

Terms of Reference

Comprehensive Plan Update Committee

Summary

The Board of Trustees has appointed the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee to assist it in reviewing and updating the Comprehensive Plan of the Village of Hastings-on-Hudson adopted in 2011. The charge of the Committee is to create a revised plan (in the form of a report) that reflects vision of the community for the next five years.

Background

History. On July 18, 2007, the Board of Trustees passed a resolution to initiate the process of developing a stand-alone Comprehensive Plan for the Village of Hastings-on-Hudson. A Committee was created to: review different comprehensive plan types; outline a process for forming and selecting members of a steering committee; and describe the sequence of events that would be part of the planning process. The Board selected a Comprehensive Plan Committee in October of 2007 and members of the Committee worked over a three year period, gathering data and reviewing documents, taking surveys, holding over 50 meetings with the public, and setting up sub-groups to address specific topics that had been flagged as critical (for the process adopted see Appendix 1). The group produced a final Comprehensive Plan that was formally adopted by the Board of Trustees on July 19, 2011. (see:

https://www.hastingsgov.org/sites/hastingsonhudsonny/files/uploads/compplan_finial_0.pdf)

In 2012, the Board created a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee to prioritize the objectives and strategies described in the Comprehensive Plan, and document what had been achieved against the objectives. The group produced summaries of achievements which were presented to the Board on a periodic basis.

The Importance of a Comprehensive Plan. A comprehensive plan contains the goals, objectives, and strategies and serves as a blueprint for the future development and conservation of a community. A good comprehensive plan guides not only the physical and economic development of the municipality, but also accommodates social, environmental, and regional concerns. New York State Law does not require a community to adopt a comprehensive plan but the state law encourages local governments to adopt comprehensive plans. To become a comprehensive plan as defined by New York State, the local legislative body – the Board of Trustees – must formally adopt a plan that is the product of extensive and effective citizen participation. A comprehensive plan provides not only guidance but also protection for a community. Adopting land use regulations that conform to the comprehensive plan provides significant legal protection for the local governing bodies. If a regulation or decision faces a court challenge, judges usually resolve the challenge in the local government’s favor when it can be shown that it was enacted to achieve an objective of the comprehensive plan. Comprehensive plans provide additional protection to communities by ensuring that governmental agencies (federal, state, county, or municipal) wishing to undertake a capital project take the community’s comprehensive planning goals and objectives into account. Communities use comprehensive planning for different reasons. Some communities begin the comprehensive planning process because of specific concerns such as traffic safety, environmental issues, or development proposals. Other communities choose to write a comprehensive plan because their zoning laws are out of date and they need the larger framework a comprehensive plan provides. While there are no required components of a comprehensive plan, the statutes suggest fifteen elements for

inclusion (see Appendix 2). The community should decide which elements to include through public participation. State law says an “open, responsible, and flexible planning process is essential” to the adoption of a comprehensive plan.

Updating the Comprehensive Plan. While the Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Board of Trustees in 2011 is robust and thoughtful, a Comprehensive Plan needs to be a living document and after five years have passed updates are both necessary and to be expected. To this end the Board of Trustees has convened a group of citizens to undertake an update of the current plan, deleting elements that are no longer relevant, modifying the aspects that are out of date but still relevant, and adding any new components that contemporary circumstances require.

Implementation Details

Committee Structure

The Board has appointed a Committee of nine Village volunteer residents. The first order of business will be to choose a Chair, set meeting times/schedule and establish minute taking etc.

Public Meetings

Meetings will be considered “public”, which means that they must be held in a publicly accessible location (the Municipal Building, the Library or the Community Center) and any member of the public can attend. During any given meeting the Committee may determine whether or not to entertain comments and questions from members of the public who are present.

Process

The Board anticipates that this process may involve several phases that may include the following stages. This suggested process reflects best practice in other similar situations but can be modified by the Committee:

- **Committee Formation and Mobilization**
This includes selection of a chair, establishing dates and schedules, deciding on procedural issues.
- **Preliminary Review of Core Documents**
Collecting and reading through relevant existing documentation, including the previous Comprehensive Plan and the documented achievements under that plan. Village Boards and Commissions may be asked to provide updates of completed actions called for in the current plan.
- **Public Meetings**
The committee will hold an initial public workshop to brainstorm on thematic groups that might need to be formed.
- **Comprehensive Plan Development**
The committee will recommend updates to the existing plan for review by the Board and the public.
- **Public Input**
There will be presentation of the plans to the public and a multiple chances for public input and input from other relevant Village Boards and Commissions (e.g. Conservation Commission, Parks & Recreation Commission, Transportation Working Group etc.).
- **Further Refinement of Comprehensive Plan**
The plan will be refined based on public input.
- **Comprehensive Plan Finalization**
The plan will be finalized and presented to the Village Board for approval.

Resources

The Committee will have access to meeting facilities (as mentioned above) and the services of Village employees to provide video transmission or taping.

Committee Deliverable

The Committee will produce a final Comprehensive Plan which will be formally accepted, reviewed, and approved by the Board of Trustees.

Deadline

The Committee is expected to produce the plan by June 30th, 2019.

Appendix 1

Process Used to Develop the 2011 Hastings-on-Hudson Comprehensive Plan

1. Kick Off

- 1.1 Establish Comprehensive Plan Committee
- 1.2 Hire Consultant
- 1.3 Review Prior Planning Documents
- 1.4 Identify Assets and Issues (Public Workshop)
- 1.5 Describe Existing Conditions

2. Set Goals

- 2.1 Establish Topical Committees
- 2.2 Develop Draft Goals (in Topical Committees)
- 2.3 Hold Public Workshop (Discuss Draft Goals)

3. Identify Objectives and Strategies

- 3.1 Develop Objectives and Strategies (in Topical Committees)
- 3.3 Hold Public Workshop (Discuss Objectives and Strategies)

4. Recommend Implementation Steps

- 4.1 Identify Implementation Steps (in Topical Committees)

5. Draft Comprehensive Plan

- 5.1 Prepare Draft Plan
- 5.2 Refer Proposed Plan to Planning Board
- 5.3 Refer Proposed Plan to County Planning Department
- 5.4 Hold Public Hearing on Draft Comprehensive Plan
- 5.5 Finalize Plan

6. Adopt Comprehensive Plan

- 6.1 Present Proposed Plan to Board of Trustees
- 6.2 Hold Board of Trustees Public Hearing on Draft Comprehensive Plan
- 6.3 Conduct SEQRA (State Environmental Quality Review Act) Review
- 6.4 Adopt Comprehensive Plan
- 6.5 File Plan with Village Clerk and County Planning Department

Appendix 2

https://www.dos.ny.gov/lg/publications/Creating_the_Community_You_Want.pdf

https://www.dos.ny.gov/lg/publications/Zoning_and_the_Comprehensive_Plan.pdf

1. New York State Plan Elements

While there are no required components of a Comprehensive Plan, the statutes suggest fifteen elements for inclusion.

1. A general statement of goals, objectives, and standards upon which proposals for the immediate and long range growth and development of the community are based
2. Consideration of regional needs and official plans of other governmental units within the region.
3. Existing and proposed location and intensity of land uses
4. Consideration of historic and cultural resources, coastal and natural resources and sensitive environmental areas
5. Consideration of population, demographics, socio-economic trends and future projections
6. The location and types of transportation facilities
7. Existing and proposed location of public and private utilities and infrastructure
8. Existing housing and future housing needs, including affordable housing
9. Present and future location of historical sites, educational, cultural, health and emergency services
10. Existing and proposed recreational facilities and parkland
11. Present and future locations of commercial facilities
12. Specific policies and strategies for improving the local economy in coordination with other plan topics.
13. Proposed process for the implementation the goals of the Comprehensive plan
14. All or part of the plan of another public agency
15. Any and all other items, which are consistent with the orderly growth and development of the community