

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 Russeau
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

2

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

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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

Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan Update

11/21/2021



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

Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan Update

11/21/2021
1



Bethlehem Forward Update Committee

5

- 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

9

Aging

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

Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan Update

11/21/2021

SWBR

What We've Heard

10

Housing

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



Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan Update



11/21/2021

SWBR

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

12

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

13

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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11/21/2021

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What We've Heard

14

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

Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan Update

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1

SWBR

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

16

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

17

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



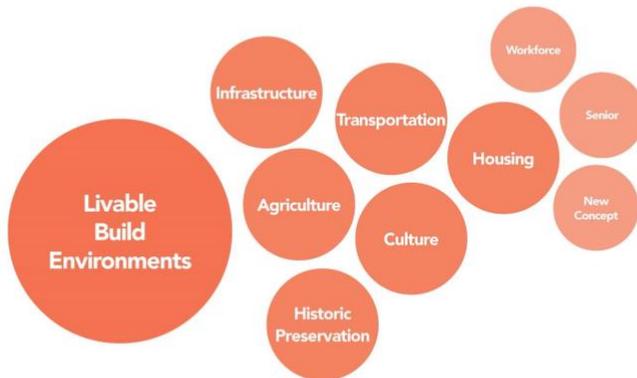
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Elements of Equitable & Sustainable Comp Plan

20



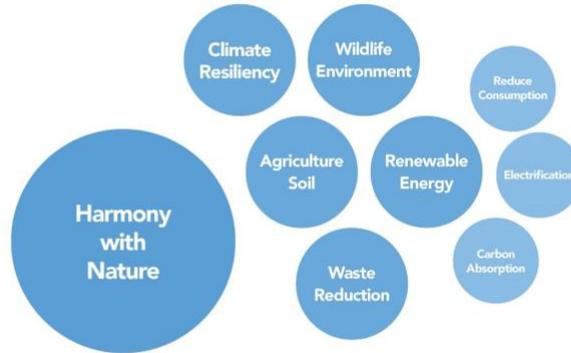
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Elements of Equitable & Sustainable Comp Plan

21



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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.

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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.**

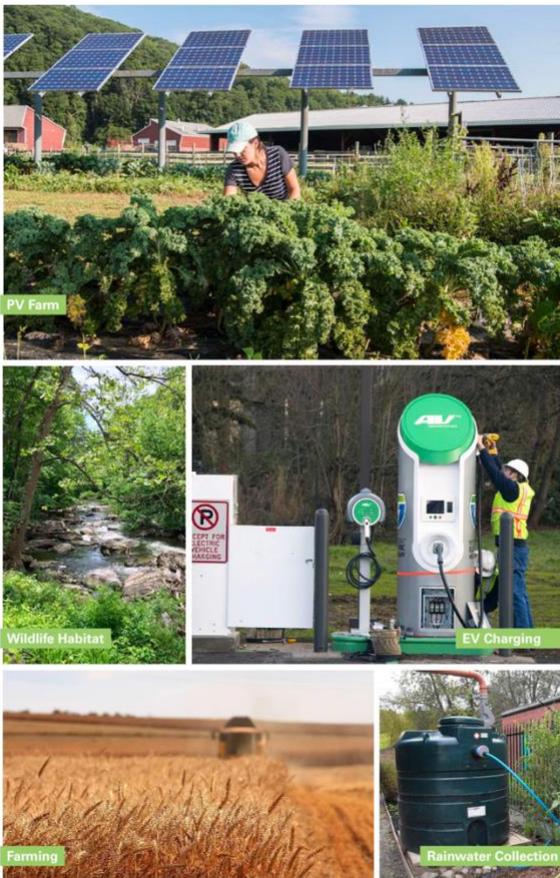
Goal 4 Recommendations

- 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.
- 5f. 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.

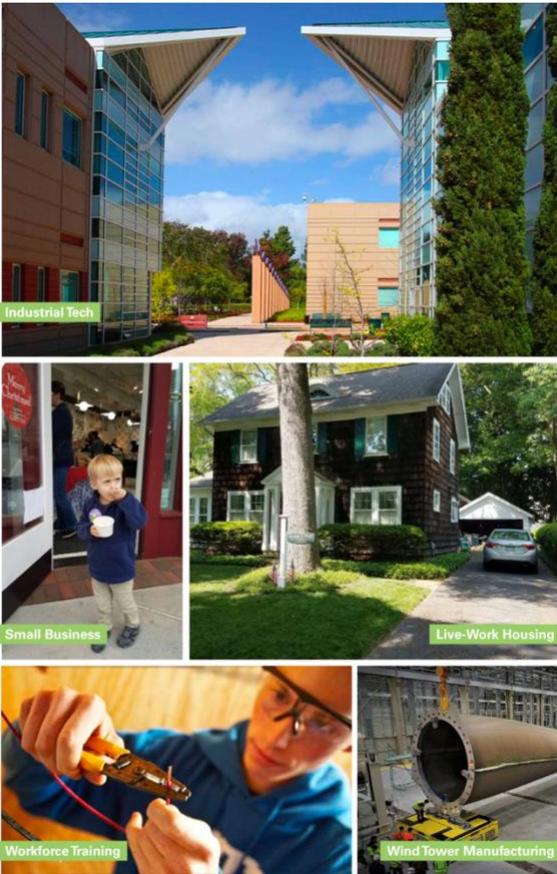
Goal 7 Recommendations

- 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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