

## 2012 Transition Committee Report

### Excerpt of Land Use, Planning and Open Space section

The Committee was briefed by Committee member, Deputy Supervisor and Planning Board member John Smolinsky (Appendix C contains the presentation outline). The central finding was that it is a good time to review the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that its goals are being met, broadly shared, and that the public understands how the Plan and land use controls operate. It was generally agreed that people are concerned about growth in the southern part of town, and it might be a good idea to have a public forum or two on this issue explaining what the town can and cannot do to guide growth and manage transportation issues. Most agreed that economic development to broaden tax base is of prime importance. While many agreed that it is important to have a Town Open Space Program, (i.e. selection criteria, funding options, facilitation, stewardship options, etc.) in place, even if no funding source is identified, others did not. Similarly, some supported and some opposed public funding for open space preservation.

### Recommendations:

- The town needs to review the goals, recommendations and accomplishments of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, to determine if the Plan continues to accomplish its objectives. This review could use some combination of the following approaches:
  - a) A Committee
  - b) Public Forums
  - c) Focus Groups
- It was noted that the CPOC committee and process has previously been utilized to evaluate the Comprehensive Plan.
- The Town should take proactive approaches for particular development plans in critical areas (e.g., as done for the New Scotland Road Hamlet Plan), as well as to address major emerging needs (example: affordable senior housing in an area in which seniors can walk to small stores, etc.).
- The Town should initiate a planning initiative to consider long-term traffic and circulation patterns in the general area bounded by Rt. 9W on the east, the Delmar By-Pass on the west, Glenmont Road on the north and Elm Ave. on the south. This would supplement traffic planning already underway by private developers and would result in policy consensus for long-term improvements to traffic and circulation in this growing area of the Town.

## **Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan**

The Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) emerged as a Tier I recommendation of the Town's Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) adopted in 2005. The Town was successful in applying for a grant from the New York State 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.

To assist the Department of State and the Town in preparing the study, DOS requires that a Waterfront Advisory Committee (WAC) be organized to assist in the planning process.

Major components of the LWRP study will include the following:

- Inventory and Analysis of natural and man-made resources in the waterfront area
- Identification of issues, conflicts and opportunities in the study area
- Identification of existing roles and responsibilities of federal, state and local agencies in the study area
- Identification of management plan objectives in the study area
- Development of waterfront revitalization policies
- Description of proposed land and water uses necessary to implement the LWRP
- Identification of implementation techniques and methods that can be used to address identified issues
- Determination of Significance and Compliance with the State Environmental Quality review Act (SEQRA)
- Development of a Master Plan for Henry Hudson Park

**History and Status:** Started 2006; Final Draft delivered March, 2011; comments from DOS received Oct, 2011

## **Delaware Avenue Hamlet Enhancement Study**

**Background/Mission:** The Town's Comprehensive Plan recognizes that the Delaware Avenue Hamlet area, as well as the Town's other hamlets, helps to define a "sense of place" in the Town. One of the goals stated in the Comp Plan is to "encourage compact, mixed use commercial and residential development/redevelopment in identified neighborhood commercial centers and hamlet centers throughout the town. Appropriate scale, design, and character, attention to the pedestrian environment, and connections to adjacent neighborhoods are critical to the success of such centers".

The Town was successful in securing a grant through the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) to select a consultant to assist in developing this study. River Street Planning & Development LLC, located in Troy, NY has been selected as the consultant.

### **Study Objectives:**

- Design guidelines/standards including building scale, massing, design and setbacks
- Streetscape guidelines including a typical street cross section
- Access Management
- Parking and circulation for vehicles and bicycles
- Transportation improvements

**History and Status:** Study Advisory Committee met Sept 2008; Recommendation to adopt guideline expected to Town Board in early 2012

## **Route 9W Study**

The Route 9W Linkage Study emerged as a Tier I recommendation of the Town's Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan). The Town was successful in applying for a "Linkage" Study grant 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 has appointed a Citizen's Advisory Group (CAG) to assist in building consensus on study recommendations. The 9W CAG is an advisory body that provides advice and recommendations to the study leaders and consulting team.

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 will be a feasibility analysis of a possible "northern alignment" for the Selkirk Bypass

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### **Major components of the study include:**

- Review of previous planning efforts in the corridor
- Development of an existing conditions profile for the corridor (land use and zoning, intersection and mainline performance, property access management, Selkirk Bypass alternatives, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and visual environment)
- Development of a 20-year growth scenario and traffic forecast
- Establishment of a vision statement and planning principles for the corridor
- Conducting public workshops on issues identification and Selkirk Bypass alternatives
- Development of a draft plan for the corridor
- Obtaining public feedback on the draft through additional workshops
- Refinement and development of a final plan

**History and Status** - Committee first met March, 2006; Final Report 12/2008; draft zoning revisions that incorporate the guidelines presented to Town Board May, 2011; approval is pending 12, 2011.

## **PaTHs 4 Bethlehem - Pathways To Homes, Hamlets and Healthy Hearts**

**Mission:** Help implement recommendations as made by the 2005 Comprehensive Plan regarding pedestrian connectivity throughout the town. Mission also includes bicycle pathways and safety.

### **Committee Goals 2009:**

- 1) Identify and establish a priority list for future pathway investment
- 2) Identify available funding sources and grant opportunities
- 3) Maintain and enhance pedestrian connections to:
  - A. Parks, Recreation and Cultural Facilities
  - B. Create Safe Routes to Schools
  - C. Neighborhoods (within and between)
  - D. Hamlet Centers
  - E. Commercial Districts

## ATTACHMENT 2 - Planning Presentation to Clarkson Transition Team

**Long Term Goal 2010** - Establish a Bicycle and Pedestrian Program addressing the 3 E's, Engineering, Education, and Enforcement, for bicycle and pedestrian mobility – The Committee could work towards the development of this broader program to address bicycle and pedestrian mobility in the Town. (The 3 E's approach to bicycle and pedestrian mobility are recommended in the NYSDOT 2010 Strategic Highway Safety Plan, and the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee 2010 Highway Safety Strategic Plan.)

### Paths Accomplishments:

- > Complete Streets Resolution August 2009, adopted by Town Board
- > Evaluation Process for New Pathways Investments
- > Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Network
- > Bicycle and Pedestrian Program addressing the 3Es - Engineering, Education, and Enforcement for bicycle and pedestrian mobility
- > Pedestrian/Bicyclist Safety Card - partnered w/ citizen's committee
- > Secured Grants for town bicycle racks
- > Partnered w/ BCSD, YMCA, and RPI on Ped/Bike efforts
- > Developed Sidewalk Maintenance Manual
- > Bike Route/marketing Pilot Projects - In Progress

History and Status - PATHS Advisory Committee started in March, 2009; established as a standing committee November 2010

## Agricultural and Farmland Study

**Background/Mission:** The Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan emerged from the 2005 Comprehensive Plan's recommendation for the development of a Farm and Open Space Protection Plan. The Town was successful in applying for a grant from New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM) in the amount of \$25,000 to fund the development of the Protection Plan. The purpose of the study is to work with individuals involved in the Towns agricultural industry to establish strategies that will result in the enhancement, management and continued viability of agriculture and farmland areas and lands in the Town of Bethlehem

### Major goals of the study will include:

- Document current farming operations and agricultural businesses to result in a status of agriculture and farming activities in Bethlehem.
- Identify opportunities/strategies to enhance, manage, and continue the viability of agriculture and farming in the Town.
- Analyze the following factors concerning any areas and lands proposed for participation:
  - Value to Bethlehem's agricultural economy
  - Value to Bethlehem's community character
  - Level of conversion pressure
  - Consequences of possible conversion to non-agriculture and farming activities

**History and status:** Committee meetings initiated June 2008; Final Report presented to Town Board, Nov 2009, several zoning amendments which implement recommendations are pending.

## **Open Space/ CACC**

**CACC** -The Citizens Advisory Committee on Conservation (CACC) emerged as a Tier I recommendation of the Town's Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan). The Comp Plan directed the Town Board to appoint an advisory committee, which at the direction of the Town Board, explores conservation projects and opportunities with willing landowners. The CACC has been asked to assist in the development of an integrated pedestrian trail network in the Slingerlands area. It has also been asked to develop information about funding programs that can be used to assist in open space conservation. CACC was also asked to develop recommendations on Open Space Needs and Opportunities.

**Status and History:** CACC was formed in March 2006 and in 2011 it was noted that the committee's charge from the Town Board had been completed. The committee produced three major products:

**Open Space Protection Programs - Funding and Tools (2006)**

**Slingerlands Pedestrian Network - A Pedestrian Mobility Plan for the Slingerlands Hamlet (2006)**

**Recommendations on Open Space Needs and Opportunities (2009)**

**Open Space Program** - Based upon CACC's work and the efforts of Bethlehem Tomorrow the Town Supervisor presented a draft structure for an Open Space Program to the Town Board. With the Board's consent, Town staff and volunteers are preparing a more detailed proposal for an open Space Program and to continue a dialogue with interested landowners.

The Open Space Program (OSP) establishes the parameters for the Town to maintain a balance of residential development, commercial/industrial development, and conservation land. As the Town continues to grow and support development, the OSP will ensure the preservation of Bethlehem's character as a community that blends suburban and rural elements.

An effective OSP requires a combination of dedicated public and private funds. The OSP can be funded through a variety of means such as grants, donations, set-aside fee structures, or new revenue streams such as payment-in-lieu-of-tax agreements or general taxation. The Town is committed to supporting the OSP by establishing a dedicated account for the sole purpose of purchasing land or development rights and associated administrative costs. The Town understands that having a dedicated fund for open space is vital to the success of the OSP but there are many tools to assist in preserving open space that will also be a part of the OSP. For example, landowners may choose to make a charitable contribution of land for the purpose of conservation easements in exchange for both Federal and State income tax benefits. The Town is in the beginning phase of establishing the OSP and is considering all available tools for preserving open space.