

REPORT ON THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROCESS

**For the Board of Trustees
of
Village of Hastings on Hudson, New York**

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Report on the Comprehensive Planning Process

Mission of the Committee

On July 18, 2007, the Board of Trustees passed a resolution stating “[t]he Mayor and the Board of Trustees desire to initiate the process necessary for the development and consideration of an updated, stand-alone comprehensive plan for the Village of Hastings-on-Hudson, New York. ” That resolution established an initial committee to assist the Board of Trustees by “researching types and processes of other comprehensive plans and reporting their findings to the Board of Trustees.” (Hearing Minutes, “HM,” Board of Trustee, Regular Meeting, 7/18/06, p. 10.)

Members of the Board established the mission of this committee as: providing the board with a review of different comprehensive plan types; discussing the typical process for forming and selecting members of a steering committee; and describing the sequence of events over the course of the planning process (HM at pp.2-3.)

Methodology Used by the Committee

Starting in the fall, the Committee gathered several comprehensive plans, mostly from surrounding communities. These included the New York communities of Dobbs Ferry, Irvington, Croton-on-Hudson, Nyack, Roslyn, Bedford, Cornwall, and Coventry in Rhode Island. The Committee divided the plans and the members summarized their contents for the group.

Additionally, members of the group interviewed individuals who helped develop the various plans. They included: Angie Witkowski, Hastings Village Planning Director; Fran Frobels, Hastings Village Manager; Dennis Flood and Don Marra, respectively Mayor and Village Manager of Irvington; Peter and Charlene Paden, respectively chairs of the Vision Plan and the LWRP Committee in Dobbs Ferry; Ann Gallelli, chair of the Croton-on-Hudson Comprehensive Plan Committee and now Village Trustee; and Peter Vermazen, a chair of a Nyack Topical Committee.

The members looked at websites and other resources including:

Pace Law School, Land Use Law Center: www.law.pace.edu/landuse/index.html

New York State, Dept. of State, Division of Local Government, Village Law Section 7-722: www.dos.state.ny.us/lgss/villaw.html#722

Well-Grounded – Shaping the Destiny of the Empire State, Local Land Use Law and Practice, John R. Nolon, Pace University School of Law

Land Use Training Program for Local Officials, New York Municipal Insurance Reciprocal with the Land Use Law Center of Pace University School of Law and the New York Planning Federation

A Local Leader’s Guide to Local Environmental Strategies, The Pace Land Use Law Center

Note: The Pace Land Use Law Center offers many relevant seminars and the Westchester Municipal Planning Federation offers courses.

The Comprehensive Planning Process

The Importance of a Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan contains the goals, objectives, and strategies for the future development and conservation of a community. New York statutes define a comprehensive plan as:

Materials... that identify the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices, and instruments for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth, and development of the [locality] New York Town Law §272

A comprehensive plan creates a blueprint for the future development and preservation of the community. A good comprehensive plan guides not only the physical and economic development of the municipality, but also accommodates social, environmental, and regional concerns.

In New York, all land use regulations must conform to the comprehensive plan. The state law encourages, but does not require, local governments to adopt comprehensive plans. To become a comprehensive plan as defined by New York State, the local legislative body – here the Board of Trustees – must formally adopt the plan.

State law does more than encourage the adoption of comprehensive plans; it also encourages to do so with extensive and effective citizen participation. Without a comprehensive plan, drawn with citizen consensus, a community might face an individual development or conservation proposal that might not carry out the community's vision of itself. When communities fail to adopt comprehensive plans, keep them up to date, or to achieve community consensus for them, the adoption of particular land use regulations or decisions regarding specific proposals can be frustrating, time-consuming, and unsatisfying to proponents and opponents alike. (A Local Leader's Guide to Local Environmental Strategies, The Pace Land Use Law Center, pps. 11-12.)

These principles were clarified by the New York Court of Appeals in the Udell v. Haas, 21 N.Y.2d 463 (1968), a seminal case setting forth the importance of comprehensive plans. In Udell, the court described what it said was, the “universal statutory requirement” that zoning must conform to a “well considered” or “comprehensive plan.”

This ruling states that zoning must consider the needs of the whole community:

“...comprehensive planning is the essence of zoning. Without it, there can be no rational allocation of land use. It is the insurance that the public welfare is being served.”
Udell v. Haas, 63 N.Y.2d at pps.469-70.

In endorsing the benefit of a comprehensive plan, the Court of Appeals found that:

“[w]here a community, after a careful and deliberate review of ‘the present and reasonably foreseeable needs of the community,’ adopts a general developmental policy for the community as a whole and amends its zoning laws in accordance with that plan, courts can have some confidences that the public interest is being served.”
Udell v Haas, 63 N.Y.2d at p.470 (citations omitted).

Fundamental Principles of Comprehensive Planning

“Whoever sets a hedge around his land shall not exceed the boundary; in the case of a wall, he shall leave one foot; in the case of a house, two feet; if a well a path, an olive or fig tree, nine feet....”

An early Hastings land use regulation? The olive tree should have given it away. This plan for land use is from the Rome’s “12 Tables,” around 450 BC. Land use planning is as ancient as, well, Ancient Rome. Land use planning, over the next two millennia, has saw as many iterations in style as there were in forms of government. It has been and will continue to be an important function of any municipal government. It has only been in the last fifty years, however with the significant increase in population and resultant development pressure, along with the enactment of state enabling legislation, that municipalities have actively exercised their local control of land use and development.

A comprehensive plan provides guidance and protection for a community. New York State Law does not require a community to adopt a comprehensive plan. The law does state, however that if there is an adopted comprehensive plan, all land use regulation and zoning must be in conformance with it. 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.

Every community utilizes comprehensive planning for different reasons. Some communities began the comprehensive planning process because of specific concerns such as traffic safety, environmental issues, or development proposals. Other communities chose to write a comprehensive plan because their zoning laws were out of date and they needed 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) The community should decide which elements to include through public participation. Indeed, public participation is at the very core of comprehensive planning. State law says an “open, responsible, and flexible planning process is essential” to the adoption of a comprehensive plan.

The public must always drive the process. After all, it seeks to answer: Who are we? Who do we want to be? And who can we be?

Our committee has read and evaluated plans from like communities and conducted interviews with plan committee members. An analysis of their processes follows this introduction.

Proposed Process for Hastings Comprehensive Plan

1. Kick Off

- 1.1 Trustees establish Comprehensive Plan Committee
- 1.2 Trustees and Comprehensive Plan Committee hire consultant
- 1.3 Review of prior planning documents
- 1.4 Identify Assets and Issues - Public Workshop to help identify assets and issues
- 1.5 Describe existing conditions

2. Set Goals

- 2.1 Establish Topical Committees
- 2.2 Topical Committees develop draft goals
- 2.3 Public workshop to discuss refined issue and draft goals

3. Identify Objectives and Strategies

- 3.1 Topical Committees develop objectives and strategies
- 3.3 Public workshop on objectives and strategies

4. Recommend Implementation Steps

- 4.1 Topical committees identify implementation steps

5. Preparation and Review of Plan

- 5.1 Prepare draft plan
 - Proposed Table of Contents of Comprehensive Plan
 - 1. Inventory and Analysis of Existing Conditions
 - 2. Community Vision, Issues and Opportunities
 - 3. Goals
 - 4. Objective and Strategies
 - 5. Regional Goals and Concepts
 - 6. Implementation Steps
- 5.2 Refer Proposed Plan to Planning Board
- 5.3 Refer Proposed Plan to County Planning Department
- 5.4 Comprehensive Plan Committee holds public hearing
- 5.5 Finalize plan

6. Adoption of Comprehensive Plan

- 6.1 Proposed plan goes to Board of Trustees
- 6.2 Board of Trustees holds public hearing on plan
- 6.3 SEQRA (State Environmental Quality Review Act) review
- 6.4 Board of Trustees Adopts Plan
- 6.5 File plan with Village Clerk and County Planning Department

The Planning Process: A Survey of Other Plans

The following is a process recommended by this committee after reading and discussing a number of comprehensive plans. We think the process described here would work well for Hastings. We include examples illustrating how other communities used similar processes.

1. Kick-Off

1.1 Form a Comprehensive Plan Committee

While the Village Board of Trustees or the Planning Board may prepare a comprehensive plan, all of the plans we reviewed were prepared by a special board or committee appointed by resolution of the village board. The role of the Comprehensive Plan Committee (hereafter referred to as “CPC”) is to steer the planning process and work with a consultant, drawing on the assistance of village staff and officials as needed. The Committee will then recommend the proposed plan to the Village Board of Trustees for adoption.

Although there are no set rules on who should serve on this committee, the CPC may consist of representatives of village boards and committees, civic organizations, and community activists. The CPC should also have citizens from all geographic areas of the village, in order to get a breadth of experience and views. In our opinion, it is important that the CPC members be committed to the comprehensive planning process and be willing to devote the time and energy necessary to steering the plan to completion.

Examples:

Bedford, NY

The Town Board set up a 16-member comprehensive plan committee. The committee represented all quarters of the town, its three hamlets, the Town Board, and the Planning Board.

Coventry, RI

In its initial comprehensive plan, the Town of Coventry had 50 Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee Members. In a subsequent update, the Town Council appointed a Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee and a Growth Management Committee. For both communities, there were a total of 25 members, representing the Planning Commission, the Zoning Commission and the community at large.

Croton-on-Hudson, NY

In 1999, the Board of Trustees appointed a Comprehensive Plan Committee to review, update, and revise the village’s 1977 Master Plan. The Village had several specific concerns that prompted the establishment of the committee. Those concerns were about land use and development trends in the Village, County, and region. The Village also sought to update and review its local laws and regulations (including zoning), and conform them to a revised Master Plan. The Committee had seven members, one of whom was a member of the Planning Board. The committee was comprised of three Democrats and three Republicans, all “forward-thinking” people, according to the Chair of the Committee.

Dobbs Ferry, NY

The Village Board appointed seven members of the Land Use Committee to prepare the vision plan. This committee worked with representatives from formal and ad hoc committees including a Downtown Improvement Committee, a Gateway Committee, an Open Space and Sidewalk Committee, and a Waterfront Committee.

Irvington, NY

The Village Board appointed an eleven-member Land Use Committee to prepare Irvington's plan. The committee included members of the Open Space Advisory Committee, the Environmental Conservation Board, the Planning Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the League of Women Voters, and the Historic District Subcommittee.

Nyack, NY

The desire for a comprehensive plan and the four major goals set forth in that plan came from a 1998 public workshop/town meeting on the future of Nyack's downtown. The Village Board established an eleven-member Master Plan Steering Committee chaired by a former mayor, with village activists, civic leaders, and representatives from the Planning Board, the Zoning Board, and the Parking Authority.

Roslyn, NY

The Board of Trustees formed a Master Plan Committee to both prepare a comprehensive plan and revise the Village's zoning ordinance (which was almost unchanged since adoption in the 1930s). The fourteen participants included members of the Historic District Board, the Roslyn Landmark Society, Roslyn Preservation Society, and the Chamber of Commerce, along with individual concerned citizens.

1.2 Hire a Consultant

It is advisable that the Comprehensive Plan Committee chooses a planning consultant through an RFP process and then brings the proposed contract to the Board of Trustees for approval. The Comprehensive Plan Committee could prepare the RFP with the assistance of the Village Planning Director as well as the Village Manager. The CPC could hire a nearby planning consultant or the CPC could expand its search to other parts of the state or more broadly still, to other parts of the country.

Examples:

Coventry, RI

The Town of Coventry hired a consultant from outside of the local area. The committee preferred an out-of-state firm that would bring a fresh perspective to the planning process. According to Fran Frobels, the Committee was pleased with the consultant they hired.

Croton-on-Hudson, NY

Croton hired Buckhurst, Fish & Jacquemart, Inc. because one committee member felt very strongly that this consultant was able to communicate in layman's language. The committee was looking for a consultant who was skilled in public workshops and who would be able to draft a professional questionnaire to survey citizens.

Dobbs Ferry, NY

The Village of Dobbs Ferry hired Phillips Preiss & Shapiro, Inc. to prepare both a vision plan and revise the zoning ordinance. The committee preferred a local firm that would be able to visit the town regularly and speak to many citizens and village employees. The planning firm provided two consultants -- one with public workshop expertise and one who was particularly skilled in drafting zoning laws.

1.3 Committee and Consultant Review Prior Planning Documents

The Comprehensive Plan Committee and the Planning Director assemble existing planning documents for review by the committee and the consultant. They determine what studies are missing and may need to be prepared for the comprehensive plan.

Many communities had previous planning efforts that covered specific topics that a comprehensive plan would include. Several were preparing a *Local Waterfront Revitalization Program* (LWRP) plan or had adopted such a plan. During the comprehensive planning process, the CPC and the consultant reviewed those planning documents and considered them in the context of a community wide plan. (In some cases, those plans were ready for an update as well.) Many communities reviewed plans from state, county, and neighboring municipalities.

A preliminary list of Hastings-on-Hudson planning documents to be reviewed is in the appendix.

Examples:

Coventry, RI

Since Rhode Island recommends an update to the plans every five years, at a minimum, this plan was a scheduled update.

Previous Comprehensive Plan: 1992

Zoning Ordinance: Adopted 1997

Croton-on-Hudson, NY

The plan is a good example of how a comprehensive plan responds to and ties into previous planning. The village created a Master Plan in 1977. Despite substantial change in building construction and development over next twenty years, no comprehensive review or update of the plan had been undertaken. Instead, the Village produced many strategic plans and studies on specific topics including: waterfront, traffic calming, open space inventories, and environmental conservation policies.

In 1992, the Village adopted an LWRP that became the land use plan for entire village because all of Croton falls within the NYS Coastal Zone. The LWRP recommended updating the 1977 Master Plan. In 1997, Croton formally incorporated their Greenway Vision Plan into the Village Master Plan. Their Comprehensive Plan was drafted in 2002 and approved in 2003.

Dobbs Ferry, NY

Dobbs Ferry decided to draft a Vision Plan because their zoning laws needed to be updated, out of concern for "intense development pressure" and because its recently adopted LWRP recommended there be a Comprehensive Plan. On August 9, 2005, the Dobbs Ferry Village Board adopted the LWRP and the LWRP Local Consistency Law. To date, the Vision Plan has not yet been formally adopted. Currently, the Land Use Committee is rewriting the zoning laws to conform to the recommendations set forth in their Vision Plan.

1.4 Identify Critical Assets and Issues

While New York State does not mandate topics or issues, it does provide a recommended list of fifteen components that may be adapted to the special requirements of the village. The state's list includes a "general statement of goals, objectives, and standards upon which proposals for the immediate and long range growth and development of the municipality are based." (See appendix for recommended topics.)

The approach to identifying key issues varied. Most communities first conduct public visioning workshops to delineate a vision for the community and to begin identifying issues and themes. It is effective to hold these public workshops after the consultant is familiar with all prior planning documents. Since the objective of these workshops is to gather as much public input as possible, it is important to consider to both the timing and the number of workshops.

Some communities formed subcommittees or topical committees based on the issues that emerged at these workshops, to further define the issues, and develop goals. In our opinion, this would be a good way to increase citizen participation in the planning process.

Surveys are also a tool commonly used to identify issues. CPCs frequently used surveys at an early stage to determine global concerns. Later surveys sought more detail on specific issues. Anne Gallelli of Croton cautioned us to have the surveys professionally designed and analyzed in order to ensure that the collected data is useful.

Comprehensive plans typically addressed land use and zoning issues. In our opinion, a comprehensive plan could cover other specific issues like regional concerns, waterfront planning, preservation of open space, business district revitalization, transportation, community appearance and community services, and facilities. Indeed, perhaps the best way to address these issues is to look at in an integrated manner rather than a piecemeal fashion.

Examples:

Coventry, RI

To kick off the initial planning, Coventry held four community-wide meetings to discuss issues and strategies. Interestingly, solutions to problems were topics of discussion in the earliest of stages. Rhode Island mandates the development of a comprehensive plan and the list of topics to be covered is required: Land Use, Housing, Economic Development, Natural and Cultural Resources, Community Services and Facilities, Open Space, Conservation and Recreation, and Circulation. Coventry added Human Services.

In the update of the Comprehensive Plan that was reviewed, Coventry focused on the specific issues of Land Use and Business Retention.

Croton-on-Hudson, NY

When Croton-on-Hudson started its strategic planning, there were specific concerns about how the village would guide proposed commercial development not addressed by then current zoning. As the planning process started, the village imposed a moratorium on building for several months. As the planning process proceeded, the village also "fast tracked" specific zoning and other implementation elements for commercial development.

The Committee conducted three workshops and sent out a professionally designed questionnaire to all residents. It received a high percentage of completed surveys; approximately 25% of village residents responded.

Nyack, NY

A successful public visioning workshop on the future of the downtown led this community to expand its view to the village at large. The workshop identified four topics/areas of the village for initial consideration. The steering committee held four public visioning workshops, one per topic. The topics were: Downtown, Gateway, Waterfront, and Residential Quality of Life.

Roslyn, NY

The Master Plan Committee met almost thirty times to discuss the content of the comprehensive plan. It advertised all meetings, which were open to the public. (The plan did not mention any specific public workshops.) The Committee decided to focus on the following: the Village's historic resources, the waterfront area, downtown Roslyn, and residential neighborhoods. As many municipal services are under the jurisdiction of the town, the village's principal responsibilities pertain to land use planning and development.

1.5 Describe Existing Conditions

Most plans described existing conditions. This is a concise compilation of factual data about the community either presented in a separate chapter, or integrated into topical chapters. Coventry's plan also included important non-land use issues such as Human Services and Municipal Fiscal Structure.

(See the Appendix for a list of the existing conditions already described in Hastings's LWRP Inventory and Analysis.)

Review of Existing Conditions typically included:

- Community Background and History
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Land Use and Zoning
- Land Ownership and Large Scale Development
- Demographic and Socio-economic Characteristics
- Transportation
- Infrastructure and Services
- Open Space and Recreation

2. Set Goals

Goals are broad statements of ideal future conditions for the Village as a whole or for specific areas. These should address the issues and assets identified in the previous phase. While goals should address specific problems and protect its assets, they can also be forward thinking and visionary. For example, a goal could be to protect the village's scenic and historic resources (Roslyn), but another goal could be to take full advantage of the Hudson River and its waterfront as the village's defining recreational amenity (Nyack).

In some communities, topical committees developed draft goals in a manner suiting the topic. In our opinion, either the topical committee should choose how it will engage the community and set the goals pertaining to its topic, or the steering committee should set forth guidelines for public participation. A committee could use existing planning materials as a starting point, or it

could gather new information by sending out a survey, holding public meetings, focus groups, or conducting interviews.

Most communities had the draft goals presented by the committee and consultant in a public meeting for public comment. We feel this is a key checkpoint for the community to affirm the direction of the planning process.

We recommend that the consultant, the Steering Committee, and the topical committees hold public workshops to present the refined issues and the draft goals. Community participants could discuss the presentation in breakout groups. They could report to the larger group. The Hastings website and other means, such e-mail and WHOH TV, can be used to elicit public comments.

Examples:

Croton, NY

1. Preserve Traditional Qualities
2. Strengthen Assets
3. Protect Resources

Irvington, NY

1. Preserving and enhancing the Village's existing built character and scale
2. Protecting the health, safety and quality of life of Village residents
3. Controlling and managing growth in the Village;
4. Protecting and enhancing the Village's green spaces, natural resources, open space areas, and scenic corridors.

Nyack, NY

Based on the results of a public workshop, the steering committee devised four topical committees, each chaired by a member of the Steering Committee: 1) downtown 2) gateway 3) waterfront 4) residential quality of life.

1. Downtown: Protect and enhance the traditional downtown center
2. Gateway: Generate new and higher-value development that can afford to pay for needed on- and off-site improvements
3. Waterfront: Maximize the Hudson River as the Village's defining visual open space and recreational amenity
4. Residential objectives: Protect the physical and social qualities that make Nyack a safe, diverse, affordable, and pleasant community

Roslyn, NY

1. Safeguard the integrity and value of Roslyn's historic and scenic resources
2. Create a cohesive waterfront that enhances the economic vitality and value of its uses, the adjacent downtown and the Village as a whole
3. Bolster the downtown's specialty niche as an historic and waterfront business center, used by residents from the region seeking one-of-a-kind, small-scale shops and restaurants
4. Accommodate new residential development in a manner that also helps to maintain and create attractive and highly valued neighborhoods

3. Establish Objectives and Strategies

Objectives are medium-term, attainable achievements that will help the community meet its goals. These are most effective when they are measurable and quantifiable. For example, to

achieve its goal of maximizing the potential of its Hudson River waterfront, Nyack’s plan recommends several objectives, including “providing additional waterfront parks and access opportunities” and “protecting views and improving connections between the waterfront and the rest of the Village, particularly downtown.” The delineation and protection of wetlands of a certain size and character, or the construction of a certain number of affordable housing units are further examples.

Strategies are one or more actions recommended to accomplish each objective. For example, in order to maintain the value of its residential neighborhoods and preserve neighborhood character and scale, Roslyn’s plan recommends the strategy of adopting Floor Area Ratios (FARs) to set a cap on the size of houses relative to their lots. Another example of a quantitative strategy is Roslyn’s call for the creation of “buffer zones of 100 feet should be established to protect significant wetlands.”

The consultant and the topical committees will develop draft objectives and strategies to address the goals and note the resources that will be needed.

Again, most communities had the committee and consultant hold public workshops to present the draft objectives and strategies for comment and discussion. We feel this is a key checkpoint for the community to affirm the direction of the planning process.

Examples:

Irvington, NY

Objectives:

Irvington devised both objectives and implantation plans for each of what they referred to as their policy areas: 1) Land Use and Development Controls; 2) Transportation; 3) Open Space and Parks; 4) Main Street and the Waterfront.

Land Use and Development Objective

Updating existing Village zoning and subdivision ordinances to ensure that further development is “in concert” with the Village goals of preserving Irvington’s built character – density, scale and historic character- as well as its natural and scenic resources.

Main Street Area and the Waterfront Objective

Creating a more cohesive center of the village by preserving the scale and built character of both the Main Street area and the Waterfront, and improving access to the waterfront. Both areas are destinations that serve as the center of commercial and municipal activity, each with historic character and scale that contribute to the charm and identity of Irvington.

Strategies:

To further the objective of making the Main Street area and the Waterfront a destination for village residents and serving as the center of commercial and municipal activity:

1. Preserve historic character of the Main Street and waterfront areas by designating them as historic districts
2. Protect the built scale of the Main Street area by enacting a zoning amendment to restrict large scale development and regulate the height and bulk of renovations or new construction
3. Preserve the Main Street and other views of the Hudson River by designating it a scenic view shed; develop provisions to address obstacles and intrusions on the view shed.

4. Devise an Implementation Plan

In our review, a strong implementation plan distinguishes some plans over others. The implementation plans took various forms, but all addressed what needed to be done, who was responsible for doing it, what resources were needed and set deadlines for each action. A Nyack representative commented that it was important to look forward and identify the individual or group that would find funding for the implementation of the plan.

The more detail set forth in the implementation plan, the easier it is for the village to move forward accomplishing the goals of the comprehensive plan. In our opinion, the implementation plan should set forth short term, intermediate term and long terms goals. (Short term ~ 0-6 months, intermediate term ~ 6 to 12 months and long term greater than 12 months)

Examples:

Coventry, RI

Coventry's implementation section offered the most complete integration of objectives and strategies. The plan identified specific plan elements to accomplish each objective. These plan elements provided the specific framework for the Town's elected and appointed officials and Town staff to promote and guide orderly and planned growth.

Other useful parts of Coventry's implementation plan are the outline of a municipal funding program, the identified regulatory actions needed to implement the plan and list of areas for further action and study.

Another interesting aspect of the implementation plan was that the planning director monitored the plan throughout the year.

The town also reviews the plan on an annual basis. The town holds an annual public hearing to discuss proposed comprehensive plan actions for the upcoming year.

Croton-on-Hudson, NY

Croton-on-Hudson's plan did not provide a timeline for accomplishing the goals. The town did not finely detail how to implement the plan. It wanted future flexibility to choose how to implement the plan. Instead, the plan laid forth village-wide goals and commendations for five key elements of the Village: commercial districts, natural resources, transportation, residential areas, and community facilities and services.

The plan did outline the next steps in adopting the plan. As the first task, the plan recommended reviewing the current zoning code in light of the goals of the comprehensive plan. It also lists areas of further study.

Irvington, NY

The CPC suggested the adoption of 14 new laws, including:

1. Wetlands and/or amended resource protection;
2. Protecting views of the Hudson River from Main Street and other areas west of Broadway;
3. Restricting out of scaled development on Main Street;
4. Amendments to zoning laws to encourage below market rate housing;
5. Amending the cluster ordinance

Prior to enacting the proposed legislation, the Village Board proposed establishing Ad Hoc Committees and amending the Recreation Advisory Committee's Charge to make recommendations regarding:

1. Contours of the establishment of Historic District
2. Transportation measures for present/future challenges set forth in plan
3. Suitable location for community pool and two recreational fields

The Village Board committed to working on several objectives set forth in the plan:

1. Securing outside funding for additional preservation of open space;
2. Working with other communities to prevent development outside of Irvington that will have adverse consequences inside Irvington;
3. Publicizing the benefits of conservation easements

Nyack, NY

Nyack's comprehensive plan provided a suggested implementation plan with three timeframes: Short (0 to 6 months); Intermediate (6 months to one year); and long term (one year and beyond.). The implementation plan addressed topics such as zoning changes, specific actions. It listed ongoing actions for different village groups.

The Plan did not address specifically fiscal actions, but addressed general ways to proceed.

Roslyn, NY

Key implementation steps included:

1. Major overhaul of Village's zoning ordinance (which dates back to the 1930's);
2. Clarify the authority and procedures of all Village boards;
3. Create a waterfront zoning district with design guidelines;
4. Review business district zoning to provide inducements for shared parking, access and egress;
5. Strengthen Historic District Board's authority with regard to scenic corridors and views.
6. Revisit uses in each zone to allow greater flexibility, but with performance standards.

5. Preparation and Review of Plan

Referrals

Once the planning committee has prepared the draft plan with the assistance of the consultant, they can refer it to the Planning Board for comment before sending it to the Village Board for adoption. The County Planning Commission or Planning Department must review the draft plan for comment. The County Planning Board considers the following when undertaking review:

1. The *Patterns for Westchester* elements of review - density of development, relationship to surroundings and visual impact
2. Intermunicipal relationships
3. The themes of advocating smart growth, meetings housing needs and protecting water quality.

Public Hearings

The planning committee is required to hold one or more public hearings during the preparations of the plan. The Village Board must also hold a public hearing prior to adopting the plan within ninety days of having received the recommended plan from the committee. Notice of the public hearing must be published in a newspaper at least ten days before the hearing and the document must be made available for public review during that period.

6. Adoption of Comprehensive Plan

Adoption

For a comprehensive plan to have legal status, the Village Board must adopt the plan by resolution.

SEQRA Review

The lead agency for the village – typically the Village Board of Trustees – must also review the Comprehensive Plan under SEQRA. In order for the Comprehensive Plan to become local public policy and a legal document, SEQRA must be complied with in any implementation process. The Board authorizes the preparation of an Environmental Assessment Form, and after reviewing that form, issues a positive or negative declaration of the potential impacts of the plan's recommendations. A positive declaration triggers the preparation of a Generic Environmental Impact Statement.

Filing

The adopted Comprehensive Plan must be filed with the Village Clerk and a copy sent to the County Planning Agency.

The Board would adopt after making any revisions based on the State and County reviews. In our opinion, this would be an historic and wonderful day for our community.

Examples:

Croton on Hudson, NY

On January 21, 2003, the Village Board of Trustees adopted the Comprehensive Plan. Process took 16 months.

Dobbs Ferry, NY

Dobbs Ferry has not yet adopted its Vision Plan.

Irvington, NY

In March 2003, the Village Board of Trustees adopted the Comprehensive Plan. Process started in 2000.

Nyack, NY

On January 11, 2007, the Village Board of Trustees adopted the Comprehensive Plan. Process started in 2000.

7. Outreach

Frequent and thorough communication with all residents and stakeholders is essential throughout the comprehensive planning process. We urge the Village Board to mandate that all meetings be public and noticed. We recommend special efforts to reach children, seniors, and non-English speaking residents.

In our opinion, not only must residents be aware of upcoming public meetings, but also they must be informed regularly of the plan's progress. The planning committee must use every means possible to reach out to the public, including newsletters, mailings, e-mails, website, door-to-door surveys, and local papers. Local TV and radio stations reports, posters and flyers can alert residents to upcoming planning events or workshops.

Examples:

Nyack used the Village's monthly newsletter to update the public on the planning process, post issues and present schedules and surveys.

8. Updates

State law requires that the comprehensive plan set intervals at which the plan shall be reviewed and recommends ten-year intervals. Rhode Island recommends that the plans be updated every five years.

Appendix

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

2. Preliminary List of Hastings on Hudson Documents for review

1. Pedestrian Plan 2006 (Buckhurst Fish and Jacquemart)
2. Large Land Tract Plan and proposed rezoning 2006
3. LWRP Report and proposed rezoning 2006
4. NYS Department of Environmental Remediation September 2006 for Tappan Site
5. Assessment of Park and Recreation Facilities and Fees in Liu of Parkland 2005
6. Committee on Youth and Families: Report On Youth in Community (2004)
7. Waterfront Implementation Strategy (Saratoga Associates, 2004)
8. EAF for Downtown Rezoning 2003
9. Walkable Communities Workshop Report 2003
10. A Redevelopment Plan for Hastings on Hudson Waterfront (RPA) 2001, implementation steps (grants for zoning, infrastructure design, etc.)
11. Community Vision for Comprehensive Planning and Strategic Action Plan and Appendix 1998
12. Planning Assessment (Ferrandino) 1996 of earlier plans
13. The Zoning Code was revised and adopted in 1994. (This code has been augmented by specific legislation regarding issues such as accessory apartments, steep slopes and affordable housing)

3. Documentation of Existing Conditions

(From Section II, Inventory and Analysis of Resources in the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, 2007)

1. Overview
2. A Brief History of the Hastings Waterfront
3. The Planning Context
4. Land Use and Zoning
5. Water-Related Resources
6. Economic Development – Issues and Resources
7. Scenic Resources
8. Historic Resources
9. Cultural and Recreational Resources
10. Natural Resources

11. Transportation
12. Infrastructure
13. Contamination of the Waterfront

Observations of Members of this Committee

This Committee has been mindful of the limited scope of our mission and as a result, has tried not to interject our personal observations into this document. We have reserved this section as a place where we can set forth our comments about particular ideas that we would like to bring to this Board's attention as it begins the Comprehensive Planning Process.

In no particular order:

Elizabeth Felber:

1. Public Process: It is critical that this process be wholly transparent. In addition to the important workshops and questionnaires, the meetings for the committees must be open to the public. In order for that to be possible, these meetings must be also noticed on the Village's website and through e-mail announcements. Even if there are meetings where the public will not be commenting, all meetings must be open to the public.

2. Integration of Previous Planning with Fresh Eyes: Every plan we reviewed took into consideration prior planning efforts undertaken by their municipality, and Hastings should do the same. That does not mean, however, that such documents or the issues contained within those documents should be adopted uncritically. For the same reason that New York State recommends revising a plan every ten years (and Rhode Island recommends it be done every five years), so too, should the CPC look at the issues at stake in the various planning efforts and determine whether circumstances have changed, necessitating a fresh look at the issues, or remained the same. Each document or planning effort must be considered within the larger context of whether it comports with the goals identified by the community and set forth in the development of this comprehensive plan.

While I am mindful that this plan will cost the village money, I urge the Village Board not to be pennywise and pound foolish when determining how much funding to expend for this critical process. If necessary, the Board could consider deferring other expenses to a later date, so that this comprehensive planning process can be efficiently and properly implemented.

3. Expertise in Zoning Laws: Many of the plans focused on strengthening their environmental laws. These laws must be drafted by attorneys/specialists with expertise in drafting zoning laws because zoning is a highly specialized area of law and because strong, well-written laws will best protect the village, it is critical to hire a specialist with expertise in this area.

Jim Stadler:

What aspect of the process do I see as having the greatest significance....

Public participation and consensus building

Every effort must be made to not only offer public participation and input, but to encourage it. Every resident of our village will be affected in some way or another by the CPC's final product. Comprehensive planning is a long, involved process. Getting, and keeping, citizens involved are the very cornerstone of that process.

Kathy Sullivan

1. I would like the comprehensive plan to include a review of issues for their sustainability and environmental impact. I would like the village to discuss how to decrease energy use, encourage public transportation, protect natural areas and elements, recycle, and encourage sustainable maintenance of public buildings.

A place to start might be the EPA's Green Communities program.

<http://www.epa.gov/greenkit/index.htm>

2. I would like the comprehensive plan to consider ways that Hastings and neighboring localities can collaborate to pool resources, ideas, and efforts to accomplish goals.

3. It is important to consider the time required for the reviews by the state and county as the village sets a timeline for the completion of the plan.

Meg Walker

While I believe that a comprehensive planning process is of critical importance in shaping a vision of the future for a community and creating a document that expresses the voices of its residents, I also am mindful of the amount of time, money, and effort that such a planning process will entail. I would like to urge the Village Board not to set aside important planning initiatives that are currently underway in order to prepare a comprehensive plan. These include approval of the LWRP and implementation of its recommendations (especially the zoning and design guidelines for the waterfront, the design, and engineering of public spaces and infrastructure, and the establishment of a Waterfront Development Corporation); rezoning of the Large Land Tracts; and, implementation of the recommendations in the soon-to-be released Pedestrian Plan.

I believe that a fresh look at overall planning in Hastings is healthy and necessary, but it will be more cost-effective if this planning process incorporates and builds on the hard work that this community has already expended on planning without starting over again. Thus, a new Comprehensive Plan should update and expand upon the Village's previous plan from 1998 ("A Community Vision for Comprehensive Planning and Strategic Action Plan"), and create a larger framework in which to incorporate recent planning work. At the same time, however, the Village Board should move ahead to approve and implement the recommendations of previous well-considered planning efforts that have already received the community's support. The goal of planning, after all, is to take meaningful action!