



September 23, 2022

TOWN OF
WARRENSBURG, NY

New York Forward



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Main Street Vision Statement

“Warrensburg is a vibrant community that celebrates its history while at the same time recognizing that growth and change is desired and positive when done deliberately. Warrensburg’s Main Street is a walkable, attractive area that includes a variety of housing, services, and a mix of local and independent businesses that serve residents and visitors alike.”

Why Warrensburg?

Warrensburg is a complete community ready to share in the growing prosperity spreading north from the Capital Region via Tech Valley, Saratoga Springs, and Glens Falls. But unlike other communities that stand to grow at the expense of the very people, businesses, and history that have shaped it, Warrensburg is ready for growth and revitalization on its own terms. Through decades of careful stewardship, the Town of Warrensburg has navigated the regional and national trends shaping our communities. Strategic investments by the Town in infrastructure, emergency services, public parks, and community health facilities have allowed Warrensburg



Town of Warrensburg's Bandstand

to remain a year-round community that has a reasonable balance of permanent residents along with second homes and seasonal rentals. Warrensburg is home to an organized group of independently owned businesses and civic organizations that take pride in their Town and fellow residents.

Despite years of careful planning and interest in maintaining community character, Warrensburg is at a tipping point at which the states largest historic district between Schenectady and the Canadian Border is at risk of being viewed as more of a liability than as an asset.

In 2021 a very public debate over the limits of municipal regulations versus the desire to preserve historic properties as community assets resulted in a renewed interest in taking a proactive stance towards the future of Warrensburg's Main Street. After a dilapidated historic structure was demolished to make way for a national chain retailer, the community recognized that a contingent of the Town felt trapped by the financial burden of maintaining old historic structures and another group of residents were growing increasingly concerned that the Town's architectural heritage is at risk of being lost.

This application identifies projects that would help support independent businesses that are already invested in the community, provide the necessary resources to rehabilitate and restore historic structures, invest in the public realm, and encourage the development of new residential units and retail space. Projects included in the application are hyper-concentrated along the Town's central intersection which encounters an average of 13,000 vehicles a day.

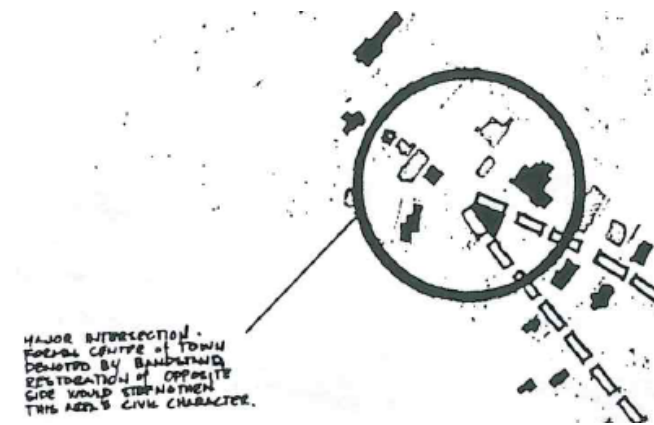
Since the Town's adoption of their 2012 Comprehensive Plan, Town leaders and committees have been working to leverage the Town's assets to improve opportunities and prosperity. The projects outlined here will serve as a springboard for Warrensburg's revitalization.

The Center of Town

The NY Forward project area includes the 5-way intersection at the center of Town which once served as Warrensburg's primary civic space. The intersection of Main, Elm, Hudson, and Adirondack Ave hosts the Floyd Bennet Park and Bandstand and previously was home to a public fountain. Today, this area has as many vacancies as it does active commercial spaces and residential units. The 13,000 vehicles passing by on a daily basis are keenly aware of the empty storefronts in Warrensburg's main commercial center. But, the financial challenges of retrofitting historic properties to modern standards in a contextually sensitive manner has stymied properties from reaching their full potential. While this the case in other portions of Warrensburg and other portions of Main St., targeted investment here will have the most transformative effect. Not only are their many opportunities for improvement, but here the surrounding property owners are committed to making ongoing investments if there is some financial investment from New York State. The high visibility of this area, the number of potential retail spaces, and the number of potential residential units that can be restored or created is unmatched elsewhere in Warrensburg or anywhere else in rural Warren County.



Warrensburg's Complete Street Opportunities Map (2012)



Excerpt from 1993 Main Street Plan identifying the project area as a key community node

Focus Area



1" = 150'



Past Investments.....

Private property owners have been leading the charge in securing, stabilizing, and revitalizing properties in the Project Area. In the targeted NY Forward area there have been millions of dollars of investment over the past 5 years. Some highlights include the renovation and expansion of Jacob and Toney's Meat Store of the North, the conversion of the shuttered Merrill McGee house at 3 Hudson into a restaurant and high-end lodging facility (The Bond). Town investments in the rehabilitation of the Floyd Bennett Memorial Park bandstand and streetscapes, the acquisition and rehabilitation of the three-story stone structure at 3883 Main Street, and the stabilization of the mixed use building adjacent to the bandstand. The private owners of these properties have made investments with no public subsidy. Through a commitment to community and a shared vision of what Warrensburg could be, these private individuals have taken considerable risk to start turning the project area around.

The Town of Warrensburg has steadily invested in its future for decades. The Town has been an active participant in the Small Cities Program to assist in the development of critical infrastructure, the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, which has resulted in the development of multiple parks and improvements to the public realm.

The Town generated a Main Street Enhancement Plan as well as a River Street Revitalization Plan to guide their attempts to increase the number of rental units and improve the quality of downtown businesses, which will support their service industry-based economy.

The revitalization of Main Street has been supported by working to improve the walkability of the community and provide better multimodal access to downtown centers of employment. Over the last 10 years, the municipality has invested approximately \$1.5 million in sidewalks, crossings, bike racks, benches, trash cans, signage, and doggy stations. This assists seniors and low-income persons to access the local supermarket, pharmacy, and health care providers at the downtown Warrensburg Health Centers.

Efforts have also been made to enhance public green spaces and recreational facilities, which supports a tourism-driven economy. This includes the creation of river pocket parks and boat launches, the construction of a gazebo and boardwalk, and the creation of playgrounds, including basketball and tennis courts. Approximately, \$500,000 in public/private funding has been invested in green spaces in the last 10 years.

A key initiative of the community has been investment in wastewater infrastructure. Funding from the Office of Small Cities, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and Environmental Facilities Corporation was used to develop a wastewater infrastructure plan, and a \$750,000 grant for wastewater infrastructure from the EFC is currently underway. An additional \$62,000 of Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund was used for water meters.

All of these initiatives are driven by efforts to support the tourism/service economy base and make Warrensburg a great place to live, work, do business, and visit.

...Future Potential

A buildout analysis conducted by the Warren County Planning Department for the Town of Warrensburg indicates that under current zoning the hamlet area of Warrensburg could support an additional 359

dwelling units. However, small adjustments to off-street parking requirements, increasing of allowable densities, the provision of public sewer, and the redevelopment of existing parcels would significantly increase the development potential of Warrensburg's hamlet area. Additionally, Warrensburg's existing wastewater infrastructure allows for greatly increased densities. Despite commonly repeated criticisms of the land use regulations of the Adirondack Park Agency, all lands in designated hamlet districts are subject to almost no APA oversight and the primary restricting factor is locally designated zoning classifications.

“...a community that is unique and retains its small-town feel, additionally charming and historical relevance, encourage diverse, small business and community needs. Try to avoid future big box stores, chains, so Warrensburg does not become another "miracle mile" of suburban "everywhere"”

Of the \$6,000,000 in projects identified there will be an additional 18 residential units, 8 retail spaces, office space, a new events venue, and a micro-distillery. That is just within the project area and does not account for the projects that are possible up and down Main Street, including multiple properties along Main Street that have recently been acquired by new investors whom are hungry to capitalize on Warrensburg's success.

-Resident's vision for Warrensburg from 2022 EDC Survey



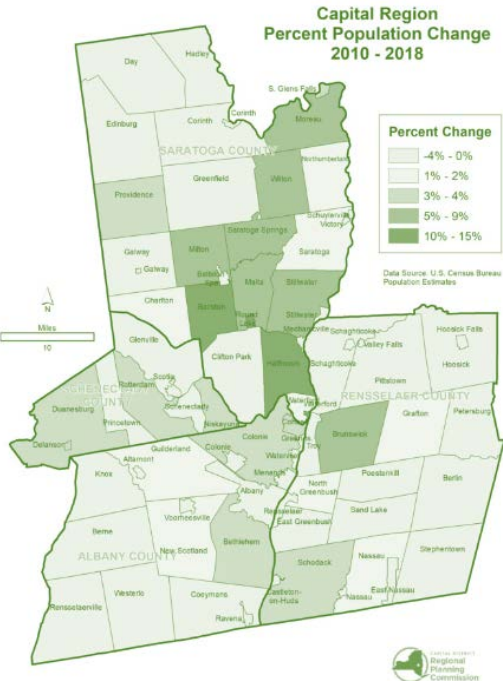
3D map of Potential Housing Units in the Town of Warrensburg, from the Buildout Analysis completed by Warren County GIS.

Regional Growth Trends Impacting Warrensburg

The Town of Warrensburg is located in the center of Warren County, just off of Interstate 87. The regions unemployment rates have been hovering at historic lows and there are a range of open positions in fields as wide ranging as hospitality, the medical field, and manufacturing. The neighboring City of Glens Falls, a 1st round DRI winner provides manufacturing jobs, professional positions, and increasingly those in the creative industry.

Regionally, the growth in the advanced manufacturing industry associated with Tech Valley is drawing attention and workers. Even before a recent federal incentive program to re-shore computer chip fabrication, Global Foundries in Saratoga County was investing \$500,000 into their facility. This is driving job creation and increasing the number of new residents to the region with disposable income and a desire to visit the Adirondacks to the north.

To the north of Warrensburg, historic investments in Gore Mountain Ski Resort by the Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA) are anticipated to provide more quality year-round jobs. Investments at Gore Mountain are being complimented by the Town of Johnsbury’s push to construct a wastewater treatment facility so that the mountainside hamlet of North Creek can increase the intensity of their commercial and residential development.



Quality of Life

Warrensburg is a compact, historic, and walkable community. Warrensburg has a thriving public-school district, a community medical center at the Hudson Headwaters Health Network campus on Main St., a full-service grocery store, a pharmacy, and a series of riverside parks that connect residents to both the Schroon and Hudson Rivers.

Warrensburg's proximity to I-87 serves not only to route visitors through the community, but also to connect residents to quality jobs in the greater Glens Falls area and the capital district. Many people choose to live in Warrensburg because of the comfort and security of small town living and the access to jobs and outdoor recreational pursuits.

Within walking distance of the project area is Hackensack Mountain, the Schroon River, and the Hudson River- all three of these natural assets offer passive and active recreation opportunities. Further from downtown, Hickory Hill Ski Area offers old-school ungroomed terrain and SUNY ESF's Pack Demonstration Forest provides free family friendly access to unique forest habitats.

Community events contribute to the Town's character and bolster civic pride. For the past 30 years locals and an increasing number of visitors attend the annual "Smoke Eaters Jamboree" a fundraising event for local emergency services. In the Fall the Town and the Chamber of Commerce hold "The Worlds Largest Garage Sale" which draws stuff out of local's garages and visitors from across the country.

Local businesses make up the heart and soul of Warrensburg, and shops like Oscar's Smokehouse and Jacob and Toney's Meat Store of the North provide a reason for people to stop in Warrensburg on their way to skiing or vacationing elsewhere in the Adirondacks.



Family fun at the Smoke Eaters Jamboree

Supportive Public Policies

Warrensburg stands out as a town that is thoroughly committed to maintaining a network of public and private services and businesses that allow residents to meet the needs of daily life within the community.

The Town of Warrensburg benefits from an active and engaged Historical Society, Beautification Society, Chamber of Commerce, and the Economic Development Committee works hand in hand with the Town Board and Supervisors Office to identify and implement community initiatives.

- **Warrensburg has positioned itself for growth:** Through deliberate planning and strategic investments, the Town of Warrensburg has been building, expanding, and maintaining a wastewater sewer collection system and processing plant. Town leadership has recognized that without a sewer system intensive commercial, industrial, and residential development is very difficult even despite flexible hamlet zoning. Using a creative combination of general funds and federal grants the Town has been able to provide this service and maintain financial stability.
- **Warrensburg celebrates its history:** Warrensburg has the largest historical district between the City of Schenectady and the Canadian Border. In the early 2000's Town residents worked together to research and catalogue the town's remarkable built history. This has allowed residents to rally around the cause of protecting the town's unique assets. As the Town revitalizes and private investment in the community increases it is anticipated that the remaining historic structures in the Town will emerge as critical elements of the community. The Warrensburg Historical Society plays a very active role in Town life.
- **Warrensburg is working towards economic development:** In order to implement the Town-Wide Economic Development recommendations of the 2012 Comprehensive Plan the Town Board appointed an Economic Development Committee (EDC). The Warrensburg Economic Development Committee supports economic growth in the Town. This group answers to the Town Board and has been actively pursuing grant opportunities to restore Main Street buildings and businesses. This group consists of elected officials, staff, and resident volunteers with the professional experience and passion for economic development.
- **Warrensburg is beautiful:** The Warrensburg Beautification Society works to make the Town an attractive place to live, visit, and do business. An active group of volunteers works with Town government to improve parks, streetscapes, and public spaces.
- **Warrensburg's business community is organized:** The Warrensburg Chamber of Commerce's motto is "bridging business and community." The group holds community events, organizes workforce and business development training, and serves as a liaison to regional entities.
- **Warrensburg is planning for the future:** In 2021 the Town of Warrensburg allocated non-grant municipal funds to hire a qualified consultant to update their 2012 Comprehensive Plan. Updating the Comprehensive Plan on a 10-year cycle is a best practice that very few municipalities actually follow. Town leadership recognizes that in order to develop appropriate land use controls and make informed decisions on infrastructure investments that there must be an up to date plan in place that reflects current economic and demographic trends as well as residents' priorities.

Public Support

The proposed projects in the area surrounding the 5-way intersection were selected for their compatibility with Warrensburg residents stated desire for growth and business development that is measured and contextually sensitive.

In 2021 the Warrensburg Economic Development Committee conducted a community survey in order to understand residents' priorities. "Helping to retain and expand existing businesses," was the most important economic development activity to respondents with 77% indicating that they strongly support that goal. The proposed slate of projects all support local independent businesses and the revitalization of historically significant structures.

The recent public polling by the EDC is reflective of what residents expressed support for during the development of the town's 2012 comprehensive plan- 84% of respondents indicated that street improvements, including trees, benches, green areas and period street lamps, should be enhanced.

"I have lived in Warrensburg for 32 years. My vision for Warrensburg is a community that values and preserves our historic buildings, structures and landmarks as well as our parks and open spaces. I would like our town to support our current businesses and recruit local small businesses. I would like our town leaders to seek input from and listen to Warrensburg citizens. I support more beautification projects which enhance our town and improve the quality of life for our residents. I would like to see the walkability of Warrensburg maintained and improved. Being able to walk for errands and exercise has health, economic and environmental benefits."
-Resident comment in 2022 EDC Survey



Discussing the NY Forward Application at the 2022 Apple Festival

At a public engagement exercise held during the development of this NY Forward application, residents supported the vision statement on the second page of this document as being in line with the vision for Main Street.

This NY Forward Application has the support of the participating private property owners, the EDC, the Beautification Corporation, the Chamber of Commerce, regional entities and elected officials.

Transformative Project Opportunities and Readiness

Project	Location	Owner	Project	Project Investment
Shoe Store Retail Space and Apartments	3861 Main Street	Paul Spooner	This underutilized building, directly adjacent to the Floyd Bennett bandstand. Reactivate 3 vacant retail spaces and 3 apartments.	\$200,000
Former Tax Express/Vacant Retail	3870 Main Street	Toney	Restore façade of historic structure and make aesthetic improvements to entire exterior. This is a very high visibility vacancy that is encountered by approximately 13,000 vehicles a day. 2 dwelling units and once retail space would be impacted.	\$25,000
Adirondack Jules	3873 Main Street	Julie Garcia	Implement planned historical restoration, modernize 3 dwelling units, upgrade retail space for potential dispensary, and recreate fountain and greenspace in front of building. Two retail spaces and three dwelling units improved.	\$300,000
Ground level retail	3 Hudson Street	Ash Anand	Establish two new retail spaces on the same parcel as "The Bond" these would face Hudson St and be positioned between the main building of the Bond and the mixed used structures at 7 Hudson Street.	\$365,000
The Bond – Venue Expansion	3 Hudson Street	Ash Anand	Enhance and expand 'The Bond' as an event and wedding venue. Increase guest capacity and upgrade grounds.	\$430,000
Antique Shop Rehabilitation	3885 Main Street	Donovan	Historic structure was purchased with hopes to develop modern rental housing. Due to historic nature of property and price increases the building has been vacant for 2 years. State funding would leverage over \$200,000 in private investment and create 2/3 new residential units.	\$200,000
Restoration and Expansion of Multi-Family Housing	3882 Main Street	Toney	This large historic structure contains 24 affordable and market-rate apartments. The owner of this site would modernize existing apartments and build additional capacity (6 units). This will help fill critical housing gaps in the region.	\$450,000

Rehabilitation of Mixed-Use Structure	7 Hudson Street	Ash Anand	This remarkable mixed-use structure is listed on the national register of historic places. The building has been purchased and stabilized by the owner, but redevelopment has been prohibitively expensive. This project would reactivate two historic ground level retail spaces and 8 residential units.	\$495,000
Establishment of Micro-Distillery	3 Hudson Street	Ash Anand	Establish the first micro-distillery in Warrensburg. Currently there are no craft beverage makers in Warrensburg.	\$960,000
Street Trees, buried utilities, and pedestrian scale lighting	5-way intersection	Town of Warrensburg	Previously the area surrounding the 5-way intersection contained attractive lighting and Elm trees. This project would improve aesthetics and consider traffic pattern enhancements.	\$1,000,000
Façade Improvement Program	Project Area	EDC	There are various buildings along main street that have fallen into disrepair due to age and cost of maintenance	\$500,000
Band Stand Green Space Enhancement	Center of Intersection	Town of Warrensburg	The Band Stand was rehabilitated with a state grant in 2012. However, a town owned asphalt between 3861 Main Street and the bandstand degrades the ability of the public to use the space. The Town of Warrensburg is willing to remove this road and replace with a pedestrian space/benches.	\$100,000
Old Senior Center Rehabilitation	3847 Main Street	Paul Spooner	This historic property is in need of significant upgrades and repairs in order to make it an attractive, habitable structure. In addition to residential units, the property contains ample off-street parking that is utilized by vendors for the World's Largest Garage Sale.	\$300,000
Shared Parking Lot	3861 & 3857 Main Street	Glens Falls National Bank and Paul Spooner	Parking is limited in the area around the 5-way intersection. Owners two vacant lots have expressed interest in potentially developing a shared parking lot. Organized appropriately this would support retail opportunities. A surface parking lot would include vegetated islands, pedestrian circulation, green infrastructure, and wayfinding.	\$300,000

The NY Forward project area contains a mix of complementary shovel ready projects that are intended to catalyze further private investment along the entirety of Main Street. While there are many other



Proposed Roundabout at 5-way intersection.

structures, businesses, and public spaces that would benefit from capital investments, the area surrounding the Floyd Bennet bandstand will be most transformative.

Outreach to the property owners in the project area has revealed a deep commitment to Warrensburg's Main Street Vision Statement (p. 2).

Ash Anand, the owner of The Bond, has been investing in Warrensburg for the past decade. His company, 'Lotus Companies' has been instrumental throughout Town in stabilizing old buildings at risk of demolition and returning them to productive use. In 2020 Anand purchased the Merrill MacGee House and two surrounding parcels. Since then the Lotus Companies have refurbished guest rooms, upgraded the restaurant and grounds, and rebranded the site in a historically contextual manner.

Now, Anand has proposed further improvements to his holdings including a micro distillery (which ranked as a top desired business in the EDC's 2022 survey), an improved banquet/wedding facility, additional retail, and the restoration of historic mixed-use structures. These projects would have an outsized impact on the Main Street corridor since there is a relative paucity of accommodations in Warrensburg and because this would be the first venture in Town to capitalize on the exponential growth in the craft beverage industry that has stormed New York State over the past 10 years.

Public Space: Improvements to the public space include a restoration of what was once considered the public square of Warrensburg. In front of the Garcia property there was a fountain, grass, benches, and mature elm trees. Today the site is dominated by utility poles and asphalt with not a blade of grass or shade tree to be seen. Between the Floyd Bennet bandstand and Paul Spooners mixed use building there is a seldom used town road. This plan calls for removing the asphalt road and replacing it with trees, grass, and a pedestrian area that could be used for spectators during events at the Bandstand.

Shared Parking: Between Paul Spooners mixed use building and Glen Falls National Banks there are two vacant lots that could serve as a shared parking lot for the benefit of the current owners (Glens Falls National Bank and Paul Spooner) as well as the community at large. Both property owners have expressed interest in exploring a shared parking arrangement so that there would be an attractive surface parking lot in the center of downtown. The incentive to the current property owners would be aesthetic improvements such as controlled access, vegetated islands, pedestrian circulation amenities, and wayfinding.



Example of Attractive Shared Parking Lot

This application also calls for the establishment of a \$500,000 revolving loan or grant program for the stabilization and aesthetic enhancement of Main Street properties. Despite being the largest historic district in the Adirondack Park, Warrensburg has yet to connect with the sorts of tax incentives and OPRHP grants that make owning and restoring a historic property viable. Without some type of public subsidy, it is likely that Warrensburg will continue to lose historic properties to unscrupulous developers. In the past decade multiple historic properties have been removed to make way for auto-centric chain retailers that have no connection to the history or character of Warrensburg. Without intervention this trend will continue and the architectural heritage of Warrensburg will be lost or greatly diminished.

Administrative Capacity

The Town of Warrensburg has successfully managed various state and federal grants over the years. The Town will work closely with the Warren County Planning Department, the Chamber of Commerce, as well as the Economic Development Committee to ensure that the NY Forward program will be diligently and effectively administered. This project is of regional significance and has the support of the Warren County Planning Department as well as the Warren County Economic Development Corporation.

The Town of Warrensburg uses various combinations of Town staff, consultants, and technical assistance from the Warren County Planning Department to apply for and administer a variety of state and federal grants. This includes participation in the “Small Cities” program, the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, Community Development Block Grant program, NY Main Street Program, as well as federal programs to fund emergency services.