



Warren County 2040
Public Advisory Group Meeting Summary
Project Number: 2231014

Location: Warrensburg Fire House

Date: March 25, 2024
Time: 3:30PM

	Name	Organization/Role
Attendees:	Ethan Gaddy	Warren County Planning
	Sarah Brugger	Warren County Planning
	Tammie DeLorenzo	Warren County Administrator's Office
	Anna Bowers	Town of North Creek Business Owner
	Paul Cummings	Town of Queensbury resident
	Craig Leggett	Town of Chester Supervisor
	Scott Sopczyk	Glens Falls Transit Transportation Director
	Patrick Dowd	City of Glens Falls Community Development Director
	Nathan Etu	Town of Queensbury Supervisor At-Large
	John Behan	Behan Planning
	Jim Martin	LA Group
	Norabelle Greenberger	LaBella Associates
	Devin Bulger	LaBella Associates

8 members of the public were also in attendance.

Meeting Summary:

1. Meeting Review

- Norabelle opened the meeting with a recap of prior work completed through the planning process, referring to the Plan Organization and Key Theme Areas – Current Status Tracker. This document will be used to track progress within each of the plan areas and help relate the different plan areas to one another. Each section of the plan will have memos that cover issues, opportunities, and trends related to the topics area. From that context, objectives and priorities are developed.
- The Who We Are and What We Do sections were advanced early in the planning process through research and analysis and interviews with the County department heads and key community partners. The group reviewed a “refresher” document that captures the key takeaways for the two



sections. We paused on these sections to capture feedback through the public engagement survey and public meeting. LaBella will next incorporate the public feedback and develop objectives and priorities for these sections, which will then be reviewed at the next PAG meeting.

- The Built Environment is the furthest advanced plan section. The initial Built Environment memo was reviewed at the December PAG meeting. Since that meeting, the memo was updated to capture additional issues, opportunities, and trends that surfaced through the public engagement activities and through additional consideration of topic information. An objectives and priorities section was added to this memo.
- The Built Environment memo serves as the model for how the other sections will be built out. These memos will then be built out into the final plan. At the next PAG meeting, we will review the Who We Are and What We Do memo objectives and priorities and the Natural Environment memo.

2. Engagement Updates

- Norabelle next recapped the public engagement activities that occurred since the December Meeting:
 - Public Workshop: Over 100 people attended the in-person workshop; the online version of the workshop received an additional 50 responses. The group agreed turnout was excellent. The conversations and input shared during the workshop was almost exclusively positive and solutions oriented.
 - Public Survey: The public survey received over 900 responses. LaBella provided a summary of the survey responses as part of the meeting materials. Based on the summary, PAG members noted:
 - Overlapping themes identified at the County and local planning levels, based on themes emerging from recently completed or in progress local comprehensive plans. This dynamic will allow for some shared resources and approaches the County can help support. However, it was noted that while there are common themes experienced throughout the County, solutions at the local level will likely be different.
 - The level of support expressed for the County government as an institution was high, which is inherently positive and could also mean the County has the support and credibility to support local communities and implement Warren County 2040 strategies.
 - Climate Smart Community Meeting: Norabelle and Ethan acknowledged the work that the Climate Smart Community is engaged in and briefly described topics covered at the most recent meeting.

3. The Built Environment

- Norabelle opened the Built Environment discussion by reviewing updates made to the Memo since the December meeting. Additional comments and edits noted by the PAG included
 - Housing Rehab funding is limited to the City; home purchases can be County-wide.
 - A PAG member mentioned the pilot low orbit satellite deployment project occurring in Elizabethtown, NY as an example.
 - Anecdotally, EDC and other County entities are hearing that land use, planning, ZBAs have been one of the primary challenges and causes of delays to housing construction.
 - When defining housing affordability, it is important to capture the rent and mortgage, but the contributing tax and energy costs, as well as transportation costs. Saratoga County has a recently completed study related to the cost of developing housing given different density levels, which could inform portions of the form and content of the Housing Action Plan or the Housing section of the Built Environment.



- Norabelle next walked the group through the Built Environment draft Objectives and Priorities. PAG member provided the following feedback:
 - Housing:
 - A discussion of the role of the County and its limitations should be added to the memo. The “foster projects at the local level” objective touches on this, but the plan can provide more context and detail.
 - The group noted an opportunity to help citizens understand how to navigate through approval processes and how to accomplish certain tasks within the County. The concept of a municipal flow chart that shows how certain actions move through local and County government was shared as an example, as well as a “dispatcher” knowledgeable in governmental programs and processes that could be contacted for guidance on how to accomplish tasks.
 - The County could use Smart Growth principles as a condition or incentive for receiving support from the County towards housing goals.
 - Ancillary housing, such as accessory dwelling units, could be the quickest way to bring additional housing online.
 - While aesthetics can be difficult to legislate and design standards can be controversial because of the actual or perceived costs they add to projects, they can help address community concerns surrounding the appearance, size, scale, etc. of new projects, which is often a source public pushback. HCR enforces strong designs, LEED certified designs, quality amenities, through proper incentives. Proper community supported visioning will also always be critical to identifying locations that are suitable for development and the character of the development.
 - In addition to new development, we should also be focusing on reusing and maximizing the buildings we have.
 - Infrastructure:
 - The group similarly noted the opportunity to help citizens understand which municipality controls which assets and where those assets fit into the implementation strategies at the County and local levels. The County Hazard Mitigation Plan and other planning and GIS efforts have begun to capture this information.
 - Transportation:
 - Scott cautioned using the term “micro-transit” in this section of the plan because it has a specific meaning in the transit industry and that specific approach may not ultimately be the right approach for Warren County. He suggested using a more general term such as “innovative transportation solutions.”
 - General/Other:
 - Consider adding a bullet point for Overarching Objectives that addresses the County’s approach to cost effective implementation, emphasizing prioritization, resource allocation, shared services, and leveraging State and Federal funding to the greatest extent possible. Related to this comment, Ethan noted that the County has a capital project inventory, but not a strategy. It was suggested that this is a more general, overarching objective that should be applied to all decision-making
 - It was noted that the greenhouse gas emission priority stems from the Climate Smart Community group’s activities. The County has some internal resources that can help identify sources of emission and set benchmarks that the group can then measure progress against. It was suggested that this priority fit better in the Natural Environment discussion.
- Several other ongoing, related initiatives were discussed.



- Norabelle noted that the County has moved forward on the Housing implantation strategy. They have engaged Labella to review the recently completed Housing Study and develop a Housing Action Plan.
- Craig mentioned that the Town of Horicon is hosting “builders breakfast” on 3/28 at 7:30 a.m. to understand the challenges and opportunities that local builders are facing to construct new housing or rehabilitate existing housing.
- LCLGRP is applying for funding to further housing studies and to create funding for implementation incentives.

4. **The Natural Environment**

- John opened the Natural Environment discussion by asking the group to answer the question: “Twenty five years from now, what will make you say, ‘I’m glad we talked about this or that this was included in the plan.’ Responses from the group included:
- Molly pointed to the salt reduction program that Lake George has initiated. The benefits of this approach should be shared, and opportunities to expand the program to all communities in the County should be explored.
- The septic replacement program within the Lake George watershed is another initiative that seems to be working and could be extended throughout the County.
- Several people noted the challenge of and the importance of striking a balance between conservation and active, commercial uses of land and natural resources. Presently, the largest private landowners in the County are lumber companies. The plan should define “resource” and speak to the balance between conservation, passive/recreational use, and active/commercial use since each of those categories of the natural environment are important to the County.
- An additional factor to consider in this realm is land and its resources being purchased for carbon credits. If the market for carbon credits outpaces the market for natural resource products, how does this affect the industry and the jobs in the industry?
- Several people noted the opportunity to educate the public about natural resources within the County. Rev Rail incorporates educational information into their tours, Up Yonda Farm provides educational courses to K-12 students and the general public, Cornell Cooperative Extension provides community education services. Lake George is the most studied watershed in the world, Thuman Maple Days educates visitors about sap and syrup production, the Hyde has been discussing how it can turn itself inside out to embrace the industry that borders its property since that industry is what created the museum in the first place. Are there more ways to tell the story of the County’s natural resources, celebrate its sylvan culture and hydro power that bring a shared appreciation and build common ground among conservationists, recreationists, and industrialists?
- Is the County fully leveraging the land that it owns to create public access to natural spaces? It was pointed out that publicly owned lands safeguard permanent public access to natural spaces. Private land can be sold and developed for other purposes at any point. Specific opportunities for greater use of public land:
 - Community forests
 - Access to the Hudson. There is very little existing access to the Hudson. Glens Falls is developing Haviland Cove and Pruyn’s Island to open access in the City. Are there other points of access and additional promotion of the Hudson that can more fully activate the river as a County resource?
 - Trails – John shared the example of the Zim Smith Trail in Saratoga County and how it began as a low priority, but has turned into a celebrated community asset. There are several different trails that have recently been developed or that have been envisioned as part of different plans,



including the Rush Pond trail, the Bolton hub plan, which would connect to a network extending to Lake Placid, and a Warren County bike trail extension to Warrensburg.

5. **Public Comments**

- There were no comments from the public

The next PAG meeting date was set for Monday, 5/6, at 3:30 p.m. at the Warrensburg Fire House.

The preceding minutes represent the author's understanding of the matters discussed and decisions reached. If there are any corrections, clarifications, or additions to be made to these minutes, please contact the sender at dbulger@labellapc.com within five business days of issuance.

Respectfully submitted,
LABELLA ASSOCIATES, D.P.C.

Devin Bulger

Cc: All Attendees