens Advisory Committee on Conservation (CACC)	CACC was formed in 2006 and has completed two tasks assigned to it by the Town Board. CACC currently working on a map task (Task 3) to document public and private recreation and conservation lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete task 3 ▪ Seek Town Board direction regarding the preparation of an Open Space Plan ▪ Consider recommendations to improve flexibility of CACC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Task 3 should be completed by late-Summer 2007 ▪ Further Town Board direction anticipated by September 2007
Establish a Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee	Established by the Town Board in April 2007 to review progress to date in implementing the recommendations of the Comp Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organize the committee ▪ Establish the work plan ▪ Publish a report 	The committee's report should be published by September 2007

Exhibit B: Detailed Status Report on Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Next Steps</u>	<u>Estimated Completion Date</u>
Identify locations for infill development and redevelopment activities and encourage the use of such locations	The Town has assisted in the transformation of the former Glenmont Plaza, the lease-up of 158 West Yard Road, and several other adaptive re-use projects. It is actively encouraging the redevelopment of the former Blue Cross/Blue Shield building on New Scotland Road, and it is assisting the developer of the proposed Beacon Harbor mixed use project on a former heavy industrial site off River Road.	Continue to identify and cultivate infill and redevelopment opportunities.	This task will be ongoing for the foreseeable future.
Develop a "Citizen's Guide to Town of Bethlehem Land Use and Development Regulations"	This been accomplished in a different manner than considered during the Comp Plan process. The many public meetings associated with the 2005 and 2006 amendments to the Zoning Law and Subdivision regulations exposed the public to many of the details and nuances of the code. The code is readily available to the public on the Town's web site. In addition, the Town has commenced an electronic newsletter that is a good vehicle for providing timely information regarding land use issues in Town. The Development Planning Committee also provides an excellent public forum for discussion of land use regulations.	Continue to provide opportunities for public education on land use controls and monitor need to prepare a formal guidebook.	As part of the 2007 technical review of the land use controls, the Town should revisit the notion of a Citizen's guide and make recommendations on methods to continue to familiarize the public on Town land use controls in a non-technical manner

MIDTERM ACTIONS/TIER II RECOMMENDATIONS, AUGUST 2005

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Next Steps</u>	<u>Estimated Completion Date</u>
Consider development of hamlet master plans for specific hamlets	New Scotland Road Hamlet Master Plan has been completed	Identify next potential study area	A new hamlet master plan is targeted for 2008

Exhibit B: Detailed Status Report on Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Next Steps</u>	<u>Estimated Completion Date</u>
Consider adopting right to farm practice forestry laws; encourage use of Agricultural Districts	No action to date. Albany County has adopted a Right to Farm law.	Speak with agricultural interests in Town to determine desirability of such a law.	This will continue to be monitored on an ongoing basis
Revive efforts to create a business improvement district demonstration project along Delaware Avenue	This will be considered as part of the Delaware Ave. linkage study that will be commenced	Include topical area in scoping of Delaware Ave. linkage study	This will track with the Delaware Ave. linkage study
Conduct a Delaware Avenue Linkage Study	Staff has submitted a grant application that has been approved by CDTC and is mobilizing for a project start during Summer 2007.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Execute agreement with CDTC ▪ Appoint advisory committee ▪ Select consultant 	The study should be completed by late Summer 2008
Consider reducing street width in new residential developments	No action taken, requires some community outreach and conversation with service providers	Engineering Division is currently developing recommendations	Recommendations should be made during Autumn 2007
Consider developing a Town recreational trail system and identify potential funding mechanisms	CACC has assisted in development of integrated pedestrian plan for the greater Slingerlands area and has identified potential funding mechanisms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider preparation of Town-wide pedestrian/bike master plan ▪ Identify opportunities in land use review process for establishing key pedestrian linkages 	To be determined at a later date after Town Board consideration
Consider a Town-wide referendum to create funding for land acquisition and preservation of open space and parkland	CACC has prepared baseline materials to support enhanced open space planning. It is currently completing a task to identify and map public and private conservation and recreation properties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determine relative priority of task ▪ Receive Town Board direction to develop an Open Space Plan ▪ Make recommendations to the Town with regard to financing open space protection projects 	To be determined at a later date after Town Board consideration.
Consider developing an inventory of farmland, open space, recreational uses and natural resources	There continues to be debate in the community regarding the use of an involuntary land inventory.	Consider this task in the context of undertaking an open space planning process.	To be determined at a later date

Exhibit B: Detailed Status Report on Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Next Steps</u>	<u>Estimated Completion Date</u>
Consider creating a farm and open space protection program including the purchase of development rights and the use of conservation easements	CACC has prepared baseline materials to support enhanced open space planning. It is currently completing a task to identify and map public and private conservation and recreation properties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider development of town-wide master plan for pedestrian and bike linkages and a methodology for prioritization ▪ Receive Town Board direction to develop and Open Space Plan 	To be determined at a later date
Conduct a Town-wide inventory of historic and cultural resources	No specific action taken in this regard although LWRP is assisting in expanding knowledge and understanding of historic and cultural resources in the Town.	Determine relative priority of task	To be determined at a later date
Consider development of a community center to provide community, youth, and senior programs and activities	The Town has completed a facility needs assessment and is considering its priorities and options.	Town Board must determine relative priority of task	To be determined at a later date

ONGOING ACTIONS/TIER III RECOMMENDATIONS, AUGUST 2005

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Next Steps</u>	<u>Estimated Completion Date</u>
Maintain and enhance pedestrian connections within and between neighborhoods, recreation facilities, and hamlet centers	Several new sidewalk projects in various stages of planning and design including Maple Ave. Selkirk, Feura Bush Road (Elsmere Ave. to Wemple Rd), Elsmere Ave. (Walden Fields to Rt. 32), and Delaware Ave. (Fisher Blvd. to YMCA).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arrange funding for existing projects ▪ Consider bike and other non-motorized forms of connections ▪ Implement funded projects 	Ongoing; specific projects will have individual implementation schedules
Prepare for and comply with the new Phase II Stormwater Management Regulations	Continuous progress has been made and the annual stormwater report has been completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of two local laws (Illicit Discharge and Stormwater law) 	Ongoing; there are specific milestones that must be met
Promote the use of alternative, renewable energy sources for public and private buildings	The hamlet master plan for New Scotland Road encourages the use of "green" technologies in planning for the hamlet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify opportunities to encourage energy efficient design in development projects 	This will be an ongoing task as new development projects are identified

Exhibit B: Detailed Status Report on Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Next Steps</u>	<u>Estimated Completion Date</u>
Coordinate with fire and emergency services providers regarding long term growth needs and facilities planning	A committee has been formed to evaluate potential improvements to emergency service provision	Committee will develop recommendations for presentation to the Town	Autumn 2007
Encourage the use of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards for both new and redeveloped buildings in town	The Town has strongly encouraged the Vista Tech Campus project to seek LEED certification and meet LEED standards for new construction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follow-up with Vista TC ▪ Identify other potential projects 	This will be an ongoing task as new development projects are identified
Assist developers in understanding and identifying available funding opportunities supportive of sustainable design and construction	To date, this has simply entailed directing developers to contact NYS Energy Research and Development Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to monitor and promote NYSERDA programs 	This will be an ongoing task as new development projects are identified
Provide educational services related to septic system maintenance and the prevention of illicit discharges into the Town's storm drainage system	As part of the Town's Stormwater Management Program, septic system maintenance literature has been provided for the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Include link on Town website to Cornell Cooperative Extension septic system information website ▪ Participate with Albany County MS4 group to develop and distribute septic system maintenance information 	This will be an ongoing responsibility as part of the Town's Stormwater Management Program
Initiate a "buy local" program and develop an agricultural economic strategy	There has been community conversation but little program activity to date regarding this topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider "buy local" in developing district master plans ▪ Coordinate with Bethlehem Chamber to promote and support local businesses 	This will be an ongoing responsibility of DEDP and the BIDA
Provide adequate bicycle facilities and establish signed systems of routes throughout the Town	An initial step has been taken through the development of the Slingerlands Integrated Pedestrian Network Plan by the CACC in 2007.	Assign responsibility for further implementation; establish bike and ped priorities	TBD as funding permits.
Coordinate with the Beth. Chamber to promote local business and employment	The BIDA has embarked on a Town marketing initiative	Refine strategy and develop collaboration mechanisms	Initial implementation Fall 2007, ongoing thereafter

Exhibit B: Detailed Status Report on Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan Recommendations

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Next Steps</u>	<u>Estimated Completion Date</u>
Establish a Park Master Plan coordinated with community growth projections	Henry Hudson Park master plan being prepared as part of LWRP. Also, recommends development of plan for Town owned land on Simmons Road	Hire a consultant to prepare a town-wide public and privately owned parks and recreation facilities plan.	TBD as funding permits.
Coordinate with school districts, neighboring communities, and other community and regional organizations	Periodic meetings with School Districts have been ongoing; Town participates in CEG, CDRPC and CDTC activities	Continue interaction	Ongoing
Enhance entranceways and community gateways	The Town has assisted the Bethlehem Garden Club in creating attractive plantings and signage at key gateways to the Town including Delaware Ave, Cherry Ave. at Kenwood Ave., Rt. 32 at Frontage Road. and Maple Ave. at Cottage Lane.	Develop plans for improvements near Maher Road at the Rt. 85 By-Pass Extension, and on Cherry Ave. Extension where the median will be improved at part of the project.	This is an ongoing effort
Investigate the current condition of an improve as necessary, the Town's technology infrastructure	DEDP and the Engineering Division will be evaluating methods to document technology infrastructure. There are legal and proprietary obstacles to overcome.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue dialogue with utility providers ▪ Include technology infrastructure in digital submission requirements for subdivisions 	This is an ongoing effort
Encourage continuing education for members of the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals	Effective January 2007, training is now mandated by New York State and Town assists in scheduling training.	Continue to assist Planning and Zoning Board members in fulfilling their continuing education requirements.	This recommendation has been successfully implemented.

LONG TERM ACTION RECOMMENDATION, AUGUST 2005

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Next Steps</u>	<u>Estimated Completion Date</u>
Review the comprehensive plan within five to ten years	No action, less than two years since adoption	Review annually	2010 - 2015

**Exhibit C:
Status of Residential
Development Projects
Affected by Moratorium
as of July 2007**

1. Beacon Heights – Rt. 144, west side

The project was originally a Planned Development District (PDD) request with 425 dwelling units. Has been combined with the Beacon Harbor project site into an application for a zone change to Mixed Economic Development District. The applicant has submitted its draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Town's review.

2. Cedar Hill Farm – Dinmore Rd. and Rt. 144

Applicant is currently developing plans for 7-8 building lots.

3. Clapper Meadows – Clapper Rd. to Beaver Dam Rd

Developer applied for a PDD with a mix of 587 units – estate, single family, cottages, condos and apartments. Due to the potential location of the Selkirk By-Pass, the developer has withdrawn its application and stated they will reapply with a conventional smaller subdivision.

4. Delaware Pointe Subdivision – Delaware Ave; northerly side new Fisher Blvd.

Originally conceived as a single-family subdivision, more recently indicated potential shift to condominiums. No formal application has been received.

5. Dreamfield Estates – Jolly Road

Originally conceived as a single-family subdivision, developer has submitted a concept for a PDD design with a mix of town homes and smaller courtyard homes.

6. Elm Ave East Subdivision – Elm Avenue East

Originally application had single-family homes and multifamily mix. Now a single family 82 lot subdivision. Has received preliminary plat approval.

7. GRA-BIL Estates – Wemple Rd.

Came before the Development Planning Committee on February 22, 2007 with a new layout. Mix of subdivision single family & PDD with patio homes and condos.

8. The Grove – Norfolk, Grove & Pine, North Bethlehem

7 lot subdivision with 2 lots having existing homes. Has received variances on some lots. Application is pending.

9. Hamden Woods – Elm Ave.

Originally conceived as a 37 lot conventional single-family subdivision. Has been resubmitted as a PDD with 84 condo units.

10. The Hammocks – Route 9W and Wemple Rd.

An application for a 250+ unit apartment complex. Project no longer active

11. Haawk Court Subdivision – Murray Avenue

Has been approved as a four-lot subdivision.

12. Meadowbrook III – Blessing Road

PDD with 48 single-family homes. PB recommendation for approval to TB expected soon.

13. Millwood Estates – Russell Rd.

24 single family homes. Has had public hearing and SEQR determination. Preliminary plat approval expected soon.

14. Phillipin Kill Manor – Fisher Blvd.

Originally conceived as a conventional subdivision with 109 lots. Recent design is a mix of estate homes fronting Orchard Street and single-family homes and town homes with access from Fisher Blvd.

15. The Pines @ Normanside – Leonard Place

Originally conceived as a single-family subdivision. Application now is PDD with town homes, a commercial mixed-use lot and 2 single-family homes with access on Salisbury Rd.

16. River Road Subdivision – Rt. 144 between Barent Winnie Rd. & Lyons Rd.

Originally conceived as a 22 lot single-family subdivision. Application was withdrawn. 1 lot was divided prior to zone change and then a land division was approved after for a total of three building lots.

17. Sprout Creek – Route 9W and Hague Blvd.

Has been before the DPC last year with a new plan. No recent submissions.

18. Van Dyke Spinney – VanDyke Rd.

Proceeding with 202 rental units for seniors and a few single-family lots on the opposite side of Van Dyke.

19. Wemple Road Condominiums – Wemple Rd. & Rt. 9W, northwest corner

Originally conceived as a condominium project, the application has been withdrawn.

**Exhibit D:
List of Processed Land
Divisions Since September
2005**

Exhibit D: List of Processed Land Divisions Since September 2005

Date Received	Approval Date	Applicant Name	Property Description
11/4/2005	Pending	Syrett, George	Wildwood Lane, 42
11/18/2005	12/13/2005	Carroll, Peter & Vaysman, Mikhail	Inman Ave. & Arch Ave., Lots 1956-1965
10/19/2005	5/24/2007	Quadrini, Brandon	Barent Winnie Rd. & Lyons Rd.
3/1/2006	5/24/2006	Micelli, Darcy	Maple Avenue, 217 - Selkirk
12/5/2005	12/8/2005	Blaisdell, Mary	Long Lane, 30
2/15/2006	8/14/2006	Ramos, Antonio & Alecia	Feura Bush Rd., 864
3/27/2006	11/29/2006	Watkins, Bernie & Rose	Bridge Street, 254
3/28/2006	11/13/2006	Crossett, Lance	Bridge Street, 100-102
4/6/2006	10/10/2006	Helm, Kevin	Maher Rd., 71
6/20/2006	1/12/2007	Fox/ Gaudette Land Division	Feura Bush Rd., 530
6/20/2006	10/24/2006	Burrows, Karen	Waldenmaier Rd., 136
7/26/2006	9/25/2006	Biggane, Ellen	Winnie Rd., 105
9/14/2006	9/27/2006	Barkman, Gary & Debra	Elm Avenue East, 213
8/17/2006	12/7/2006	Cubello, Mario	Oakwood Rd.
12/29/2006	1/24/2007	Bethlehem Children's School	Fisher Blvd., 12
5/17/2007	Pending	Oreifej, Valerich	Elm Ave., 74