

TOWN OF BETHLEHEM **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**2022
UPDATE**

APPENDIX A

Public Engagement

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Community Survey Summary

Agriculture Business Focus Group Summary

Large Business/Economic Development Focus Group Summary

Local Business/Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce Focus Group Summary

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Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

October 12, 2020



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1.0 INTRODUCTIONS

Project Overview

In September 2020, the Town of Bethlehem began the Comprehensive Plan Update process to develop a plan that will guide development and community-related decisions toward the community's vision for years to come. The Town's current Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2005, has provided the Town's elected and appointed officials with valuable context and guidance for development-related decisions and capital investment. It established a vision for the community's future, articulated guiding principles and goals, and recommended specific actions or strategies that would move the Town toward the community vision. Updating the comprehensive plan requires a thorough and inclusive community discussion about the current state of the town, the community's values and aspirations for the future, and the strategies that should be used or actions that should be taken to achieve the community's vision for the future.

The first phase of the Comprehensive Plan Update began the community discussion. From Fall 2018 through Spring 2019, the Town held a series of seven community forums with participation from 250 residents to talk about what the future should hold for the Hamlets and the greater Town. The summary report organized input in the following seven categories: Neighborhoods, Transportation, Aging and Housing, Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, Environment, and Government.

Decision Statement

A decision statement is used in a stakeholder and public engagement process to summarize the opportunity to be explored and the decision that will be made. The decision statement is intended to clarify the objective of the project. It will be used in press releases, at the start of public meetings, and in the final document. The decision statement for this project is:

By Fall 2021, the Town of Bethlehem Board will adopt an update to its Comprehensive Plan to establish a shared community vision for the future and an action plan to achieve it.

Purpose of the Engagement Plan

This Stakeholder Engagement Plan was prepared using input from eight key stakeholders and direction from the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC). The goal of this plan is to build and sustain two-way communication with town residents, property and business owners, and other stakeholders and to utilize a variety of tools and methods to assure that all interested parties receive information about the project and opportunities to participate in the planning process. The plan is designed to be a living document with purposeful flexibility. It may evolve over the course of the project as the effectiveness of tools and techniques are evaluated. If necessary, the plan will be modified to better suit the project and broader community. A project timeline is included as Appendix A.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic will impact the project in at least three distinct but interrelated ways. First and most importantly for the purposes of this document, community engagement tools will need to account for continuing requirements regarding social distancing and large gatherings. The project team understands that during NYS on PAUSE due to COVID-19, access to professional offices, libraries, community centers, and other public spaces will remain limited for the foreseeable future. Members of the public and stakeholders may not have access to reliable internet and/or computer equipment at home to allow video conferencing. Therefore, the virtual platforms and techniques in this plan include options for participants to join by phone-only or view materials presentations on their own time. Implementation of meetings identified in this plan may include both virtual and non-virtual techniques that do not rely solely on virtual platforms or in-person contact. As certain engagement activities will have to align with the sensitivity of the situation, this schedule will remain fluid throughout the project.

Engagement Principles

Throughout the course of the project, the Town will uphold the following stakeholder engagement principles and consider feedback received from the members of the general public.

- (1) **Accessibility:** An accessible process will ensure that a diverse group of stakeholders are engaged. Because we anticipate that all engagement will be virtual due to the COVID pandemic, we will aim to make digital engagement ADA compliant. Within the context of safe COVID-19 practices, we will also seek opportunities for people to give input in writing or in person.
- (2) **Communication:** All engagement will include clear communication of the context, advantages, disadvantages and trade-offs of decisions. To ensure better public participation, technical language will be avoided where possible and explained where necessary.
- (3) **Transparency:** Transparency honors the public and reduces risk to the project. We will clearly articulate the scope of the public's influence in the project and the results of the input received throughout the process.
- (4) **Flexibility:** Flexibility allows engagement to respond to changing circumstances. Due to the evolving situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, individual elements of this plan may need to be adjusted to meet changes to timelines, processes, and community needs.

All engagement actions will be designed and assessed based on these principles.

Pre-Engagement Stakeholder Interviews

In September 2020, Highland Planning conducted eight pre-engagement interviews with community stakeholders identified by the CPUC. The purpose of pre-engagement interviews was to gain an understanding of how stakeholders are likely to perceive the project and what the likely issues will be. Pre-engagement interviews are an opportunity to begin developing constructive

stakeholder relationships, better understand impacts, concerns, opportunities, and identify risks to the project. Pre-engagement interviews were completed with the following stakeholders:

- Cindy Ferrari, Bethlehem Opportunities Unlimited
- Donna McMullen, McMullen Trucking
- Lou Picarazzi, Selkirk resident
- Mark Kelly, Town resident
- Mike Waldenmaier, Town resident
- Pattie Beeler, Bethlehem Tomorrow
- Susan Leath, Preserve Historic Bethlehem group
- Will Vail, Town of Bethlehem Senior Services Department

The results of the pre-engagement interviews were used to develop specific objectives and techniques for engagement, which are described in this Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

Town’s strongest assets and existing challenges:

- Stakeholders noted that the Town is well-situated near Albany and has one of New York State’s top school districts. Other assets include:
 - Parks and open spaces for recreational purposes
 - Public services such as police and fire department
 - Senior services
 - Rural and historic character
 - Socially conscious people
- Concerns in the community include:
 - Unequal resource/infrastructure between Delmar and the rest of the Town, including shopping opportunities, parks, schools, transportation, and crosswalks, and the perceived disenfranchisement of non-Delmar residents
 - Lack of racial diversity and racism in the community
 - Motorized traffic (trucks, tankers, etc.) passing through the Town
 - Barriers to business expansion
 - Development of former farms and rural lands
 - Preservation of historic sites, buildings, and the rural character of the area
 - Type of housing to be built in the Town (e.g., affordable, multi-family housing vs. single family homes)
 - Town financial resources, particularly in the wake of the COVID pandemic
 - Neighborhood connectivity as new neighborhoods are built
 - Reassessment of land value for tax purposes

How stakeholders would like to be engaged:

Interviewees noted they would like to be kept informed about the update process. Some offered suggestions that representatives from all hamlets, public services (police and fire department) and state agencies (NYSDOT) should be involved. Stakeholders noted that partnering with local clubs and organizations (such as the Lions Club, Rotary Club, Bethlehem Businesswomen, and Delmar Progress Club) would be the most effective way of reaching out to the public in order to solicit maximum feedback. Other suggestions included:

- Interactive project website
- Door-to-door outreach by ambassadors
- Well-thought-out communications campaign with inclusive outreach and messaging
- Publicity about the project and engagement opportunities via:
 - Facebook groups
 - Nextdoor App
 - Local newspaper, such as the *Spotlight Weekly*
 - *Our Town* magazine (monthly mailings)
 - *Times Union Local First* (weekly newspaper mailing to all residents)
 - Existing meetings
 - Leafletting and posting notices
 - Seasonal newsletter by the Parks & Rec department
 - Text messaging
- For virtual meetings, use breakout groups to enhance interactions between participants from different geographies/hamlets.
- Engaging with church leaders from Delmar Reformed Church, 1st Reformed Church of Bethlehem (in southern part of town), Delmar United Methodist Church, and Bethlehem Community Church.
- The community has over 7,000 senior residents, many of whom can be reached through the Town's Senior Services office.
- Suggested locations for engagement events include:
 - Farmer's Market in Delmar
 - Shoprite in North Bethlehem
 - Kleinke Farm Stand
 - Selkirk Grange
 - PriceChopper in Glenmont
 - Bethlehem Public Library
 - Senior Housing
 - Glenmont Elementary School

2.0 PROJECT TEAM

The project team consists of the Town of Bethlehem and the project consultants, including members from SWBR, Highland Planning, Fisher Associates, and Kevin Dwarka LLC. The main contacts for the team will be:

- Town of Bethlehem
Robert Leslie, Director of Planning | rleslie@townofbethlehem.org
- Consultant Project Manager
William M. Price, SWBR | wprice@swbr.com | (585) 232-8300
- Public Engagement Team
Tanya Zwahlen, Highland Planning | tanya@highland-planning.com | (585) 315-1834
Nancy Raca, Highland Planning | nancy@highland-planning.com | (585) 754-1078

3.0 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE (CPUC)

The Town of Bethlehem convened a Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) to provide guidance for the project and help ensure that the study addresses issues relevant to the stakeholders. The CPUC is composed of residents, representatives of local organizations and non-profits, and Town officials. The Committee will hold meetings as needed. Membership of the committee includes:

- Giles Wagoner
- Jeremy Snyder
- Adrienne Mazeau
- Kathleen Mannix
- Bill Ketzer
- Brian Gyory
- James Grady
- Georgia Fishburn
- Thomas Coffey
- Paul Beyer
- Anne Benware
- Rad Anderson
- Dania Flores

Throughout the process, the CPUC members will engage with stakeholders and the general public through engagement activities detailed in section

6.0 Committee-led Engagement.

4.0 STAKEHOLDERS

With support from the members of the CPUC, the project team will engage with the members of the general public, including residents, property owners and business owners, and representatives from Town/Planning Board, municipal leaders, local law enforcement agencies, state agency officials, and members of various advocacy groups with a vested interest in the planning process.

The input and potential support they can provide will be critical to the project. While all interested stakeholders will be emailed with updates and information on upcoming project events, the consultant team will also seek to collaborate with stakeholders who can help promote input opportunities and otherwise expand the reach of the project.

Based on conversations among the project team and feedback received during the project kick-off meeting and the pre-engagement interviews, the stakeholders have been identified under the following groups.

- **Public officials and agency staff within the Town.** Public officials, including elected officials, Town Board/Planning Board members, local law enforcement agencies, Public Works/Highway Department, Senior Services, and representatives from other state agencies will likely be directly involved in the planning process. This group of stakeholders will also be key in helping to distribute information about the project and engaging other stakeholders. This plan includes strategies to ensure this group is informed and involved, as needed.
- **Local residents.** Residents from Slingerlands, Selkirk, South Bethlehem, Delmar, Glenmont, North Bethlehem, and Elsmere hamlets, especially members from the senior and low-income community, should be kept informed and offered opportunities to provide feedback about concerns and opportunities.
- **Businesses and business owners within the Town.** They will likely experience positive and negative impacts from the implementation of recommendations suggested in the Comprehensive Plan. They should be kept informed and offered opportunities to provide feedback about concerns and opportunities.
- **Large landowners, local farming and agricultural community.**
- **Local Community Organizations and Leaders:** The existing plans and priorities of community organizations will be considered in the development of the comprehensive plan.

5.0 TRADITIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the course of the project, the stakeholders and members of the general public will be engaged through a series of public meetings, one-on-one stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and online surveys. These engagement activities will serve as an opportunity to develop constructive stakeholder relationships and solicit feedback to inform the development of the Comprehensive Plan update.

CPUC Meetings

Town of Bethlehem will host regular meetings with the CPUC members for the purpose of sharing project information and seeking guidance and feedback on the project. Highland Planning will attend seven (7) meetings with the CPUC and assist SWBR with meeting coordination as needed. A list of all the committee members is included in Section 3.0: CPUC.

Stakeholder Interviews

Objective: To identify concerns, issues and opportunities in the Town of Bethlehem and to brainstorming engagement methods and gather a stakeholder list.

Format: Eight 1-on-1 20-minute phone interviews with individuals identified by the CPUC.

Participants:

- Cindy Ferrari, Bethlehem Opportunities Unlimited
- Donna McMullen, McMullen Trucking
- Lou Picarazzi, Selkirk resident
- Mark Kelly, Town resident
- Mike Waldenmaier, Town resident
- Pattie Beeler, Bethlehem Tomorrow
- Susan Leath, Preserve Historic Bethlehem group
- Will Vail, Town of Bethlehem Senior Services Department

Schedule: September 2020

Roles: Highland Planning conducted these eight interviews. The information gathered from these interviews helped design this engagement plan. The CPUC plans to conduct additional one-on-one interviews throughout the process.

Public Meetings

Objective: To inform and engage the public in the development of the Comprehensive Plan Update. The purpose of the first public meeting will be to inform the stakeholders about the project and what to expect moving forward:

- (1) Share information about the project background, purpose, scope, schedule, and engagement opportunities
- (2) Seek initial feedback about participant's concerns, issues, impacts (positive and negative), and opportunities
- (3) Provide an opportunity for participants to share contact information

The input received from this meeting will assist in the development and assessment of a community profile. The second public meeting will be in the format of a community visioning workshop to provide stakeholders an opportunity to reflect on community's goals and priorities and express a vision for its future. The third public meeting will summarize the results, demonstrate how public input was used in the development of recommendations, and provide an opportunity for stakeholders to comment on the draft Comprehensive Plan.

Format: Three virtual public meetings held by Zoom. To reach out to people who do not have access to the internet or computer, the virtual meetings will be live streamed/ broadcast via the Bethlehem Community Network Television in addition to providing an option to join by phone. A meeting recording will also be posted on the project website to allow members of the public (including those who were unable to participate in the live virtual meeting) to view the presentation and provide detailed feedback. SWBR will provide meeting summaries and minutes as needed. An annotated agenda for the first public workshop is included as Appendix B.

Participants: Members of the general public

Tentative Schedule:

Meeting 1: November 2020

Meeting 2: January 2021

Meeting 3: August 2021

Roles: Highland Planning will convene the three meetings in conjunction with the project team. The Town may also hold a fourth meeting in a public hearing format after the final assessment of the Final Plan. This meeting will not be hosted by Highland Planning. For the first three meetings, Highland Planning will work with the project team to develop a final agenda, invite the public, and facilitate the meeting. SWBR will provide meeting summaries.

Topic-Focused Groups

Objective: To gather detailed input on particular topics from interested members of the public and stakeholders.

Format: Three virtual meetings, each with a different topic, led by a facilitator. Suggestions are to use geographical areas as topics (e.g., Delmar, North Bethlehem, South Bethlehem/Selkirk) or issue areas as topics. Examples issue areas for focused groups could be Housing/Land development, Economics/Business, and Diversity and Inclusion.

Participants:

Members of the general public

Schedule: March 2021

Roles: The project team will design and structure the meetings. Highland Planning will convene and facilitate the meetings. The CPUC will determine the topics to be covered. SWBR will develop meeting summaries.

Surveys

Objective: The purpose of the first survey is to gather information about current issues and opportunities in the Town of Bethlehem as well as collect information from participants who would like to stay informed or get involved with the project. The second survey will solicit public feedback on draft recommendations for the Comprehensive Plan.

Format: Two online surveys using PublicInput.com. A draft of the first survey is included as Appendix C.

Participants: General public

Schedule:

Survey 1: November 2020

Survey 2: August 2021

Roles: Highland Planning will develop the surveys in conjunction with the project team and the CPUC and will promote the surveys through email, text messaging, and communications materials that can be distributed by the CPUC. A distribution plan for the survey is included in Section 7.0: Communications Plan.

6.0 COMMITTEE-LED ENGAGEMENT

In the COVID-19 era when large public gatherings may not be feasible or permitted, go-to-them strategies are useful in reaching out to the community members in spaces and through platforms they feel most safe and comfortable. The following engagement events are designed and intended to be led/facilitated by the members of CPUC, local community leaders, and other community members, including students and senior citizens. Highland Planning will develop materials and provide assistance to all facilitators with both event preparation and promotion.

Pop-up Events

With support from Highland Planning, the CPUC members will each spearhead pop-up events. The purpose of these events is to share information about the project with stakeholders, providing them with an opportunity to learn about the project and give initial feedback. Locations suggested by stakeholders include:

- **Delmar Farmers Market**
332 Kenwood Ave, Delmar, NY 12054
- **Town Squire Plaza**
329 Glenmont Rd, Glenmont, NY 12077
- **Glenmont Plaza**
392 Feura Bush Rd, Glenmont, NY 12077
- **Price Chopper**
1395 New Scotland Rd, Slingerlands, NY 12159
- **South Bethlehem Grange**
24 Bridge St, Selkirk, NY 12158
- **Bethlehem Public Library**
451 Delaware Ave, Delmar, NY 12054

Highland Planning will assist CPUC members to obtain permissions for the pop-up events. Engagement activities may include distribution of survey postcards, informal conversations, and an interactive exercise, such as a budgeting exercise.

CPUC members will record the number of participants engaged along with their comments. During the course of the pop-up event, photos will be taken for use in social media posts and following the pop-up event, any comments recorded on paper would be photographed by the CPUC members to ensure they are documented and will, therefore, be logged in the Public Input Log (PIL) by Highland Planning.

Drop-in Meetings

The CPUC members and the project team will attend virtual, existing meetings organized by business associations, churches, community groups, neighborhood and resident welfare

associations, and non-profits to share information about the project and seek initial feedback from stakeholders about concerns and opportunities in the Town.

Meeting-in-a-Box (MIAB)

A Meeting-in-a-Box “toolkit” contains everything needed to hold an independent discussion including instruction sheets for the host/facilitator, publicity materials, discussion questions, worksheets for participant responses, and directions for recording and returning responses. The members of the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) may be potential MIAB meeting hosts/facilitators. MIAB could also be distributed using the project webpage and through email distribution.

Door-to-door Outreach

At their discretion, CPUC members will perform door-to-door outreach to (1) mobilize stakeholders about the Comprehensive Plan update process and (2) gather contact information from those who would like to stay involved in the project. Possible materials to distribute during the outreach will include the frequently asked questions (FAQs) document, project brochure and flyers containing information about upcoming events and opportunities to provide feedback (e.g. online survey).

Social Media

In addition to disseminating information about upcoming engagement opportunities and project findings, social media campaigns (Facebook, Instagram, and Nextdoor, in particular) will be used strategically to engage the community. Potential activities that can be spearheaded by the CPUC members and local community leaders include:

- Ask students to write about or draw how they envision the Town, and post on the associated social media page of the campaign facilitator such as that of the CPUC members, school (e.g. Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk School District), or community organization (e.g. Bethlehem Tomorrow)
- Encourage town residents to use *#BethlehemForward* and post photos of things they love about Bethlehem between October and December.

Articles and Blog Posts

To ensure awareness about and participation in the project, Highland Planning will encourage and work with local residents and the CPUC members to produce articles and blogs for the project website and other print media outlets, including:

- *Spotlight Weekly* newspaper
- *Our Town* magazine
- *Times Union Local First*
- Newsletters by the Town, Parks & Rec, Local Chamber of Commerce, Bethlehem Public Library, and the Senior Services

- Local blogs (such as by Susan Leath, Town Historian)

If needed, Highland Planning will provide assistance in coordination with media outlets and with content such as photos from events, event details or other outreach materials.

7.0 COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

PublicInput.com

To enhance the reach and transparency of the public outreach for this project, Highland Planning will develop a project website using the PublicInput.com tool. This tool will consolidate the stakeholder database, survey, and project materials, allowing us to keep stakeholders and citizens informed of the project's progress and gather their input.

- (1) **Surveying:** The industry-best survey capabilities will allow us to gather detailed, actionable information. The surveys include advanced mapping capabilities, AI-powered sentiment analysis, and full mobile compatibility.
- (2) **Meeting Support:** To support virtual Zoom meetings, the project team will use PublicInput.com features including meeting/event registration, live-polling and live streaming integration that will ensure clear, equitable, and well-recorded communication between meeting participants and the project team.
- (3) **Communications:** In addition to providing a high-quality landing page where stakeholders and citizens can get project schedules, materials, and updates, PublicInput.com includes social media outreach tools that will be used to track discussion of the project on social media and integrate it into the record of public comment where appropriate. Through integration with PublicInput.com, the project team will also send up to 2,000 text messages.
- (4) **Stakeholder Database:** Highland Planning will use PublicInput.com to maintain a database of all interested stakeholders with their addresses, email and other contact information. The project website will host a subscribe feature to allow stakeholders to join the contact list. The database will be used to facilitate e-blasts, mailings and other communication. CPUC members will also be able to add contacts using the subscribe feature on the project website or provide contact information in an Excel/spreadsheet format to Highland Planning.
- (5) **Multilingual Outreach:** PublicInput.com deploys content and surveys in multiple languages making the overall engagement process more inclusive. All comments are automatically translated for analysis alongside the original untranslated comment.

Public Input Log (PIL)

Highland Planning will keep a continuous log of all community and stakeholder engagement activities and input received in the Public Input Log (PIL). The name and contact information of the commenter will be included when possible, preferably email address but phone number, home

address or preferred major social media platform will be included if email is unavailable. Comments will then be categorized and kept on record.

Communication Materials

Highland Planning will assist the team in developing the below-mentioned communications materials and content to inform the public about the project and solicit feedback. SWBR will provide technical information and graphic design support for creation of the materials.

- Press releases
- Project Website (using PublicInput.com)
- Project brochure
- FAQ document
- Flyers:
 - Surveys
 - Public meetings
 - Focus groups
- Digital copies of the flyer and brochure for Town website and/or social media
- Social media/website content (as needed)
- Phone calls to stakeholders (where needed)
- Media contact: David VanLuven, Supervisor, and Rob Leslie, Director of Planning with the Town of Bethlehem

Survey and Event Outreach Plan

Given that there are multiple target audiences including local residents, business and property owners, the survey and all public events will be promoted using a variety of methods and locations to gather input from a balanced cross-section of stakeholders. Techniques include:

- **News Media Outreach:** A press release to announce the survey and project through newspaper, radio, and television.
- **Website:** A link to the online survey on the homepage of the Town website and other partners, directing users to the survey. Meeting dates and links and background material on the process will be available on the website, as will a place to sign up for emails and text alerts.
- **Social Media:** Promotion through Facebook, Instagram, and Nextdoor.
 - Social media posts to Town's social media accounts (www.facebook.com/BethlehemNY/?ref=br_rs) as well as a variety of community social media accounts, including Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk School District, Bethlehem Tomorrow, etc.
 - Social media posts through the accounts of people associated with the project, including that of the Town Supervisor (www.facebook.com/BethlehemSupervisor/) or the CPUC members.

- Nextdoor: Posts and links to the survey and upcoming events by the CPUC members.
- Instagram campaign: encourage town residents to use *#BethlehemForward* and post photos of things they love about Bethlehem between October 22 - December 14 with a drawing for some *#BethlehemForward*
- A paid/ sponsored “boost” of social media posts in the Town
- **Emails:** Email blasts to various email list serves including:
 - Students and parents list
 - Listservs of Bethlehem Historical Association, Preserve Historic Bethlehem
 - Local Chamber of Commerce listserv
 - Resident and Business Association listservs
 - Listservs of non-profits, including *Bethlehem Tomorrow*, *Bethlehem Indivisible*, etc.
- **Text Messaging:** Through integration with PublicInput.com, the project team will send 2,000 text messages. In addition to the cell phone numbers collected by the Town through their website, cell phone numbers will be collected through the online survey and the project website. Text messaging will be used to promote public meetings and the second survey.
- **Committee-led Engagement:** Mobilizing stakeholders, handing out project information materials, and pinning up survey/meeting announcement flyers on community bulletin boards (at libraries, senior centers, local businesses, schools, town hall, etc.) as part of outreach spearheaded by the CPUC members.
- **Other Print Media:** Articles and blog posts by local residents and the CPUC members on the project website and other local print media outlets, including:
 - *Our Town* magazine
 - Bethlehem Public Library newsletter
 - Newsletters by the Town, Parks & Rec, Bethlehem Public Library, and the Senior Services
 - Other local blogs (such as by Susan Leath, Town Historian)

A detailed list of communication channels is included as Appendix D.

APPENDIX A: ENGAGEMENT MATRIX

Activity	Medium	Lead	Schedule
Kick off Meeting	Virtual	Town	September 10, 2020
Preliminary Stakeholder Interviews complete	By phone	HP	September 17-25, 2020
Finalize Stakeholder Engagement Plan	Electronic	HP	October 21, 2020
Draft materials and collateral		HP	October 26, 2020
Project website	Electronic	HP	October 26, 2020
CPUC/Design Team Workshop #2	Virtual	SWBR/ CPUC	
Finalize materials and collateral		Town	October 2020
Promote public workshops, focus groups, and survey	Electronic	Town/ CPUC	October 2020
Social Media/Instagram campaign	Electronic	CPUC/ Town	October 22-December 14, 2020
Open and distribute Survey #1	Electronic	HP	October 26, 2020
Pop-up Events & Door-to-door Outreach	In-person	CPUC	October 26-November 6, 2020
Public Meeting #1 – Issues & Opportunities	Virtual	HP	November 10, 2020
Meeting-in-a-Box (MIAB)	Virtual/ In-person	CPUC	December 1-11, 2020
Close and summarize Survey #1	Electronic	HP	December 14, 2020
Articles & Blog Posts	Electronic	CPUC	Ongoing
Social Media Posts	Electronic	Town/ CPUC	Ongoing
Drop-in Meetings	Virtual/ In-person	CPUC	Ongoing

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Activity	Medium	Lead	Schedule
Text Messaging (advertise PM#2)	Electronic	HP	January 4-8, 2021
Public Meeting #2 – Visioning	Virtual	HP	January 12, 2021
CPUC/Design Team Workshop #3	Virtual	SWBR/ CPUC	January 14, 2021
Focus Group Meetings #1—3	Virtual	HP	March 8-12, 2021
CPUC/Design Team Workshop #4	Virtual	SWBR/ CPUC	July 19-23, 2021
Open and distribute Survey #2	Electronic	HP	August 2, 2021
Text Messaging (advertise Survey#2)	Electronic	HP	January 4-8, 2021
Pop-up Events & Door-to-door Outreach	In-person	CPUC	August 9-20, 2021
Text Messaging (advertise PM#3 & Survey#2)	Electronic	HP	August 23-27, 2021
Public Meeting #3 – Draft Comp Plan Update	Virtual/ In-person	HP	August 31, 2021
CPUC/Design Team Workshop #5	Virtual	SWBR/ CPUC	September 2, 2021
Close and summarize Survey #2	Electronic	HP	September 15, 2021
CPUC/Design Team Workshop #6	Virtual	SWBR/ CPUC	October 7, 2021
Text Messaging (advertise PM#4)	Electronic	HP	October 11-15, 2021
Public Meeting #4 – Adoption Hearing	Virtual/ In-person	HP	October 19, 2021

APPENDIX B: DRAFT PUBLIC MEETING #1 ANNOTATED AGENDA

Date: TBD

Time: TBD

Format: Virtual Meeting (using Zoom)

Objectives: The public meeting will serve as an introduction to the project, providing an opportunity to:

- (1) Share information about the project scope, schedule, and engagement opportunities
- (2) Seek initial feedback from stakeholders about concerns, issues, and opportunities
- (3) Provide an opportunity for stakeholders to share contact information

Participants:

- (1) Key stakeholders and general public
- (2) Members of the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC)
- (3) Project Team

Format: In response to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak, the Town is hosting a 90-minute virtual public meeting using Zoom. The meeting is scheduled to be conducted in two parts:

- (1) A live virtual public meeting to share project updates and information, followed by a live question and answer (Q&A) session and interactive group activities.
- (2) The meeting recording will be posted on the project website to gather public feedback for a period of additional two weeks.

Dry Run: A dry run with the team and Town representatives will be conducted at least one week prior to the online meeting.

Agenda:

Time	Activity	Description	Role
0:00	Meeting Set-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Zoom meeting set-up ▪ Allocate co-hosts ▪ Share the sign-in google-spreadsheet link in chat-box 	Highland Planning
1:00	Convene & Welcome	Begin recording. Convene the group and introduce Town and project team	SWBR/ Town

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

1:05 pm	Online Meeting Instructions	<p>Explain COVID requirements for social distancing and explain logistics of online participation (provide virtual meeting instructions about “virtual hand-raising,” Q&A, chat-box, etc.)</p> <p>Poll Question: How did you hear about the meeting?</p> <p>AND/OR</p> <p>Poll Question: Select the option that best describes you (multiple choice)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I live in the Town ▪ I work in the Town ▪ I own a business in the Town ▪ I own a farm in the Town ▪ I used to live in the Town ▪ I have not lived or worked in the Town ▪ I’m not sure ▪ Other 	Highland Planning
1:10	Agenda Review	Review meeting purpose and agenda	Highland Planning
1:15	Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project overview ▪ What’s a comprehensive plan vs. other plans and regulations ▪ Purpose/Timeline/deliverables ▪ What we’ve heard – key themes 	SWBR
1:25	Q&A session	Attendees can submit questions in writing via Q&A/ chat-box feature. Questions can be answered by the team in writing during the webinar or addressed live.	Highland Planning
1:30	Interactive Group Exercise(s)	<p>POLLING EXERCISE:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do residents love about the Town? 2. Which are the most important characteristics in the Town? 3. What’s the main area that needs improvement? 4. What would be the ideal opportunity for the Town? 	Highland Planning

		<p>SMALL-GROUP EXERCISE: Attendees will be assigned to breakout groups of 5-10 people. Each breakout room will have a facilitator and scribe/note taker. Participants will be asked to discuss the issues and opportunities associated with the below seven categories and collect their thoughts, which they will then bring back to the larger group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Neighborhoods ▪ Transportation ▪ Aging and Housing ▪ Economic Development ▪ Parks and Recreation ▪ Environment ▪ Land Use <p>OR</p> <p>Attendees can be divided into 7 breakout groups wherein each group is assigned 1 category each. Participants are asked to discuss the issues and opportunities of the assigned category and collect their thoughts, which they will then bring back to the larger group.</p>	
2:10	Report out	Summarize main points/ takeaways and categorize them in the above mentioned seven categories.	
2:25	Wrap-up and adjourn	Discuss next steps, future engagement opportunities, and online survey	SWBR

Meeting Recording and Comment Period: At conclusion of the meeting, the project team will share the link to the recorded meeting (video and/or audio) to allow community members to offer detailed input. All comments received within the period of two weeks will be included in the final document. This will allow the members of the public (including those who were unable to participate in the live virtual meeting) to provide detailed feedback.

APPENDIX C: DRAFT SURVEY

Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan Update 2020

The Town of Bethlehem began a comprehensive plan update in September 2020.

A comprehensive plan is an expression of the community's values and future vision. The process to develop the plan involves a broad section of the community to create a vision that will help guide the future of the Town. A comprehensive plan communicates a community's goals and objectives, provides a blueprint for community infrastructure projects, Town policies, future land use, and serves as the basis for zoning, subdivision, and land use codes.

Please help us create an effective and responsive comprehensive plan by taking 10 minutes to complete this short survey. Your responses will help shape the vision for Bethlehem's future. Your responses will be anonymous and confidential. Please contact Rob Leslie, Director of Planning with the Town of Bethlehem at rleslie@townofbethlehem.org if you have any questions about this survey.

1. Please select the options that best describes you. (select all that apply)

- I live in the Town of Bethlehem
- I work in the Town of Bethlehem
- I live and work in the Town of Bethlehem
- I own a business in the Town of Bethlehem
- I own a farm in the Town of Bethlehem
- I used to live in the Town of Bethlehem
- I have not lived or worked in the Town of Bethlehem
- I'm not sure
- Other (please specify)

Life in the Town

2. Why do you choose to live in or visit the Town of Bethlehem? (select up to three (3) of your top reasons)

- Location within the Albany region
- Neighborhood and local community
- Schools
- Relatives and friends nearby
- Housing options available
- Walkability

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

- Commercial amenities
- Historic character
- Rural character
- Recreation options
- Other (please specify)

3. How would you rate the quality of life in the Town of Bethlehem?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Not sure

Improving Quality of Life in the Town

Note: Q4 is a branch question. Only the respondents who select "poor" as an option in Q3 will be asked to further provide reasoning in Q4, other respondents will be directed to Q5.

4. What factors led you to rate the quality of life in the Town as poor?

[provide comment box for open-ended response]

5. Of the following, which are the most important characteristics in the Town? (select all that apply)

- Proximity to Albany
- Historic architectural character
- Neighborhood appearance
- Lack of large malls and overbuilt commercial areas
- Senior community
- Parks and Recreations services and programs
- Arts and culture
- Rural character
- Public services
- Schools
- Community/People
- Safety/low crime
- Other (please specify)

6. Please rank What are the most important challenges you see for the Town during the next ten (10) years? Please select your top five (5) from the list below and the feel free to identify others:

- Preservation of rural character and farmland
- New housing developments
- Neighborhood connectivity and walkability
- Social issues and racism
- Business expansion opportunities
- Availability of shopping and amenities
- Equitable distribution of resources throughout the town
- Property taxes
- Property owner rights
- Other (please specify)

7. What is your vision for the extent and pace of future growth in the Town?

[provide scale with three measures—slow, limited development; incremental development; and, transformative, smart growth-style development]

8. What should future growth look like in the Town of Bethlehem? (Check all the types you would like to see).

- New mixed-use development (commercial + residential) **on same property**
- “Infill” development (redevelopment of existing buildings and sites)
- New residential development: single-family homes
- New residential development: multi-family/apartments/condos
- New residential development: affordable housing
- New commercial/office development
- Industrial/ light manufacturing development
- Preservation of farmland
- Focus on sustainability
- I don’t want to see growth
- Other (please specify)

9. What types of businesses and services do you routinely use that are not located in your neighborhood or hamlet? [Open-ended question]

10. When planning for future housing/residential development, which of the following should the Town prioritize?

- Low-density residential development of single-family housing
- Mix of housing types and price points to attract and accommodate individuals and families with a variety of income levels.

- In-law suites and other shared housing options to accommodate young professionals and senior citizens.
- Other (please specify)

11. During the next ten (10) years what changes would you like to see in the Town? Please select as many as apply (the following list is not in any order of priority):

- More sidewalks, trails, and bike lanes
- More parks and recreational facilities
- More senior citizen programs
- More youth programs
- More housing available at for individuals, families and senior citizens supporting a variety of income levels
- More businesses and jobs
- More variety of stores, restaurants and other commercial services
- More emphasis on creating a sustainable community
- More public transit
- More emphasis on creating an inclusive community
- Less development of open space
- Less traffic
- Other (please specify)

12. In fifteen (15) years, what three words would you like to be able to use to describe the Town of Bethlehem to your friends/children/grandchildren?

Word one

Word two

Word three

13. Do you have any other comments for the project team?

[provide comment box for open-ended response]

About You

Help us better understand who is answering this survey. Your responses will help ensure we are capturing a representative cross section of the community and will remain anonymous and confidential.

14. Please select the option that best describes you:

- Renter
- Homeowner

15. In what type of dwelling do you live?

- Single-family detached
- Single-family attached (townhouse, rowhouse)
- Apartment/multi-family
- Condominium

16. What factors led you to choose to live in this type of housing?

[provide comment box for open-ended response]

17. How many people live in your household?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6 or more

18. What is your age?

- Under 20
- 20-39
- 40-64
- 65 and over

19. Please select the option that best describes you:

[provide drop-down menu with race and ethnicity options]

20. How do you get news about the Town of Bethlehem? (select all that apply)

- Town Newsletter
- Town Website
- Social Media
- Attend Meetings

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

- The *Spotlight* Newspaper
- Times Union Local First
- Our Town* magazine
- Radio or television
- Neighbors and friends
- Other (please specify)

21. Which hamlet do you live in?

[provide drop-down menu with list of hamlets: Delmar, Elsmere, Glenmont, North Bethlehem, Selkirk, Slingerlands, South Bethlehem, and "other" option]

22. Which school district do you belong to?

[provide drop-down menu with list of the three school districts along with an "other" option]

23. What is your annual household income level?

- Less than \$15,000
- \$15,000-\$24,999
- \$25,000-\$34,999
- \$35,000-\$49,999
- \$50,000-\$74,999
- \$75,000-\$99,999
- \$100,000-\$149,999
- \$150,000-\$199,999
- \$200,000 or greater

Stay Updated

24. Please provide your contact information below to stay informed on the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Name	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>
Address 2	<input type="text"/>
City/Town	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Email Address

Mobile Number *(to receive text message updates)*

25. May we contact you about future engagement opportunities?

- Yes
- No

Thank you for taking the survey! We greatly appreciate your feedback. For more information about the Comprehensive Plan update process or associated public outreach efforts, please visit the project website at www.BethlehemForward.com.

APPENDIX D: COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS

Note: throughout the course of the project, the team will work with the Town/CPUC members to expand this list of communication channels.

Email Lists

- PTO
- Bethlehem Indivisible
- Friends of Bethlehem Public Library
- Parks & Rec
- Friends of Parks & Rec
- Town of Bethlehem
- Progress Club
- Rail Trail
- Chamber of Commerce
- Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy
- Friends of Five Rivers
- Bike and Ped Town Committee
- Healthy Kids Committee
- Church email lists
 - Delmar Reformed Church
 - 1st Reformed Church of Bethlehem
 - Delmar United Methodist Church
 - Bethlehem Community Church
- Bethlehem Tomorrow (Pattie Beeler/Jeremy Snyder)
- Bethlehem Historical Association
- Preserve Historic Bethlehem/Bethlehem Alliance (Susan Peters)
- Senior Services/Food Panty list (Will Vail)
- Delmar Farmer's Market (Paul Tick)

Print (newsletters and other publications)

- Our Town magazine
- The Spotlight
- Parks and Rec brochure
- Senior Services newsletter
- Town newsletter?

Social Media Sites

- Town of Bethlehem (Facebook, Twitter)

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

- Bethlehem Parks & Recreation (Facebook)
- Bethlehem Opportunities Unlimited (Facebook)
- Bethlehem Healthy Kids Committee (Facebook)
- Tackling Racism in Bethlehem (Facebook)
- Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk School District (Facebook)
- Next Door
- Bethlehem Tomorrow (Facebook)
- Town Historian, Susan Leath (Facebook)

Other Media

- Bethlehem Community Network TV (BCN-TV)

Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan

Community Survey Summary

February 18, 2021



HIGHLAND PLANNING

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan Update process, the Town of Bethlehem offered a survey to community members in late 2020 that sought input on quality-of-life factors, land use, and a future vision for the community. The survey garnered almost 1,800 responses. Nearly 100% of people who responded to the survey said they live in Bethlehem. Those who completed the survey said they chose to live in Bethlehem because of schools, neighborhoods, and proximity to Albany. Overall, these community members are happy with the quality of life in Bethlehem, saying it is “excellent” or “good” because of the schools, walkability, and amenities. Community members also value the community’s safety and low crime rates, the parks and recreation offerings, the sense of community, and reputation.

Community members are concerned about challenges facing the town. Chief among those challenges are property taxes, preserving/conserving rural character, and traffic congestion. Other concerns are related to new housing development, climate resiliency, and affordable housing. Residents would like to encourage certain kinds of land uses (restaurants, coffee shops, low-density housing, outdoor recreation) and discourage others (big box commercial and apartments).

Those who responded to the survey want to see the town invest in sidewalks/bike facilities, and traffic calming, preserve open space and farmland, and create a more sustainable community. In the long-term, community members envision a safe, friendly, and diverse community that is sustainable, inclusive, walkable, and affordable.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

In Fall 2020, the Town of Bethlehem initiated the Comprehensive Plan Update process to develop a plan that will guide development and community-related decisions toward the community’s vision for years to come. The Town’s current Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2005, has provided the Town’s elected and appointed officials with valuable context and guidance for development-related decisions and capital investment. It established a vision for the community’s future, articulated guiding principles and goals, and recommended specific actions or strategies that would move the Town toward the community vision. Updating the comprehensive plan requires a thorough and inclusive community discussion about the current state of the town, the community’s values and aspirations for the future, and the strategies that should be used or actions that should be taken to achieve the community’s vision for the future.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Promotion and Distribution

Consistent with the Community Engagement Plan, the Town developed and distributed a community survey. The purpose of the survey was to gather feedback from the community about challenges, opportunities and preferences related to the overall quality of life in the town. The survey was prepared and distributed using an online platform and posted at the Town’s project website. Paper copies were made available upon request. (Paper copies of the survey were mailed to approximately 250 property owners in the town.)

The survey was available for eight weeks. It was launched on Monday, November 9, 2020 and was open to all members of the public until the close of business on Thursday, December 31, 2020.¹

The survey responses are anonymous and confidential. The survey was promoted using a variety of methods, as described below:

- Postcard mailer
- Press release to local newspapers
- Project website (www.BethlehemForward.com)
- Social media posts (via project pages on Facebook and Instagram)
- Virtual public meeting on December 8, 2020
- Virtual Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) meetings
- Email blasts to multiple stakeholders list serves
- Lawn signs
- Decals on Town vehicles
- Door-to-door outreach by CPUC members
- Mailed to large landowners (5+ acres)
- Bethlehem Public Library and Ravena Coeymans Selkirk Community Library display boards

¹ This survey was designed to be qualitative and exploratory. It employed an opt-in methodology (i.e. non probability), meaning some members of the population had zero chance of responding. The results cannot be used to infer from the sample to the general population in statistical terms. The survey is one of multiple public engagement activities to be undertaken during the Comprehensive Plan Update for the purpose of gathering feedback from the public.

Topic Areas

The survey sought input from community members about the following topics:

Quality of Life: Questions relating to quality of life inform us about why respondents choose to live in or visit the Town. Understanding the qualities and characteristics that attract people to the Town will help guide decisions about future growth. *(Q 2, 3, 4, 5)*

Land Uses: Understanding what types of land uses and businesses the community will encourage and discourage provides insight into preferences for future development and growth. *(Q 7, 8, 9)*

Our Future and Vision: Respondents answered a few questions about the future of Bethlehem. Feedback provided about the desired state of the Town in the next 10 – 15 years provides guidance for future policies. *(Q 10, 11, 12, 17)*

The survey also gathered information about who participated survey. *(Q 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25)*

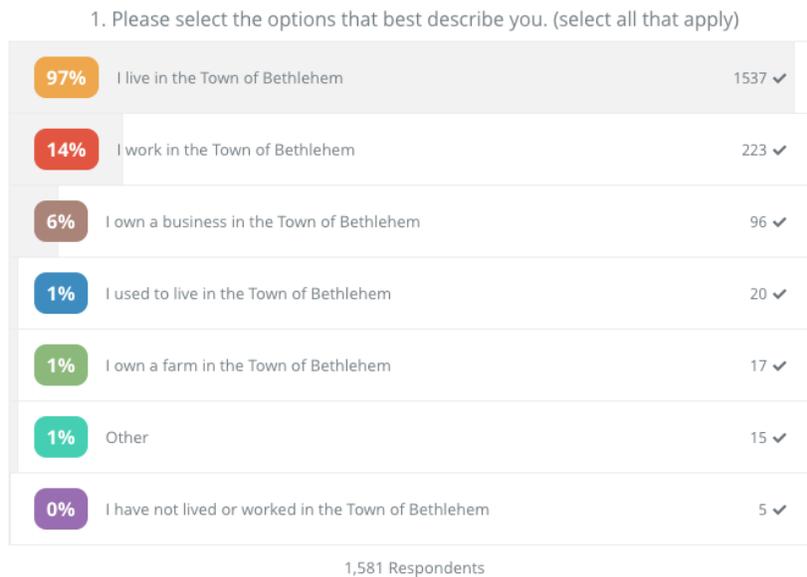
This memo contains a summary of the survey results. The detailed survey results, including all answers to open-ended questions, can be accessed at <https://publicinput.com/Report/alsagycwhs>.

For more information about the project and the associated outreach efforts, please visit www.BethlehemForward.com or send an email to bethlehemforward@townofbethlehem.org.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Town received 1,790 responses to the survey, which included 1,758 online responses and 32 paper responses. Not all respondents answered every question, so the total number of responses for each question did not always equal the total number of participants.

Almost all respondents who filled out the survey (97%) reported they live in Bethlehem or used to live in Bethlehem. About one percent of respondents said they used to live in the town. One percent said they live nearby, live on the border, or had a family member that lived there. Respondents were asked to check all that apply. The chart below shows the distribution of responses.



Quality of Life

Q2 asked respondents to select the top three reasons they choose to live or visit the town. The top three reasons selected by respondents were “Schools,” with 60%, “neighborhood and local community” with 55%, and “location within the Albany region” with 51%. The bottom three reasons were “commercial amenities” (4%), “employed in Bethlehem” (7%) and “historic character” (11%). The chart below shows the distribution of responses.

2. Why do you choose to live in or visit the Town of Bethlehem? (select up to three (3) of your top reasons)

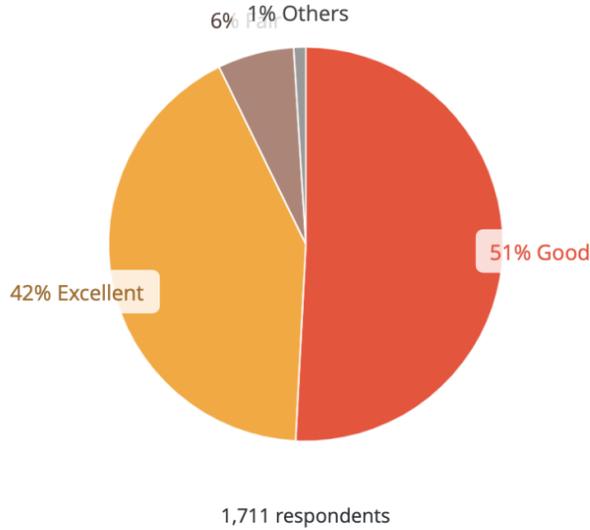
60%	Schools	937 ✓
55%	Neighborhood and local community	857 ✓
51%	Location within the Albany region	797 ✓
29%	Relatives and friends nearby	456 ✓
29%	Walkability	456 ✓
20%	Rural character and active farmland	314 ✓
15%	Recreation options	239 ✓
13%	Vibrant hamlet area	208 ✓
13%	Housing options available	194 ✓
11%	Historic character	171 ✓
7%	Employed in Bethlehem	104 ✓
6%	Other	87 ✓
4%	Commercial amenities	60 ✓

1,552 Respondents

Q3 asked respondents to rate the quality of life in the town. Approximately 93% said the quality of life is either “good” or “excellent,” while six percent said “fair.” Q4 asked respondents what factors led them to select their quality-of-life rating in the previous question. There were 994 responses to this open-ended question. The most frequently mentioned keywords that appeared in those responses (as measured by the number of times the word was tagged) were “schools,” “walkability,” “community” “services and

amenities,” and “safety.” A detailed list of open-ended responses to this question can be found at <https://publicinput.com/Report/alsagycwhs>.

3. How would you rate the quality of life in the Town of Bethlehem?



4. What factors led you to select the quality of life rating?



Q5 asked respondents to select characteristics of the town were most important to them. The top three selected options were “safety/low crime,” (70%) “schools” (68%) and “parks and recreation” (58%). The options selected least frequently were “public transit” (8%), “arts and culture” (9%) and “Senior community” (11%). The chart below shows the distribution of responses.

5. Of the following, which are the most important characteristics that are found in the Town? (select all that apply)

70%	Safety/low crime	1089 ✓
68%	Schools	1061 ✓
58%	Parks and Recreations services and programs	900 ✓
56%	Lack of large malls and overbuilt commercial areas	874 ✓
49%	Neighborhood appearance	766 ✓
48%	Sense of community	742 ✓
47%	Town services	733 ✓
47%	Local/small businesses	724 ✓
45%	Diversity of landscapes: rural, businesses, homes, parks/preserves	696 ✓
39%	Reputation of neighborhood/area	601 ✓
34%	Rural character and active farmland	532 ✓
31%	Housing quality	485 ✓
28%	Transportation options: walk, bike, bus, drive	437 ✓
21%	Historic architectural character	319 ✓
17%	Hamlet areas	260 ✓
11%	Senior community (people age 65+)	169 ✓
9%	Arts and culture	147 ✓
8%	Public transit access	129 ✓
2%	Other	26 ✓

1,549 Respondents

Q6 asked respondents about the most important challenges facing the town for the next ten years. The top three selected options were “property taxes” (52%), “preservation or rural character and farmland” (49%), and “traffic congestion” (46%). The bottom three choices

were “housing for seniors (9%), “business expansion” (14%) and “equitable delivery of services to all parts of town” (15%).

6. What are the most important challenges you see for the Town during the next ten (10) years? Please select your top five (5) from the list below and feel free to identify others.

52%	Property taxes	785 ✓
49%	Preservation of rural character and active farmland	746 ✓
46%	Traffic Congestion	697 ✓
39%	Neighborhood connectivity and walkability	587 ✓
38%	Conservation of natural resources	572 ✓
33%	New housing developments	496 ✓
31%	Social issues and racial diversity	468 ✓
26%	Sustainability/resiliency to address climate change	396 ✓
24%	Affordable housing	369 ✓
20%	Preservation of historic and cultural resources	309 ✓
17%	Business attraction	261 ✓
16%	Availability of shopping and amenities	244 ✓
16%	Property owner rights	236 ✓
15%	Equitable delivery of services to all parts of the town	225 ✓
14%	Business expansion opportunities	212 ✓
9%	Housing for senior citizens	132 ✓
3%	Other	52 ✓

1,515 Respondents

Land Use

Q7 asked land uses respondents would encourage or discourage in the town. The top three land uses respondents selected to encourage were “public outdoor recreation” (92%),

“protection of natural areas” (90%), and “restaurants” (80%). The top three land uses respondents selected to discourage were “big box commercial” (74%), “motels/hotels” (67%), and “residential multi-family apartments” (44%). Q8 asked respondents to suggest other land uses they would like to encourage. Detailed responses to that question can be found at: <https://publicinput.com/Report/alsagycwhs>.

Q9 asked what types of businesses and services respondents routinely use and wish where located closer to home or located in the town. There were 776 responses to this open-ended question. The most frequently mentioned keywords that appeared in responses (as measured by the number of times the word was tagged) were “restaurants,” “large stores” “coffee shops” “local businesses.” Detailed responses to this question can be found at the results website link provided above.

9. What types of businesses and services do you routinely use that you wish were closer to your home, neighborhood, or located in the Town?



For Q10, respondents were asked to prioritize four options presented about planning for future residential development. Respondents prioritized “low-density residential development of single-family housing” (64%), followed by a “mix of housing types” (61%), “in-law suites” (54%). The remaining 20% listed other options, such as senior housing, affordable housing, short-term housing for professionals, preservation and reuse of existing homes, and none of the above.

10. When planning for future housing/residential development, which of the following should the Town prioritize?

64%	Low-density residential development of single-family housing	Rank: 1.67	763 ✓
61%	Mix of housing types (ownership and rental) and price points to attract and accommodate individuals and families with a variety of income levels.	Rank: 1.73	718 ✓
54%	In-law suites and other housing options to accommodate young professionals and senior citizens.	Rank: 1.90	638 ✓
20%	Other	Rank: 2.19	231 ✓

1,184 Respondents

Future Vision

Q11 asked respondents what topics should have additional emphasis over the next ten years. The top three topics selected were “investment in sidewalks and bicycle facilities” (70%), “conserve open space and farmland” (60%), and “creating a sustainable community” (51%). The bottom three topics were “more public transit” (16%), “hamlet development” (17%), and “more senior citizen programs” (17%).

11. During the next ten (10) years, what things would you like to see get additional emphasis in the Town? Please select as many as apply (the following list is not in any order of priority)

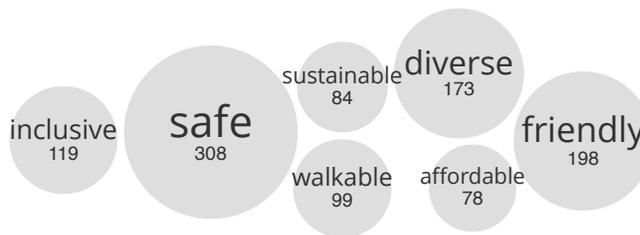
70%	Investment in sidewalks and bicycle facilities	976 ✓
60%	Working with interested landowners to conserve open space and farmland	830 ✓
51%	More emphasis on creating a sustainable community	708 ✓
50%	Traffic calming	693 ✓
49%	More parks and recreational facilities	687 ✓
44%	More variety of stores, restaurants and other commercial services	606 ✓
37%	More active farms/agricultural businesses	513 ✓
37%	More emphasis on creating an inclusive community	509 ✓
34%	Historic Preservation	473 ✓

33%	More housing available for individuals, families and senior citizens supporting a variety of income levels	463 ✓
29%	More youth programs	404 ✓
21%	More businesses and jobs	295 ✓
17%	More senior citizen programs	238 ✓
17%	Hamlet development	231 ✓
16%	More public transit	218 ✓
4%	Other	55 ✓

1,391 Respondents

Q12 asked respondents about their vision for the future using three words they would like to use to describe the town in 15 years to their friends/children/grandchildren. The most frequently suggested words were “safe,” “friendly,” and “diverse.”

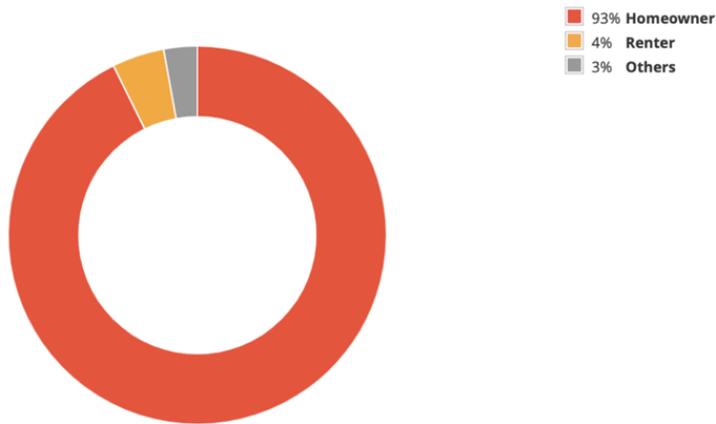
12. In fifteen (15) years, what three words would you like to be able to use to describe the Town of Bethlehem to your friends/children/grandchildren?



Respondent Demographics

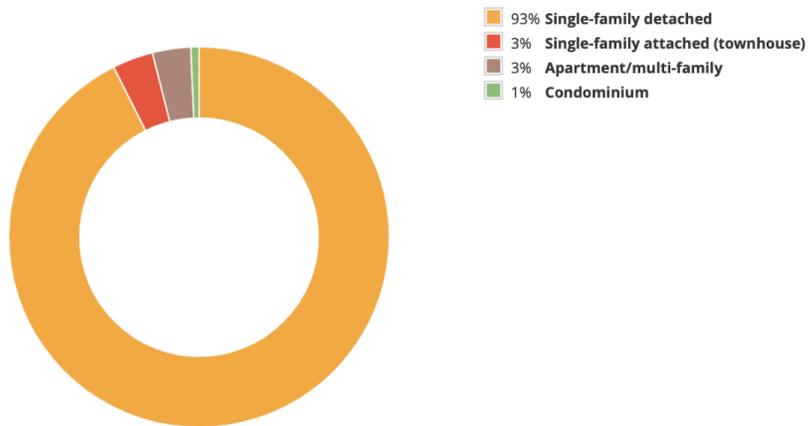
Approximately 93% of respondents reported they were homeowners and 93% reported they live in a single-family detached dwelling. Q16 asked respondents to list what factors led them to select the type of housing they live in. The most frequently suggested words were “family,” “homeownership,” and “privacy.”

14. Please select the option that best describes you:



1,435 respondents

15. In what type of dwelling do you live?



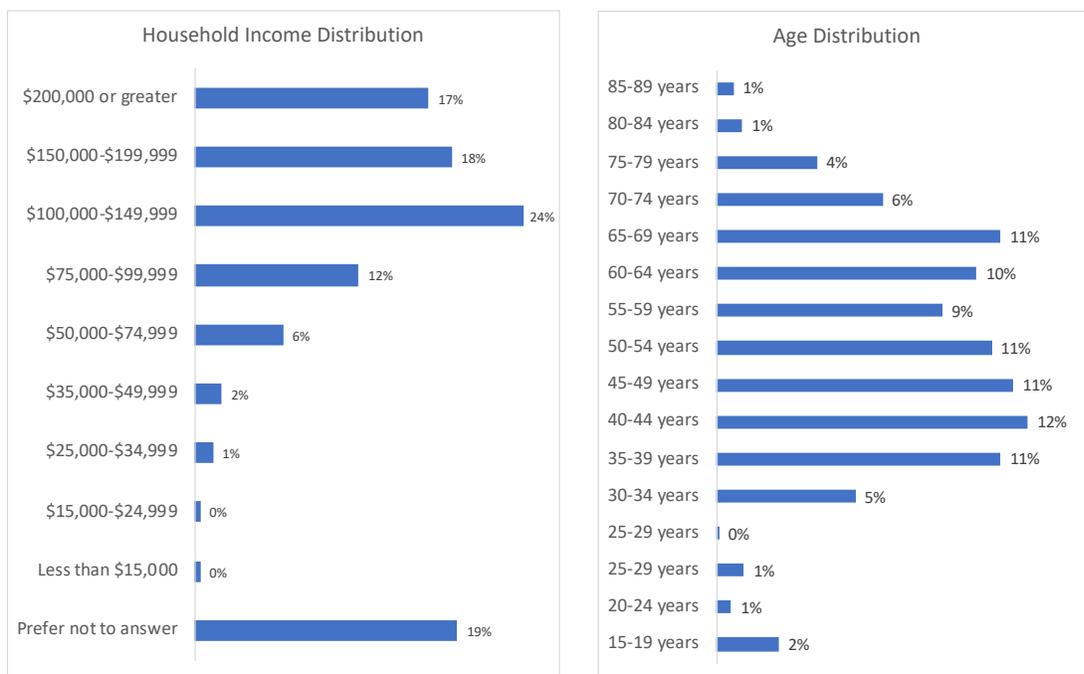
1,444 respondents

16. What factors led you to choose to live in this type of housing?



Just over 61% of respondents reported living in a household with 2-4 occupants. About nine percent of respondents lived in one-person households, while two percent lived in households with six or more occupants. About 52% of respondents reported that zero children under 18 lived in their household, while 23% reported having two children under the age of 18. One percent reported having four or more children under 18 living in the household. Approximately 84% of respondents reported they identify as White, while one percent reported they identify as Black or African American. Two percent identify as Hispanic and two percent identify as Asian.

The largest proportion of respondents reported their household income is between \$100,000 and \$149,999 (24%), while 18% reported household income between \$150,000 and \$199,999. About 17% reported income over \$200,000. About 23% of respondents were over the age of 65.



Respondents were asked how they get news about the town. Fifty-eight percent selected from “neighbors and friends,” while 52% selected “town newsletter” and 48% said “town website.” About 47% of respondents said they get their news from social media and 41% said from the newspaper.

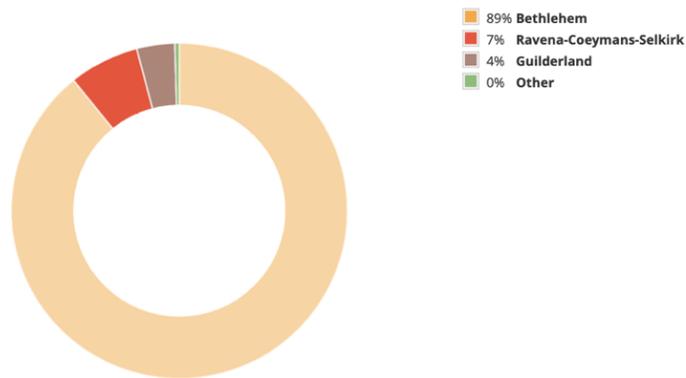
The largest proportion of survey respondents said they live in the hamlet of Delmar (49%), followed by Glenmont (14%) and Slingerlands (12%). Almost 90% of respondents said they live in the Bethlehem School District, followed by Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk (7%) and Guilderland (4%).

24. Which hamlet do you live in?

49%	Delmar	694 ✓
14%	Glenmont	201 ✓
12%	Slingerlands	169 ✓
12%	Elsmere	162 ✓
8%	Selkirk	118 ✓
2%	North Bethlehem	32 ✓
1%	Other	19 ✓
1%	South Bethlehem	10 ✓

1,404 Respondents

25. Which school district do you live in?



1,422 respondents

Filters

To better understand challenges and preferences among respondents, filters were applied to selected questions, as described below.

Base questions	Filter Questions
Q6: What are the most important challenges for the Town?	Q1: Live in town, work in town, other
Q11: What things would you like	Q14: Homeowner/renter/other

to see get additional emphasis?	Q24: Hamlet of residence
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In response to Question 1, approximately 14% (223) of respondents noted that they work in the Town of Bethlehem, nearly 6% (100 respondents) noted that they own business, and 1% (17 respondents) owned a farm. These responses were filtered according to Question 6 (challenges) and Question 11 (preferences). Among those who said they work or own a business in Bethlehem, the majority selected “property taxes” as the major challenge for the Town during the next ten (10) years, followed by the “preservation of rural character and active farmland.” Additionally, around 47% (89) of respondents who work in the Town expressed concerns about “traffic congestion,” and around 53% of farm owners noted “property owner rights” as a major challenge.

Q 14 asked respondents to select whether they were homeowners, renters, or other. The majority (93%) of survey respondents identified themselves as “homeowners.” Of those, 96% live in “single-family detached” housing. Of the 4% survey respondents who identified themselves as “renters,” a majority live in “apartment/multi-family” housing. Homeowners identified “property taxes” (52%) as a major challenge along with “preservation of rural character and active farmland” (50%), and “traffic congestion” (47%). Renters, on the other hand, expressed concerns about “affordable housing” (62%), “neighborhood connectivity and walkability” (41%), “property taxes” (36%), “preservation of rural character and active farmland” (36%), and “social issues and racial diversity” (36%).

Question 24 asked respondents which hamlet they live in. The Town of Bethlehem includes seven (7) hamlets: Delmar, Glenmont, Slingerlands, Elsmere, Selkirk, North Bethlehem, and South Bethlehem. These hamlets have no formal boundaries but are generally known areas that residents associate with a unique character and/or from a historic perspective.

To better understand challenges and preferences among respondents across different hamlets, responses to Questions 6 and 11 were filtered by hamlet of residence. Table 1 summarizes the challenges and preferences filtered by hamlet.

Table 1 Challenges and Preferences by Respondent’s Hamlet of Residence

Hamlet	Top two challenges among hamlet residents (Q6)	Top three preferences among hamlet residents (Q11)
Delmar (49% or 694 respondents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preservation of rural character and active farmland (51%) • Neighborhood connectivity and walkability (45%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in sidewalks and bicycle facilities (74%) • Working with interested landowners to conserve open space and farmland (60%) • More parks and

		recreational facilities (54%)
Glenmont (14% or 201 respondents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property taxes (66%) Preservation of rural character and active farmland (47%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment in sidewalks and bicycle facilities (67%) Working with interested landowners to conserve open space and farmland (63%) Traffic Calming (58%)
Slingerlands (12% or 169 respondents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property taxes (62%) Preservation of rural character and active farmland (48%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment in sidewalks and bicycle facilities (68%) Working with interested landowners to conserve open space and farmland (55%)
Elsmere (12% or 162 respondents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic Congestion (59%) Preservation of rural character and active farmland (53%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment in sidewalks and bicycle facilities (76%) Working with interested landowners to conserve open space and farmland (65%) More emphasis on creating a sustainable community (57%) Traffic calming (57%)
Selkirk (8% or 118 respondents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property taxes (64%) Preservation of rural character and active farmland (44%) Conservation of natural resources (33%) Equitable delivery of services to all parts of the town (21%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment in sidewalks and bicycle facilities (60%) Working with interested landowners to conserve open space and farmland (59%) Traffic calming (54%) More emphasis on creating a sustainable community (50%)
North Bethlehem (2% or 32 respondents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property taxes (70%) Preservation of rural character and active farmland (47%) Equitable delivery of services to all parts of the town (37%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More parks and recreational facilities (73%) Investment in sidewalks and bicycle facilities (73%)
South Bethlehem (1% or 10 respondents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property taxes (78%) Traffic Congestion (78%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with interested landowners to conserve open space and farmland (78%) Investment in sidewalks and bicycle facilities (67%)

Note: Detailed survey results, including all answers to open-ended questions, can be accessed at <https://publicinput.com/Report/alsagycwhs>. Summary charts are shown in Appendix A.



Bethlehem Forward: Comprehensive Plan Update www.bethlehemforward.com

Agricultural Business Economic Development Focus Group Summary

Thursday, March 25th at 6:00 – 7:30 PM via Zoom

Goal/purpose of focus group discussion: To explore how the Town can support and encourage existing and new agricultural businesses in Bethlehem, which will guide policies and recommendations for the 2021 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Facilitator: Mary Ann Johnson, Deputy Director, Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation, majohnson@hvadc.org, www.hvadc.org

Town/Consultant representatives: Rob Leslie, Director of Planning rleslie@townofbethlehem.org; Karen Shaw, Open Space Coordinator, kshaw@townofbethlehem.org; Bill Price, SWBR wprice@swbr.com; Frank Armento, Fisher Associates farmento@FisherAssoc.com. www.bethlehemforward.com

Comprehensive Plan Update Committee Member: Ed Kleinke, President of Albany County Farm Bureau, Info@kleinkeassociates.com,

Attendees:

1. Ryan Kitchen, Kleinke Farm, Glenmont; field crops, seasonal farm store
2. Ethan and Cynthia Wheeler, agricultural entrepreneurs in South Bethlehem
3. Christine and Fabio Ritmo, Nimble Roots Farm, Catskill, lease farmland, Farmlink Network to find leased land and “non-farming partners”, National Young Farmers Coalition leaders
4. Jane Lyman, Lyman’s Sleighbell Farm, Delmar; sheep/wool, former pick-your-own raspberries
5. Nancy Neff, Mead’s Farm, Delmar; livestock, produce, field crops, seasonal farm stand
6. Mike Waldenmaier, Delmar; leases farmland to farmers
7. Mike Zakens, farmer in Selkirk, field crops
8. Jerry Cosgrove, American Farmland Trust, American Agricultural Law Association
9. Ryan and Kristin Penno – veterinarians (equine and small animal) looking to locate business in Bethlehem
10. Mark Verstandig – M & K Greenhouses and garden center, Selkirk
11. Mike Libsch– New Leaf Farm, vegetables and flowers, New Lebanon; vendor at Delmar Farmers Market and Tuesday Farmers Market at Kenwood Methodist Church

Focus Group Discussion Questions:

Products or services offered by participants: vegetables, flowers, beef, wool, berries, horses, veterinary, bee-keeping, farm stand, farm store, value-added products (salsa from tomatillos), hay, corn, greenhouse plants.

Question #1: When you think of agriculture in Bethlehem, what two-three words or phrases immediately come to mind; they can be positive, negative, or neutral.

Negative

- Soils in Bethlehem are poor, known for clay (known as best for hay or corn).
- Land has been in the family for generations. Current generation not interested in working the land so the family leases land to another farmer.
- Children of farmers/landowners generally not interested in farming.
- Taxes are too high – if leasing land, rental income is not even enough to help with school taxes.
- No respect for property rights – example: teenagers pulling cars onto land and creating ruts in soil that farmer has to repair.
- Couldn't afford land close to Bethlehem (wanted farm to be located in Bethlehem ideally) – purchased land in New Lebanon to start vegetable farm.

Positive

- Five generations of family have lived in the Town, shows they like living here.
- Located in middle of Capital Region - market location is good.
- Population of people who are interested in local produce and products.
- Business has been built around the two Delmar Farmers markets.
- Non-crop agriculture opportunities – beekeeping, livestock.
- Historical context of farming in Bethlehem – build on this.
- Farm to table movement is very popular – this is an area for growth.
- COVID has helped, kept people home- shop locally. Last year (2020 season) was good year for sales.

Question #2: What are the key barriers to operating, expanding, or transitioning an EXISTING agricultural business in Bethlehem?

Barriers

- Competition amongst farmers. Working at odds with each other, instead of cooperating. Food hubs in some communities provides for collaboration. Lot of farmers are not great business people. Need to collaborate more, compete less.
- Selling the produce tends to be a tricky part of farm business. Help and collaboration can go a long way. Hard to afford the land, infrastructure, and then also sell what you grow.
- Affordable money. Regulations (all fees) and taxes. Not a large enough profit margin once fees, taxes, and agricultural inputs (pesticides, fertilizers) paid for.
- Public education – teach the younger generation about farming.

- Town government is problem. Town has an idea of what agriculture is. There is disconnect between what agriculture needs and doesn't need. Desire to preserve it as if it's something that can remain forever. Agriculture happens to use open space as its largest asset.
 - Constant defending yourself and your right to do the things you want to do
 - Puts pressure on landowner.
 - Think they are trying to help with a conservation program, but less is more. Less control/restrictions.
 - Town's fear is that farmland is disappearing and so Town wants to do more and more to hold onto farmland – stifling.
 - Need more ability to have incentive to do what you want; freedom for by-right uses.
 - Constant effort to defend property rights and ability to farm.
 - Trespassing is a problem.
- Traffic on rural roads has increased. Speed/volume of vehicles on road has inhibited farming – tractors on road.
- Worry about whether kids can do farming when suburbia keeps creeping out. Suburb's don't appreciate farming lifestyle, only appreciates opportunity to purchase the produce. Suburban opposition to noises, smells, working late at night – operations are driven by weather.
- Tax burden on rural land is higher but they use fewer services.
- Conservation Easement program, not interested in another government program. Farmers are very independent.
- Town regulations are difficult. Future idea for agriculture activity on the property but fearful of Town regulations and process for approvals.
- Example of chicken coop on farm that was being replaced. Town issued stop work order – overly burdensome and costly to farmer.
- Drainage issues from surrounding developments, which makes portion of agriculture parcels unusable (wet). Residential neighbors didn't want water in their back yard.
- Animals eating crops because there's no place for them to go – pushed out from development.
- As last remaining large land in the Town – land becomes opportunity for utility pipeline placement serving conduit for the public good.
- Don't have consistent internet access (broadband) in rural areas – zoom meetings difficult [also marketing of product].
- Access to startup capital is a process.
- Bethlehem has reputation of being a difficult town.
- Tiresome to fight to prove a use/activity is agriculture and does not need site plan review or building permit.
- Town is very rule-oriented.

What are some ideas or opportunities for the Town to encourage existing agricultural businesses?

Solutions

- Growers could work to gather to sell produce or setup an organization (cooperative). Collaborate to enhance the opportunities in the Town.

- Teach younger generation – get into schools.
- Surge in children (suburbs) interested in equine riding due to COVID. Businesses tailor marketing to family demographic would also increase interest (exposure) in agriculture. Experience outdoors and farm activity.
- Education on residential side needed – right to farm.
- Right to Farm Law (town specific) – provide security for your investment and Town or neighbors can't take it away.
- Clear definitions of agriculture activity/business in Zoning Law so when farmer pursues the business approval process is predictable for both the Town and the farmer. As by-right use only requires building permit, not site plan review [*R. Leslie comment reflecting on recent equine vet practice proposal*].
- Simplify rules/processes – don't need numerous definitions, use Ag & Markets definitions. Consider agriculture business proposal and look at it from agriculture perspective - find a way to make it work since we are trying to encourage agriculture in the Town.
- Provide education to farmers informing them that they do not have to go through site plan approvals for agriculture businesses when activity is by-right use.
- Farm to table dinner – close down road so agriculture business can have farm to table dinner in field without traffic.
- Figure out a way where taxes aren't the burden.
- Publicize funding/grant programs to help preserve barns.
- Create funding program to help purchase farmland.
- State Law changes:
 - Farmers School Property Tax Credit: for farmers who make 2/3 of income from agriculture. Current Town farmers not eligible since spouse is working full time for health insurance, which is effecting the income criteria. Town encourage State Legislature to sponsor bill to lower the 2/3 income level to make farmers in Town eligible. Would also help Albany County farmers – lot of small farms. Need Senate/Assembly member to sponsor the Bill.
 - NYS Agricultural Assessment (exemption) criteria – difficult to achieve \$10,000 gross income. 50% of farms in US don't achieve that. Lower the criteria (income limit), say \$5,000. Also, lower the timeframe (currently 2 years) to be eligible. This would be supportive of the smaller farms we have locally. "Big ag" lobby is fighting this change because they want small farms to fail.

Question #3: What are the key barriers to starting a NEW/FUTURE agricultural business in Bethlehem?

Barriers

- Layers of Board approvals, site planning, surveying, etc. is daunting.
- Land access to any new farmer is difficult.
- Affordability of land.
- Access to startup capital.
- Residential neighbors complaining about nuisance from farming (odors, noise, work hours)
- Soils are difficult – lot of amendments to grow vegetables. Young farmers would not be attracted to Bethlehem soils. Experience is to first understand soils on the land.

What are some ideas or opportunities for the Town to encourage new/future agricultural businesses?

Solutions

- There are a lot of farmers looking for land in the Capital District (like in TOB, where markets are good). Need to make land accessible and affordable; be a welcoming town for agricultural practices (ok with smells, noises, “imperfect”-looking landscape on working land)
- New farmers need access to start-up capital. Need to look at agriculture as a business, like any other business.
- Have you identified areas/parcels in Town that may not be involved in agriculture but could potentially be, and then pair landowner with young farmer? Once land is developed – residential lots, it’s gone forever.
- Land in TOB is too expensive – PDR (local Farms & Forests Fund paired with NYS FPIG grant) could help provide affordable land to a new farm businesses
- Opportunity for small animal – sheep, goats; adequate land for that activity (also, hoop houses, greenhouses to grow plants and vegetables in the colder months).
- Incentivize landowners with good soils to lease land to new/young farmer (Nimble Roots Farm example of leasing land from non-farming landowners/partners) – found a mutually beneficial relationship
- Promote the NYS Farmland Finder (Farmland for the next generation) – matches landowners with farmers needing land.
- Opportunities to repurpose old/historic barns for agritourism uses – grants to help restore farm structures for business purposes (state local?)
- If new farmers think that the general public in the town are not receptive to farming activities (smells, noises, not perfectly beautiful farmland), then new farmers will not feel welcomed and will not choose to locate here – education to public, local Right to Farm law

Question #4: How can the Town encourage the various supply chain businesses that are important to agricultural business success in Bethlehem?

- Which supply chain businesses are missing locally, regionally? (examples: meat processing, specialty/value-added processing, exchange system for farm services/equipment, veterinarian, direct markets/delivery systems, etc.)
- Meat processing is a problem. Booked for 2 years out to get USDA certified. To be able to market need USDA certified. Need to go to Massachusetts, Vermont. Guilderland is local, but booked. Region-wide problem.
- Allow slaughter house in Rural Light Industrial district. Currently only allowed in Heavy Industrial district.
- Locating a slaughter house is always a challenge. Infrastructure needs, but not located near anything (impacts).
- Traveling slaughter house (but needs to be USDA certified) – north of Troy existing business, but not USDA certified.
- Restaurants- need produce from local growers (and/or farmland to grow their own produce)
- Commercial kitchens needed for value-added products (example: tomatillos into salsa; processing and packaging)

- Collaborative local/regional product distribution network for farm products to help each other sell their products (example: Hudson Valley Bounty Network via HVADC)

Question #5 (if time): When thinking about Bethlehem’s future in agriculture, what is the most important thing that needs to happen?

- COVID created awareness in locally grown produce.
- Good year for growers. People will be back because they appreciated locally grown.
- People see what’s available to them, and appreciate freshness, taste.
- Returning customers. New residents to market to after those who have put their kids through school leave.

Takeaways/Immediate Action Items

While some of the solutions for agriculture are long term related recommendations or policies in the Comprehensive Plan Update, there are a few solutions that can be pursued now:

- The Town can start to actively support the two legislative modifications:
 - (1) Farmers School Property Tax Credit
 - (2) NYS Agricultural Assessment (exemption). The Town can engage with the Farm Bureau and other entities to move these needed bills and efforts forward with Senator Breslin and Assemblymember Fahy.

THANK YOU!!!

Ways to continue the conversation – let’s keep it going!:

- Website: www.BethlehemForward.com
- Social media: <https://www.facebook.com/BethlehemForward>, <https://www.instagram.com/bethlehemforward/>
- Email: BethlehemForward@townofbethlehem.org
- Rob Leslie- Phone: 518-439-4955 x 1157
- Reach out to Ed Kleinke, Comprehensive Plan Update Committee/Bethlehem Forward member (contact info above)



Bethlehem Forward: Comprehensive Plan Update

www.bethlehemforward.com

Large Business/Economic Development Focus Group Summary

Thursday, April 15, 2021 – 10:00AM via Zoom

Goal/purpose: To explore how Bethlehem can support existing and attract new businesses (non-retail/storefront) and advance economic development opportunities in the Town, which will guide recommendations for the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Facilitators: William Price, RLA – SWBR

Town/Consultant representatives: Rob Leslie, Director of Planning rleslie@townofbethlehem.org; Kevin Dwarka, Economic Development Consultant kdwarka@kevindwarka.com; David VanLuven, Supervisor

Comprehensive Plan Update Committee Member: Rad Andersen

What are top 2-3 things that concern you about your business?

- **Jim Marotta (American National Insurance-Farm Family, Route 9W):** Biggest issue is attracting and retaining talent. With Covid, we are now looking at attracting talent from rest of country. Insurance industry is heavily regulated. There are catastrophes that affect as well.
- **Gregg Biche(Quality Property Management, Delaware Ave.):** Work is not hard to get. But labor force is real challenge. And there is not an end to that in near sight.
- **Patrick Riegel (WJ Riegel Rail Solutions):** We are in industrial construction, supporting rail providers. Our single largest issue is attracting skilled labor. There is no shortage of work but we are limited in what we pursue given employment and training requirements. We are very regulated as well, and requirements discourage labor.
- **Casey Crowley (Owens Corning, Rt. 32/Feura Bush Road):** Labor is key piece for manufacturing. Talent is slow and hard to find. New regulations (paid sick leave) puts us in a bind. We are trying to build up skill level through apprenticeship programs but we are limited in number we can train while still hiring. State/Town provided job training grant. Second piece is utility-power supplies (interruptions from National Grid). These small blips have an impact.
- **Maurice O'Connell (CSX):** Our biggest interest is safety. Transport is heavily regulated by Surface Transportation Board (STB) and Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). We have large yard in Selkirk and automotive distribution center. Having the Town's cooperation has helped us attract customers. David has reached out to help us bring additional business.

- **Kurt Miles (CSX):** Our operation at Selkirk is mission critical. In 2017, CSX operated 12 pump yards. Now we have just 5. So Selkirk has become even more important and will get busier as times goes by – future is strong.

What are the best aspects of where your business is located? What are drawbacks of your current locations?

- **Patrick Jordan (Port of Albany):** We have river / road access. Port was built in perfect spot. But then everyone built around us. Led to complaints about traffic volumes and noise. Saying “we were here first” doesn’t work. Moving traffic fleets and road infrastructure is expensive (\$5 - \$10M). If we change 300ft of track, that’s a ½ million(\$). These are not small costs. So while we are well positioned as a hub (3 hours from major cities) and employ 2,000 people, getting to Port is not always easy for tenants. CDTA buses from South End of Albany or Bethlehem is limited. We have been trying to impress upon CDTA to improve access via bus routes, car pooling, that would get more workers direct into port.
- **Scott Sabatino (Price Chopper):** We have 2 facilities in Bethlehem (Slingerlands under construction as a Market 32) and Glenmont. One of our biggest complaints is that the Glenmont entrance is very difficult. We have been trying to get a traffic light to improve safety during peak times of getting in and out.
 - Robert: Roundabout construction will begin in May.
- **Patrick Jordan (Port of Albany):** Things like roundabouts work great. Municipalities around port are creating travel patterns that make it harder for Port Transport movements of goods on Rt32 or Rt9. There are chokepoints of getting on I-787 that we cannot handle anymore. We may need to turn down tenants. There was not collaboration with the adjoining municipality (Albany) I787 exit ramp about working with existing businesses. If we don’t resolve the transport issues, we could lose longshoreman and actual employers around the Port that need the port to move things through.
 - David – as part of roundabout design, we met with large truck drivers early on in the comprehensive planning process to make sure our systems work for everyone.
 - Robert – we accommodated the large trucks/ low flatbeds in the roundabout design by adjusting curb design.
- **Jody Monroe (Bethlehem Central School District):** We have created some traffic issues this past year with pick up and dropoff. We are fortunate in that we do get high quality candidates for teaching and administrative jobs. Volume applicants are lower. (e.g. elementary school teacher position 5 years ago would attract 1,000 applicants – today 200-300 applicants). There is a change in labor pool. But we still get qualified candidates. When we look at support staff, we are experiencing huge shortages of bus drivers. Lots of new requirements from State. We typically have over 90 drivers. We are now under 60. We have to rely on parents to bring kids to schools. We have challenges with other positions (aides). We struggle to get quality people who want to stay.

- **Judith Kehoe (Bethlehem Central School District):** We have increased our sidewalks to encourage students walking to school. Walkability is a plus.
- **Jim Marotta (American National Insurance-Farm Family):** Walkability is important to our employees. The addition of sidewalks and roundabout has been well received. We have had some incidents where we have had employees hit by cars, walking across Rt9W for lunch to Walmart or Applebee's. As we thinking about walkability, let's consider safety for employees, students, or residents using walk areas.

What advice do you have for the Town / County wishing to attract new industry?

- **Gregg Biche (Quality Property Management):** For companies seeking employees from outside the Town is availability of housing a concern?
- **Jim Marotta (American National Insurance):** We have young families who are attracted to schools but move to areas around Bethlehem due to availability and affordability of housing.
- **Scott Sabatino (Price Chopper):** I recently sold home in Glenmont after 25 years of Bethlehem. Prospective buyers decided to back out of deal and live on outskirts of Bethlehem because of the cost of living in Bethlehem with property taxes, price of housing. The market is hot right now.
- **Kurt Miles (CSX):** Provide listing of properties on website that County lists and shows availability, acreage, power, infrastructure. Work with brokers and CBRE. Selkirk is an obvious place to focus efforts given how many want to be around that railyard.
- **Carl Becker (Windsor Companies):** You could use more multi-family, especially our one product in the Hamlet development, the townhome rental rents to two type of tenants (young professionals and downsizers).
- **Gregg Biche (Quality Property Management):** the idea of first floor living is something we get on a regular basis. Many want to turn the living room into a bedroom space, and find space for bathroom. They want to age in their homes.

Are there other business synergies you would like to see located nearby? (i.e. supply chain)

- **Patrick Riegel (WJ Riegel Rail Solutions):** Customers who want rail access speak with Patrick who works with Kurt. We acquired property that was already well served by CSX – former Agway property. What we are looking to bring in transload projects (farm served, commodities) things that can go from rail to truck, a standard transload operation. Some that need short term storage – maybe lumber product.
 - Riegel Rail Solutions is located in the Selkirk area. We both from a construction standpoint, service the local industries, and also wear the hat for developer properties. We go right to Kurt with transload requests, can it be supported by CSX, how rail cars can come in/year and how many trucks can come off the road? With location in Selkirk there is potential for short-term, long-term storage – feeds into the Port access to the river. We

have been at our business serving rail customers for 40 years, but attempting to spearhead other business in South Bethlehem and continue to work with Kurt.

Do you use local, county or state economic development programs?

- **Kurt Miles (CSX):** We do work a lot with NYS Empire State Development – multimodal programs. Right now, we have been working with Patrick Riegel to access transload customers who do not have their own facility to offload – former Agway property. We have been working with Peter Frueh. That activity is created by proximity to Selkirk. We are hoping that some of the business can use some of the programs out there.

What town, county or state regulations / policies could be modified to help your business?

- **Patrick Riegel (WJ Riegel Rail Solutions):** On the existing property, because we are in the infancy of clean up and rehabbing track structure in this heavy industrial zone, we need to determine what products (like fertilizers, gas, hazmat) to determine what we can target at this issue. Can we serve gas? Propane? Conversation is still developing in terms of what we could be bringing here. This is what we could bring in the town of Bethlehem. Will meet with Town to determine what products can be brought in – nonhazardous materials. Aware of potential customers who want to move from current facility and be closer to railyards and markets they serve.
- **Patrick Jordan (Port of Albany):** For developers and the Port, having a clear path for development whether its actual or imagined. We need to know that we need to get through the process in a timely fashion (predictability). As long as that continues, road blocks are not going to be thrown up out of the blue. Developers need to know what to expect. Port had good experience with the Town – wind energy development site. Links to available sites that allow industrial development (similar to Kurt comment above), make the information available and work closely with applicant through the planning review process. Goal is to get trucks off the road and product/material onto rail or barge.
 - Dissuade truck traffic from using Corning Hill Road. River Road is preferred. Improving roads and rail within the Port over next few years to allow traffic to get right onto rail or highway.
- **Patrick Riegel (WJ Riegel Rail Solutions):** It will be important to capture the usage of business and properties in thinking about zoning along cargo corridors adjacent to railyards. There are previous farms converted to industrial uses (trucking companies). In 2005, our physical location along Route 396 was rezoned to a Rural Hamlet zone. This was in error and it's limited our expansion plans. Needs to be rezoned for our current business operations. Capture what the appropriate use of lands should be to support business.

THANK YOU!!!

Ways to continue the conversation – let's keep it going!:

- Website: www.BethlehemForward.com
- Social media: <https://www.facebook.com/BethlehemForward>,
<https://www.instagram.com/bethlehemforward/>

- Email: BethlehemForward@townofbethlehem.org
- Rob Leslie- Phone: 518-439-4955 x 1157



Bethlehem Forward: Comprehensive Plan Update

www.bethlehemforward.com

Local Business/Chamber Focus Group Summary

Thursday, April 15, 2021 – 8:30AM via Zoom

Goal/purpose: To explore how Bethlehem can support and encourage existing and new retail/storefront businesses in Town, which will guide recommendations for the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Facilitators: William Price, RLA – SWBR and Maureen McGuinness – Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce

Town/Consultant representatives: Rob Leslie, Director of Planning rleslie@townofbethlehem.org; Kevin Dwarka, Economic Development Consultant kdwarka@kevindwarka.com; David VanLuven, Supervisor

Comprehensive Plan Update Committee Member: Bill Ketzner

Why did you choose to locate your business in Bethlehem?

- **John McIntyre (Spotlight Newspapers, 341 Delaware Avenue, Delmar):** Been here since 1955. Had opportunity in early 2000s, as business shifted from Delmar to Colonie, we contemplated moving but decided to stay because of the uniqueness of Bethlehem and our time there. We choose to be here b/c of vibrant community.
- **Jim Giacone (My Place, 241 Delaware Avenue, Delmar):** Grew up in town, graduated college in 83, love the town, knew the laws, could navigate through zoning, good help from building department, well run, good character, good schools. Think sometimes we might be changing and loosening things a little too different. I am for change but in a good way.
- **Rob Sawyer (Sawyer's Screen Printing & Embroidery, 10 Hallwood Road, Delmar):** Live in Delmar, previously located in Watervliet, friends showed us the current space, we are 2 miles away from shop, we like the town. Proximity to home made it perfect place to locate business.
- **Pam Robbins (Policy Research Associates):** Largest employers on Delaware Avenue, 75 employees (50 in building, 25 around the country); we knew the community because we lived there, we have a ton of employees living within blocks of our business on Delaware Avenue, we have stayed there because I like the different features that our location on Delaware Avenue location has to offer such as the walkability, the Rail Trail, the ease of getting food without driving; we will be closed until July and so re-evaluating what we need in terms of a brick and mortar place, we have one year lease, our staying or going will depend on the environment and the community surrounding us.

- **John Hogan (CrossFit Spur, Hamilton Lane, Glenmont):** picked Bethlehem on demographics (population density, space availability for a gym, community (I had worked at YMCA), tons of advantages of being in Bethlehem because it's a unique community.
- **Guin Gorman (Grace Roofing, 1562 New Scotland Rd, Slingerlands):** grew up on border of Delmar and Albany, grew up in family business, decided to start company in 2004 in construction industry. We wanted to open a business with construction and dance studio for community. We occupy whole building across from Toll Gate. We love the location. What I have experienced over past 15 years both with the dance school and roofing is that this community supports one another.
- **Jeff Bryant (Bryant Insurance Agency, 1280 New Scotland Road, Slingerlands):** we moved our office to Slingerlands in 1986, a business my dad started in 1951. My brother and I came into the business in early 80s. Previously located on Wolf Road, but wanted business closer to clients. We bought a building across from BCBS building and made it into our office and expanded a few times. We enjoy being part of the community, part of the local charities. We also love what the Town has done in terms of recreation such as a mountain bike park. We would like to see rail to trail connected to other areas (connection to Terramere neighborhood to avoid using Cherry Ave Extension). The town has done significant things with regard to recreation and that recreation creates a sense of community.

How critical is location to your business?

- **Deb Murray (Delaware Plaza, 3 Normanskill Boulevard, Delmar):** Have 30 tenants, new one moving in shortly. Dad bought property over 45 years as an investment. On side, I manage shopping center in Plattsburgh. The Town has always been wonderful to work with. Same with what other people have said. The community supports local businesses and the area. And in return, we do the same. My tenants and us in a management company do the same. Our location has easy access in and out of Delmar. So far us, location is prime. Its nice to see after this year of the pandemic, people are back at the shopping center. There is a good mix. And prospective tenants like that.
- **Julie Sasso (McSharry and Associates Realty, 385 Delaware, Delmar):** Our location is critical and not at all. Originally, we wanted a storefront to be a legitimate business. We had space on 385 Delaware, right at four corners, first floor front, and then we have four residential units in the building, across from Delaware Reform Church. It proved to be much more important than we anticipated. Even though we don't use the space that often, it is important for meeting clients in center of town.
- **Katherine Agneta (Merriman & Pfister, 406 Kenwood Avenue, Delmar):** To have eateries and diverse retail is really important and could be a template for Glenmont and Slingerlands, at the end of Elsmere at Feur Bush. Mixed use is a huge appeal that works for the Town. Its working at 4 corners and could be more substantial. Other parts of the Town of Bethlehem could benefit from this model of a hamlet based hub.

- **Jim Morrill (Delmar Beverage):** My business is different from some. There tends to be more bulky purchase that tends to be heavier. So it's more conducive to people arriving in vehicle so I need visibility, streetfront, and parking on Delaware Avenue. It remains important that the primary mode of transportation, which is the vehicle, remain fully accessible in that space. A store like mine would not be perfect in that kind of hamlet setting. It would need to be more in a setting like Jim and Mary's market (McCaroll's). Needs to be spaces that accommodate businesses like this where people are carrying bulky items to their vehicles.

What limits your business from expansion / growth? (workforce, capital, pandemic)

- **John McIntyre (Spotlight Newspapers, 341 Delaware Avenue, Delmar):** biggest problem we have is that many businesses are closed. For long term, we have to look at other issues including traffic, serious infrastructure issues including power (we are out of power whenever the wind blows the wrong way. If you are looking at infrastructure plans, be sure to look at power. The other thing that is important especially in terms of transportation projects is communication with business, especially along Delaware Avenue, and going into Glenmont (where a roundabout is coming in). Upper Delaware project was a disaster for local businesses (though it looks great now) due to poor communication. As other projects come in, we need to look at better communication.
- **Jim Giacone (My Place, 241 Delaware Avenue, Delmar):** end of Elsmere Avenue/Feura Bush Road. At Kendall Square, we put up one building and had a viable tenant but they needed gasoline sales – Stewart's. But when we went back to Clarkson and Leslie, they said they would not support gas station as the Town's previous staff had allowed it. As far as Delaware Avenue, it's a good location, good community. I wanted to give back to the community, be involved with recreation activities. We have a great love for the Town as the location of our primary business.
- **Vince Crisafulli (St. Croix Tan, 266 Delaware Avenue, Delmar):** Pandemic is not help. But from an operation and investment standpoint, it's the worry of the regulatory unknown that could change the cost of an operation. Signage and use restrictions make the space less valuable. If there is less traffic in front of my retail stores, then the space has less value.
- **Karly Decker (Free Movement Pilates on Kenwood near 4 Corners):** I took over existing studio. Pandemic hit. I am booked solid with my personal business. I can see 25 clients a week. I have been appreciative for the grants, like the Town providing masks and sanitizers. I felt supported that this was being given to small businesses. There was a grant that I used for air purifiers (PPE), that was helpful. I appreciate the money that was helpful to small businesses.
- **Marie Bettini (Realty Group, 203 Delaware Avenue):** If you look historically back, towns that are not progressive are the ones that fall behind that newer people do not want to move to, and the tax base shrinks, and cannot support other things. I don't think we should approve things willy nilly but we need to move forward so we don't fall behind. Its great being in business in Town of Bethlehem. Location is important. I support anything Town and Chamber does. Its all of our livelihoods. Don't necessarily need specific location, but the signage visibility helps.

- **Guinn Gorman (Grace Roofing, 1562 New Scotland Rd, Slingerlands):** Community members have serious differences of opinions. What I see is that residents in that areas are afraid of growth. We obviously have some challenges at that intersection (Kenwood Ave/New Scotland Rd). But I wonder if there is a way to meet in the middle. And I don't know. But we have some beautiful vacant buildings. There are reasons for this. I would love to see something in Tollgate again. We want to preserve the buildings, their architecture, but there is a disconnect between residents and the businesses. If there is a fear that business would spoil the area, that is an issue. I work hard to make a peaceful situation between businesses and residents. Is there a better way of connecting residents with businesses and not letting it be such a limitation, remove the fear element.

What role (if any) does town government play in success of your business?

- **Jeff Bryant (Bryant Insurance Agency, 1280 New Scotland Road, Slingerlands):** We have been here since 1986. Speaking about the former Blue Cross Blue Shield Building (BCSD)- It was vacant probably for 10 years before that. It's a big mystery (asbestos? Paying taxes? Discussions with owners? Is there a plan? Is it a tax write-off [Rob – Town kept in contact with Picotte Companies, who is the owner, to have quarterly conversations about the building and offer help. We suggested that we could apply for a grant from NYS Empire State Development to support a marketing analysis for the property. And the property owner was not willing to participate in that grant. We held an economic event 5 years ago at property. Its gutted inside. Walls, piping removed. The bottom floor is used for storage and have expressed to us that they are only interested in selling property outright and not interested in breaking up the 80K space into smaller subtenants. But with that amount of space and with the pandemic, how viable is that? Asking price is too high. Property from zoning perspective is zoned hamlet, allows for multi-family, retail, office space.
- **Pam Robbins (Policy Research Associates, 345 Delaware Avenue, Delmar):** Offered to Picotte to take some of BCBS building but brushed off.
- **Julie Sasso (McSharry and Associates Realty, 385 Delaware, Delmar):** How does the Town navigate empty buildings like Tollgate and BCBS. Bottom line is that town does not have control. Community may have unrealistic expectations of what the Town can and cannot control.
- **Jeff Bryant (Bryant Insurance Agency, 1280 New Scotland Road, Slingerlands):** Important to approach vacant property owners and offer to help them. Maybe folks like the owners of the Toll Gate might avail themselves if they knew there was a grant or possibly commercial rent assistance.
- **Guin Gorman (Grace Roofing, 1562 New Scotland Rd, Slingerlands):** Direct assistance (grants or loans) toward whatever it is that keeping the business back (like code compliance) so that we don't have vacant buildings.

What town or state regulations could be modified to help your business?

- **Erma Klein (Delmar Dog Grooming, 30 Hudson Ave, Delmar):** my family has been here since 1800s, watched Delmar go from farm town to what it is today. My concern is that I was involved in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. There was a group of people who wanted to walk the rules on trespassing. They wanted to make it so they could have picnic by a stream on farmers property. The wanderers law in England. The farmers said that he originally turned a blind eye but then they littered the property, climbed the fence. The town has talked about being more lenient on trespassing. Its not just large landowners but applies to every business. Sometimes, there is animosity toward landowners and business owners. How will the wish lists for regulations affect business owners. The road diet is not going to help businesses.
 - David VanLuven: The Town is not considering changes to make trespass laws more lenient, or to change enforcement responses. We're also not talking about creating restrictions on holiday decorations.

- **John McIntyre (Spotlight Newspapers, 341 Delaware Avenue, Delmar):** we have to look at housing. Many businesses have employees that do not live here. There is a disconnect between affordable housing and workforce housing. Communication about changes is very important. They are not always as well communicated as they need to be. What can improve the business community is the communication between business community and the Town. Tell us about new laws and how we will fit into them so we can adapt.

THANK YOU!!!

Ways to continue the conversation – let's keep it going!:

- Website: www.BethlehemForward.com
- Social media: <https://www.facebook.com/BethlehemForward>,
<https://www.instagram.com/bethlehemforward/>
- Email: BethlehemForward@townofbethlehem.org
- Rob Leslie- Phone: 518-439-4955 x 1157

Town of Bethlehem

Comprehensive Plan

Public Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: December 8, 2020 6:00-8:00 PM

Meeting Location: Zoom (Virtual)

Prepared by: Highland Planning



SWBR

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OVERVIEW

On Tuesday, December 8, 2020, the Town of Bethlehem hosted a virtual public meeting from 6:00—8:00 PM to support the development of the Comprehensive Plan that will guide development and community-related decisions toward the community's vision for years to come. The Town's current Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2005, has provided the Town's elected and appointed officials with valuable context and guidance for development-related decisions and capital investment. It established a vision for the community's future, articulated guiding principles and goals, and recommended specific actions or strategies that would move the Town toward the community vision. Updating the comprehensive plan requires a thorough and inclusive community discussion about the current state of the town, the community's values and aspirations for the future, and the strategies that should be used or actions that should be taken to achieve the community's vision for the future.

By Fall 2021, the Town of Bethlehem Board will adopt an update to its Comprehensive Plan to establish a shared community vision for the future and an action plan to achieve it.

To inform and engage the members of the general public in the development of the Comprehensive Plan Update, the Town hosted the first public meeting to serve as an introduction to the project, providing an opportunity to:

- (1) Share information about the project scope, schedule, and engagement opportunities
- (2) Summarize feedback received to date
- (3) Solicit feedback from participants about issues and opportunities

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the meeting was held virtually using Zoom and also livestreamed on the Bethlehem Forward Facebook page and the project website. To reach out to people who do not have access to the internet or computer, the option to join the meeting by phone was also provided.

More than 155 people attended the virtual public meeting, including 15 participants who joined via Facebook Live. The meeting recording is accessible at <https://youtu.be/1Kty3GxB96E> and a list of attendees interested in staying informed about the project is included as Appendix A.

AGENDA

The virtual public meeting was convened by David VanLuven, Town Supervisor, who welcomed and thanked the attendees for participating. Reiterating the purpose of the meeting, Tanya Zwahlen, Highland Planning, reviewed the meeting agenda, which included:

- Welcome & Introductions
- Meeting Instructions & Poll Questions

- Project Overview
 - Project Scope/Schedule/Engagement Opportunities
 - What We’ve Heard – Key Themes
- Topic-Oriented Breakout Sessions
- Report Out
- Q&A/ Discussion
- Wrap-up & Next Steps

A copy of the annotated agenda is included as Appendix B.

INTRODUCTIONS & MEETING INSTRUCTIONS

Bill Price, SWBR, introduced the project team including the Town representatives, the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) members, and the consultant team members from SWBR, Highland Planning, Fisher Associates, and Kevin Dwarka, LLC.

Tanya further informed the attendees about Zoom meeting controls. To gather an understanding about geographic representation, the team asked attendees to participant in a poll and select one of the hamlets in the Town of Bethlehem they live in. The polling results¹ tabulated below illustrate that majority of attendees represented Delmar (47%), followed by Elsmere (21%). There was no representation from North Bethlehem and South Bethlehem.

Poll 1: Where do you live?

Hamlet	Response
Delmar	(41) 47%
Elsmere	(18) 21%
Glenmont	(10) 11%
North Bethlehem	(0) 0%
Selkirk	(6) 7%
Slingerlands	(11) 13%
South Bethlehem	(0) 0%
Other	(1) 1%

PROJECT PRESENTATION

Bill Price, SWBR, presented an overview of Comprehensive Plan Update process, including the project scope and schedule. He noted that the project initiation and public engagement plan phases of the project have been completed and we are currently in the community assessment

¹ A total of 87 Zoom meeting attendees participated in the poll.

and profile phase. He provided an overview of both completed and upcoming engagement activities, including one-on-one stakeholder interviews, CPUC meetings, four public meetings, three focus groups, and two online surveys, throughout the course of the project.

Tanya further summarized the comments received from the community during the stakeholder interviews.

- Town has top school districts in New York State
- Other assets include:
 - Parks and open spaces
 - Senior services and public services
 - Rural and historic character
 - Socially conscious community
- Unequal resource/infrastructure distribution between Delmar and other Town hamlets
- Lack of racial diversity and inclusion in the community
- Preservation of historic sites, buildings, and the rural character is crucial
- Other concerns noted by stakeholders include:
 - Motorized traffic (trucks, tankers, etc.) passing through the Town
 - Barriers to business expansion
 - Development of former farms and rural lands
 - Availability of affordable and age-friendly Housing
 - Town financial resources, particularly in the wake of the COVID pandemic
 - Neighborhood connectivity / cut-through traffic
 - Property owner's rights and flexibility of uses on rural lands

A copy of the project presentation is included as Appendix C.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS & REPORT OUT

The presentation was followed by an interactive group exercise. Tanya Zwahlen, Highland Planning, introduced the topic-oriented breakout group exercise and noted that the participants were pre-assigned to topic-oriented breakout groups based on their preferences at the time of meeting registration. Each breakout session was led by a Facilitator and/or Notetaker, who were members of the project team and/or CPUC. There were a series of generic discussion questions.

1. What is the biggest issue/ challenge?
2. What could the Town do better?
3. What resources does the Town lack?
4. What's going well in the Town with regard to this topic?
5. What would you like to see more of?

Participants were encouraged to discuss the issues and opportunities associated with the respective topic and collect their thoughts. Each breakout group selected one participant to debrief main points/key takeaways from the discussion to the larger group.

Summary from each topic-oriented breakout groups is included below.

AGING

The breakout session on aging was facilitated by Tanya Zwahlen, Highland Planning. Twelve (12) participants were in attendance.

1. What is the biggest issue regarding aging in the Town?

- Accommodations in design and infrastructure (parks, sidewalks) are needed
- Use universal design
- Challenge of housing stock; one floor living is in high demand
- New construction should include one floor living and multi-family housing; this would make the town more attractive for those who are aging and for diversity
- More one floor, rental options in walkable areas are needed in the Town
- New housing is not being built in walkable areas
- Town center doesn't provide mixed use walkability; this worries me
- Not a lot of one floor housing available and, where there is, it's not affordable; this is a barrier to existing residents
- Lack of available land in the center of town for the development of a senior center
- Lack of connectivity with transportation and people

2. What could the Town do better?

- Neighborhood support groups and networks to help people stay in place
- Create a community center with a focus on senior programs and with programs involving mixed age groups
- Anytime there is infrastructure improvements, consider universal design
- Van service or micro-transit to move residents through the town; people might be willing to pay for this

3. What resources does the Town lack?

- Money
- Volunteers and/or personnel

4. What's going well in the Town with regard to the needs of senior citizens?

- Senior programs are tremendous; they are a hidden gem
- Senior transportation to appointments and shopping
- Most are from Delmar and Slingerlands

5. What would you like to see more of?

- More people aware of Bethlehem Neighbors, a group of people who join together to help people age in place, so it can be more successful
- Transportation for other ages
- The Town Planning Department study, analyze and recommend improvements that help senior citizens and those with disabilities
- Ask people with expertise on topics related to aging and residents with disabilities to provide knowledge and advice to the Town to solve problems
- Using skills of senior citizens to greater affect

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The breakout session on economic development was facilitated by Kevin Dwarka, Kevin Dwarka LLC, with support from Karen Shaw, Town of Bethlehem as the notetaker. Sixteen (16) participants were in attendance.

1. What is the biggest issue in the Town regarding economic development?

- Chamber of Commerce - hear from members - difficulty going through the Planning Board process, time takes too long to get project approved.
- Planning Board needs business owners on the Board; there's a lack of understanding of how biz economy works
 - Makes a difference when businesses are deciding if they should locate in Bethlehem
- How do we encourage start-ups, small businesses?
- When on Town Board - solar companies - attracted to communities like Bethlehem where the permitting is streamlined; can we think about targeting small businesses and setting out a standardization of how they would get started in town to make the process faster, more effective - a way to make it easier for businesses to get their start - given Covid-19, nurture small businesses
- Survey that Chamber did, existing businesses may not survive over the winter... highlight this problem. Critical problem right now.
- Rail trail is great, but there are opportunities for development and connection is a missed opportunity - finally had food trucks there, but didn't go about that in the best way
 - Chance to connect businesses to the Rail Trail, incubator spaces, encourage small restaurants
 - Right now, not a huge amount of food and restaurants - small, independent - could potentially hold the winter farmers market
 - Incentives - encourage small businesses to "refresh" their facade? Offer incentives for new signage on the outside

- Town encourage more social gatherings where businesses to participate - music in the park, street festivals - people looking for ways to come together; close down part of a street or four corners (Chowderfest, etc.)
- Microenterprise grant - supports small businesses through NYS/local grants; also, reimbursements/grants for PPE for small businesses (via IDA)
- Institutions need to remain open - dive tank, pool closed over the summer - killing jobs and commerce, mistake - need to manage money better
- Tax dollars come out of the private sector
- Land use moratorium - is there something in between? A uniform moratorium with no building for a year is too much
- Economic development will be inhibited for the next couple of years due to moratorium

2. What could the Town do better?

- One of the challenges is the rail trail is maintained by the County - food trucks was a County project - not sure there is an understanding at all levels priority of the town, local businesses
- Need better inter-governmental communication - County, State, local
- Planning Board - have a developer, small business person - is there anyone representing economic development?
- In another town, planning boards move more quickly - need to make sure PB members do their due diligence so questions are answered ahead of PB meetings
- As a small business owner - I don't know about these town-based incentive programs/grants, so communications need to be better, guidance for business owners would be helpful
- Some businesses use social media very well - could there be offerings by Town - bring in social media guru - show how to use Instagram/Facebook to draw business, promotional use
- Could be more grants and programs to support small business productivity and connections
- (remember to sign up for Chamber of Commerce emails, etc. To get notices, trainings :))
- Like to see expansion of amenities on the Rail Trail - undercurrent of folks living in town to have more connectivity - Four Corners - walkable, dense; offer opportunity for more businesses in the heart of Delmar
- Walkability is key - infrastructure is there, need to continue fostering this - particularly in Delmar - can expand to other areas (Slingerlands) and other places connected to Rail Trail (Voorheesville, etc.)
- Four Corners has bones that other places try to replicate, but it's all already there - just need to build on in - continue momentum - connection organically all along the trail's linear pathway

- Walk on the Rail Trail everyday - 2 generations of family; kids have all moved back and use the trail - as an Albany Co. Legislator, we are interested in ways to enhance the trail... pushing Dan McCoy to do more there. Have a vision for the trail - untapped potential.
- County owns the Rail Trail - want to support vision
- County has financial assistance for small businesses - can help support Town/IDA
- Connection to the Pine Hollow Arboretum from the rail trail
- The Rail Trail going all the way out to Voorheesville
- The Four Corners - most suburbs don't have this so enhance this: Fall Fest at Perfect Blend, etc.; perhaps blocking off a street to celebrate/encourage businesses to interact, celebrate

Other comments on tax included:

- Part of the work of the IDA is to bring in businesses to enable the growth of the tax base
- Look for businesses that are within our mission
- As taxpayers, we see we are getting value for our money... seems a lot of people agree with that if services are excellent

ENVIRONMENT/SUSTAINABILITY #1

The first breakout session on environment/ sustainability was facilitated by Jeremy Snyder, CPUC member, with support from Rob Leslie, Town of Bethlehem as the notetaker. Eighteen (18) participants were in attendance.

1. What are the biggest concerns with respect to the environment and sustainability?

- Maintaining clean air - proximity to SABIC
- Clean water - waste facilities (feeds to the Hudson)
- Preservation of open spaces, important conservation areas
- Clean energy as it relates to air quality
- Less houses being developed, preservation of open spaces
- Climate change
- Things we can do as a town to cut our energy waste (inefficiencies) - through sustainability initiatives to come out of this plan
- Future development needs to support mixed use, aging population. Cafes/restaurants. Very little going out towards Slingerlands - more needed in this area.
- Biking in this area is not safe.
- Where do we want/don't want houses – Selkirk is different than Slingerlands.
- Places for people to go and enjoy the land where they live

2. What is going well? What would you like to see more of?

- Rail Trail and charging stations at the Rail Trail
- Hiking trails, MHLC efforts

- Recycling program is amazing - like to see more plastics (not in our control)
- Walkable/Bikeable helps us to drive less
- CDTA- public transportation
- Comp Plan is moving ahead despite the virus
- Efforts towards Community Choice Aggregation - great idea/easy

3. What goals should the Town set with respect to the environment and sustainability?

- Government and businesses are doing towards sustainability. Synergy of Town Govt, business, and residents - 3 sectors to work together to set targets.
- Expand upon solar panels in Town - additional
- Real benefit from large-scale solar
- Ground mounted solar that also allows farming to take place underneath panels - compatible with agriculture
- Encourage smarter development – mixed-use development. Large scale residential development should include pocket-parks.
- Scale of housing - mega mansions not consistent with sustainability goals.
- Look at new housing with critical eye - sustainable.
- Bethlehem align its laws with NYS goals - zero-out greenhouse emissions by 2050-Climate Act (move Bethlehem towards zero-emissions)
- Sustaining open space balanced with property rights
- Lots of cars removed off the road - transportation includes many short trips - use public transportation as predominant use rather than Single occupancy

4. What are some policies or actions the Town could enact to meet these goals?

- Simplify regulations for egg-laying hens.
- Building out education programs for all ages - focus on youth attuned to environmental issues
- Sustainable farming
- backyard eggs vs store purchase
- Accessibility - open space/hiking trails is a draw
- Allow dogs in town parks [dogs need to be on leash-it's allowed]

5. What are other communities you're aware of that are doing a good job on the environment and sustainability that we can look to as role models?

- Look at Ithaca
- California/Washington

ENVIRONMENT/SUSTAINABILITY #2

The second breakout session on environment/ sustainability was facilitated by Frank Armento, Fisher Associates, with support from Brittany Murphy, SWBR as the notetaker. Around fifteen (15) participants were in attendance.

1. What are the biggest concerns with respect to the environment and sustainability?

- Town going in the right direction
- Will Comp Plan guide sustainability and make sure we do it right?
- How are we defining sustainability?
- Farm preservation is a concern, but not pigeon holing. “preserving” alone can be problematic, town should focus on property rights, and flexibility of use.
- Concerned about renewable energy, favors moving toward solar energy in town.
- Concerned with balance between property rights respect and managing development to sustain true environment and habitat, ensure factors like water table. How to “do both”?
- Concerned about pesticide use for aesthetic reasons for lawns
- Concern about pesticides seconded, no options for composting food scraps.
- Climate “smart communities’ program” should be incorporated into comp plan, solar energy in town code (issues about trees from neighbors blocking solar panels, disputes between neighbors). People plant native plants in yards but use not continued when property changes hands. Opportunities for passive solar, taking advantage of designing for sun exposure.
- Need resources for homeowners wanting to plant native plants

2. What policies/programs in town are going well? Other examples of towns with good policies or programs?

- New Scotland zoning changes around route 85, mixed use commercial use, land preservation, oriented around land features, protective of natural habitat and mixed-use development
- Vista tech park is an example of unsustainable development, too much asphalt/impervious, spread-out single-story buildings, replaced natural land in/near watershed. Need more innovation for development that protects natural features, stormwater, biodiversity.
- Some towns (nationally) have policies to buy local food, CSAS, introducing residents to food growers nearby
- Opportunities to educate residents about alternatives to pesticides, renewable energy, native plants etc. Convenient resources for busy people.

Other comments on town services with regards to sustainability included:

- Composting leaf and mulch program are amazing. Any enhancements/development would be great, could even export to other communities

- Need to consider health effects in all decisions, sidewalks, walkability, pesticides etc. Health in all policies
- Town is moving toward food waste composting; residents need to be educated in all areas of town. Make it easy for people. Would be a huge impact on greenhouse gas emissions.
- Creating networks/combining compost uses (food waste and leaves/yard)

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The breakout session on historic preservation was facilitated by Bill Price, SWBR with support from Leslie Lombardo, Town of Bethlehem as the notetaker. Around fifteen (15) participants were in attendance.

1. What is the biggest issue regarding historic preservation in the Town?

- No common goals for historic preservation
- Question if there should be historic districts
- Educational resources etc. Need a discussion on these questions to get to goals
- Group members have been active in participating in saving historic structures in town
- Bill noted the focus has been in Slingerlands, what about the other hamlets, can you mention them:
 - Selkirk area, Cedar Hill has the Historic Society
 - There was an inventory of structures in 1996, it needs to be updated
 - History of Town began in Cedar Hill area
 - People are not aware of where structures are.
 - We need a seat at the table for the topic, we need a process, a commission for historic preservation to get things moving
 - Old Delmar is also an area, a classic easy suburb, the town should protect, celebrate this area and Elsmere area also, mid to late 19th century, homes and subdivision built on old farms
 - Glendale Ave an example of homes built before 1900 in Delmar
 - Wealth of history here in Town in all parts
 - Uniqueness is important to residents

2. What's been lost?

- A home at the back of Maple Ave Delmar lost to construction to new homes, in-fill development, was once part of Grosbeck Farm
- Slingerlands - house behind the old Mangia restaurant was taken down
- Train Station in Slingerlands, now the fire house
- 9 Elsmere

3. Are there sites that need to be protected?

- A historic district commission could recommend areas to save, set up a process
- Church on Krumkill Rd that is being turned into a day care
- We need to define what is historic?
- 1996 inventory doesn't have all the data needed for a professional survey; it is missing structures doesn't include all
- Would help to have more data to meet the criteria, reconnaissance survey is a trigger to set up a district
- Consultant can give feedback on what's needed to set up a commission, districts etc.
- Sometimes restriction of a historic district is not welcomed by residents

4. What are the roles of property owner and muni in process?

- The owner can get their property designated by State and National level - have to meet criteria
- A historic commission, if formed, then it gets to weigh in on changes to structure- can cause additional expenses for renovations

Other comments included:

- Resident spoke of a home in a historic district that they own - the commission in that location is a good thing though she thought
- A commission is usually volunteer board, there is legislation that can help guide it, people can be from different background on a board like that.
- Education is important - tax credits can help with renovations if people are interested, Towns can help with that.
- Do you allow accessory dwelling units in order to help with revenue is a question?
- Limitations is a problem that needs attention, it can be an obstacle
- Some group members have looked into commissions and how they are set up, they vary, some are more advisory, the Town should talk about the idea and explore all the options

HOUSING

The breakout session on housing was facilitated by Brian Gyory, CPUC member. Twenty (20) participants were in attendance.

- Review Committee - demographics and aging of the town population. Left senior housing to the private sector market. Developments require cars and on the fringe of town. Would like senior housing in the core of the town
- Density in center. Concentrate on dense in central areas. Focus on infill in the center of town-include housing for seniors as well as young people. Worried about cost of housing.
- People want to live in walkable area

- Housing diversity - great. Co-housing or intentional community housing. Adults with disabilities specifically. Live in an environment that is quieter than the city
- Cooperative housing project in Saratoga (take a look at it)
- Partner with planners, architects, and social services
- Appear there is a movement to fill any empty space. Doesn't serve anyone except for owners of the empty space. Plan for development to change the community in a positive way. Not in a dramatic way that makes it a different way.
- Concern that unless we are more careful in planning, we risk that we could become a very different town.
- Concern over high-priced housing development
- Become more inclusive and look into healthy living
- Rail trail is added to positive side of town.
- High priced single homes require drive
- How to make a change to this? June Farms-125 acres -farm. Restaurant B&B. Context of land that it is very rural and also a business.
- West Hartford, CT. Farm that the Town purchased. Town maintains the farm. Local schools visit (education center). Lease some of the property as a wedding/event venue.
- Property owners-long time (30 years). Development-looking not to just pay taxes. Do something to shift. Developer to change.
- Sewage lift station as opposed to grinder pumps. Thoughtful ways to mitigate cost.
- Hard to find housing that is affordable for young families.
- Change in how we look at housing. If you look at total number of homes in Bethlehem. SF v multi/townhouse. Vast majority are single family on individual lots.
- Provide housing for changing demographics. Don't focus on outer lands.
- Find ways to develop in center of town and incentivize.
- Economics that drive the projects-economics are single family of SF attached homes on individual parcels of land
- Economics need to be looked at
- Agree about affordable housing. Diversify housing stock
- Apartments-including everyone, buy in on the idea.
- Town needs mixed use hamlet zoning.
- Seniors and young professionals-affordability and walkability
- Mass transit-key component. Modify transit lines to accommodate more people. Make more convenient.
- Affordable- Apartments, condos, co-ops
- Center is saturated
- People want to walk
- Mixed use hamlet zoning
- Incentivizing-increase housing for seniors. More cluster housing. Changes in building code
- Cluster housing-density bonus. Make them more of a requirement.

- People want more open space in town
- Have lots closer together with parkland in neighborhood.
- Greater density in new development. Multiunit house 2-3 story apartments.
- Infill developments. Take parking lots or SF house lots into more dense developments
- Accessory dwelling units-accommodate
- Incentives-change zoning to allow what we want
- Disallow what we don't want. We have tons of SF detached housing. Don't want more of this. For open space to be developed create a high bar to develop this space
- Enforce new zoning.
- Take option of greenspace development off the table
- Look at impact of demographic change
- Look at statewide demographics as well as local demographics
- Opportunity to look at comprehensive in a different way
- Forward thinking. What we want to see the town to look like in 10 years
- How do we use technology and alternative transportation?
- Housing and how housing development come into play
- Keep in mind that those of us that live in town want to be healthy here. Walking and recreation is really important. Seniors need a place to walk too.
- Transportation-bus line

TRANSPORTATION

The breakout session on economic development was facilitated by Mike Godfrey, Fisher Associates, with support from Nate Owens, Town of Bethlehem as the notetaker. Twelve (12) participants were in attendance.

1. **What is the biggest transportation issue in the Town?**
 - Traffic around town is manageable, but some areas are problematic. School times around elementary schools experience congestion. Pedestrian traffic at particular crosswalks is a problem. Sidewalks and pedestrian safety. Rectangular rapid flashing beacons are helpful. Cherry and Orchard crosswalk. No sidewalk that takes you to Elm Ave. Park.
 - Bicycle safety. Difficult to cycle around town. On-street facilities (shoulder, bike lane) are desired. Normanskill bridge a problem. Elsmere Ave. between bypass and Feura Bush Rd a problem. Full of potholes.
 - Continue focus on walkability and bikeability. Sidewalks can just end abruptly. More bike lanes and better shoulders desired. Make more areas of Town walkable.
 - Importance of street connectivity. Support bike lanes. Connect as many neighborhoods and people as possible to Elm Ave. Park. Especially important with Covid-19

- Truck traffic in Selkirk is a big issue (Maple Ave./396). Kids waiting for the school bus and that is a safety concern. Road winds and twists. 9W corridor is rough too. River Road is also a concern with truck traffic.
- Separate access to Thruway
- Main routes are NYSDOT roadways and that can be a barrier to Town efforts/initiatives. 9W roundabout rectangular rapid flashing beacons won't be installed initially, need to have supporting pedestrian numbers.

2. What could the Town do better with respect to transportation?

- More interface with State. Problems with roadwork in Town is on state roads. Work out some solutions with State - can be hard to connect with state. Bypass to Selkirk - roundabout in Glenmont and pedestrian access are examples.
- Concerns about pedestrian safety at roundabouts. Kenwood and Cherry a desired location. While they are efficient and safer than intersections, they are uncontrolled. They should be made safer for pedestrians.
- Roundabouts aren't good for cyclists either - roundabouts could be better designed for cyclists. Issue with riding alongside traffic.
- NYS-85 and lack of bicycle facilities
- Reach agreement with the City of Albany/Water Board to use the water line as a recreational facility.
- Creating pedestrian connectivity with paper streets (street that is mapped/owned by Town, but not constructed)- Colonial Acres an example

3. What transportation resources does the Town lack?

- Funding to maintain sidewalks and add new sidewalks, older sidewalks covered with asphalt. Need creative ways to maintain what we have and maintain new sidewalks.
- Great highway dept. Pretty good shape.

4. What's going well in the Town with regard to transportation?

- Bus route 18 and bus shelters - great way to connect - add shelters and maintain connectivity
- Rail trail - new connector in Albany to get to river
- Expansion of sidewalks in recent years

Q&A SESSION

The report out session was followed by a question and answer (Q&A) session to gather further feedback from the meeting participants. The question and comments received from the attendees are summarized below.

- **Regarding historical areas, would anything 50 years or older be considered a historic district?** I'm wondering if there's anything in Town that was built say after World War II with a bunch of houses to bring the soldiers home. Those areas could be considered historic areas. I live in the historic area down in Selkirk. In Maple avenue and Selkirk, there are quite a few Sears homes and that would be considered historic.
- **How can the residents continue to stay involved? What are the other opportunities going forward?** There is a survey open for the public right now. The next Comprehensive Plan Update meeting is on Wednesday, Dec 16, 2020 from 5—7 PM. The next public meeting will take place in February 2021; that will focus on visioning and goals. More information about future engagement opportunities will be made available on the project website and social media pages.
- **PR regarding project volunteer residents with the yard signs. Neighbors can ask resident volunteers regarding the Bethlehem Forward project and this will help engage residents actively with the project.**
- **Even after participating, it's not clear how these project meetings are different from the town meetings. I'm a little bit ignorant to the overall project and how it was advertised. Also, it's not clear how to engage going forward and how they're meant to be different from normal town meetings.** A lot of the topics discussed in today's project meeting are routinely talked about at the town board level or in the planning board or zoning board of appeals meetings. The town has been working from an existing comprehensive plan which was adopted in 2005 and probably done mostly in 2004. A Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) updated that plan in 2013. Then the town and CPUC held community forums again in 2018. So, this is a continuation of the work that started in 2018. The project team is trying to understand the differences in demographics, economics and physical infrastructure of the town that has changed over that time. Today's meeting provided the team a lot of information about the inner relationship of infrastructure, transportation, historic preservation, land use density, zoning, etc., and how the town functions. The next step is to create a vision and the goals that start to really address all of these issues and opportunities that have been identified tonight.
- **Can people provide additional comments on tonight's meeting?** The meeting recording and summary will be posted on the project website. The public can provide further input through the website, which will be open throughout the course of the project.
- **Has anyone thought about community gardens?**
- **Will there be a code/local law update process as well?**
- **Where can we get a lawn sign?**
- **Will there be future mailings?** This is the best way to communicate with all residents. I didn't see anything in my mail as others had. I only found out about this via seeing yard signs.
- Other questions and comments include:

- The other thing not working is sidewalk maintenance and construction. A consistent, transparent process is needed and sufficient funding to make progress on needs.
- Need better parking at rail trail - limited spaces
- Community space for adolescents
- What's not working is having a diversity of housing options so that there is a range that includes more affordable options.
- I agree with lack of community space and activities for kids/teens
- The former RCS board of Ed building would have been great for town uses
- It would be good to further develop the 9W corridor. I live in Selkirk and driving to Latham or Colonie to do basic shopping.
- Thinking about some commercial properties that have sat empty, unused, undeveloped/unsold for years. E.g. New Scotland Rd near Maher Rd. Let's utilize existing real estate, consider remodeling to adapt to new roles (e.g. Office, co-working, housing)
- Mixed use will also make our community more attractive to young professionals
- We need connectivity between greenways, to sustain wildlife and to permit natural movement of wild creatures.
- Wildlife protection
- I wholeheartedly agree with non-motorized connectivity
- Re under-utilized properties, there appear to be some abandoned (unoccupied) single-fam homes as well as some large tracts of farmland (corner of 9W in Glenmont, e.g.?)
- Historic preservation should include cemeteries as well as structures
- Having an historic district commission can help the town successfully apply for funding to save structures/sites of historic value.
- Provide incentives to keep your historic home historic instead
- Rather than impose restrictions, more flies with honey than vinegar is my thinking
- Maybe a small museum here with an emphasis on history, photos, artifacts
- Guidelines for those who must remodel, etc.
- Bethlehem Historical Association has a museum in the Cedar Hill Schoolhouse.
- Many homes in my neighborhood were built in the late 1940's and 50's
- My house is 1910-20 somewhere around there, and there are many over here (Elsmere near Delmar border)
- The meeting was excellent. Really appreciate the town making the effort to have residents contribute to the comprehensive plan.
- There was one informational postcard that went out
- I would like a yard sign
- Thank you. Learned a lot. Nice job.
- Really good meeting btw, kudos

- I'm in Selkirk - I'd put out a yard sign.
- Thank you- very important and informative meeting
- Great meeting, thank you all
- I'm also from Selkirk and would put up a sign
- I have suggestion in relation to historic preservation. I did the comprehensive historic survey for the Town of Colonie in 1980. I think it would be helpful to check in with the NYS historic preservation office to see what they might deem approvable for the National Register. While a house/building is 50 years or older, it doesn't mean that it is going to meet the thresholds to get on the National Register. For Colonie, we confronted that with a town-wide nomination process.
- I'm interested in a lawn sign also.
- Such a great turnout tonight. Thank you so much everyone.

WRAP-UP & NEXT STEPS

The project team reviewed the next steps:

- Virtual meeting recording is available on the project website and Facebook page.
- Submit your feedback via:
 - Online Survey: www.publicinput.com/BethlehemForwardSurvey
 - Paper copies of the survey can be requested by emailing at bethlehemforward@townofbethlehem.org or calling 518-439-4955 x 1157
 - Comment Form on the website: www.BethlehemForward.com
- Submission deadline for the survey: Thursday, December 31, 2020
- Comp Plan Update Committee Meeting: December 16, 2020 from 5:00—7:00 pm
- Next Public Meeting about Visioning & Goals: February 2021

APPENDIX A: LIST OF PUBLIC MEETING ATTENDEES

Note: The list only includes contact information of public meeting attendees interested in staying informed about the project.

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation	Phone Number	Email Address
Jeff	Baker	Resident		jeff.baker967@gmail.com
Pattie	Beeler			
Gus	Birkhead	Resident		gus.birkhead@gmail.com
Brent	Cady	Resident		brentcady@gmail.com
Maureen	Cunningham	Town Board Member		mcunningham@townofbethlehem.org
David	Decancio	Resident		
Cindy	Ferrari	Resident		ferraric@aol.com
Vicki	Folger	Resident	518-439-1824	
Ashley	Fox	Resident		ashfoxly@gmail.com
Victor	Franco, Jr.	Resident	518-506-4589	sell518property@gmail.com
Jennifer	Gallagher	Resident	5184750811	jengal@verizon.net
Bridget	Griffin	Resident		bridgetburkeg@gmail.com
Ashley	Herkert	Resident	518-322-2344	ae08herk@gmail.com
Amy	Higgs	Resident		amylhiggs@gmail.com
Peter	Iwanowicz	Resident	518.439.2921	pmiwanowicz@gmail.com
Bill	Ketzer	CPUC	646-315-1416	labratsrock@gmail.com
Mark	Kissinger		518-605-6319	mkissw2@gmail.com
Don	Klime	Resident	518-229-5778	doklime1@gmail.com
Mary Lyn	Koval	Resident	518-439-6940	marylynkoval@gmail.com
Celine	Lavalley	Resident		clavalley@albany.edu
Libby	Liebschutz	Resident	518-466-7034	libbyliebschutz@gmail.com
Kathleen	Mannix	CPUC Member		
Michael	McCarthy	Resident		mccarthyteam@gmail.com
James	McGaughan	Resident		jamcgaughan@gmail.com
Joe	Murphy	Resident	5187299249	
Nancy	Neff			
Carol	Ostrow	Resident	518-727-8423	carologoes@gmail.com
Maureen	Packer	Resident	518 281-7395	jmpacker@gmail.com
Janine	Patschureck	Resident	518-469-8446	wbeannn@gmail.com
Michael	Patterson	Resident		patterson83078@gmail.com
Bill	Reinhardt	Resident	518 3698573	ww.reinhardt@gmail.com

Erin	Rightmyer	Resident	518-542-9016	erin.rightmyer@gmail.com
Mark	Sargent	Resident	5184698063	msargent@cmellp.com
Frank	Slingerland	Resident		fms1077@gmail.com
Vicary	Thomas	Resident		vicaryt28@gmail.com
Peter	Thomas	Resident		enform@gmail.com
Amy	Vastola	Resident		senneshcurls@gmail.com
Joanne	Vogel	Resident	5182816131	jtv170@gmail.com
Gail	Volk	Resident		
Gabrielle	Walker	Resident	443-668-6683	gsmccrea@gmail.com
Mary	Willmott	Resident		marywillmott2@hotmail.com
Ma	Witherspoon	Resident		klspoon@hotmail.com
Katie	Yezzi	Resident		yezzikatie@gmail.com
Margery	Zucker	Resident	518-439-0264	diamondmdz@gmail.com
Vicki				

APPENDIX A: PUBLIC MEETING #1 ANNOTATED AGENDA

Date: December 8, 2020

Time: 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Format: Zoom Meeting

Meeting Registration:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMvcuGspjovEftqgjB91lqsb92XDKu0mHE>

Objectives: The public meeting will serve as an introduction to the project for the general public, providing an opportunity to:

- (1) Share information about the project scope, schedule, and engagement opportunities
- (2) Summarize feedback received to date
- (3) Solicit feedback from participants about issues and opportunities

Participants:

- (1) Members of the general public
- (2) Members of the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC)
- (3) Project Team

Format: The Town is hosting a two-hour virtual public meeting using Zoom. The meeting will be conducted in two parts:

- (1) A live virtual public meeting to share project updates and information, followed by a live question and answer (Q&A) session and interactive group activities.
- (2) The meeting recording will be posted on the project website to gather public feedback for a period of additional two weeks.

Invitation & Promotion: The meeting will be promoted by the Town and the CPUC via the following.

- Press release
- Project website and Town website
- Town E-blast/newsletter
- Town Social media

Dry Run: A dry run with the team and Town representatives will be conducted within one week prior to the meeting.

Agenda:

Time	Activity	Description	Role
5:45 pm	Meeting Set-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Zoom meeting set-up ▪ Assign co-hosts/panelists ▪ Share the sign-in google-spreadsheet link in chat-box: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/16PXrgBA-gpgcvzRldyeUZlnPrVGnYo3lfe1Th04Pttc/edit?usp=sharing 	Highland Planning
6:00 pm	Convene & Welcome	Begin recording. Convene the group and introduce Town and project team	SWBR/Town
6:05 pm	Online Meeting Instructions & Agenda Review	<p>Explain logistics of online participation (provide virtual meeting instructions about “virtual hand-raising,” chat-box, etc.) and review meeting purpose and agenda.</p> <p>Poll #1: Where do you live?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delmar ▪ Elsmere ▪ Glenmont ▪ North Bethlehem ▪ Selkirk ▪ Slingerlands ▪ South Bethlehem ▪ Other <p>Poll #2: How did you hear about the public meeting?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project website ▪ Town website ▪ Town E-blast/newsletter ▪ Postcard mailings ▪ Social Media ▪ The Spotlight Newspaper ▪ Times Union Newspaper ▪ Our Towne magazine ▪ Neighbors and friends ▪ Other 	Highland Planning

6:10	Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project overview ▪ Scope/timeline/engagement opportunities ▪ What we've heard – key themes 	SWBR/Highland Planning
6:20	Q&A	<p>Participants can submit clarifying questions in writing via Zoom. Questions can be answered in writing during the webinar or addressed live by the team.</p>	Highland Planning
6:30	Interactive Group Exercise	<p>BREAKOUT SESSION:</p> <p>Based off topic preferences at the time of registration, the participants will be pre-assigned to topic-oriented breakout groups of 5-10 people. Each breakout session will have a Facilitator and Notetaker from the Project Team and/or CPUC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aging (Facilitator/Notetaker: Tanya Zwahlen) ▪ Economic Development (Facilitator: Kevin Dwarka, Notetaker: Karen Shaw) ▪ Environment/Sustainability (Facilitator: Jeremy Snyder, Notetaker: Frank Armento) ▪ Historic Preservation (Facilitator: Bill Price, Notetaker: Leslie Lombardo) ▪ Housing (Facilitator/Notetaker: Brian Gyory) ▪ Transportation (Facilitator: Mike Godfrey, Notetaker: Nate Owens) <p>For each breakout group, participants will be asked to discuss the issues and opportunities associated with the respective category and collect their thoughts, which they will then bring back to the larger group. Each breakout group will select one participant to debrief main points/key takeaways from the discussion to the larger group.</p> <p><i>Note to the reader/facilitator: Refer to the</i></p>	Highland Planning/Town

		<i>FACILITATOR’S GUIDE section in this document for step-by-step instructions.</i>	
7:00	Report out	Each group’s reporter summarizes main points/takeaways from their group.	Highland Planning
7:30	Q&A	Participants can submit questions in writing via Zoom chat-box or “raise hands” virtually to comment/ask questions.	Highland Planning
7:50	Wrap-up and adjourn	Discuss next steps, future engagement opportunities, and online survey	SWBR

Online Live Stream

- Meeting will be livestreamed via Facebook Live and the project website to provide an option to the public to view the presentation without pre-registering on Zoom (a Facebook login may still be required).
- SWBR and Highland Planning staff will monitor comments and questions on Zoom.
- Town (Karen Shaw) will monitor comments and questions on Facebook livestream post

Meeting Recording and Comment Period: At conclusion of the meeting, the project team will share the link to the recorded meeting through the project website to allow community members to offer additional input. All comments received within the period of two weeks will be included in the final document. This will allow the members of the public (including those who were unable to participate in the live virtual meeting) to provide detailed feedback.

FACILITATOR’S GUIDE

Topic-Oriented Breakout Group	Discussion Questions	Facilitator	Notetaker
1. Aging	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the biggest issue regarding aging in the Town? 2. What could the Town do better? 3. What resources does the Town lack? 4. What’s going well in the Town with regard to the needs of senior citizens? 5. What would you like to see more of? 	Tanya Zwahlen	-
2. Economic Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the biggest issue in the Town regarding economic development? 2. What could the Town do better? 3. What resources does the Town lack for economic development? 4. What’s going well in the Town with regard to economic development? 5. What would you like to see more of? 	Kevin Dwarka	Karen Shaw
3. Environment/Sustainability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the biggest concerns with respect to the environment and sustainability? 2. What is going well? What would you like to see more of? 3. What goals should the Town set with respect to the environment and sustainability? 4. What are some policies or actions the Town should enact to meet these goals? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Regarding ecosystem health or climate change b. Regarding electrification, renewable energy, and efficiency c. Regarding various end uses such as houses, transportation, services, etc. 	Group 1: Jeremy Snyder Group 2: Frank Armento	Group 1: Rob Leslie Group 2: Brittany Murphy

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. What are other communities you're aware of that are doing a good job on the environment and sustainability that we can look to as role models? 		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Historic Preservation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the biggest issue regarding historic preservation in the Town? 2. What could the Town do better with respect to historic preservation? 3. What resources for historic preservation does the Town lack? 4. What's going well in the Town with regard to historic preservation? 5. What would you like to see more of? 	<p>Bill Price</p>	<p>Leslie Lombardo</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Housing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the biggest issue regarding housing in the Town? 2. What could the Town do better with respect to housing? 3. What housing resources does the Town lack? 4. What's going well in the Town with regard to housing? 5. What would you like to see more of? 	<p>Brian Gyory</p>	<p>-</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Transportation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the biggest transportation issue in the Town? 2. What could the Town do better with respect to transportation? 3. What transportation resources does the Town lack? 4. What's going well in the Town with regard to transportation? 5. What would you like to see more of? 	<p>Mike Godfrey</p>	<p>Nate Owens</p>

Role of the Facilitator:

- The main role of the Facilitator is to ask open-ended questions about issues and opportunities related to the assigned topic and to keep discussion flowing (see suggested discussion questions in the table above). If the group starts to get off topic, please gently bring them back to the assigned subject. Please do not comment on what people say, other than to acknowledge them and ensure their comment is recorded. Please do not

attempt to answer questions about the assigned topic. Ask the group to note their questions and ask them later in the larger group during Q&A session.

- Convene the respective breakout session
- Keep time
- Record and save the individual breakout sessions
- Assist the group to select one participant to debrief main points/key takeaways to the larger group
- Ask the notetaker (see assignments in the table above) to take notes from the discussion.
- Keep discussion on time by giving around 5 minutes for transition to/from Zoom’s breakout rooms
- Wrap up the breakout group discussion
- Ensure participant who will report to the larger group has the notes
- If you have any difficulties during the breakout session, please select “Ask for Help” icon to notify the host (Charvi) and she will come in to help you. Alternatively, you can also message her using chat-box. You do not have to leave the breakout room to reach out to her.

Role of the Notetaker:

- The notetaker should share his or her screen, open the respective topic-specific Google word document (https://highlandplanning-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/charvi_highlandplanning_com/EUHfLjPqayhOgksmXqyYoQgBCxBPZPvAHwqG3gpGV11iUw?e=FGVbnl) and type notes from the group discussion.
- Before the end of the session, the Notetaker should share this document with the person who will report out to the large group.

Breakout Group Agenda:

Time	Activity	Description	Role
6:30 pm	Transition & Convene	<p>Allow participants to transition from the main group to breakout group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Notetaker will share screen and open the shared Google note-taking word doc. to take notes. Note the number of participants. ▪ Begin recording. ▪ Facilitator will convene the breakout group ▪ Select one participant to debrief main points/key takeaways from the discussion to the larger group. <p>SAMPLE INTRO SCRIPT FOR FACILITATORS:</p>	Facilitator/ Notetaker

		<p><i>Thank you for joining me for this breakout session on [topic]. My name is [your name] and I'm [a CPUC member or with the consultant team]. Introduce the Notetaker (if any).</i></p> <p><i>[If the group is small (say 5 or less), you may ask people to introduce themselves if they're comfortable.]</i></p> <p><i>Note why we are here and reiterate that the insights from these discussions will assist the Town in the development of the Comprehensive Plan. Introduce the respective breakout session topic. You may use the sub-topics mentioned in the shared note-taking Google word document to elaborate your discussion topic.</i></p> <p><i>Review the Zoom meeting controls and how you'd like the participants to submit response before diving into the group discussion.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>To view the shared document and facilitator/ participant videos, click "View Options" at the top of the screen and select "side-by-side" mode in the drop-down menu (the option will only be visible when the screen is shared)</i> ▪ <i>Facilitators may provide option to the group to share comments/questions/supporting materials via chat-box. But please include the chat message response in the notes word document.</i> 	
<p>6:35 pm</p>	<p>Group discussion</p>	<p>Facilitators can use the topic-specific discussion questions detailed in the above table to gather insights from participants about the issues and opportunities in the town.</p> <p>Generic discussion questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the biggest issue/ challenge? 2. What could the Town do better? 3. What resources does the Town lack? 	<p>Facilitator/ All</p>

		<p>4. What’s going well in the Town with regard to this topic?</p> <p>5. What would you like to see more of?</p> <p>If facilitators provide the option to participants to share feedback via chat-box, please include the chat message response in the notes document.</p>	
6:55 pm	Wrap-up	Facilitators will review the main points/key takeaways, save discussion notes, and remind the selected person who will report out. Notetakers may share the discussion notes with them, if required.	Facilitator/ Notetaker

After the meeting: Facilitators/Notetakers will ensure:

1. Discussion notes are in the respective topic-specific Google word document (https://highlandplanning-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/charvi_highlandplanning_com/EUHfLjPqayhOgksmXqyYoQgBCxBPZPvAHwqG3gpGV11iUw?e=FGVbnI)
2. Meeting recording has been uploaded to the shared folder (https://highlandplanning-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/charvi_highlandplanning_com/EtEVFBZjj_tHg89bv_6ITtIBDXIZRVM-fD0o80_PrlVouA?e=eHdKpD). Ensure the recording name/title is after the respective breakout topic.

APPENDIX C: PROJECT PRESENTATION

Comprehensive Plan Update

Public Meeting #1 – Issues & Opportunities

Town of Bethlehem



12/08/2020

SWBR

Meeting Agenda

2

- 6:00 – 6:05 Welcome / Introductions / Meeting Instructions
- 6:05 – 6:10 Meeting Instructions / Poll Questions
- 6:10 – 6:20 Project Overview
 - Project Scope / Schedule / Engagement Opportunities
 - What We've Heard – Key Themes
- 6:20 – 7:00 Breakout Sessions / Group Exercise
- 7:00 – 7:30 Report Out
- 7:30 – 8:00 Q&A / Discussion
- 7:50 – 8:00 Wrap Up / Next Steps

Bethlehem Forward Project Team

3



Bill Price, RLA
Senior Associate
SWBR



Don Naetzker, RLA
Senior Associate
SWBR



Tanya Zwahlen, AICP
Principal
Highland Planning



Frank Armento, AICP
Senior Planner
Fisher Associates



Kevin Dwarka
Principal
Kevin Dwarka, LLC



Brittany Murphy
Landscape Designer
SWBR



Charvi Gupta
Senior Planner
Highland Planning



Nancy Raca, AICP
Director of Engagement
Highland Planning



Mike Godfrey, AICP
Senior Planner
Fisher Associates

Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan Update

12/11/20

SWBR

Bethlehem Forward Update Committee

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- Giles Wagoner
- Jeremy Snyder
- Kathleen Mannix
- Bill Ketzer
- Brian Gyory
- James Grady

- Georgia Fishburn
- Thomas Coffey
- Paul Beyer
- Anne Benware
- Rad Anderson
- Dania Flores

Town Representatives

- David VanLuven, Supervisor
- Rob Leslie, Director of Planning
- Leslie Lombardo, Sr. Planner
- Nate Owens, Sr. Planner
- Karen Shaw, Open Space Coordinator

Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan Update

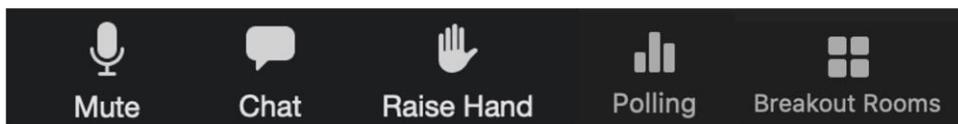
12/11/20

SWBR

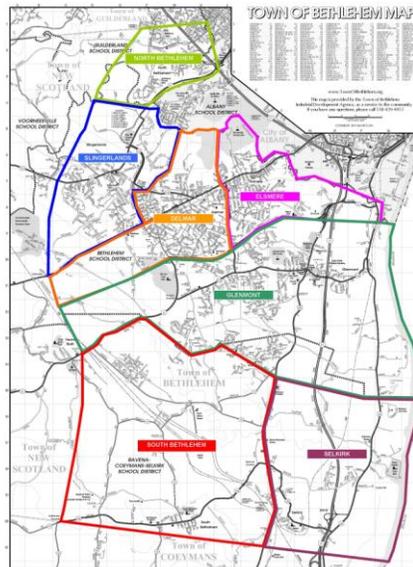
Meeting Instructions for Attendees

5

- Mute/Unmute
 - If you're not speaking, please mute yourself for better audio clarity.
- "Chat" to submit questions in writing during the webinar
 - Please include your email along with questions to allow us to follow up individually
- "Raise hand" virtually to ask questions/comment
 - Attendees joining via phone can dial *9 to virtually raise hand
- "Polling"
 - If you accidentally close the poll, use the "polls" feature in the control panel at the bottom of the screen to access it again.
- "Breakout Rooms" will be used for interactive group activity



Poll #1: Where do you live?



6

Poll #2: How did you hear about the public meeting?



12/08/2020

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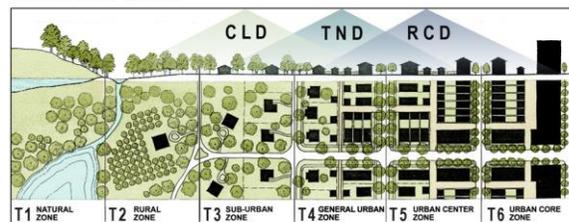
Project Scope

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- Task 1 – Project Initiation
- Task 2 – Public Engagement Plan
- Task 3 – Community Assessment & Profile
- Task 4 – Community Visioning & Goals
- Task 5 – Programming & Implementation Strategies
- Task 6 – Draft Comprehensive Plan
- Task 7 – Final Comprehensive Plan & SEQRA
- Task 9 – GIS Mapping



Jericho Drive-In Theater, Jericho Road



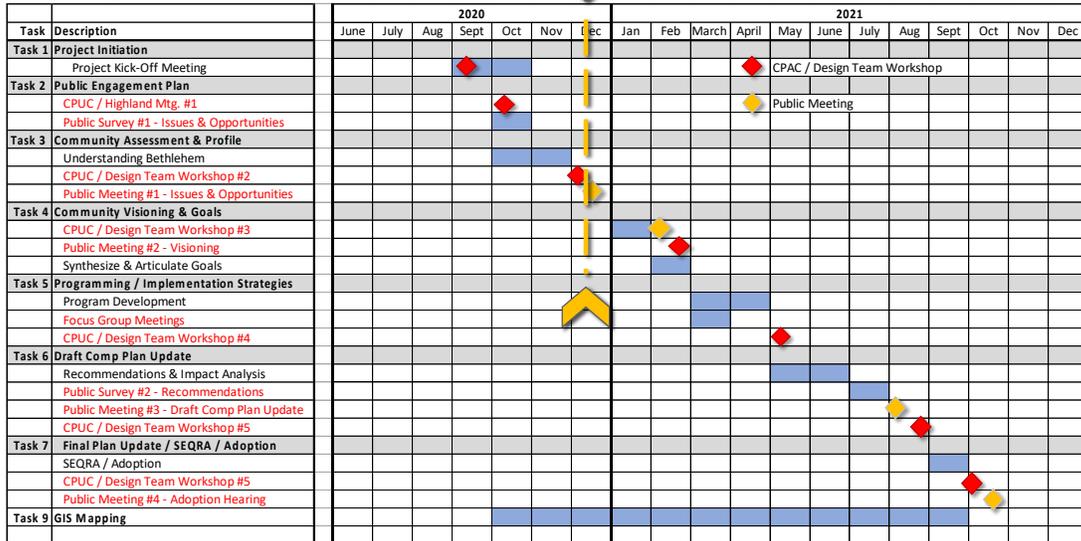
Rural – Urban Transect

12/11/20

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Project Schedule

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Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan Update

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What we've heard

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- Town has top school districts in New York State
- Other assets include:
 - Parks and open spaces
 - Senior services and public services
 - Rural and historic character
 - Socially conscious community
- Unequal resource/ infrastructure distribution between Delmar and other Town hamlets
- Lack of racial diversity and inclusion in the community
- Preservation of historic sites, buildings, and the rural character is crucial
- Other concerns noted by stakeholders include:
 - Motorized traffic (trucks, tankers, etc.) passing through the Town
 - Barriers to business expansion
 - Development of former farms and rural lands
 - Availability of Affordable and Age-Friendly Housing
 - Town financial resources, particularly in the wake of the COVID pandemic
 - Neighborhood connectivity / cut-through traffic
 - Property owner's rights & flexibility of uses on rural lands

Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan Update

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Breakout Group Exercise

- Participants have been pre-assigned to groups based on their preferences at the time of registration.
 - If you wish to switch to a different group, message Charvi Gupta via chat-box.
- Generic discussion questions:
 - What is the biggest issue/ challenge?
 - What could the Town do better?
 - What resources does the Town lack?
 - What's going well in the Town?
 - What would you like to see more of?

Topic	Facilitator/ Notetaker
Aging	Tanya Zwahlen
Economic Development	Kevin Dwarka, Karen Shaw
Environment/ Sustainability	Jeremy Snyder,
Environment/ Sustainability	Frank Armento, Rob Leslie
Historic Preservation	Bill Price, Lelsie Lombardo
Housing	Brian Gyory, Brittany Murphy
Transportation	Mike Godfrey Nate Owens

Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan Update

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Breakout Group Exercise In Progress

We will reconvene at 7PM for the report out.

If you're having trouble joining the breakout group, please message Charvi Gupta via chat-box.



12/08/2020

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Report Out

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- Generic discussion questions:
 - What is the biggest issue/ challenge?
 - What could the Town do better?
 - What resources does the Town lack?
 - What's going well in the Town?
 - What would you like to see more of?

Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan Update

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Q&A Session



12/08/2020

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Next Steps

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- Public Survey Open Until December 22nd
- Comp Plan Update Committee Mtg. - Dec. 16th 5-7 pm
- Next Public Meeting – February 2021 – Visioning & Goals
- Stay Connected – BethlehemForward.com

Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan Update

12/11/20

SWBR

Thank you

To learn more about the project or provide further feedback, please visit www.BethlehemForward.com.



12/08/2020

SWBR

Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan

Public Meeting #2 Summary

April 6, 2021



HIGHLAND PLANNING

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OVERVIEW

On Tuesday, March 23, 2021, the Town of Bethlehem hosted a virtual public meeting from 6:00—8:00 PM to support the development of the Comprehensive Plan that will guide development and community-related decisions toward the community’s vision for years to come. The Town’s current Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2005, has provided the Town’s elected and appointed officials with valuable context and guidance for development-related decisions and capital investment. It established a vision for the community’s future, articulated guiding principles and goals, and recommended specific actions or strategies that would move the Town toward the community vision. Updating the comprehensive plan requires a thorough and inclusive community discussion about the current state of the town, the community’s values and aspirations for the future, and the strategies that should be used or actions that should be taken to achieve the community’s vision for the future.

By Fall 2021, the Town of Bethlehem Board will adopt an update to its Comprehensive Plan to establish a shared community vision for the future and an action plan to achieve it.

To inform and engage the members of the general public in the development of the Comprehensive Plan Update, the Town hosted the second public meeting to review the project scope, summarize work to date, provide a high-level overview of existing conditions and survey responses, and conduct visioning exercises.

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the meeting was held virtually using Zoom and also livestreamed on the Bethlehem Forward Facebook page and the project website. To reach out to people who do not have access to the internet or computer, the option to join the meeting by phone was also provided.

One hundred twenty-eight (128) people attended the virtual public meeting, in addition to 25 participants who watched the livestream via Facebook and project website. The meeting recording is accessible at <https://fb.watch/4rKtFf2UM/> and a list of attendees is included as Appendix A.

INTRODUCTIONS & MEETING INSTRUCTIONS

The virtual public meeting was convened by David VanLuven, Town Supervisor, who welcomed and thanked the attendees for participating. Reiterating the purpose of the meeting, Nancy Raca, Highland Planning, informed the attendees about Zoom meeting controls. Bill Price, SWBR, reviewed the meeting agenda (see Appendix B), which included:

- Welcome & introductions
- Project Presentation
 - Visioning
 - What We’ve Heard – Public Survey #1 Summary

- Review 2005 Vision Statement
- Review Value Statements
- Issues to Understand
- Q&A Session
- Wrap-up & Next Steps

Bill introduced the project team including the Town representatives, the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) members, and the consultant team members from SWBR, Highland Planning, Fisher Associates, and Kevin Dwarka, LLC.

To gather an understanding about geographic representation, the team asked attendees to participate in a poll and select one of the hamlets in the Town of Bethlehem they live in. The polling results¹ tabulated below illustrate that majority of attendees represented Delmar (53%), followed by Elsmere (17%) and Slingerlands (14%). There was no representation in the poll from North Bethlehem and South Bethlehem residents.

Poll 1: Where are you calling in from?

Hamlet	Response
Delmar	(38) 53%
Elsmere	(12) 17%
Glenmont	(6) 8%
North Bethlehem	(0) 0%
Selkirk	(4) 6%
Slingerlands	(10) 14%
South Bethlehem	(0) 0%
Other	(2) 3%

Bill reminded the participants that the public survey summary document and the community profile video presentation can be accessed on the project website.

¹ A total of 72 Zoom meeting attendees participated in the Poll 1.

WHAT WE HEARD: PUBLIC SURVEY SUMMARY

Bill noted that the community assessment and profile phases of the project have been completed and we are currently in the visioning phase to understand where the community wants to be in the future. Bill mentioned that a series of engagement activities were conducted to gather feedback on issues and opportunities perceived by the community, and further summarized results of the public survey.

- Major reasons to live/visit in the Town as noted by survey respondents:
 - Schools
 - Safety/ low crime
 - Walkability
 - Neighborhood/ local
- Preferred future development:
 - Restaurants
 - Low-density residential development of single-family housing
 - Sidewalks & bicycle facilities
- Words chosen by survey respondents to describe the town in the future were categorized into key themes: safe, friendly, diverse, inclusive, walkable, sustainable, and affordable.
- The major issues and challenges identified by the respondents:
 - Property taxes
 - Traffic congestion
 - Preservation of rural character & active farmland
 - Affordable housing
 - Neighborhood connectivity & walkability
 - Property owner rights

To gather further feedback on the public survey results, the team asked attendees to participate in a polling question. The poll results² tabulated below illustrate that majority of attendees (58%) were not surprised by the survey summary.

Poll 2: Did anything in the survey summary (opportunities & issues) surprise you?

Yes	(31) 36%
No	(49) 58%
I'm not sure	(5) 6%

² A total of 85 Zoom meeting attendees participated in the Poll 2.

The feedback received from the participants on the survey summary has been categorized and included below:

- **HOUSING**

- There's some inconsistency in the results. There's a desire for affordable housing but the development that's desired was of low-density individual homes. They're on either end of the spectrum. Also, walkability is challenged when we continue the type of development that we have seen over the decades.
- Inconsistency in results. Affordable housing but development of low-density individual homes
- Better facilitation is required to communicate how multi-family housing will be introduced and how the design will be consistent with the existing neighborhood character to help achieve population densities to get good street activity and support local business.
- Affordable housing vs. single-family low-density housing
- It was listed as an "opportunity" to have more single-family housing. It was previously discussed that we need build more dense development than single family housing.
- Low density residential development. After hearing recent town development theories, it seems higher density preserves open spaces.
- What is meant by low-density single-family housing?
- What do people mean by low density residential? Does that mean the sprawl of Orchards is acceptable?
- Also, there is perhaps a disconnect between wanting inclusivity and also prioritizing low-density, single family housing.
- The emphasis on low density residential seems contrary to affordability and housing diversity.
- How do the low-density housing goals line up with low density or open spaces?
- Low-density residential sounds like exactly the opposite of what the last Comprehensive Plan promoted. Very disappointing. That takes us in the wrong direction.
- Low density housing is not senior friendly or walkable

- **TRANSPORTATION**

- Traffic congestion seems surprising.
- Surprised that traffic congestion was an issue. I'm wondering in what part of Bethlehem. Delmar not an issue.
- Coming from a big city, I find it hard to believe that "traffic congestion" is perceived as an issue here.
- Aside from some key spots at commuter time, I'm surprised that traffic congestion is an issue.

- Walkability came up as high which is important. How did bicycling fit into that?
- Also, higher density encourages walkability and sense of connected community
- Our public transportation is still dismal. This would address the traffic issues and permit more foot and bicycle traffic.
- **ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY**
 - There were no water or air concerns. No noise
 - I was surprised the issue of overdevelopment/loss of open spaces, and huge influx of rental property development wasn't a problem for residents
 - That sustainability wasn't more important to more people
 - Given the climate crisis we are in, I am surprised that sustainability was so low.
 - also disconnect with preserving farmland and low-density housing which is on farmland
 - Less green areas, runaway commercial like the Stewart's. Junctions like 4 corners are an eyesore. Truck pollution in residential areas elm and cherry avenues.
- **QUALITY OF LIFE**
 - Very surprised that "safe" was first. And that a healthy safe environment was not near the top.
 - Safe was the top-quality people wanted
 - Safety
 - I was pleasantly surprised to see inclusivity be a big priority for so many people.
 - Safety also can include safety while walking and biking. Feeling as though my kids are safe navigating town.
- **PROPERTY OWNER RIGHTS**
 - Property owner rights surprised me
 - Can Bill also clarify what "Property owner rights" actually means? Is the ability to subdivide, build more outbuildings, or rent?
- **OTHER**
 - That most of what are important issues are the opposite of what seems to be going on with development within the town.
 - I thought from last time developments like those off Wemple Road was exactly what we didn't want.
 - If we want more open spaces and we want affordability...then we need to allow for some greater density.
 - Surprised senior issues didn't surface. Affordability and age in place are issues.
 - I am concerned by continued big box and strip mall development and would rather see retail integrates into the village commercial districts to create a village like feel.
 - I see another disconnect with "safety" and a desire for diversity and development. I think if people are very comfortable with their existing and "safe" community and neighborhood, then adding new residents through increased residential development, especially if the new community members bring diversity to

Bethlehem, there's bound to be change and maybe discomfort that doesn't feel as "safe".

REVIEW 2005 COMP PLAN VISION STATEMENT & 2035 VALUE STATEMENTS

Bill reviewed the 2005 Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement focusing on key aspects (e.g., exceptional quality of life, attractive residential neighborhoods, etc.) and explained that the survey results illustrated how 2005 Comprehensive Plan was able to achieve the same. For instance, the majority of survey respondents rated the quality of life in Bethlehem to be either good or excellent.

For 2035 Comprehensive Plan, Bill noted that the value statements were developed in conjunction with the town and the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee. They were then classified into five categories: community, public services, environment & sustainability, land use, and transportation. Overall, a majority of the meeting participants believed that the value statements aligned with their vision for the town in 2035.

The feedback received for each of the value statement categories is included below.

COMMUNITY

Bill reviewed the six value statements for the community category, included below.

- C1: Our **sense of community** with socially conscious citizens and business owners who engage in improving the quality of life.
- C2: Our **diverse age cohorts** and multiple generations of families that choose to live in the town.
- C3: The **qualities of rural land**, supporting the landowners' ability to access its economic value in a manner compatible with sustaining a rural-agricultural livelihood.
- C4: **Racial, ethnic, economic** and **gender** diversity and inclusion for all who want to live, work and visit the town.
- C5: **Small / locally owned businesses** and desire to create the conditions that encourage more business enterprises.
- C6: **Preservation** of our historic architecture, cultural sites, neighborhoods and districts.

The review was followed by a poll and discussion to gather feedback from the participants. The poll results³ tabulated below illustrate that the majority of attendees (70%) were in agreement and felt that the value statements for community aligned with their vision for the town in 2035.

³ A total of 77 Zoom meeting attendees participated in the Poll 3.

Poll 3: Do these value statements align with your vision for the Town of Bethlehem in 2035?

Yes	(54) 70%
No	(11) 14%
Yes, if my comments are addressed	(12) 16%

The comments and questions received from the participants on the value statements for the community category are included below:

- One social value, that COVID has emphasized, is the need for social interaction. Creating opportunities for more civic, social and cultural interaction should be included.
- Environment sustainability of the community is important as well as our natural areas.
- I think it would be great to utilize the wisdom of our senior citizens and come up with a program whereby they interact regularly with younger people - school aged - of various ages. Maybe even a requirement under a community service segment of HS.
- Bethlehem is an aging community.
- C3 should refer to undeveloped land in general as well, including parkland etc.
- C3: Rural lands. As a landowner, it would be nice to know that it's possible to develop land. It was not purchased with the idea of farming it. And thoughtful sustainable development is what's desired.
- Quality of all lands, not just rural
- Concerns about environmental and natural areas
- Need to consider environmental sustainability
- C4 disability inclusion
- C4 will be more authentically achieved and support the present qualities of Bethlehem when homes and apartments are “purchased” by persons who can truly afford them themselves.
- I'm sure that many people in 2005 believed that C4 sounded good on paper, but I think there are issues with how that has manifested today. I'd caution against putting it in the next plan without considering the specifics of HOW to make that happen in Bethlehem.
- We recently raised the issue of accessibility, which we would like to see specifically addressed in the update (Friends of Bethlehem Parks and Recreation)
- I would add the value that we also see ourselves as part of the global community - global warming role, support of human rights.
- I realize I may have misunderstood the term “low-density.” I think of Old Delmar as low density, and that Old Delmar’s level of density is very desirable and makes for a stronger community. Some of our new developments by comparison are too low!
- Lovely statements - nicely put. Thank you for all this work!

PUBLIC SERVICES

Bill reviewed the five value statements for the public services category, included below.

P1: Our **public-school systems** that provide the highest level of education, athletics, arts and cultural programs.

P2: **Public services** provided by the dedicated employees of the town.

P3: **Public safety and emergency response** services provided by dedicated town employees and volunteer first responders.

P4: **Senior service programs** that enable residents to live in their homes and remain active community members.

P5: Our **park system and recreation programs**, private preserves and seek to expand facilities with diverse activities and programs for all age groups.

The review was followed by a poll and discussion to gather feedback from the participants. The poll results⁴ tabulated below illustrate that the majority of attendees (81%) were in agreement and felt that the value statements for public services aligned with their vision for the town in 2035.

Poll 4: Do these value statements align with your vision for the Town of Bethlehem in 2035?

Yes	(66) 81%
No	(3) 4%
Yes, if my comments are addressed	(12) 15%

The comments and questions received from the participants on the value statements for the public services category are included below:

- P1: What does “highest level of education” - for example, for whom? “Highest level of athletics” - for example, winning titles or increasing participation? These are bromides and really not actionable. *Focus here would be on education-academics.*
- The major thing that drew us to the area was walkability and the school system. I have been amazed at how friendly and welcoming the community were when we first came after living overseas.
- Which school district is the "highest" as we have three schools and they can't all be the highest? Also, if we say we are the highest, what is there to strive for. Perhaps we are districts of excellence or striving to be schools of excellence.

⁴ A total of 81 Zoom meeting attendees participated in the Poll 4.

- Nancy Neff, your understanding of English is appreciated. How can we have three school systems in town with the highest level of education. Indeed! As I asked in the Q&A, these are bromides. We need to define these phrases so that they are actionable for town government officials.
- How is the balance of new arrivals to the school system, who only stay in town for the benefit of the schools, balanced with lifelong residents and families who have hundreds of years of tenure?
- RCS is an excellent school district
- Re: our public school. I believe it is important for our school program to remember not to place over emphasis on academic achievement being pushed down too severely into kindergarten and First and Second Grade. It is so important for our youngest children to have time for constructive play indoors and out.
- Regarding P1, if you search a house on Realtor.com and check out ratings of our schools, you will see that 2 or 3 elementary schools are rated by Great Schools as 5 out of 10. Schools are rated by national tests and colleges seniors are accepted. Regarding P2, as for public services, the supervisor should be held accountable for his expenditures.
- There needs to be a mention of social/mental health services as part of P3.
- There is nothing here about providing services to the disabled including the seniors
- P5 “private preserves” should be restated to make it clear that it means preserves owned by other organizations that are open to the public. “Private” sounds exclusive or closed.
- The public employees need also to understand that they have a responsibility to neighbors as far as noise and interruption of daily activities.
- More than 50% of Bethlehem residents do not attend Bethlehem CSD
- I agree that accessibility should be an important part of the value statements.
- I am concerned that some areas of town are not viewed as equal importance in parkland and development reviews
- I would add a value about health and open space for recreation services.
- I would include renewable energy options as part of public service.
- I agree with the value statements but would like to see infrastructure emphasized and detailed.

ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

Bill reviewed the three value statements for the environment and sustainability category, included below.

E1: Our vast **natural resource systems**, their habitat, ecosystem services, to provide clean air and water.

E2: Being on the **forefront of sustainability** by addressing climate change through renewable energy, energy efficiency, a just transition off fossil fuels, electrification, waste reduction and prevention of greenhouse gas emissions.

E3: **Productive agricultural** land; ‘farmlands for farmers’ and rural character.

The review was followed by a poll and discussion to gather feedback from the participants. The poll results⁵ tabulated below illustrate that the majority of attendees (68%) were in agreement and felt that the value statements for environment and sustainability aligned with their vision for the town in 2035.

Poll 5: Do these value statements align with your vision for the Town of Bethlehem in 2035?

Yes	(48) 68%
No	(7) 10%
Yes, if my comments are addressed	(16) 23%

The comments and questions received from the participants on the value statements for the environment and sustainability category are included below:

- E1 goes beyond what it directly provides to us (in terms of clean air and water). Focus on a cohesive plan to connect green space throughout the town to create wildlife corridors to better promote a sustainable environment.
- Also, not sure if we mentioned Hudson River in natural areas, but it is a big natural resource, along with the shoreline that should be recognized
- Agree with resilience. A strong climate action plan is of value. E2 could address the need to impact efficiency of buildings, transportation and infrastructure. Besides electrification renewable energy and energy efficiency along with carbon sequestration are measures I’d like the town to value
- There must be a dedicated effort to recycle organic waste by composting. I also believe specific mention needs to be made regarding the river front and enhancing its quality.
- How can we make residential areas more environmentally friendly through decreased use of pesticides and increase biodiversity in private and public areas?
- Please expand on what is meant by “just transition”? I know what it means to those who live EJ communities, but not sure what the Bethlehem definition would be.
- What is a just transition? Who is it being just to?
- I would love to see “that provide climate mitigation” and “preservation of scenic lands”
- The Town has a great deal of diesel-powered machinery that routinely affect neighbors and increases the effects of climate change. This needs to stop.

⁵ A total of 71 Zoom meeting attendees participated in the Poll 5.

- No issue with value, but we need to include concerns over resiliency to changing climate. The community can make great strides on sustainability but still be susceptible to hazards associated with changes not within its control.
- Climate change is cyclical.
- Agree with that last comment on resilience, natural areas provide protection against flooding and drought and ecosystem services
- Promotion of renewable energy use and potential means of recycling gray water. Also, could it be possible to provide for linked rural areas to allow for animals and plants to move between patches of habitat (and address invasive plant and animal issues along the way).
- Regarding E3, I don't know what "farmlands for farmers" means and don't know that productive agricultural land is meaningful in this context. Regarding E2, if want to be comprehensive then wording should change. Regarding E1, need to add soil to air and water.
- E3: Also mentions farmland for farms only. If we want to have affordable housing, and clean solar panels, and meet some of the other goals...it seems out of sync to assume that there will be a lot of "farming" happening.
- How is "productive agriculture land" defined? *An open space study was completed in 2018 that documents different criteria, including soils having local or statewide significance, and mapped as to where those most productive lands are. One can also look at the different conservation easement programs that the town has to help define the productivity of agriculture lands.*
- I'm concerned about the word productive with regard to ag land. Leaves room for inappropriate interpretations and judgement
- The climate change resilience is missing. It's important to recognize that our natural environment does a lot of services for us without knowing that it's working for us like the wetlands in our stream buffers etc. etc. so it's not just the natural resource systems to provide habitat and clean water but also to protect us from the effects of climate change.
- Environmental value statement comment: No mention of building efficiency standards (which are maybe outside the scope of Town jurisdiction). The Town can certainly influence land use to "shepherd" people into smaller areas and carbon de-intensification efforts.
- I would like to see the elimination of the use of pesticides and herbicides on town property and give incentives to homeowners to eliminate the use of these chemicals.
- The town needs to set the challenge to 2030 to align with the state and others.
- As this plan brings us to 2035, aligning with the state's goals in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act is key as well.
- Excessive tree cutting is becoming a serious problem and there seems to be some incorrect interpretations of what is and is not allowable
- People should stop cutting down trees for no reason.
- I agree, but I hope we will add reducing lawns for pollinator plant development.

- Lawns are monoculture and not "diverse". Encourage native plantings, less lawns, and no chemicals on lawns because these chemicals are toxic. Also, gas-powered leaf blowers create air pollution, noise pollution, and destroy the soil's natural microbes which support insect species vital to our ecosystems.
- We value living in harmony with nature.
- Can you tell us how you will address those environmental values with the comprehensive plan and regulations?

LAND USE

Bill reviewed the two value statements for the land use category, included below.

L1: A **diversity of land uses** to balance the tax base, provide jobs, complement our hamlets and residential zoning districts and sustain fiscal policy objectives.

L2: **Diverse housing options** that are affordable, fit the needs of different lifestyles, and allow residents to prosper and age in place.

The review was followed by a poll and discussion to gather feedback from the participants. The poll results⁶ tabulated below illustrate that the majority of attendees (59%) were in agreement and felt that the value statements for land use aligned with their vision for the town in 2035.

Poll 6: Do these value statements align with your vision for the Town of Bethlehem in 2035?

Yes	(43) 59%
No	(11) 15%
Yes, if my comments are addressed	(19) 26%

The comments and questions received from the participants on the value statements for the land use category are included below:

- L1: Please provide clarification on diversity of land use. *When the town adopted zoning in early 20th century, different zones were established, and land uses were separated. Diversity of land uses would mean getting back to where we were zoning ourselves into these low-density separated areas by allowing more uses within certain districts taking into account environmental and traffic impacts. Allowing a diverse mix of land uses, for instance introducing residential into highly commercial areas or allowing more commercial into highly developed residential areas, will be an effort to create a vibrancy of the street.*

⁶ A total of 73 Zoom meeting attendees participated in the Poll 6.

- Land use section should be tied to environment and sustainability.
- L1 is very vague as a value statement.
- I think a big missing point on the land use slide is the preservation of open spaces. Not necessarily for environmental/sustainability reasons, but for the reason that the preservation of the character of the town depends on keeping some of the undeveloped land as it is.
- How the diversity of land use and housing is addressed is very important and needs to have detailed review based on the actual areas of the town and not just by color blocks on an existing map.
- Please define "balance the tax base"; with that definition, the types and quantities of land uses can still be diverse but more strategically induced by the Town
- L1 should be clarified to encompass the idea of a single piece of land supporting mixed-uses.
- L2: What is it meant by diverse housing options?
- You mentioned low density housing is desired.
- I realize I may have misunderstood the term "low-density." I think of Old Delmar as low-density. Old Delmar's level of density is very desirable and makes for a stronger community. Some of our new developments are too low! Too spread out and not walkable.
- Affordable housing seems to be such a hot button issue here. I'm not sure how this gets included as a value in Bethlehem as I don't think it generally has that much support.
- I am concerned with options for our seniors. It seems like many of the townhome developments are higher end. We need housing for senior that don't want to move into an apartment. When we talk about affordable housing, it seems like many people think of high-density apartment complexes. What about zoning that allows smaller homes on small lots, much of what Old Delmar is like. Single lot zoning shouldn't mean large lot. Many people want a home without a huge yard and as long as they are near a park-don't mind not having one. We zone out small lots, but it is exactly what we love about Delmar and how it looks.
- If you look at the old Delmar lots, they are suburban tracts, but they are on deep lots or double lots. Also nowadays we let anyone meeting the requirements do a lot division and just toss any old infill house there... all you have to do is look at the UFO house that landed on Maple Ave off Elsmere in the middle of early 20th Century homes When the Groesbeck/Leonard properties were razed. We need some better design guidelines for infill in addition to the density considerations.
- In 2005 the town's values included land preservation/ and farm preservation yet since I moved here in 2013, I have witnessed the Glenmont area farmland being erased by low density housing. And it looks like there is more development on Wemple road. So how do these stated "values" actually work so that the community vision is achieved?
- The value statements for land use should recognize the value of natural spaces in town.

- I think more effort needs to be made to enhance the villages and hamlets and limit any more big-box and strip mall development.
- I agree regarding the limiting of strip malls/big box stores
- How about more gardens and less lawn? We could have a community pick up for any excess food.

TRANSPORTATION

Bill reviewed the two value statements for the transportation category, included below.

T1: The **transportation infrastructure** which provides equal access / priority to all modes of travel (pedestrian, bicycles, transit and vehicles).

T2: The **walkable** areas of the town and desire to expand connectivity across the town to schools, neighborhoods, recreation facilities and commercial districts.

The review was followed by a poll and discussion to gather feedback from the participants. The poll results⁷ tabulated below illustrate that the majority of attendees (76%) were in agreement and felt that the value statements for transportation aligned with their vision for the town in 2035.

Poll 7: Do these value statements align with your vision for the Town of Bethlehem in 2035?

Yes	(55) 76%
No	(3) 4%
Yes, if my comments are addressed	(14) 19%

The comments and questions received from the participants on the value statements for the transportation category are included below:

- Regarding T1, how do you determine what is feasible and prudent transportation solutions?
- Sidewalk infrastructure needs to be increased and sidewalk maintenance needs to be increased as well
- Regarding T1, how do we have priority to all modes of travel? Not everything can be first. There needs to be more precise use of language.
- I appreciate that we have encouragement with signs for bicycles to bike in the lane on Camwood Avenue. It really helps the traffic and guides the drivers about where bicyclists are going. However, as a bicyclist, I still find biking on Camwood Avenue a little dangerous

⁷ A total of 72 Zoom meeting attendees participated in the Poll 7.

because the sidewalk is so choppy in places. The signs are great, but we can continue to improve the bikeability of the town.

- Higher density allows for more walkability
- Please specifically mention safe bike lanes and sidewalks and hiking paths.
- I'm concerned about road diet that supports biking, but we have a bike trail people can use
- May want to add electric vehicles to transportation infrastructure
- The Rail Trail is an excellent walkable/bicyclist connector now but there is plenty of room for improvement to connect to Delaware/Kenwood etc.
- I am in agreement with T1 and T2 but would like the close to road sidewalk along Kenwood made safer.
- T2 (walkability) is not aggressive enough. I value walkability, period. I want the Town to pursue a multi-pronged strategy to increase walkability and cycle-ability broadly.
- Support bikeability and walkability!
- Part of making a walkable community is a sidewalk maintenance plan which our town does not currently have.
- Walking on Kenwood is equally as dangerous. I am concerned as development continues to grow off of Kenwood.
- Connectivity can be a complex term. As I've mentioned in previous meetings, most people who attended the 7 comprehensive plan community forums held previously spoke to connectivity being for walking, biking to connect the community and neighborhoods not vehicular traffic. Even as Nate answered a question earlier and Bill also implied vehicular connectivity as desirable. That is not the case in many situations. Connecting neighborhoods for vehicular traffic degrades the character and quality metrics of an existing neighborhood, and sadly the cars do not drive slowly and 30mph isn't even desirable. And most newer neighborhoods do not have sidewalks and it is not safe to walk and bike. The further away from the driver's residence the more likely they speed up to accomplish their route connection vs preserving the character of the community they just drive through. Thank you for thinking about this as we work on metrics and quantitative metrics for new designs and future connectivity plans.
- I agree that connectivity is complex. I would like the town to think about connectivity for all road users, not only cars. I agree with @Oliver Homes about the tremendous need for sidewalk infrastructure and sidewalk maintenance. These items need to be included in the annual budget for the town. We are very behind in maintaining our current sidewalks, let alone building new ones that town residents desire.
- Biking on Murray Ave is very dangerous for our kids heading to Hamagrael Elementary, for example. But with no traffic calming and no sidewalks on Murray, it's hard to get around on Murray - despite the fact this is a designated bike pathway.
- I discourage use of cars.
- Need to employ traffic calming measures to increase the visual desirability of our streets while making them safer for bicyclists and pedestrians.

- Traffic coming off the bypass onto Murray often barely slows down. We regularly see cars traveling at 40mph+ which is dangerous for bicyclists trying to make a left on Murray onto Parkwyn.
- Kenwood is dangerous for bicyclists as well.
- Is anything being done to encourage that high tech grown in the Slingerlands vista blvd. area, for which it was originally built?
- What is Selkirk bypass?

ISSUES TO UNDERSTAND

Bill explained how public survey was used to identify issues faced by the community. Because a majority of survey respondents found property taxes to be a challenge, he provided an overview of tax rates in comparable communities within the capital region as well as across the state that have high functioning and highly rated school systems. He noted that, in Bethlehem, residential properties make up 77% of the total assessed value of land and pay the largest amount of tax burden, which is much higher than the statewide average.

To gather further feedback from the participants on the identified issues, the team asked attendees to participate in a series of polling questions, followed by a discussion for the respective poll. The comments and questions received from the participants following each of the polls are summarized in the sub-sections below.

PROPERTY TAXES

The team asked attendees to participate in two polls to gather insights about why property taxes are a challenge and how to achieve a fiscal balance.

Poll 8: Why are property taxes a challenge in next 10 years?

Affordability (economic factor in decision to stay in Bethlehem)	(23) 29%
Value of services (School, Town, County) don't align with cost	(17) 22%
Residential burden too high (need for diverse uses to share burden)	(27) 34%
Other	(7) 9%
Taxes not a challenge	(28) 35%

The above poll results⁸ illustrate that for many of the attendees either “taxes are not a challenge” (35%) or “residential burden is too high” (34%). The comments and questions received from the participants are included below:

- NYS taxes are high.
- I would suggest that “fiscal policy objectives” should include long term fiscal planning and the true cost of environmental degradation, loss of land, etc. The value of natural resources is often left out of the equation unless it is how it can be exploited.
- An apartment building in will bring taxpayers and a limited footprint. Keep the open spaces, put a moratorium on new home builds for five years.
- You would’ve been better off sorting these left to right by overall tax rate, ascending
- What is not represented is the services received for those taxes. We pay for many things on a household level that may be included in the taxes of other communities.
- School property taxes is the largest portion of their annual property taxes. This gets to my point about how to frame questions.
- Niskayuna does not have rural farm communities.
- If we had more business and less residential property, we would lower our taxes and provide some of the businesses that we want in town.
- We value intergovernmental and interagency cooperation to enhance efficiency and to contain costs in the delivery of services.
- Could you give some specifics of services other towns receive that we do not for comparable taxes?
- We live here for the schools, services, and green spaces.
- Did project team look at the services that the county and the town were providing to residents and not just the cost? Because there are communities whose taxes may be a little higher but are also providing services that the town of Bethlehem does not provide. **No, the team just looked at the combined tax rates in comparable school districts.**
- The underlying tax issue is the overdependence on residential taxpayers; the community needs to decide what level of quality commercial development it needs to balance its quiet enjoyment of the Town. How much are residents willing to pay to maintain the character of the Town? COVID is resulting in changes to how some (many?) will work in the future; this could be an opportunity for TOB because of its quality of life.
- If you look at your local property tax bill, the town share is very small.
- I personally am ignorant on the value of the county tax. It is most of the cost of property tax. Excluding school tax.
- The tax burden on agricultural land is unsustainable. Both town and school. It is difficult to continue farming when you know a substantial part of your sales goes directly to supporting the residential tax base.

⁸ A total of 79 Zoom meeting attendees participated in the Poll 8.

- We pay the same amount of property taxes. Yet people dump their garbage behind our property. In spite of complains to the town, nothing was done. Is that area zoned junkyard?
- Meaning, what do those dollars fund- and how much does the town of Bethlehem receive for those dollars provided.
- Taxes are not a challenge right now but could be when I am retired. The other issues are more important to me at this time.
- For the amount of taxes we pay, the town does not even pick up barge.
- Inflation will also make my retirement income worthless. The dollar amount will not change.

Poll 9: Knowing Single Family Residential costs exceed the tax revenues generated, what land uses are acceptable to achieve a fiscal balance?

Light Industrial / Manufacturing in designated districts	(29) 47%
Context sensitive senior, workforce and infill housing	(33) 53%
Greater diversity of commercial / retail / office uses in hamlets & along commercial corridors	(44) 71%
Uses that support agriculture and farming operations	(40) 65%
None of the above	(1) 2%

The above poll results⁹ illustrate that the majority of attendees (71%) prefer “greater diversity of commercial / retail / office uses in hamlets & along commercial corridors,” followed by “land uses that support agriculture and farming operations” (65%). The comments and questions received from the participants are included below:

- Infill in general should not about the many small streams in Old Delmar. Keep these stream adjacent properties undeveloped. When mapping these stream corridors, don't use NYSDEC maps. They need to be defined based on elevation data and many technical advances to locate these drainage paths.
- Is the tax rate a bit misleading? Aren't actual taxes paid a function of the rate and the home value? So, our actual taxes could be higher with a lower tax rate, correct?
- Taxes never go down and it doesn't matter which tax. They all add up, NY is just a high tax state. The problem is when retired, will I be able to afford the taxes and the unknown increases that will come.

⁹ A total of 62 Zoom meeting attendees participated in the Poll 9.

- I was surprised to find out the low percentage of our total taxes that the town is able to run on. I think we get a lot for our money. Let’s hope some inflation stabilizes the taxes.
- What is infill housing? *Infill housing is the insertion of additional housing units into an already-approved subdivision or neighborhood. They can be provided as additional units built on the same lot, by dividing existing homes into multiple units, or by creating new residential lots by further subdivision or lot line adjustments.*
- Maybe use the word variety vs diversity when that is what you are getting at.
- Why are the panelists assuming residential costs more than business? This is not necessarily true. Refer to Washington, Kent CT, or other towns in Dutchess County. With respect to business, I did the analysis on Walmart, breakeven on property tax, but county benefit with sales tax.
- Why is all industrial in Selkirk, even within residential areas?
- Hamlets need to be removed from commercial corridors. They are tearing down wooded areas to build across from historic homes in Selkirk.
- I don't think commercial and industrial entities locate here based on direct expenditures compared to taxes paid. The same is probably true for residential. The value of the location to the taxpayer involves many other factors. The direct services is only one factor so I disagree that this model is valid. Value to the taxpayer is more than direct cost.

RURAL PROPERTY OPTIONS

The team asked attendees to participate in a poll and select one or more activities that could support a rural-agricultural livelihood. The poll results¹⁰ tabulated below illustrate that the majority of attendees (91%) prefer “farm stand / retail outlet / country store / dairy,” followed by “green houses” (84%) and “wedding / seasonal event venues” (73%).

Poll 10: What activities could support a rural-agricultural livelihood?

Barns / machine shops / equipment storage	(36) 65%
Wedding / seasonal event venues	(40) 73%
B&B / Agritourism	(35) 64%
Farm stand / retail outlet / country store / dairy	(50) 91%
Greenhouses	(46) 84%
Barndominium	(16) 29%
Forest product processing	(23) 42%

¹⁰ A total of 55 Zoom meeting attendees participated in the Poll 10.

Food processing	(30) 55%
Other	(10) 18%

The comments and questions received from the participants about rural property options are included below:

- Another rural property option is to host solar energy generation that co-exists with crops.
- The additional rural uses need to be taxable and not fall under the agricultural exemption.
- They are tearing down trees along Delaware and elm/ cherry Ave.
- How can solar exist with crops? Crops need sun, solar shades the earth under it.
- Is wind possible on Bethlehem farms? ***There is not much wind resource in the Albany area.***
- Why should solar be in farm areas? It is ugly, needs to be fenced.
- I would echo the opportunities for local solar power generation. Also, locally produced food that could be supported by more farmer's market choices.
- I support solar farms
- This "exercise" just makes it more obvious about the disconnect between suburban and rural lives.
- Solar collectors on farmland? I grow hay. Grass is the original solar collector and grass also does a couple of things that solar collectors cannot. 1) It stores its energy and solar panels do not; 2) It captures carbon and solar does not; 3) It is the beginning of our food chain and you cannot eat solar panels. The reason companies want to put panels on farmland is because we have already done the work to clear the land and because of this they can make more profit. I would rather have food to eat than a charged electric car or smart phone.
- Solar panels should go on houses when possible.

HOUSING ALTERNATIVES

Bill noted that survey respondents mostly encouraged single-family detached housing and multi-family housing was mostly discouraged. Bill further detailed what multi-family housing means. To better understand why there is a lack of support for multi-family housing, the team asked attendees to participate in a poll. The poll results¹¹ tabulated below illustrate that the majority of attendees (63%) support multi-family (duplex and higher) housing.

Poll 11: Why did many respondents indicate lack of support for multi-family housing?

Aesthetics / visual appearance of multifamily housing seen in Town of Bethlehem	(14) 19%
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¹¹ A total of 72 Zoom meeting attendees participated in the Poll 11.

Perception of scale and size (density)	(15) 21%
Perceived impact of property values of adjacent properties	(17) 24%
Perceive ‘renters’ don’t care about property maintenance & adjacent properties	(18) 25%
Other	(12) 17%
I support multi-family (duplex and higher) housing	(45) 63%

The comments and questions received from the participants about housing alternatives are included below:

- ADUs (rentable) can be a nice way to increase the availability of lower-cost housing
- The single family is the size of older single-family homes and well out of reach of most family incomes.
- Hamdon Woods proposal made a mess of the cluster concept.
- Seniors aging in Bethlehem cannot all afford \$350,000 townhouses. Accessory dwelling units can provide intergenerational housing opportunities. Many communities are now implementing this action.
- Build for people, not for cars. Mixed use makes sense to me.
- The pictured mixed-use New Scotland development is nice if it weren’t stranded out on the end of New Scotland Rd.
- Absentee ownership is the fear. Otherwise it is great.
- Maybe residents just don't like multi family.
- I support multi-family housing. We moved here from Seattle and saw lots of amazing multi-family options. But I am 100% positive that all the other responses that show a lack of support for family housing are widely held by residents here.
- What about small mixed units? Is it maybe about 10 families with a courtyard in the middle?
- One concern that we tend not to think about is the long-term fiscal implications of the density question. Down the road, more compact development will have less sidewalks to repair/replace and fewer miles of road and water/sewer pipes to replace/repair.
- NIMBYism is the usual reason for opposing multi-unit housing
- Building development is “semi-permanent”. We should not allow it to be built all over the place (sprawl). We should strategically place it to build a critical mass that supports subsequent retail/commercial development.

- How did the mansions of Delmar get past zoning process? The home builders had to build a barn and landscape along Fisher. The mansions look horrible with the parking lot out front, garbage cans out front, absolutely no landscaping. Totally disgraceful!
- It would not be a good idea to have mixed use multifamily everywhere!

MANUFACTURING

Bill noted that industrial was a land use discouraged by survey respondents. He further presented some alternatives, including craftsman industrial, warehousing and distribution, green manufacturing or clean industry, and advanced manufacturing. To better understand why light industrial and manufacturing was discouraged, the team asked attendees to participate in a poll. The poll results¹² tabulated below illustrate that many of the attendees either had concerns “related truck traffic on town roads” (44%) or are “not that concerned” (44%).

Poll 12: Why ‘Discourage’ Light Industrial / Manufacturing?

Location near residential uses	(24) 35%
Perceived environmental impacts	(27) 40%
Concern for property values	(11) 16%
Related truck traffic on town roads	(30) 44%
Other	(4) 6%
Not that concerned	(30) 44%

The comments and questions received from the participants about manufacturing are included below:

- Craftsman Industrial would be nice in the old Blue Cross Blue Shield Building. That property has been vacant for decades.
- I have never really thought about industrial being this type of industry.
- It could be a great place for a lot of uses but it doesn’t seem that the owner is that open to ideas.
- Why did SWBR use the word “perceived environmental impacts?”
- Istanbul park is hardly developed, and we have the partly constructed building there. If have more Industrial would Vista be a priority for location
- Let's not add light industrial, let's use what we have.

¹² A total of 68 Zoom meeting attendees participated in the Poll 12.

- I thought it needed mitigation and repair. Those can be costly. The other question is if there are business that would come?
- Light industry is often unattractive and often takes up large tracks of open space.
- I believe that there is something toxic at that site.
- My assumption is there would be a negative environmental impact.
- I’m not that concerned regarding light industrial/manufacturing
- I was/am actually in favor of industrial/manufacturing, but just voted for the truck traffic, because this needs to be considered seriously when siting industry.
- I don't agree with "perceived". Historically, there has been environmental impact with industrial development.
- Relatively strict NYS environmental regulations should mitigate most environmental concerns of light industry (i.e., air & water/sewer discharges).
- There are several options as to why one might hold that opinion then an option reading 'not that concerned' forcing individuals to remain neutral rather than being able to offer limited encouragement or any other opinion. The available options are skewed to one side of the issue rather than seeking an unbiased result.
- Local towns, village, and cities all compete to encourage light industrial/manufacturing to help pay for their own community services. How much unused, vacant commercial space is there in Bethlehem and elsewhere. Any planning for this kind of development needs to be evaluated based on the amount of existing land use zoning elsewhere for this purpose. If there's already enough capacity regionally, don't commit zoning for this as well. Zone for other types of land use.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

The team asked attendees to participate in a poll to gather insights about what traffic congestion means for the community. The poll results¹³ tabulated below illustrate that the majority of attendees (55%) selected “congestion at certain intersections during commute times,” followed by “Bethlehem doesn’t have a significant traffic issue” (37%) and “speed of vehicles” (36%).

Poll 13: What does traffic congestion mean?

Bumper to bumper road travel	(12) 16%
Congestion at certain intersections during commute times	(40) 55%
Speed of vehicles	(26) 36%
Truck traffic on town streets	(22) 30%
Bethlehem doesn’t have a significant traffic issue.	(27) 37%

¹³ A total of 73 Zoom meeting attendees participated in the Poll 13.

The comments and questions received from the participants about traffic congestion are included below:

- The town needs to lower the speed limit on residential streets. Google maps has altered usage patterns that adversely affect pedestrian safety in residential areas
- West Sand Lake suffers terribly from excess truck traffic. Makes the small local roads noisy and dangerous.
- We just don't want to become what Troy Rd has become in East Greenbush!
- Noise is a traffic issue, but it is not included here.
- I've forgotten what commuting is since the pandemic.
- Traffic congestion is a concern that we need to address in regard to multifamily housing development. It is an issue that can be handled but should not be ignored.
- People should carpool to the soccer games!
- A concern with traffic congestion links up with a desire to avoid multifamily housing development. It is a concern that can be addressed with proper planning.
- If people can work near where they live, then they don't need to drive.
- The traffic congestion is mailing in Glenmont and Delmar and would be a high topic for Delmar residents who wouldn't see the truck traffic in the southern areas
- I am in favor of multifamily development. I think to get more support for it, we need to deal with the issue of traffic congestion.
- Usually it is only me in my truck, but I don't complain about traffic either.
- Personally, I don't think we currently have many traffic problems in Bethlehem. What concerns many of us is the fear of us becoming like other areas such as the Northway corridor, Colonie and Western Ave in Guilderland, where traffic has grown and some of that is not just during rush hour.
- Glenmont has a major traffic problem during work commutes on Rt 9W, but hopefully this will be addressed with the circle going in at corner of Feura Bush Rd.
- T1 I assume to mean future transit? There is no transit where I live at present. ***All modes of travel are considered.***

Q&A SESSION

The project presentation and the interactive polling activity was followed by a question and answer (Q&A) session to gather further feedback from the meeting participants. The question and comments received from the attendees have been categorized and summarized below.

HOUSING

- Who is building these “affordable housing?” Private individuals or the Town of Bethlehem? And where would we be putting these structures? Olde Delmar, neighborhoods off Feura Bush /Murray Rd. or Seklirk/Glenmont? And is “affordable” subjective?
- Affordability and single-family preference seem to be in some conflict.
- I do like the values, but I am concerned about extensive housing development across previously undeveloped land.
- With regards to housing, I assume we are not precluding less affordable housing. Many new homes now over \$500. ***Providing housing for all income levels is considered.***
- There needs to be a way to provide lower cost (less than \$300K) houses that don't need to be subsidized. They may be smaller, have smaller lots, less high-end kitchens etc. but affordable as a starter home or senior home.
- How many residential properties vs. commercial properties? Isn't there 10X residential? ***Yes, dominant land use is residential.***

ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

- "You may address this later but what do you mean by sustainable? Does that include being aware of the impact of climate change? Does the town plan to include sustainable actions to slow climate change in the town? ***The Town currently has some measures for mitigating climate change such as the Sustainable Bethlehem Initiative, Complete Streets Resolution, and it is considered in many other planning efforts such as the Street Tree Management Plan and the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. We've already heard from residents that sustainability and climate action are important things that should be included in the Comprehensive Plan Update!***
- What makes an environment sustainable? The word sustainable and suburbia do not rally go together.
- We need to examine our resources. Water is at a premium.
- The town of Bethlehem has very limited water resources of its own and rely on many different municipalities to get water. So, whether it's industrial, residential, or agricultural development, it will affect the amount of water that we're using. In addition, we have not mentioned air quality. Depending on where you live in the town, the air quality can be very poor. For instance, I live in the center near town hall and the air quality is very poor. ***The community profile details the water and sewer capacity of the town. The town has about two thirds available capacity for in the water plant and about one-third available capacity for sewer treatment plant. So, the town has available balance in both systems. The project team can look into why the air quality is poor particularly in near town hall.***
- How does town hall affect air quality?
- Regarding “downtown” air quality, perhaps tailpipe emissions from cars on Delaware and Kenwood Ave.

- There is the climate leadership and community protection act that was passed in 2019 and is now being implemented at the state level that requires towns like Bethlehem to undergo a comprehensive overhaul of how we live work and play.
- I would like the climate action plan to be incorporated that addresses building transportation and infrastructure and considers strategies like electrification, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and carbon sequestration. We have the climate law and being able to align the 2035 comp plan with that would be fantastic.
- Trees have a life span, sometimes they die and need to be taken down, sometimes they are nearing the end and can be used for wood, sometimes they get in the way and need to be taken down.
- Trees are also sometimes diseased and can spread disease. Moderation and thoughtful removal are not always a bad thing.
- Not everyone wants trees near their house.
- Can we look to invasive species (such as bittersweet) in preserving trees in long term thinking? Trees are being killed by these. what folks think of as deforestation is actually removal of dead trees from invasive species. I personally removed a ton from a yard in Glenmont today.
- Deer overpopulation is also decimating the saplings.
- We can all agree to what we want this town to look like, but the big developers are still able to sweep in, take over large swaths of open space (ie Kleinke Farm) and despite our best efforts on the last CP, we were still unable to prevent a great loss of open space in the past 10 - 20 years.
- No mention of sustainable energy or focus on native habitat/wildlife/plant diversity and connectivity.
- More street trees along Delaware Avenue.
- The climate action plans have to be included in the comprehensive plan and I'm a real advocate for the farmland.
- It is important to retaining the highest number of trees possible in this community because they are being taken down by the thousands on monthly basis.

LAND USE

- Why do you assume that comment applies only to large landholdings? For example, what about the ability of building the type of fence you want in town.
- It would seem that it is vital to support our small farm owners so that their land does not have to be sold for housing developments.

TRANSPORTATION

- There was no adequate public transportation in the year 2005 in Bethlehem.
- This doesn't need to be addressed tonight but I am concerned about speed on Delaware Ave and would like to see commercial development restricted in number/character going

forward so as to not exacerbate traffic issues on the stretch between Four Corners and headed toward Albany.

- Is the town really walkable? *There are areas of town that are more walkable than others. The walkable areas are mainly limited to hamlet areas. Residential neighborhoods with low/slow traffic, while they may not have sidewalks, can also be considered walkable.*
- I have lived in Delmar since 1997, on the Glenmont side of the bypass. I have been asking for sidewalks for years. We still have no sidewalks going down Feura Bush Rd or Elm Ave going to the Town Park or going to 335, from where we could get sidewalks to Old Delmar or down to the Glenmont center. Also, public transportation is sorely lacking. *The town has undertaken preliminary plans in laying out a sidewalk on Feura Bush Road from Elsmere Ave to Murray Avenue. The location requires easement and land acquisition from some property owners, which has taken some time to achieve, and remains in progress.*
- Going to Murray is nice, but not far enough. It should go to Elm. *Agreed, that would be a 3rd phase, and then ultimately up Elm Avenue to Town Park.*
- What's happening with the old train station on the rail trail in Dungeons? Seems like a great place to build community. *This is the former train depot building. Albany County owns the building and land but have not announced plans for its future.*
- Neighborhood connectivity does not require that needs to always be vehicle connectivity can be just walking.

COMMUNITY

- If we are a community that celebrates diversity, why do we want to develop "like minded" neighborhoods? *Those two don't really match up completely. I think a diverse community will also have a variety of different perspectives and voices.*
- Surprised that survey results indicated that people liked that the Town is Diverse. How was diversity defined? *The "diverse" term was used to describe the town in the future and not as a reflection of our current state.*
- As it relates to the issues reported, has there been any data correlation / inquiry as to what has drawn folks to live in Bethlehem to start, and how this relates to the issue list? My thinking here is that some are brought in principally by the reputation of the school district, whereas longstanding residents may have different perspectives.
- What does "socially conscious" mean? When you do these surveys, you cannot use jargon. Also, what does valuing "gender diversity" mean? Are we saying that the town is currently not diverse as to gender? *It refers to gender identity.*
- With respect to some of the various types of buildings that are desired with potential outcome economically or otherwise for the community, it seems as if design review and the materiality of those buildings would be important and could add or subtract to the overall feeling of the community.
- My concerns about the present and the near-term future include maintaining a community with good schools, clean air, clean water, responsive and responsible government that

works for the town residents. I want my community to be inclusive and welcoming for all people. I want policing to be public safety designed primarily to protect human rights including protection of community and private property. I am concerned about the increasing footprint of heavy industry and transportation within the town and nearby vicinity. For example, there appears to me to higher volumes of heavy trucks and seemingly constant rail traffic through the Selkirk Yards. I am concerned about the pollution in the Hudson River. I believe we must strengthen county and regional coordination to maintain and improve our conditions.

PROPERTY TAXES

- As someone who moved from Seattle, the tax rates here are very high. I used to only pay 1% of my property value in taxes in the City of Seattle. So, this is significantly higher here.
- We are so much higher than almost all other states. people don't realize how much higher.
- Why do you assume “residential burden too high (need diverse uses ...)? I can show you town after town where your statement is not true. What you are looking for is development, residential or business, that produces tax revenue over cost. ***Commercial and industrial land uses help to balance the tax base - compared to residential uses.***
- BCSD does not get the fiscal scrutiny that Town government does and perhaps should.
- You are making a conclusory statement that is not necessarily true. Compare the tax burden of senior housing vs. cost to community vs. Wal-Mart’s extra demand on police services. I did the math with Walmart. Breakeven on property tax; large benefit to sales tax. Here is a great example of how I wish you would facilitate as facilitators. “Bethlehem, you say you want small businesses, not big box stores. Big Box stores produce more tax revenue per square foot than small business. HOW CAN WE MAKE SMALL BUSINESSES MORE PROFITABLE SUCH THAT THEY CAN PAY MORE TAX. As one woman wrote, “How can we make government more efficient?” ***A diversity of businesses in any community helps to provide a balanced tax base.***

OTHER

- Not enough time and the zoom format unworkable. Can I comment on a written draft? ***Comments and questions can be submitted on the project website or via email to bethlehemforward@townofbethlehem.org.***
- Where did property rights go within the value statements? ***It's found in qualities of rural land, ability to access economic value.***
- How many years out are we talking for the Murray phase and then the 3rd phase? ***Likely in the next 5 years.***
- Did the committee develop these value statements? ***Bill Price from SWBR developed the value statements based on input received to date. The CPUC committee and town staff reviewed and refined them.***

- Are the public-school districts represented on this committee? *The Committee does not include a representative from the school district. They have been contacted for discussion and are aware the Update is underway.*
- Has the town ever explored burying power lines along Delaware Ave and other areas of the town? *This was looked at during the Delaware Avenue Streetscape project a few years ago and cost was in the millions without grant funds available.*
- Is this a future vision for the town? Glad to hear your thoughts on how best achieve this balance. Yes, the town has become increasingly geared to the wealthy transient resident who vacates when their children graduate. They have very different desires for the long-term values of the town than do generational long-term residents. Both should certainly be balanced.
- Are key values just based on input from the residents or there are also standards that are applied by the committee and the planners? Friends at Bethlehem Park recently wrote a letter explaining our concern about accessibility and the inclusion of people with disabilities. We believe the town could be more proactive in terms of its policies and practices in this area. *There's nothing standard about the value statements and they aren't derived from the American Planning Association (APA) or any other national planning body. These are all unique to Bethlehem and resulted from the feedback received from the community through multiple engagement efforts including surveys and public meetings.*
- I think the key is to make progress toward goals. Unfortunately, many of the ideas will cost a fortune and the main reason folks want to leave NY is the property taxes.
- Hamlets is a legacy of the previous Comp Plan and in retrospect it was an overrated value (goal?), which resulted in the carve out of what are now questionable hamlets (ex. Feura Bush and Elsmere Ave; Slingerland Vista Park). Do we need more of these iffy hamlets? Are they really walkable, mixed use, 'attractive' places?
- The decision to use polls as the primary method to learn the responses of community members is limiting and preventing individuals from providing their full input on current or future ideals. Responses are already scripted and left vague enough that the interpretation of the individual submitting their opinion and the meaning assigned to it when compiling results may differ entirely. There is no opportunity for discussion or exchanging ideas, no way to express support or concerns with specific aspects, responses are reduced to sentences that have already been decided or what can be conveyed through a few lines of text.
- Good session. Thank you
- Thank you, Bill. This issue was looked at over 11 years ago and independence for Bethlehem was looked at.
- Thank you for facilitating this discussion. Have a good evening.
- We need to ensure parks are ADA compliant. Looking at the ADA as the floor, not the ceiling, in terms of planning to make all resources accessible.
- Big thanks to all of our town officials and employees for hosting these meetings!

- Thank you for the efficiency and timely running of this meeting.

WRAP-UP & NEXT STEPS

The project team reviewed the next steps:

- Virtual meeting recording is available on the project website and Facebook page
- Project presentation can be accessed on the project website at www.bethlehemforward.com/Customer/File/Full/28732720-d249-4d25-8275-98efd5c34105.
- Review and comment on Public Survey Summary and Community Profile Video Presentation
- CPUC will prepare 2035 Vision Statement informed by tonight's discussion
- Submit your vision ideas and comments by Friday, April 2, 2021 via:
 - Email: bethlehemforward@townofbethlehem.org
 - Comment on the website: www.BethlehemForward.com
 - Comment on social media:
 - Facebook.com/BethlehemForward
 - Twitter @BethlehemNY
- Next CPUC Meeting: April 13, 2021 from 6:00—8:00 pm
- Public Meeting #3: Late Summer

APPENDIX A: LIST OF PUBLIC MEETING ATTENDEES

PROJECT TEAM:

David VanLuven, Town of Bethlehem
Rob Leslie, Town of Bethlehem
Nate Owens, Town of Bethlehem
Leslie Lombardo, Town of Bethlehem
Karen Shaw, Town of Bethlehem
Bill Price, SWBR
Tanya Zwahlen, Highland Planning
Nancy Raca, Highland Planning
Charvi Gupta, Highland Planning

COMMUNITY MEMBERS:

Rad Anderson	Brian Gyory
Aferdita Bardhi	Rebecca Hathaway
David Barnett	Nancy Heinzen
Karen Beck	Seanan Herrick
Pattie Beeler	John Hillmann
Anne Benware	Julia Hoffman
Paul Beyer	Debra Hoffmann
Gregg Biche	Oliver Holmes
Alejandra Bronfman	Chris Horn
Greg Brown	Peter Iwanowicz
David Burtis	Linda J.
Bruce Bushart	Roberta Jeracka
Ray Cardona	Ryan Keller
Donna Clark	Bill Ketzer
Stephen Cleary	Dr. Michael And Maria Kiely
Ann Cohan	Jared King
Barbara Collura	Edward Kleinke
Nicole Correia	Donald Klime
Maureen Cunningham	Kate Kloss
Susan Debronsky	Jill Kobayashi
Judi Doody	Richard Kotlow
Rose Duhan	Mary Lyn Koval
Steven Fein	Kurt Krumperman
Judith Fetterley	Cindy Kruzinski
Georgia Fishburn	Christine Lennard
Jim Foster	George Leveille
Rusty Gallagher	Jane Lyman
Jim Garry	Bill Mafriaci
Joan Gavrilik	Nadeem Mann
James Giacone	Kathleen Mannix
Thomas Goodfellow	Catherine Mcglynn
David Gordon	Maureen Mcguinness
Christian Grieco	Homi Mistry

Mary Monaco
Anne Moore
Peter Moran
Andy Morse
Nancy Neff
Ken Neff
Kelsey Neff
Carole Nemore
Kathleen Newkirk
Barbara Nussbaum
James Peattie
Debra Pitkin
Katie Potestio
Ellie Prakken
Steve Redler
Neal Regels
Nathaniel Reichman
Aric Rider
Kathleen Roark
John Saintcross
Mark Sargent
Michael Sattinger
Dana Scalere
Melanie Schoen
Mindy Scott
Harriet Seeley
Rachel Seymour

Paul Shatsoff
Ben Shaw
Peggy Sherman
Jan Silverman-Pollow
Pamela Skripak
John Smolinsky
Jeremy Snyder
Erin Svare
Joyce Thomas
Kelly Vadney
David Vanluven
Joanne Vogel
Giles Wagoner
Michael Waldenmaier
Marsha Walton
Dean Watkins
Matt Watson
Matt Watson
Kirstie Weimee
Connie Wilbur
Mary Willmott
Katie Yezzi
Maria Zimmerman
Margery Zucker
Richard
Theresa

APPENDIX B: PUBLIC MEETING #2 ANNOTATED AGENDA

Date: Tuesday, March 23, 2021

Time: 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Format: Zoom Webinar

Meeting Registration: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_noj5TONOTTSRQhmrWBvFWA

Objectives: The public meeting will review the project scope, summarize work to date, provide a high-level overview of existing conditions and survey responses, and conduct visioning exercises.

Participants:

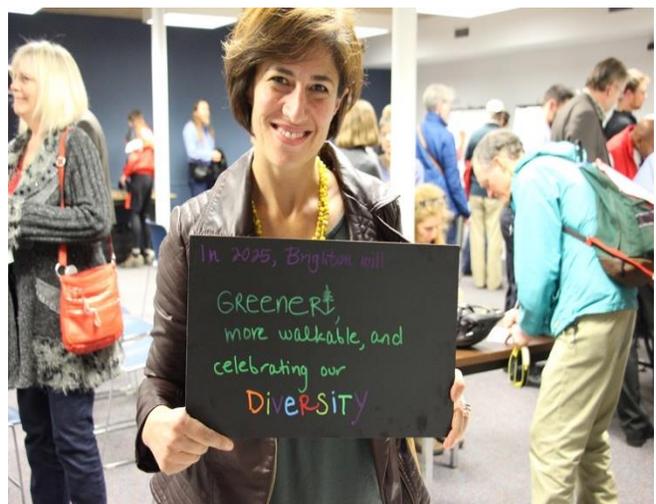
- (1) Members of the general public
- (2) Members of the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC)
- (3) Project Team

Format: The Town is hosting a two-hour virtual public webinar using Zoom.

Invitation & Promotion: The meeting will be promoted by the Town and the CPUC via the following.

- Press release
- Project website and Town website
- Town E-blast/newsletter
- Town Social media
- Template for Social Media Vision Statement Exercise

Pre-Meeting Activity: *Between March 10-20, 2021 we will invite participants to post virtual vision board statements to the Bethlehem Forward Facebook page or Instagram. Highland Planning will provide a template with the prompt: “In 2035, Bethlehem will be _____.” We will encourage people to fill in this statement and post a photo of themselves holding up the piece of paper. (Participants may also use their own blank piece of paper.) We will incorporate some of these posts in the PowerPoint presentation on March 23, 2021. Here is a sample image from the Town of Brighton, New York.*



Dry Run: A dry run with the team and Town representatives will be conducted within one week prior to the meeting.

Meeting Agenda:

Time	Activity	Description	Role
5:45 pm	Meeting Set-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Zoom meeting set-up ▪ Assign co-hosts/panelists 	Highland Planning
6:00 pm (5 minutes)	Convene & Welcome	Begin recording. Convene the group and introduce Town and project team	SWBR/Town
6:05 pm (5 minutes)	Online Meeting Instructions & Agenda Review	<p>Explain logistics of online participation (provide virtual meeting instructions about “virtual hand-raising,” Q&A, chat-box, etc.) and review meeting purpose and agenda.</p> <p>Poll #1: Where are you calling in from?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delmar ▪ Elsmere ▪ Glenmont ▪ North Bethlehem ▪ Selkirk ▪ Slingerlands ▪ South Bethlehem ▪ Other 	Highland Planning
6:10 (15 minutes)	Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project overview ▪ What we’ve heard – Community Profile (reference pre-recorded video) ▪ What we’ve heard – Public Meeting #1 ▪ What we’ve heard – Survey #1 	SWBR

<p>6:25 (10 minutes)</p>	<p>Q&A</p>	<p>Poll #2: Did anything in the community profile or survey summary surprise you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes ○ No ○ I'm not sure <p>Participants can submit clarifying questions in writing via Zoom. Questions can be answered in writing during the webinar or addressed live by the team. People can also raise their hands and unmute to provide a comment or ask a question.</p>	<p>Highland Planning</p>
<p>6:35 (30 minutes)</p>	<p>Values Statement Review</p>	<p>Review chalkboard vision statements, review 2005 vision statement, review value statements.</p> <p>We Value.....</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Community:</u></p> <p>C1: Our sense of community with socially conscious citizens and business owners who engage in improving the quality of life.</p> <p>C2: Our diverse age cohorts and multiple generations of families that choose to live in the town.</p> <p>C3: The qualities of rural land, supporting the landowners' ability to access its economic value in a manner compatible with sustaining a rural-agricultural livelihood.</p> <p>C4: Racial, ethnic, economic and gender diversity and inclusion for all who want to live, work and visit the town.</p>	<p>SWBR/Highland Planning</p>

		<p>C5: Small / locally owned businesses and desire to create the conditions that encourage more business enterprises.</p> <p>C6: Preservation of our historic architecture, cultural sites, neighborhoods and districts.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Public Services:</u></p> <p>P1: Our public-school systems that provide the highest level of education, athletics, arts and cultural programs.</p> <p>P2: Public services provided by the dedicated employees of the town.</p> <p>P3: Public safety and emergency response services provided by dedicated town employees and volunteer first responders.</p> <p>P4: Senior service programs that enable residents to live in their homes and remain active community members.</p> <p>P5: Our park system and recreation programs, private preserves and seek to expand facilities with diverse activities and programs for all age groups.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Environment / Sustainability:</u></p> <p>E1: Our vast natural resource systems, their habitat, ecosystem services, to provide clean air and water.</p> <p>E2: Being on the forefront of sustainability by addressing climate change through renewable energy, energy efficiency, a just transition off fossil fuels, electrification, waste reduction and prevention of greenhouse gas emissions.</p>	
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		<p>E3: Productive agricultural land; ‘farmlands for farmers’ and rural character.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Land Uses:</u></p> <p>L1: A diversity of land uses to balance the tax base, provide jobs, complement our hamlets and residential zoning districts and sustain fiscal policy objectives.</p> <p>L2: Diverse housing options that are affordable, fit the needs of different lifestyles, and allow residents to prosper and age in place.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Transportation:</u></p> <p>T1: The transportation infrastructure which provides equal access / priority to all modes of travel (pedestrian, bicycles, transit and vehicles).</p> <p>T2: The walkable areas of the town and desire to expand connectivity across the town to schools, neighborhoods, recreation facilities and commercial districts.</p> <p>Poll #3 - #7: Do these value statements align with your vision for the Town of Bethlehem in 2035?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Yes</i> ○ <i>No</i> ○ <i>Yes, if my comments are addressed.</i> <p>Polling questions for each block of value statement category.</p>	
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		Comments can come through the chat or by unmuting participants with raised hands.	
7:05 (30 minutes)	Topics for Deeper Discussion	Introduce topics that came up in the survey that require additional discussion: property taxes, land uses, housing, transportation, industrial land use. With each topic, polls will ask participants to weigh in on preferences.	SWBR/Highland Planning
7:35 (20 minutes)	Comments/Q&A	Participants can submit questions in writing via Zoom Q&A feature or “raise hands” virtually to comment/ask questions.	Highland Planning
7:55 (5 minutes)	Wrap-up and adjourn	Discuss next steps, future engagement opportunities	SWBR

Online Live Stream

- Meeting will be livestreamed via Facebook Live (and the project website) to provide an option to the public to view the presentation without pre-registering on Zoom (a Facebook login may still be required).
- SWBR and Highland Planning staff will monitor comments and questions

Meeting Recording and Comment Period: At conclusion of the meeting, the project team will share the link to the recorded meeting through the project website to allow community members to offer additional input. All comments received within the period of two weeks will be included in the final document. This will allow the members of the public (including those who were unable to participate in the live virtual meeting) to provide detailed feedback.

Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan

Public Meeting #3 Summary

November 18, 2021



HIGHLAND PLANNING

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OVERVIEW

In the fall of 2020, the Town of Bethlehem initiated the development of the Comprehensive Plan that will guide development and community-related decisions toward the community’s vision for years to come. The Town’s 2005 Comprehensive Plan provided the Town’s elected and appointed officials with valuable context and guidance for development-related decisions and capital investment. It established a vision for the community’s future, articulated guiding principles and goals, and recommended specific actions or strategies that would move the Town toward the community vision. Updating the comprehensive plan requires a thorough and inclusive community discussion about the current state of the town, the community’s values and aspirations for the future, and the strategies that should be used or actions that should be taken to achieve the community’s vision for the future.

In early 2022, the Town of Bethlehem Board will adopt an update to its Comprehensive Plan to establish a shared community vision for the future and an action plan to achieve it.

Throughout the course of the project, the project team engaged the community via a series of public outreach efforts. The first public meeting was held virtually on December 8, 2020, to serve as an introduction to the project and gather feedback on issues and challenges. On March 23, 2021, the second public meeting was hosted virtually to share a high-level overview of the existing conditions data and public survey responses and conduct visioning exercises.

On Thursday, November 18, 2021, the Town hosted the third public meeting from 6:00—8:00 PM at the Town Hall Auditorium (445 Delaware Ave, Delmar, NY 12054). The purpose of the meeting was to inform and engage members of the general public in the development of the Comprehensive Plan Update, providing an opportunity to:

- (1) Share project updates and upcoming engagement opportunities
- (2) Summarize feedback received to date
- (3) Solicit feedback from participants about key principles and recommendations

In addition to the project team members, the in-person meeting had more than 85 community members in attendance. A list of participants interested in staying informed is included as Appendix A. The table below illustrates the spectrum of ZIP codes that the meeting attendees reside in.

Table 1 Residential Location of Meeting Attendees

Location	Zip Codes	Attendees ¹
Delmar, NY	12054	53 (65.4%)
Glenmont, NY	12077	8 (9.9%)

¹ Note that 81 out of 85 meeting attendees provided information about ZIP codes.

Slingerlands, NY	12159	6 (7.4%)
Selkirk, NY	12158	5 (6.2%)
Albany, NY	12205-12210	4 (4.9%)
Berne, NY	12023	1 (1.2%)
Feura Bush, NY	12067	1 (1.2%)
Rotterdam Junction, NY	12150	1 (1.2%)
Schaghticoke, NY	12154	1 (1.2%)
Other (Comitancillo)	12004	1 (1.2%)

WELCOME & MEETING AGENDA

The public meeting was convened by David VanLuven, Town Supervisor, who welcomed and thanked the attendees for participating. Reiterating the purpose of the meeting, Bill Price, SWBR, reviewed the meeting agenda:

- Welcome
- Project Presentation
 - Process to date
 - What we’ve heard
 - Key Principles and Comprehensive Plan Recommendations
- Q&A Session
- Station Session Exercise

A copy of the meeting agenda is included as Appendix B.

PROJECT PRESENTATION

Bill introduced the consultant team members from SWBR, Highland Planning, Fisher Associates, and the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) members.

Bill presented an overview of Comprehensive Plan Update process, including the engagement process and project scope. He further summarized the feedback received from the community about the town attributes, aging, housing, transportation, historic preservation, environment/sustainability, economic development, parks and recreation, government, and agriculture. He noted that the information was used to determine the following principles to develop an equitable and sustainable comprehensive plan specific to the needs of the Town.

- Livable Built Environment
- Harmony with Nature
- Resilient Economy
- Healthy Community
- Responsible Governance

The project presentation is included as Appendix C and a copy of the handouts distributed at the meeting are included as Appendix D.

QUESTION AND ANSWERS

The project presentation was followed by a question and answer (Q&A) session to gather further feedback from the meeting participants. The question and comments received from the attendees are summarized below.

- **How has the community addressed different experiences in the town? (e.g., air quality, quality of life).** Review recommendations and please let us know if the project team got it right. If not, tell us where we fell short.
- **Was there any consideration given to not carbon reductions but rather elimination? (E.g. leaf blower phase out.)** This was considered and discussed and will be revised.
- **Are schools represented in the plan? Have you met with school district?** Not formally.
- **Metrics of plan relate to income, crime. Affordable housing may drive up crime. Why is that a goal?**
- **Vision statement is clear. Goals are okay, but recommendations are top-down. We need options and transition period and how we will get there.** If there are suggestions, please share with the project team. We will add the “how” in the next step of the plan.

STATION SESSIONS

Bill Price introduced the station session exercise and noted that the participants will have 12 minutes at each of the five stations.

1. Livable Built Environment
2. Harmony with Nature
3. Resilient Economy
4. Healthy Community
5. Responsible Governance

Participants were encouraged to discuss the concerns and opportunities associated with the respective topic at each station and submit comments in writing on the sheet provided (see Appendix E). The comments submitted by the participants after the meeting are summarized at the end of this document as Appendix G.

Discussion at each topic-oriented station was facilitated by a member of the project team. Feedback is summarized below.

LIVABLE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The station on livable built environment was facilitated by Bill Price (Stantec), Mike Godfrey (Fisher), Paul Beyer (CPUC), Nate Owens (Town of Bethlehem), and Bill Ketzner. The feedback received from the participants at the meeting and through the comment forms is categorized below.

- Housing
 - How do we accommodate senior housing and a variety of housing, particularly in hamlets, and have amenities located nearby?
 - Real affordable housing is impossible in Bethlehem; permitting is also lengthy.
 - There is a lack of housing inventory. Seniors who downsize pay less than they get for the house they sold.
 - What are ADUs?
 - Will single-family zoned areas now have to build all multi-unit?
 - Does ADU allow rentals?
 - For affordable housing purposes, the town should investigate Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), especially for the Delaware Avenue corridor.
 - The term “affordable housing” should be dropped. The town should identify another term to describe housing that would accommodate seniors, low-income families, teachers, firefighters and other workers who may now be priced out of the community by housing costs.
 - Instead of new construction, can we prioritize conversions of commercial to housing, for example?
 - Goal 4a (*Permit two- and three-family units in the Residential Core and Residential A districts*): It is important to identify what two- and three-family units mean. Is each unit owned separately, or does one party own both or all three units? The latter option is a marketable solution for retrofit and tear down options. However, for vacant parcels and new developments, the single-owner option is a lot of risk that is not attractive to developers. If conversion from single family to duplex or triplex is important to add to a new code, it should be incentivized. This kind of work comes with significant costs, especially on the engineering and utilities end of the project.
 - A major subdivision can be as little as six lots. How can a six-lot subdivision be better served as a conservation subdivision? The character of the property should define if it is better suited for a conservation subdivision. An option of either will open up more possibilities and opportunities for different styles of development and housing.
 - Town is contemplating limiting residential development in the proposed Agricultural Business zoning district to one home per a minimum of 10 acres. If that is accurate, the Town would be promoting suburban sprawl as 100 acres of land would be used for 10 homes, rather than having a conservation/ cluster

development, which would condense development to a portion of the 100 acres and provide for preservation of the remaining portion of those 100 acres. By promoting one home per 10 acres, the Town will be allowing the current existing natural landscapes to be reduced 100% to residential use (i.e., removal of trees, clearing of fields and natural habitat to create a residential lawn), with no conservation of existing landscapes, natural habitat or the environment. Also, the Town would be promoting higher infrastructure costs, as providing water, sewer and roads for 10 homes over 100 acres requires more materials, maintenance and work than condensing development to 30-50 acres of those 100 acres and preserving the remainder as natural open space.

- As far as housing is concerned, is anyone looking at the vacant properties, both residential and commercial, to see if they can be repurposed or repaired? Habitat for Humanity might be helpful in this regard.
 - How long does it take to develop a form-based code?
 - Goal 4c (*Permit Accessory Apartments/ADU's 'by-right' (attached and detached)*): Form-Based codes lead to costly projects and limit development potential. Meeting zoning and engineering codes are challenging enough for a developer, adding restrictions on the vertical building with regards to architecture and materials adds additional hurdles for developers to create successful projects.
 - Ultimately from a developer standpoint, the lot count vs. length of road is a quick and simple way to identify if a project is feasible. One-acre lots may provide a different look to the neighborhood, but it may not be worth it if infrastructure costs are too high. As for cookie-cutter neighborhoods, with current development codes in place, layouts already tend to be imaginative and customized. Drive through Newell Place Community, from a road layout or site design perspective; it would be hard to say it is cookie cutter, especially considering lot sizes are between 60-70' wide. Also, the 40 residents there love their homes and the neighborhood.
 - Goal 4h (*Evaluate density (i.e., Units per acre as the standard metric vs. Lot size requirement)*): This would be welcomed by the developer community.
 - The less land that is developable equals a project that is less feasible to build, and in turn limits product and housing types.
- Transportation
 - Connecting new development can cause more traffic through existing communities that should not be pass-throughs.
 - In some rural areas, speed bumps won't work; one resident drives her tractors on the road to slow down traffic.
 - What is the plan for complete streets?
 - What are the plans for bike/pedestrian network?
 - It's difficult to get from Delmar to Glenmont by bike or walking. Can we look at that area?

- Are we considering amenities around sidewalks to support pedestrians like stop signs?
- Goal 10d (*Maintain the street width standards for new residential developments and require a connected street network with existing streets*): Take a closer look at the costs associated with this. The Town is getting these roads built via developers improving the properties the road is slated to go through. If this is a Town goal, the Town should be incentivizing the work, or at the very least streamlining the permit and review. Also, some of the roads require so much infrastructure, they will likely never be built. How do these roads fit in with the goal to be less car-oriented?
- Agriculture
 - You're going to restrict farmers' rights to subsidize. They can't build on quarter acre lots.
 - Have we reached out to farmers or agricultural districts? You're restricting the farmers ability to sell their property at its highest value.
 - Have we looked at how agricultural business districts have worked in other communities?
 - The Town's proposed vision "goals" included adding an Agricultural Business zoning district, including under Goal 2 of the Livable Built Environment section (*Conserve the Town's agriculture landscapes including fields, farmsteads, barns and contributing structures*). A number of landowners that own farmland and a number of farmers in the Town expressed opposition to forcing an agricultural district upon their lands. They further stated that their experience was that farming is not financially sustainable and no longer practical as a viable business. The Town should provide the public with a breakdown of information showing what percentage of the overall Town residents identified adding an Agricultural Business as an alleged Town goal, and of that percentage identify what percent of the residents were more suburban residents identifying that as a goal, vs the percentage of rural landowners and actual farmers that identified that as a goal. If the Town's alleged Vision goal of forcing an Agricultural Business zoning district is based upon support from suburban residents only, that is not a genuine "Town" goal.
- Other
 - Time-consuming historic process to designate a property as historic.
 - Interest in preserving historic agricultural structures, in addition to other historical buildings.
 - Aren't you taking away rights?
 - We could use less expensive initial measures to show people how they work before making a longer investment.

- Regarding architectural details, can we get support or funding to maintain architectural qualities and standards?
- Why do we have setbacks in rural areas (buffer), but fewer setbacks in places like Delmar?
- It's hard to understand the recommendations without a land use map. When will the map be available?
- Can we plow the rail-trail?
- If viewsheds are being conserved, how are property owners compensated for preserving a view the Town identifies as important?

HARMONY WITH NATURE

The station on harmony with nature was facilitated by Frank Armento (Fisher), Leslie Lombardo (Town of Bethlehem), and Jeremy Snyder (CPUC). The feedback received from the participants at the meeting and in comment forms is categorized below.

- Agriculture
 - Value of rural, non-developed land impacted by agriculture recommendations.
 - Elaborate on what agriculture business district means.
 - Against agriculture business district. One house per 100 acres is not right.
 - Reduce barriers for non-crop agriculture in suburban areas.
 - Does the town have knowledge of peer success in other municipalities about Agriculture business districts?
 - Goal 2e (*Consider establishing an Agricultural Advisory Committee*): Why is it the Town's job to educate future generations of farming as a career path? The Town and surrounding areas are also in desperate need of carpenters, plumbers, electricians, and masons. Will the Town also promote these careers? How successful can the Town be in promoting a career in farming? Farmers need land. Land isn't an abundant resource and it's a significant barrier of entry to business.
 - It might be nice to investigate the option of having non-crop agriculture possible in residential areas. Chickens can be a great way to prevent pesticide applications as they eat many disease-causing organisms and improve soil by scratching and digging which can spread their fecal matter around and integrate it into soil. Goats or sheep can mow lawns and dwarf varieties are smaller than many dogs I see walking past my house daily. Bees can help with local gardens and pollination. There might need to be a limit on the numbers of these animals residents are permitted, but I know my friends in Ballston Spa enjoy the benefits of having the animals I've listed in their suburban back yards.
- Housing
 - Options for residential heating/cooling.
 - Heat pumps and housing affordability? How can it be balanced?

- Survey pins should be required on new residential development to limit dumping on adjacent agriculture lands.
- Goal 3m (*Improve energy efficiency in existing buildings*): Existing homes and buildings are the least energy-efficient buildings in any town. This should be the area of focus for energy efficiency.
- Goal 3g (*Advance solar energy with photovoltaics, passive solar energy, and building orientation*): This would limit the development potential of so many properties. Many projects would not be buildable due to house placement restrictions.
- Goal 3b (*Advance utilization of heat pumps and prohibit fossil fuel hookups and storage in the building sector*): How does this balance with the idea of promoting affordable housing? What issue can Bethlehem help with more, global emissions and pollution or affordable housing? A heat pump system in a typical 2,000 s.f. home is \$2500 more than a natural gas HVAC system. Furthermore, the current NYS Energy code is very effective, and new homes are more efficient than ever. The heating costs and gas usage for new homes are so much lower than in years past. If anything, heat pumps should be looked at for existing older home stock which is not nearly as efficient as the current new builds. It would also be important to consider all things gas supply – new homes would not be able to offer gas stoves, gas fireplaces, gas dryers, or gas generators as well. Would you opt to live in a home without these amenities for a higher price point?
- Environment/Sustainability
 - Concerns for 100' – 300' on wetlands buffers and the impact to existing developed areas.
 - Construction waste recycling is needed.
 - How will sea level rise impact us?
 - More public green infrastructure. Example, street trees.
 - How can industrial development be done in a “green” initiative? Manufacturing is dirty. I don't see what kinds of development would not exacerbate the problems we are trying to rectify.
 - We need to have a long-term plan for garbage, recognizing that the town is doing remarkable work with its recycling program.
 - How will wetland buffers work? Residential properties?
 - Residential lots that want to be biodiverse. Native plants and no pesticides.
 - Increase food waste composting and make it easier for households.
 - Multi-stream recycling needs to be encouraged
 - Goal 1g (*Support the position of Open Space Coordinator in the Department of Economic Development and Planning*): DEC already has significant controls in place. The current stormwater program bases their work and management on the DEC guidelines. Also, the Coordinator comes with a \$200 monthly fee from the Town

to do stormwater inspections. Developers already pay for this service through a private engineer. The Town should not be continuing to charge for their time, on work that is already being performed.

- The town should consider hydrogen as a potential power source (in addition to electricity, solar, and wind).
- The Town generator is also a huge source of both air and noise pollution. As you know, the generator runs every Thursday morning for 20 minutes. During this time, I must close all the windows in my house if they are open and often must do some level of cleaning to get rid of the diesel residue that blows onto my house from the fumes released.
- There is a great deal of light pollution from the Town Hall, the Library and police and Town vehicles that regularly visit Town Hall.
- Other
 - Tax incentives for protecting open spaces
 - Town committees and staff is too much
 - Recommendation language needs to reflect transitions and flexibility
 - Are suggested new positions affordable for the town?
 - The word “prohibits” in recommendations is too strong.

RESILIENT ECONOMY

The station on resilient economy was facilitated by Rob Leslie (Town of Bethlehem), Ed Kleinke (CPUC), and Brian Gyory (CPUC). The feedback received from the participants at the meeting and in comment forms is categorized below.

- Infrastructure
 - Planned growth areas/ infrastructure
 - Sewer smells
 - Infrastructure limitations
 - Get ahead of infrastructure deficiencies for water and power
 - Identify the focus areas for infrastructure
 - The newly replaced sewer system smells like hydrogen sulfide both in the morning and evening. I have given up complaining because, despite knowing what needs to be done to rectify the smell (aeration in this part of the sewer), the people I contact will not take action to fix the problem.
- Hamlets
 - Recommend mixed use (residential/commercial) in hamlets.
 - Do hamlets need changes?
 - Is there demographic targeted?
- Other
 - Importance of system approach

- Diversity
- Vista/past
- Industrial projects quicker than residential
- Economic benefit study of Selkirk Bypass
- Incentive for agriculture/industrial/commercial
- What are the stats on public participation?
- What is the status of land use map?
- Define green business.
- Why expand tax base?

HEALTHY COMMUNITY

The station on healthy community was facilitated by Kelly Vadney (CPUC) and Anne Benware (CPUC). The feedback received from the participants at the meeting and in comment forms is categorized below.

- Toxins and Pollutants
 - Goal 1 (*Reduce exposure to toxins and pollutants in the natural and built environment*): pollutants from diesel generator, town trucks, sewer, town hall
 - Replacing diesel tractors would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars
 - Anti-idling
 - Define pollutants
 - Is there going to be a formal monitoring program for toxins and pollutants?
 - Are specific toxins being addressed?
 - Phase out pesticides, especially residential. See Maine example.
 - Keep our environment in mind. For a lot of commercial/heavy uses, full electrification won't work especially during cold weather/snow.
 - To reduce explosives, we need to map DEC hazardous waste sites (e.g., EPA).
 - There was a great deal of discussion about the mitigation of greenhouse gases. I believe that Town vehicles were one of the targets for reduction, but I did not hear Town trucks mentioned. The trucks appear to be all diesel fueled and the fumes they release are carcinogenic. It is a regular occurrence that trucks are at the Town Hall, often left running as employees talk to each other or do business in the Town Hall. The Police will also leave their vehicles running and do so at night with their lights on as well.
- Civic Space
 - Database of civic spaces/ meeting spaces available in schools
 - Library would like to expand civic space
 - I would like to see more civic spaces in the town (like four corners) (i.e., plaza).
 - Recreation space? Where? 4 corners?
 - Could Peter Harris be used as a civic space?

- Goal 6 (*Ensure equitable access to town functions (events), programs and facilities; arts and cultural facilities (Library, historical society), childcare*): should coordinate with library because pre-Covid library made presentations on expanding services/spaces.
- We need to create an inventory of public meeting spaces that are available for public use to assist residents in communicating with each other and with their government (allow community members to gather in convenient locations where they can participate in town meetings via a shared zoom link)
- Transportation
 - Sidewalks and connectivity to destinations and connections to rail trail; street trees.
 - Concern regarding price of fossil fuels due to electrification of vehicles
 - Not just trucks but cars impact quality of life too
 - Will there be more infrastructure to accommodate bike transport? What should the goal be for e-bikes?
 - Would EZ pass make it possible to get a new Thruway exit for Selkirk to reduce impacts on Maple Ave residences?
 - Town vehicles should include some electric vehicles
 - Need electric chargers to be functioning
 - Want complete streets! Disappointed in Delaware Ave.
- Facilities and Services
 - Support for police reform
 - Support health care facilities. Encourage in-town/community-level health care services
 - Goal 6b (*Access the zoning law for opportunities to facilitate access to childcare*): What about family daycare? Inclusive facilities to accommodate shifting work patterns
 - Goal 5 (*Provide accessible parks, recreation facilities, greenways and open space near all neighborhoods*) is very important. One reason a person moved here was for the town park facility
 - Who maintains pocket parks and park expansion? Highway department support staff?
 - Streetscape needs to be maintained
 - Goal 2c (*Support the police reform and reinvention collaborative*): police reform support could be clearer and stronger
 - More programs for seniors and education programs in parks
 - Jitney service like NYC Central Park
 - The new sidewalk on Borthwick Avenue is very nice and well maintained. However, the idea that a sidewalk equals safety is not always true. Borthwick Avenue is very narrow, children are often walking on the sidewalk either headed for the library or the playground behind Town Hall. The speed at which cars, including Police cars

and emergency vehicles, travel on Borthwick Avenue makes walking or riding a tricycle on the sidewalk dangerous.

- Other
 - Setback requirements due to landslide
 - Majority of meeting participants would like the rail trail to be plowed
 - Concern with regards to federal and state wetlands and buffer
 - People are concerned about Hudson River as public water. Why not use Waterville Reservoir water for potable water?
 - Town build on relationship with farmer markets
 - Must be realistic in transition
 - Recommendations have to say “as feasible”
 - Technology is changing all the time so must be visionary. What’s not real now but might be in future (e.g., 5 years).
 - If you live in area where you can walk, you reduce chronic disease risk by 30%.
 - Concern about being aligned with federal and state requirements
 - The idea of “workforce” housing is liked but not the term. It seems not equitable and sounds like a class structure term. We shouldn’t use it.

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE

The station on responsible governance was facilitated by Brittany Murphy (SWBR) and Kathleen Mannix (CPUC). The feedback received from the participants at the meeting and in comment forms is summarized below.

- Inclusive, affordable housing
- Strengthening relationship/ coordination with school districts
- Meeting times to meet the needs of families
- Burden on farmers and open space opportunities. The relationship with Albany as community neighbor to address development pressures.
- Gentle changes
- Opportunities to gather in person (beyond library)
- Overlap with harmony and nature goal is equal to regional adjacent governments; zoning and open spaces.
- Broadband and tech challenges are critical for communication, especially access for seniors.
- The town needs to structure inter-governmental agreements with other municipalities regarding the preservation of open space to tie the wildlife corridors and open space to the surrounding area.

WRAP-UP & NEXT STEPS

The project team reviewed the next steps:

- Submit your feedback before December 3, 2021 via:
 - Email: bethlehemforward@townofbethlehem.org
 - Website: www.BethlehemForward.com
- Public Hearing (Early 2022)
- Comprehensive Plan Adoption (Early 2022)

APPENDIX A: LIST OF PUBLIC MEETING ATTENDEES

Note: The list only includes contact information of public meeting attendees interested in staying informed about the project.

Project Team

Supervisor David VanLuven, Town of Bethlehem
Rob Leslie, Town of Bethlehem
Bill Price, SWBR
Mike Godfrey, Fisher Associates
Tanya Zwahlen, Highland Planning
Nancy Raca, Highland Planning

Community Members

Epich Adams	David Hoffman
Steven Adams	O. Holmes
Rad Anderson	Bill Ketzer
J. Andreson	Hope Koweay
George Bailie	Kurt Krumperman
Tim Beebe	Scott Lewendon
Pattir Beller	Sheart Lyman
Anne Benware	Margaret Malone
Laura Betta	Eva Mane
Paul Beyet	Kevin Marorel
Tom Burke	Bill McCabe
Bruce Bushart	James McGaughan
Jogera Casthlin	John McGuinness
Rebecca Cavaveri	Mark Metchiac
Tom Cortas	Luke Michaels
Joel Coussantine	Anne Moore
Daniel Davitt	Jim Morrill
Ted DeBarbieri	Lech Mtelroy
David DeCanco	Deb Murray
Jon Van Derper	Ken Neff
Glavin Van Derper	Nancy Neff
Kevin Donan	Carol Northrup
Mary Beth Engelbride	Carol Ostrow
Shari Fox	Katie Potestio
Chris French	Charles Preska
Judi Gabler	Joe Racette
Roberto Geracka	A. Reilly
Jim Giacont	Spere Renasan
Conor Gillis	Courtney Russeu
J. Ginga	Melanie Schoen
Jim Grady	Kate Seely-Kirk
Cathy Griffin	Peggy Sherman
Tim Hanifin	John Smolinsky
Nancy Heizen	Alice Southanower

R. Strang
Mark Swyer
P. Tech
Richard Tke Jr
Nick Tommell
Rafi Topalian
David Ury
Jeff Vadney
Kelly Vadney

Joanne Vogel
M. Waldeverale
Marsha Walton
Ezra Winston
Adam Zanch
Don Zee
Agnes Zellin
Kleinke (*last name not provided*)

APPENDIX B: PUBLIC MEETING #3 AGENDA

Date: November 18, 2021

Time: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Venue: Town Hall Auditorium

Agenda:

- I. Welcome by Supervisor VanLuven (10 minutes)
- II. Presentation of Project Status (25 minutes)
 - a. Process to date
 - b. What we've heard
 - c. Key Principles and Comprehensive Plan Recommendations
 - d. Next steps
 - i. Survey through December 3, 2021
 - ii. Public Hearing at December Town Board Meeting
 - iii. Comprehensive Plan Adoption in December 2021/January 2022
- III. Instructions to Attendees (10 minutes)
- IV. Question & Answer Session (15 minutes)
- V. Stations Session (60 minutes)
 - a. Livable Built Environment
 - b. Harmony with Nature
 - c. Resilient Economy
 - d. Healthy Community
 - e. Responsible Regionalism

APPENDIX C: PROJECT PRESENTATION

Comprehensive Plan Update

Public Meeting #3 – Goals & Recommendations

Town of Bethlehem



11/18/21

SWBR

Meeting Agenda

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6:00 – 6:10 Welcome by Supervisor VanLuven

6:10 – 6:45 Presentation of Project Status
Questions & Answers

6:45 – 7:45 Station Sessions
• Five (5) Sessions / 12 minutes each

8:00 Adjourn

Bethlehem Forward Project Team

3



Bill Price, RLA
Senior Associate
SWBR



Don Naetzker, RLA
Senior Associate
SWBR



Tanya Zwahlen, AICP
Principal
Highland Planning



Frank Armento, AICP
Senior Planner
Fisher Associates



Kevin Dwarka
Principal
Kevin Dwarka, LLC



Brittany Murphy
Landscape Designer
SWBR



Charvi Gupta
Sr. Planner
Highland Planning



Nancy Raca, AICP
Director of Engagement
Highland Planning



Mike Godfrey, AICP
Senior Planner
Fisher Associates

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The Engagement Process

4

- Project Kick-Off October 2020
- Public Survey.....November – December 2020
- Public Meeting #1..... December 8, 2020 (Break-out Topics)
- Focus Groups #1.....January – February 2021
- CPUC Mtgs (#7-12).....October – March 2021
- Public Meeting #2.....March 23, 2021 (Value Statements / Polling)
- Focus Groups #2.....March – April 2021
 - Large Business Economic
 - Chamber Economic
 - Agriculture Business
- Summer Tent EventsMay – June 2021
- CPUC Mtgs (#13-23).....April – November 2021

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Bethlehem Forward Update Committee

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- Rad Anderson
- Anne Benware
- Paul Beyer
- Thomas Coffey
- Dania Flores
- James Grady

- Brian Gyory
- Bill Ketzer
- Kathleen Mannix
- Jeremy Snyder
- Kelly Vadney
- Giles Wagoner

Town Representatives

- David VanLuven
- Rob Leslie, AICP
- Leslie Lombardo, AICP
- Nate Owens

Project Scope

6

- Task 1 – Project Initiation
- Task 2 – Public Engagement Plan
- Task 3 – Community Assessment & Profile
- Task 4 – Community Visioning
- Task 5 – Goals & Recommendations
- Task 6 – Draft Comprehensive Plan
- Task 7 – Final Comprehensive Plan & SEQRA



Jericho Drive-In Theater, Jericho Road



Rural - Urban Transect

What We've Heard

7

Town Attributes

- Town has desirable school districts
- Parks and recreational spaces
- Public services
- Senior services
- Rural and historic character
- Socially conscious residents

What We've Heard

8

Concerns

- Unequal distribution of resources across town
- Lack of racial & income diversity
- Conservation of historic resources & rural character is critical
- Truck traffic in hamlets
- Development sprawl affecting character
- Variety of housing opportunities
- Town financial resources
- Neighborhood connectivity

What We've Heard

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Aging

- Affordable Housing Alternatives
- Community Center
- Programs & Services
- Walkability
- Transportation

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What We've Heard

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Housing

- Diverse & Affordable Housing
- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's)
- Mixed-Use Development
- Walkability



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What We've Heard

11

Transportation

- Speed / Volume of Traffic
- Complete Streets / Sidewalk Connectivity
- Truck Traffic (Selkirk / South Bethlehem / Glenmont)
- Bike / Ped Facilities (Multimodal Network)
- Public Transit Options / Park'n'Ride
- Connections to Transit Stops (Shelters)



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What We've Heard

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Historic Preservation

- Formal Inventory / Documentation
- Appropriate Local Controls (Governance / Design Guidelines)
- Historic Tax Credits (State / Federal)
- Incentives for Designation



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What We've Heard

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Environment / Sustainability

- Bethlehem a Leader in Sustainability
- Renewable Energy
- Multi-modal Network
- Protect Natural Environment
- Town wide Stormwater Management
- Acquisition of Farms / Forests / Open Space
- Agritourism / Agrihood



Klinke Farm on Kenwood Avenue, Delmar

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What We've Heard

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Economic Development

- Small / Locally Owned Business
- Diversify & Expand Tax Base
- Attract Skilled Labor
- Workforce Training
- Affordable Housing
- Job Opportunities for Youth / Young Professionals
- Fill Vacant Buildings
- Predictable Approval Process



Cherry Ave Extension / Vista Technology

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Breakout Session

15

Parks & Recreation

- Maintain & Improve Existing Parks
- Additional Parks
- Connectivity (bike / ped) to Parks
- Walking Trails Dog Parks
- Recreation Facilities
- Improve Lighting in Parks
- Pocket Parks / Playgrounds (Slingerlands)



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What We've Heard

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Government

- Town Services / Tax Balance
- Public Safety / Library / Senior Services
- Communications with Residents Important
- Zoning Code
 - Flexible By-Right Uses
 - Approval Process
- Property Maintenance Enforcement

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What We've Heard

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Agriculture

- Market located is good (Capital Region / NYC / Boston)
- Population of people interested in local produce and products
- Delmar Farmers' Markets
- Historical context of farming
- Farm to table movement
- Surge in children interested in riding, experiencing outdoors and farm activity.
- Opportunities;
 - o Small animal raising (sheep, goats) / Co-locate with Solar
 - o Non-crop agriculture – beekeeping, livestock.
 - o Hoop houses, greenhouses
 - o Repurpose old/historic barns for agritourism
- o Meat processing
- o Commercial kitchens

What We've Heard

18

Agriculture

- Teach younger generation
- Educate about 'Right to Farm' Law
- Expand 'by-right' uses
- Improve broadband (internet) in rural areas
- Tax relief:
 - o Farmers School Property Tax Credit:
 - o NYS Agricultural Assessment (exemption) criteria
- Strong demand for affordable land
- Be welcoming to agricultural practices (imperfect landscape)
- Access to start-up capital.
- Collaborative local/regional product distribution network

Elements of Equitable & Sustainable Comp Plan

19



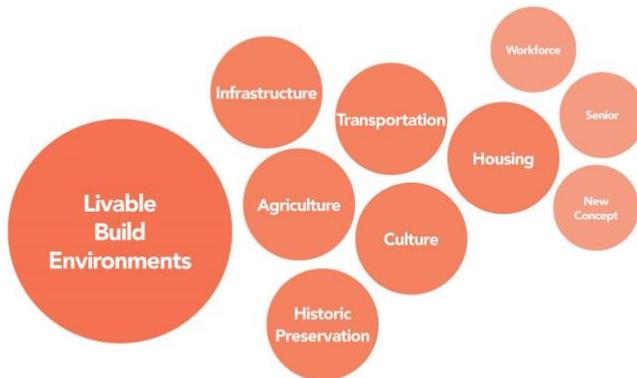
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Elements of Equitable & Sustainable Comp Plan

20



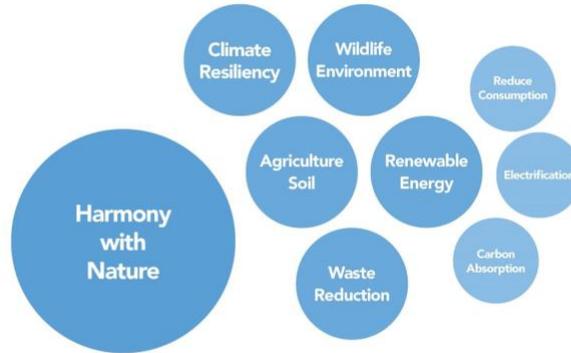
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Elements of Equitable & Sustainable Comp Plan

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Elements of Equitable & Sustainable Comp Plan

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Elements of Equitable & Sustainable Comp Plan

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Elements of Equitable & Sustainable Comp Plan

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Discussion Stations – 12 Minutes Each²⁵

- 1) Livable Built Environment – Auditorium
- 2) Responsible Governance – Hallway
- 3) Healthy Community – Lunch Room
- 4) Harmony with Nature – Room 101
- 5) Resilient Economy – Auditorium

Write your comments on sheet provided. Leave comments at sign-in table. Or email comments to BethlehemForward@TownofBethlehem.org by 12/3.

Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan Update

11/21/2021

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Comprehensive Plan Update

www.bethlehemforward.com

BethlehemForward@TownofBethlehem.org



11/18/2021

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APPENDIX D: HANDOUTS



BETHLEHEM FORWARD

VISION

The Town of Bethlehem is a safe, friendly, welcoming, vibrant, economically strong, and interconnected community, with a racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse population throughout our town.

We have made significant strides in preserving our vast historic, cultural and natural resources, including our agricultural origins. Density and diversity of land uses and services within the core of each hamlet have resulted in conveniences for residents and visitors while enlivening streets and public spaces. A rural-agricultural livelihood is respected and contributes to the overall quality of life and character of our town.

Our sustainability practices and development policies have resulted in clean water and air; protections of wildlife habitat, natural resource systems, and other open spaces; measurable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions; and improved resiliency to the effects of climate change.

The diversification of housing types and ownership models has enabled young, old and workforce residents, to live and age in our town.

Pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit opportunities and facilities have been greatly expanded to accommodate residents and visitors of all abilities.

Residents have access to increased job opportunities through new and expanded local business enterprises and emerging business sectors. A sustainable and resilient community has led to an improved tax base, which has provided the resources to support needed programs, services, infrastructure, and public health and safety.

We continue to move Bethlehem Forward.



BETHLEHEM FORWARD VALUES

Community

- C1. We value our sense of community with socially conscious citizens and business owners who engage in improving the quality of life.
- C2. We value our diverse age cohorts and multiple generations of families that choose to live in the town.
- C3. We value the qualities of rural land, supporting the landowners' ability to access its economic value in a manner compatible with sustaining a rural-agricultural livelihood.
- C4. We value racial, ethnic, economic, gender, and disability inclusion and diversity throughout the Town for all who want to live, work and visit.
- C5. We value small / locally owned businesses and desire to create the conditions that encourage more business enterprises.
- C6. We value preservation of our historic architecture, cultural sites, neighborhoods and districts.

Public Services

- P1. We value our public-school districts that strive to provide the highest level of education, athletics, arts and cultural programs.
- P2. We value public services provided by the dedicated employees of the town.
- P3. We value public safety and emergency response services provided by dedicated town employees and volunteer first responders.
- P4. We value senior service programs that enable residents to live in their homes and remain active community members.
- P5. We value our park system and recreation programs, private preserves and seek to expand facilities with diverse activities and programs for all age groups and abilities.

Environment / Sustainability

- E1. We value our vast natural resource systems and open spaces that provide benefits, including wildlife habitat, ecosystem services that provide clean air and water, and inherent natural beauty and scenic value within our community.
- E2. We value being on the forefront of sustainability by addressing climate change through renewable energy, energy efficiency, a just transition off fossil fuels, electrification, waste reduction and prevention of greenhouse gas emissions.
- E3. We value active agricultural businesses and farmland supporting local food and products.
- E4. We value a resilient natural, built, and economic environment that can endure, adapt, and rebound from catastrophic natural and other events.

Land Uses

- L1. We value a diversity of land uses to balance the tax base, provide jobs, complement our hamlets and residential zoning districts and sustain fiscal policy objectives.
- L2. We value a variety of housing options, which meet the needs of different lifestyles, and a range of income levels, allowing residents to age in place.
- L3. We value affordable rental and ownership housing for those representing elderly, low to moderate income, and disabled families and individuals.

Transportation

- T1. We value the transportation infrastructure which safely accommodates all modes of travel (pedestrian, bicycles, transit and vehicles).
- T2. We value the walkable areas of the town and desire to expand sidewalks and trails across the town to schools, neighborhoods, recreation facilities and commercial districts.
- T3. We value the interconnected street network of our hamlets and desire to connect neighborhood streets, which offer alternative routes of travel, and reduce trip lengths and intersection congestion.

BETHLEHEM FORWARD PRINCIPLES

LIVABLE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Ensure that all elements of the built environment, including land use, transportation, housing, energy and infrastructure work together to provide sustainable, green places for living, working and recreation, with a high quality of life.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Goal 1
Conserve and reuse existing resources, especially those with historic value.

- Goal 1 Recommendations**
- 1a. Prepare a survey of our historic and cultural resources.
 - 1b. Establish a Historic Preservation Advisory Committee to assist with conservation strategies.
 - 1c. Context sensitive design for projects within or adjacent to historic structures, sites or districts.
 - 1d. Identify specific uses which may occupy a historic structure or property, eliminating the need for variances and to expedite approvals.
 - 1f. Prepare 'design guidelines' to inform the design and approvals of projects within or adjacent to historic structures, sites and districts.
 - 1g. Enact a demolition delay to review proposals for the full or partial removal of historic structures.

Goal 2
Conserve the Town's agriculture landscapes including fields, farmsteads, barns and contributing structures.

- Goal 2 Recommendations**
- 2b. Consider adding an Agricultural Business zoning district.
 - 2d. Prepare a 'viewshed analysis report and mapping'.

Goal 3
Recognize and support all public and private cultural institutions in the town and ensure equal access to all.

- Goal 3 Recommendations**
- 3a. Prepare a survey of our historic and cultural resources.

HOUSING

Goal 4
Establish flexibility for a mix and diversity of housing types, ownership options, rental options and price points.

- Goal 4 Recommendations**
- 4a. Permit 2 and 3 family units in the Residential Core and Residential A districts.
 - 4b. Prepare design guidelines for building in the Core residential and Residential A districts.
 - 4c. Permit Accessory Apartments (Accessory Dwelling Units –ADUs) 'by-right' (attached and detached).
 - 4e. Consider the development of a Form-Based Code
 - 4h. Evaluate density (i.e., Units per acre) as the standard metric vs. lot size requirement.
 - 4i. Evaluate new models of housing to include work/live, micro units, tiny homes, co-housing, cottage homes.

Goal 5
Facilitate a range of housing types that are affordable to a diverse residential population throughout the town.

- Goal 5 Recommendations**
- 5a. Modify current (voluntary) language regarding median income to be based on Albany MSA vs. Town of Bethlehem annual median income (AMI).
 - 5b. Undertake a housing needs study to identify strategies to increase the range of housing prices (sale and rental) and affordability.
 - 5c. Ensure that affordable and senior citizen residential units are integrated with market rate units in all hamlets.

BETHLEHEM FORWARD PRINCIPLES

TRANSPORTATION / INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal 6
Align complete street and land use policies to accommodate all modes of travel comfortably throughout the town.

- Goal 6 Recommendations**
- 6a. Update the Town of Bethlehem Complete Streets Resolution.
 - 6b. Consider modifications to the Incentive Zoning section of the code to include the hamlet areas where land use density and diversity are supported by this plan. Further evaluate incentives (density) offered for complete streets improvements (benefit), in the form of financial contributions or actual construction of improvements.

Goal 7
Continue increasing active transportation and recreation options in town by expanding the sidewalk and trail infrastructure to provide a complete, safe active transportation network, prioritizing connections from residential areas to local destinations for pedestrians and cyclists.

- Goal 7 Recommendations**
- 7a. Prepare an 'active transportation plan' (ATP) building on the Town's Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Network.
 - 7b. Map connections from Bethlehem to regional active transportation networks.
 - 7c. Employ traffic calming measures along town streets to reduce vehicular speeds and improve public safety.

Goal 8
Optimize building density within hamlets and along the Town's principal roadways, where utility infrastructure exists and that have or could support public transit bus routes.

- Goal 8 Recommendations**
- 8c. Evaluate the potential for an inter-town transit between all hamlets.

Goal 9
Endeavor to shift away from the car culture and shorten total vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by residents and visitors for work, education, shopping and leisure activities.

- Goal 9 Recommendations**
- 9a. Commit financial resources and formalize capital planning for transportation infrastructure.

Goal 10
Provide and maintain infrastructure capacity in line with growth demand (streets, sanitary sewer, water, power capacity, broadband).

- Goal 10 Recommendations**
- 10b. Endeavor to secure documentation of private utility infrastructure systems (electric, natural gas, cable, tel-data, fiber optics).
 - 10c. Consider assessing infrastructure capacity and upgrading and / or extending the systems in order to encourage growth where desired.
 - 10d. Maintain the street width standards for new residential developments and require a connected street network with existing streets.
 - 10f. Evaluate parking regulations in an effort to right size parking requirements
 - 10g. Present and explain benefits of Transportation Demand Management (TDM).



BETHLEHEM FORWARD PRINCIPLES

HARMONY WITH NATURE

Ensure that the contributions of natural resources to human well-being are explicitly recognized and valued and that maintaining their health is a primary objective.

Goal 1

Maintain and enhance biodiversity and wildlife habitat.

Goal 1 Recommendations

- 1a. Support the position of Open Space Coordinator in the Department of Economic Development & Planning.
- 1b. Further conserve natural resources, wildlife and habitats by utilizing the NYSDEC Habitat Summary, Bethlehem Open Space Plan Conservation Criteria, the Town Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP). Three significant climate hazards affect residents now and in the future:
 - increasing temperatures,
 - rising sea level, and
 - changing precipitation patterns.
- Conservation of natural resources will help to mitigate impacts from these hazards.
 - Freshwater wetlands and buffers.
 - Regulations of development and land disturbance along streams and flood zones.
 - Refine the classification of grading disturbances associated with agricultural activity.
 - Regulations associated with tree removal along streams, rivers and on steep slopes.
 - Protect identified ecological features and biodiversity areas in the Town.
- 1c. Use of Environmental Protection Overlay Districts, Critical Environmental Areas, and resource specific regulations. Environmental Protection Overlay Districts (EPODs) are designed to protect wetlands, threatened or endangered species, agriculture soils, forest patches (woodlots), and steep slopes. Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs) are unique natural settings; sites or areas of historic, archaeological, recreational, or educational value; and ecological, geological, or hydrological sensitivity.
- 1d. Apply greater focus on the conservation of natural resources during the development review process through use of the Open Space Plan's Conservation Criteria. Consider establishing a Conservation Advisory Council (CAC).

- 1e. Apply the State sea-level rise predictions for proposed developments and infrastructure along the Hudson River and its tributaries.
- 1f. Assess the various sustainability programs offered by New York State for funding opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emission and adapt to climate change.
- 1g. Continue to support the position of the Storm Water Management Coordinator and encourage use of green infrastructure practices.
- 1h. Continue to participate as member of Albany County Stormwater Coalition.

Goal 2

Protect and conserve agricultural soils for current and future food production and agriculture business opportunities.

Goal 2 Recommendations

- 2a. Conserve agricultural soils by promoting the Farms and Forests Conservation Program.
- 2b. Use Conservation Subdivision or Average Density Subdivision provisions when prime farmland soil and soils of statewide importance lands are proposed for conversion to residential use.
- 2c. Consider an Agricultural Business District (AB) zoning to encourage farm operations (with agricultural support business uses).
- 2d. Support agricultural businesses via advocacy for property tax credits and exemptions.
- 2e. Consider establishing an Agricultural Advisory Committee.
- 2f. Continue to support the farmers' markets in the Town.

BETHLEHEM FORWARD PRINCIPLES

**Goal 3
Decarbonize our energy system by means of: Renewable Sources, Electrification, Energy Efficiency and Carbon Sequestration.**

Goal 3 Recommendations

Implementation

- 3a. Establish a Sustainability Committee and Coordinator to focus on climate change mitigation and sustainability.

Electrification

- 3b. Advance utilization of heat pumps and prohibit fossil fuel hookups and storage in the building sector.
- 3c. Provide electric vehicle charging stations at public facilities and residential properties to and encourage adoption of electric vehicles.
- 3e. Transition the Town's vehicle fleet to electric vehicles.
- 3f. Avoid new or expanded fossil fuel dispensing.

Renewable Energy Sources

- 3g. Advance solar energy with photovoltaics, passive solar energy, and building orientation.
- 3h. Zone suitable locations for grid-scale renewables (PV solar) and electricity storage.
- 3i. Source renewable electricity for Town residents and businesses.
- 3k. Consider incentives for renewable energy use in Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations.

Energy Efficiency

- 3l. Update Building Code to reflect a more efficient energy code.
- 3m. Improve energy efficiency in existing buildings.
- 3n. Convert outdoor lighting to energy efficient LED technology.
- 3o. Utilize the Sustainable Bethlehem Plan to inform replacement, investment, and improvements in municipal assets and facilities.

Carbon Sequestration and Prevention

- 3p. Utilize the Farms and Forests Program to purchase land for open space preservation to support carbon sequestration.
- 3q. Offset GHG emissions from the development of new buildings.
- 3r. Reforest and maintain forests.
- 3s. Support Albany County Soil and Water Conservation, Cornell Cooperative Extension, the NYS Farm Bureau and related agencies efforts to communicate current best practices for agricultural lands (i.e., grazing, crop rotation, no till planting, etc.).

**Goal 4
Provide for solid waste reduction.**

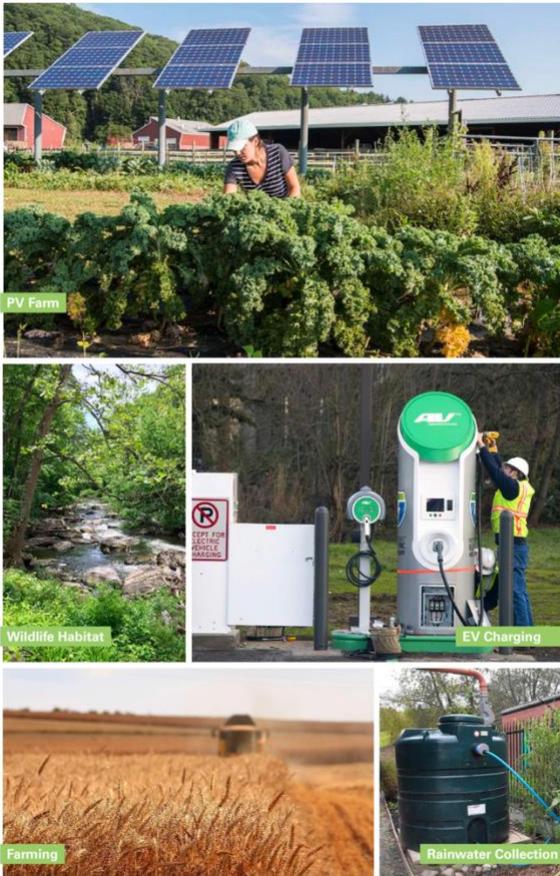
Goal 4 Recommendations

- 4a. Continue to support the Town Recycling and Composting efforts of the Town, including diversion of food waste from landfills.
- 4c. Consider and encourage reclamation, material recycling and source reduction of demolition materials and building construction materials.

**Goal 5
Identify actions to enhance resilience and adaptation to climate change, minimizing impacts to economy, public health, environment and strengthening our ability to quickly recover from extreme weather events.**

Goal 5 Recommendations

- 5d. Continue to maintain and update (annually) the Bethlehem Comprehensive Emergency Management (BCEM) Plan to address emergency situations caused by climate change.
- 5b. Educate and engage residents and businesses in addressing climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- 5d. Continue to support the Senior Services Department / Volunteers as they assist with public outreach and warnings to at risk populations.
- 5e. Continue to follow the progress and potential regulatory guidelines in the forthcoming Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) 'Climate Act'.



BETHLEHEM FORWARD PRINCIPLES

RESILIENT ECONOMY

Ensure that the community is prepared to deal with both positive and negative changes in its economic health and to initiate sustainable urban development and redevelopment strategies that foster green business growth and build reliance on local assets.

Goal 1

Attract the mix of uses desired in Mixed-Economic Development zoning districts (Clean/Green LI, Office, Commercial, Residential).

Goal 1 Recommendations

- 1a. Analyze the market potential for Bethlehem to serve as a clean tech hub by analyzing the industry trends.
- 1b. Attract Healthcare organizations to locate in Mixed-Economic Development districts.
- 1c. Consider modifications to the Zoning Code that streamline the site plan and subdivision procedures for individual projects within the Mixed Economic Development (MED) districts.
- 1d. Collaborate and partner with Advance Albany Alliance (Albany County Local Development Corporation) to market and promote sites within the Town of Bethlehem.
- 1e. Consider reestablishing the Economic Development sub-committee.

Goal 2

Attract the residential and commercial / service mixed-uses in the hamlet districts necessary for a vibrant street life throughout the day and evening.

Goal 2 Recommendations

- 2a. Examine land use regulations that are most likely to attract a broad diversity of businesses in the commercial hamlet and hamlet districts of town.

Goal 3

Sustain, enhance and expand rural and agricultural business opportunities as a vital component of the town's economy.

Goal 3 Recommendations

- 3a. Update the definition of agricultural uses in the Town Zoning code.
- 3b. Support the retention and expansion of agricultural businesses through use of the Farms and Forests Conservation Program, including Purchase of Development Rights.
- 3c. Support agricultural businesses via advocacy for property tax credits and exemptions.
- 3d. Limit the extension of utility (sanitary sewer and water) infrastructure in undeveloped areas of the town.
- 3e. Strengthen and Promote the Right-to-Farm policy in the Town Code.

Goal 4

Advance industrial development in the Industrial, Rural Light Industrial and Mixed Economic Development zoned districts.

Goal 4 Recommendations

- 4a. Collaborate with the Port of Albany and Selkirk Rail Yard properties to retain and expand existing businesses and attract new business ventures that can benefit from water and rail transportation access.
- 4b. Endeavor to mitigate (or resolve) transportation conflicts of established industrial employment centers on residential and hamlet areas.
 - Truck traffic on State roads (east-west) within residential and hamlet areas.
 - Selkirk Bypass alternatives
 - Residential quality of life
 - Economic development benefit
- 4c. Enhance interaction with regional economic development partners to attract new businesses and increase local jobs.

BETHLEHEM FORWARD PRINCIPLES

Goal 5
Support and encourage agencies and organization that perform workforce training programs.

Goal 5 Recommendations

- 5a. Recognize the value of workforce training opportunities in achieving economic development goals by attracting jobs in multiple sectors. Promote workforce development with partners.
 - Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce,
 - Center for Economic Growth,
 - Hudson Valley Community College and
 - Glenmont Job Corps Center.

Goal 6
Attract, retain and support diverse local owned businesses, which support the principles and goals of this plan.

Goal 6 Recommendations

- 6a. Review the permitted uses in the hamlet districts and modify as needed to ensure diversity of uses that attract users throughout the day and week.
- 6b. Support small business retention and attraction with facilitation of grant funding opportunities. Examples: Town include the Microenterprise Grant program and the COVID-19 pandemic relief program.
- 6c. Encourage and stimulate workforce (affordable) housing goals.

Goal 7
Plan for post disaster (natural, man-made, pandemic) economic recovery.

Goal 7 Recommendations

- 7a. Annually collaborate with Emergency Management organizations to plan for post disaster economic recovery.

Goal 8
Ensure that infrastructure (sanitary sewer, transportation, water, electricity) is not a barrier to economic development.

Goal 8 Recommendations

- 8a. Focus development where infrastructure currently exists and expansion is appropriate to meet economic development goals.
- 8b. Continue to collaborate with electric energy providers (supply and distribution) in order to ensure adequate supply and reliability of electric and broadband service.



BETHLEHEM FORWARD PRINCIPLES

HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Ensure that public health needs are recognized and addressed through provisions for healthy foods, physical activity with access to recreation and social interaction, physical and emotional health care, environmental justice and safe neighborhoods.

Goal 1
Reduce exposure to toxins and pollutants in the natural and built environment.

- Goal 1 Recommendations**
- 1a. Continue to advance emergency preparedness, risk awareness and communications to residents, business operators and visitors to Bethlehem.
 - 1b. Educate residents, property owners and business operators on the best practices for reduction or elimination of pesticide and herbicide use.
 - 1c. Recognize the transportation system's significant role in the local and regional economy, while also having the potential to impact public health and equity.
 - 1d. Evaluate "contact sensitive" modifications to the permitted residential uses in zoning districts abutting the Selkirk Yards, Port of Albany, and Industrial Districts.

Goal 2
Promote general public safety.

- Goal 2 Recommendations**
- 2a. Design, construct and maintain public realm improvements to reduce and avoid personal injury.
 - 2b. Educate the public about potential landslide areas in the Town to avoid injury and/or property damage caused by these events.
 - 2c. Support the Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative.

Goal 3
Continue to expand and improve opportunities for physical activity, emotional wellbeing and healthy lifestyles.

- Goal 3 Recommendations**
- 3a. Advance the recommendations of the Town's Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee (and Priority Network improvements) and the Town's Street Tree Management Plan.
 - 3b. Support connections to and expansion of the Albany County Rail Trail, as both a recreational and economic asset.
 - 3c. Ensure funding and staffing resources for the Highway Department to provide adequate, year-round maintenance and improvements to the town sidewalks, trails, curb ramps, crosswalks, signs, and signals.
 - 3d. Assess the feasibility of a community and recreation center in the Town.

Goal 4
Support the aging population with programs, activities and services that allow residents to age in place.

- Goal 4 Recommendations**
- 4a. Continue to support resources for the Senior Services Department that provide an expanded range of services as this demographic grows.
 - 4b. Consider development of a Community and Recreation Center to accommodate senior programs and activities.
 - 4c. Continue the collaboration with the Senior Services Department and Bethlehem Senior Project, Inc. to provide activities and services to Town seniors.

Goal 5
Provide accessible parks, recreation facilities, greenways and open space near all neighborhoods.

- Goal 5 Recommendations**
- 5a. Continue to support the Parks and Recreation Department with resources and funding for the services, programs and facilities provided to Town residents.

Goal 6
Ensure equitable access to town functions (events), programs and facilities; arts and cultural facilities (Library, Historical Society), and childcare.

- Goal 6 Recommendations**
- 6a. Ensure that town services, events and facilities are disability inclusive and reachable by all persons regardless of social or economic background.
 - 6b. Assess the zoning law for opportunities to facilitate access to child care.
 - 6c. Collaborate with library services available to Town residents, on outreach and engagement of desired programs and services.



BETHLEHEM FORWARD PRINCIPLES

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE AND REGIONALISM

Ensure continued efficiencies in the delivery of public services through collaborative governance and that all local proposals account for, connect with and support the mutually beneficial plans of adjacent jurisdictions and the surrounding Capital Region.

Goal 1
Coordinate local planning efforts with regional development plans, transportation and infrastructure investment.

- Goal 1 Recommendations**
- 1a. The Town should engage and align with regional economic development agencies to advance the interests of the town within a regional context.
 - 1b. Town staff to continue participation in coordination meetings with regional agencies to stay abreast of plans and initiatives that affect the town and to share town planning efforts.
 - 1c. Enhance connections between Town activity centers and regional destinations. (previously a Goal)

Goal 2
Support a future regional housing plan or initiative that identifies 'fair share' distribution of affordable housing units.

- Goal 2 Recommendations**
- 2a. Prepare a local housing needs analysis to better position the Town in any future regional or state housing initiative.

Goal 3
Leverage local capacity by working with not-for-profits, agencies and organizations that support local open space as well as historic and cultural resource conservation opportunities.

- Goal 3 Recommendations**
- 3a. Collaborate with conservation organizations and agencies to advance the conservation of open space acquisition opportunities.
 - 3b. Collaborate with local organizations and state agencies to advance historic and cultural resource preservation and management strategies.
 - 3c. Leverage local capacity to educate and inform property owners, organizations and adjacent municipalities to understand the various tools available for conservation.

Goal 4
Improve town communications channels and feedback mechanisms.

- Goal 4 Recommendations**
- 4a. Strive to inventory and coordinate a consistent communication format and messaging and humanize the provision of services.
 - 4b. Explore smart governance best practices to better inform residents about Town services.
 - 4c. Consider barriers (language, sight and cognitive) in communication strategies.

Goal 5
Continue to engage in intragovernmental (town departments) and inter-agency (schools, county, state) cooperation to enhance efficiency and contain the cost of delivery of all services in the town.

- Goal 5 Recommendations**
- 5a. Pursue opportunities for consolidation of services and sharing of resources.
 - 5b. Continue to encourage residents to actively engage in the town governance process.



APPENDIX E: COMMENT FORM

Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan Update:
Goals and Recommendations

November 18, 2021

Public Meeting

Comment Form

Please write your comments for each Principle below. Use the back of this sheet as needed for additional comments.



Harmony with Nature

Healthy Community

Livable Built Environment

Resilient Economy

Responsible Governance and Regionalism

APPENDIX F: MEETING PHOTOS





APPENDIX G: COMMENT FORM RESPONSES

Note: Some handwritten comments were illegible. Every effort has been made to discern the gist of illegible comments.

Number	Comments	Principle	Goal
1	Require construction contractors to recycle building waste	Harmony with Nature	
2	Coal tar driveway sealer should be banned. Breaking new ground in any new field should be banned at this point. Wildlife needs habitat. Builders should be encouraged to rehab all abandoned buildings in Albany for starters. Plenty of work there!	Harmony with Nature	
3	Peer community with successful agricultural business district?	Harmony with Nature	
4	No expansion of headcount in town government employees. Use existing personnel to do this work. Prohibiting natural gas hookups is a BAD idea. 100 foot to 300 foot buffer around wetlands is also a bad idea.	Harmony with Nature	
5	Support committee and coordinator position so town can take better advantage/ maximize funding opportunities and implement strategies.	Harmony with Nature	
6	Promote/support residents in transitioning their lawns to biodiversity havens - this will help with reducing mowing, pesticide use.	Harmony with Nature	
7	Reduce barriers to low impact backyard agriculture (e.g. (hen) chicken coops) Go for CAC again to get access to real estate transfer fees. We'll better educate realtors.	Harmony with Nature	
8	Fantastic goals! All this paper waste - not needed - use recycled paper and lighter stock and back to back printing	Harmony with Nature	
9	Composting and recycling are important to eliminating the waste (landfill) the town produces. Bethlehem should be transparent about the destination of our recyclables and consider emphasizing	Harmony with Nature	

	composting. The state of Vermont, for example, requires composting.		
10	Much care must be taken with respect to imposing limitations/ rules on existing home/ business/property owners. Significant pollution regulations is important. Property owner rights are also important - when not in conflict with pollution restrictions.	Harmony with Nature	
11	Allow with ease low-impact agriculture like bees and chicken coops in core/old Delmar. We are behind other local towns on these issues - keep agriculture local without crazy high planning regulations and green infrastructure like street trees	Harmony with Nature	
12	The membership of the sustainability committee should be constituted by a substantial number of Bethlehem residents	Harmony with Nature	
13	Want to see a continued push towards composting so every household and business will compost food waste. Consider changing to dual on tri level recycling instead of single stream.	Harmony with Nature	
14	Consider incentivizing the creation and long term survivability of properties moving towards diversity/nature plants so that it can be sustainable over multiple owners over time.	Harmony with Nature	
15	I don't think the town is well-suited to perform the functions associated with environmental protections except for XXXX funds for conservation or identify potential habitats. I think conservation subsidies(?) are a scam. The areas to be conserved are already unbuildable and they XXXX for more XXXX development. I like all the recommendations except 2b.	Harmony with Nature	
16	Add another goal under goal 2: conserve agricultural soils by promoting organic farming practices. Pesticides and herbicides kill natural organic.	Harmony with Nature	2

17	Keep our forests - don't clean cut - compost goal 2 - a very important as is 2d and 2f promote organic farming	Harmony with Nature	2
18	Goal 3: reduce gas consumption! I understand that use of rotaries results in a significant reduction in wastage of gas in comparison to vehicles idling at traffic lights	Harmony with Nature	3
19	3b is unclear re "in the building section". Do you mean when new buildings are constructed and existing buildings are renovated? 3b and 3g: suggest clarifying what you mean by "advance" - potentially through incentives, education...	Harmony with Nature	3
20	goals 4 & 5 with respect to resiliency = great!	Harmony with Nature	4 5
21	Plow the rail trail in winter	Healthy Community	
22	More daycare please! Love sidewalks/street trees/rail trail access! Bus access! Invest in parks!	Healthy Community	
23	Restrict or ban pesticide use in our community	Healthy Community	
24	Keeping open spaces is healthy. Complete streets on Delaware should not be given up on.	Healthy Community	
25	Monitoring plan emerging issues with newly identified taxins	Healthy Community	
26	All good - walkable/ bikable community critical. Support complete streets.	Healthy Community	
27	Banning pesticide use on lawns Increase civic spaces	Healthy Community	
28	Plan for ebikes and other alternative (electric/micro) transport. 10 years from now we need x miles of excellent bikes lanes.	Healthy Community	

29	In my session it was brought up that the rail trail is not maintained during winter months. I agree with the suggestion of plowing the rail trail.	Healthy Community	
30	Good to consider alternative sources of municipal water and improve water delivery. I recycle literally tens of thousands of single use water bottles - when I ask why, the most common answer is that municipal water is unacceptable. Also, I support phasing out of fossil fuels - over time.	Healthy Community	
31	We need a stronger goal to phase out and make illegal pesticide use in residential areas - this would require petitioning the state legislature to provide municipal jurisdiction over pesticide use.	Healthy Community	
32	Why don't we have a climate smart community active group/committee? We need to get residents and businesses moving on this. Lower Hudson Valley towns like Kingston are doing this so well and where are we?	Healthy Community	
33	Support police to keep us all safe. They need mental health services and training. COMPOST Definitely support seniors: housing, transportation, being able to stay active. Pesticides are damaging - what to do to address this?	Healthy Community	
34	Be specific about the toxins and poisons in the environment and how they would be. Safety - wider bike lanes and pedestrian crossings	Healthy Community	
35	There is no cost-benefit analysis associated with goals -- e.g., 3c. We need a specific study -- e.g., 2-lane highway with certain traffic XXXX XXXXX of sidewalks. Also, "safe" street curb cuts add considerable expense to snow removal. How do we prioritize various goals?	Healthy Community	
103	There is a great deal of noise in the		

	Borthwick Avenue neighborhood. This may come from the police having loud conversations in the parking lot of the Police Department, sirens being tested, loud vehicle exhaust systems from police and other Town employees and work being done on and around Town Hall. The noise ordinance either does not apply or is not adhered to. The change of working times of Town employees to 6:00am is also a factor.	Healthy Community	
104	Garbage collection can happen anywhere from 4:30am on. This is very disturbing to everyone in the Borthwick Avenue neighborhood.	Healthy Community	
105	There is a gas pump in the Police Department part of the parking lot. This issue touches on a number of goals. The concern I have is the alarm that routinely goes off on the pump. People inside Town Hall cannot hear it, no one can tell me what it is supposed to indicate and there does not seem to be any initiative to fix whatever the problem might be.	Healthy Community	
36	1c - needs clarification - add something like "and consider beneficial changes" - needs some action beyond "recognize" 2a - word "realm" should be replaced 2c - make it stronger 6c support town - library collaboration - make this statement clearer	Healthy Community	1 2
37	Item 2c: the purpose of policing is exactly that ... policing. Let's not broaden the duties of the police force such that it degrades that core function... that degradation can occur more easily than many appreciate.	Healthy Community	2
38	Do we really want to support goals 2c and 6b?	Healthy Community	2 6
39	Goals 5& 6 = great! day care & parks & rec	Healthy Community	5 6
40	Consider the impacts that e-bikes will	Livable Built Environment	

	have on our road/sidewalks system		
41	For more density near bus lines/public transit for affordable housing for senior housing	Livable Built Environment	
42	Senior living apartments and affordable housing is needed ASAP for those looking to stay within the community or move to family here	Livable Built Environment	
43	Complete streets must still be pursued through education of the community	Livable Built Environment	
44	Can't agree to support anything until we see the map	Livable Built Environment	
45	Fully support affordable housing. Thank you for firmly shutting down racist dog whistles.	Livable Built Environment	
46	Do not allow ADU's without an approval process	Livable Built Environment	
47	Elders' opportunities to stay in town and age - very persuasive argument for affordable housing	Livable Built Environment	
48	Affordable means different things and it must be clear it means housing for seniors, working people, etc. CDTA needs to have an express bus to downtown during rush hours.	Livable Built Environment	
49	Many town sidewalks are not properly maintained and understanding sidewalks are expensive, the network needs to be expanded. Routes such as Bender Lane, which often sees fast driving, need sidewalks and many existing sidewalks cannot be up to ADA standards.	Livable Built Environment	
50	With respect to the committee's attachment to "complete streets" it is critical for the group to keep in mind the clear voice of the Town voters rejecting the complete streets proposal for Delaware Ave (Elsmer to Albany). Looking at other towns was making sense but that section is clearly off limits.	Livable Built Environment	

51	Very hard to get affordable housing with long planning processes	Livable Built Environment	
52	Complete streets strikes me as an effort to turn Bethlehem into something resembling the "Chathams:" that may work for say Saratoga Springs but i greatly doubt that works for Bethlehem.	Livable Built Environment	
53	Continue to extend bike and pedestrian ways that connect the entire community. Yes to efforts to have more affordable housing. More multifamily housing.	Livable Built Environment	
54	I am totally committed to the community streets concepts for Bethlehem. I think the businesses along Delaware Ave should have been the strongest advocates for the road diet.	Livable Built Environment	
55	No one at any public meeting that I attended -- and I attended all but one -- expressed a desire for goal 4a, permitting 2 or 3-family units in residential core or 3-family units. Also design elements should only be xxxxx with xxxxx for protecting neighbors not for town "goals." XXXX should be lot-sized with setback XXXXXX....	Livable Built Environment	
101	There was some inappropriate discussion of housing at the beginning of the evening. However, I think what that might point out (and I'm not saying this was the intention of the person asking the question) is a lack of understanding of the difference between low-income housing and public housing. It might be important to educate the public on the difference.	Livable Built Environment	
56	Historic preservation should be a top priority 1793 to present - help maintain open spaces and promote/ support farm business. Goal 2	Livable Built Environment	2
57	Under goal 4, change "evaluate" new models of housing to "promote" and and 4j to encourage satellite we work spaces that will provide communal work spaces	Livable Built Environment	4

	for workers who work remotely and want an alternative to working from home.		
58	Goals 4 &5 with respect to housing are excellent	Livable Built Environment	4 5
59	I strongly support all the recommendations in goal 4. 5a: I assume this refers to something in the current comp plan? This is not at all clear. 1C & 1f: design guidelines - are these recommendations to property owners and developers or are they criteria for planning/zoning/permit application?	Livable Built Environment	4 5 1
60	Goal 5 is great! Need to mix it up, multiple price points. Goal 4 looks good. House/new construction near landslide areas important issue - good to mention it ADD risks if too close to stream, small tributaries that are unstable	Livable Built Environment	5 4
61	Goal 6! Adopt complete streets on Delaware Ave and areas around schools to support active transportation. More affordable housing is an important priority. Test "tactile" methods to test traffic calming measures	Livable Built Environment	6
62	Small business -- yes	Resilient Economy	
63	If builders are concerned about jobs it's time to rebuild housing in the cities. Complete streets would actually, probably enhance business along Delaware Ave. Beware misinformation!	Resilient Economy	
64	Agricultural economy	Resilient Economy	
65	Support farm preservation. Policy is only way to make meaningful change - waiting for people to do the right thing on their own has never worked.	Resilient Economy	
66	Less chains (or none), more small business development with diversity in	Resilient Economy	

	product and ownership. And sustainable in practice and product.		
67	Use the term housing options or something like that - get rid of the term affordable housing. Maybe something like diverse housing options. Thanks!	Resilient Economy	
68	What efforts are being made to encourage mixed development and economy within new developments? Many new developments and projects have been allowed as they claimed to be supporting these things. The plug power deal is great news, but it's only now beginning to deliver on the imagined promise of the tech park.	Resilient Economy	
69	Town processes for businesses to locate in the Town need significant improvement and clarity. The hoops businesses must go through with the Planning Dept. and planning board need to be streamlined dramatically.	Resilient Economy	
70	The plan needs to define what is meant by a green business	Resilient Economy	
71	I'm concerned that the other four considerations/ themes on this sheet, as implemented may have a very deleterious effect on an economically sustainable Bethlehem economy	Resilient Economy	
72	Your forward-thinking "vision" and "values" statement demonstrates a commitment to a sustainable balanced and healthy Bethlehem for years to come, thank you.	Resilient Economy	
73	Goal 1d may conflict with existing law and puts the town in the XXXX position to choose XXXX.....	Resilient Economy	
74	2a - agree with intent but wording needs to be clarified - examine land use regulations for potential changes/ to remove barriers/in order to attract a broad diversity...	Resilient Economy	2 1

	1b: "health care organization" - do you mean healthcare facilities and providers?		
75	3c, 3d, 3e - very important to keep moving forward 4 corners would be a great place for co-working - peter harris building? so many empty buildings on Delaware - Fix complete streets. More people will use Delaware shops if they can bike and walk safely! very frustrated the town council didn't speak out and rally for Delaware Ave so far behind other towns.	Resilient Economy	3
76	I like goal 3!	Resilient Economy	3
77	All for Goal 3 - that could link up with Goal 4 Bring on the wind tower manufacturing	Resilient Economy	3 4
78	Prioritize Goal 6c.	Resilient Economy	6
79	How to coordinate regionally regarding solid waste management	Responsible Governance and ...	
80	To attend this meeting my wife and I paid a babysitter to watch our children - the participation has skewed towards those without children More parks & rec funding! more affordable	Responsible Governance and ...	
81	It's not clear that racial diversity is valuable in this plan. There needs to be room for change acknowledged here.	Responsible Governance and ...	
82	Historic character retention is vital. Governance needs to educate the community on the changing times. The failure of prop 6 proves the community was not educated.	Responsible Governance and ...	
83	Identify important expert recommendations	Responsible Governance and ...	
84	Face to face meetings where dialogue can be fostered and comments addressed properly	Responsible Governance and ...	
85	Somehow include something about equity with city of Albany - our neighbor where so many of us work. Share our resources,	Responsible Governance and ...	

	not hoard on them. Overall we should be visionary - don't wait for fed and state mandates - be a leader on conservation and resiliency. Note somehow interconnectedness of all goals.		
86	Define "affordable housing" that realistically focuses on many who are working full time but in lower income jobs like teaching, not for profits, service industry, young families, those on soc. sec. etc.	Responsible Governance and ...	
87	Employ text messaging to communicate town meetings, upcoming construction in a neighborhood. opt-in text messaging	Responsible Governance and ...	
88	To really make "Harmony with nature" viable on a necessary scale, you have to have intergovernmental agreements to coordinate open space and other conservation measures to protect and enhance wildlife corridors with neighboring communities.	Responsible Governance and ...	
89	What language resources does the town have? Do we employ interpreters or people who assist with disability services in terms of governance?	Responsible Governance and ...	
90	Provide opportunities for the public to participate in Zoom meetings - for example designated rooms in our local libraries and municipal buildings (town hall) so that residents without electronic resources (smart phones, computers, wifi) can participate.	Responsible Governance and ...	
91	Aligning Bethlehem's zoning with other jurisdictions; whether that is acceptable depends on the extent to which Bethlehem government regards its land use scheme as governed by the other jurisdictions' land use plans	Responsible Governance and ...	
92	I think an ongoing dialogue/ coordination with the school board is required. Not just related to tax but all the goals. A formal coordination process would be good.	Responsible Governance and ...	

93	Need open spaces - and respect for historical resources in town - how to move forward for affordable senior living	Responsible Governance and ...	
94	<p>The town is generally a cooperative partner and comparatively runs an efficient operation.</p> <p>These two are related - is the town willing to forego economic development within this town in favor of economic development elsewhere which might make more sense. A regional level analysis of markets and the pros and cons of __ in 1 town or another needs to be crucial to have economic context in proposed and supported. Economic resiliency is a concept better suited to actual markets which are not necessarily defined by municipal governments kind of like air.</p>	Responsible Governance and ...	
95	I applaud the town's recognition of building sidewalks to facilitate pedestrian safety and walkability. However, now many sidewalk networks are unconnected and isolated in their neighborhoods. Case in point: many developments off Elm and Feura Bush have sidewalks until the narrow main roads and do not allow safe connections to Elm Park for pedestrians and bicyclists. Please make this a priority in the interests of safety and livability.	Responsible Governance and ...	
96	<p>Goals 1 and 2 fly in the face of local xxxxx legislation in state statutes found in xxxx. Regional experience would be expressed through the Albany County Board of Supervisors, amended in Albany County to be the Albany County legislature.</p> <p>Comprehensive Plan visionary document is filled with undefined acronyms. With the exception of "NY" or "NYS," which I think are common knowledge. All acronyms should be written out -- e.g., New York instead of NY</p>	Responsible Governance and ...	
100	The town needs to insure reliable and speedy broadband access for rural areas to assist residents in taking part in	Responsible Governance and ...	

	government meetings held on zoom.		
106	We should identify the resources we can offer to surrounding communities to further connections on a regional basis.	Responsible Governance and ...	
97	4a - need to clarify language. "Inventory and strive to standardize disparate formats, encourage story-telling that humanizes the provision of services" Strongly support goal 2 recommendations!	Responsible Governance and ...	4
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