



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

Location:           Warrensburg Fire House

Date:                October 24, 2023

Time:                3:30PM

	Name	Organization/Role
Attendees:	Ethan Gaddy	Warren County Planning
	Tammie DeLorenzo	Warren County Administrator's Office
	Connie Bosse	City of Glens Falls
	Anna Bowers	Town of North Creek Business Owner
	Paul Cummings	Town of Queensbury resident
	Ryan Hutton	Town of Chester, Theater owner
	Craig Leggett	Town of Chester Supervisor
	Brady Stark	Town of Queensbury ZBA & Planning Board
	Joshua Westfall	Town of Bolton, Planning & Zoning Director
	Scott Sopczyk	Glens Falls Transit Transportation Director
	Sara Frankenfeld	Warren County Planning
	Molly McCarthy	Revolution Rail Co. General Manager
	Norabelle Greenberger	LaBella Associates
	Chris Round	LaBella Associates
	Mirren Galway	LaBella Associates



## Meeting Summary:

### 1. Meeting Review

- a. The meeting summary from the previous meeting is up on the Warren County 2040 website.
- b. All SWOT analysis and discussions from the previous meeting will be used to inform the overall organization of the planning process and the plan itself.
- c. The goals of today are to discuss the overall organization of the planning process.

### 2. Review of Draft Plan Organization and Key Theme Areas

- a. At the first PAG meeting there was a discussion of how to include and organize all of the diverse subject areas of the plan along with quality-of-life measures.
- b. The draft plan organization sets out a guide for these subject areas starting with demographics and trends, what the County does, who the County partners with, the built environment, the economy, the natural environment, and quality of life.
  - i. Environment/climate change: this will be a common thread throughout the plan. There will be call outs in each section on the impacts of climate change instead of a standalone section on its impacts.
- c. The order of discussion of the natural environment, our economy, and quality of life has not yet been decided because there is so much other work being done in different areas, like the ongoing outdoor recreation economy plan.
  - i. The comprehensive plan should work in collaboration with those studies and be paced alongside them.
- d. It was agreed by members that the organization of this plan seems to be a good path forward and is generally user friendly and succinct.

### 3. Climate Change and Resiliency

- a. Ongoing conversations are happening with the Capital District representative for the NYS CSC who will be the point of contact for certification actions. It was noted that undertaking a comprehensive plan can be a task a community can complete to get points to move to the next level. The representative will be brought in throughout the process to ensure the plan aligns with what is needed for certification.
- b. Higher designation by the CSC Program comes with some financial incentives for communities through preference for future grant applications/funding for implementation projects.
- c. Different projects can help achieve "points" towards a silver designation so the County can consider its existing goals and see how they align with projects that would improve the designation.

### 4. What We Do: Department Interviews

- a. Following the County Department interviews, the resulting report is the only current report that reflects all the services of the County. This should be helpful internally for



the County but also externally for people to better understand what the County is doing.

- b. The key themes from the interviews were presented.

## 5. Peer Counties

- a. The group noted the identified peer counties provide a good mix to compare Warren County to. It was also highlighted that the high visitor spending per resident in Warren County provides an exciting opportunity for the County to leverage.
  - i. It was asked how the visitor spending statistic is determined and reported. This is based on data from NY Empire State Development and evaluates how much Warren County generates per resident in visitor revenue.
    - 1. This includes spending on lodging (including second home spending), food and beverage, retail and gasoline, transportation, and recreation.
    - 2. It was said that it may be interesting to look further into this data as things like second home spending could significantly impact totals.
  - ii. The group also discussed the high arrest rate data in Warren County compared to the peer Counties.
    - 1. It was stated that we don't know exactly why its significantly higher in Warren County yet but that things like location on the thruway, or whether certain factors are controlled for in the analysis, could be impacting it. This will be another area to investigate further through the process.
- b. It was also noted that all the data in the reporting so far will provide a helpful touchstone as we move forward and have conversations with the public. Many of these topics will be revisited as data is folded into future conversations.

## 6. How We Collaborate: Partner Organization Outreach

- a. The list of interviewed stakeholders/partners was not intended to be exhaustive. These collaborators were identified because of their level of involved partnership with the community.
- b. The main theme of the interviews was that existing partnerships are good and productive, but that there is always room to become a more unified group and align efforts.

## 7. The Built Environment

- a. In discussing housing and the concern that no single entity is tasked with tackling housing in Warren County, it was noted that Essex County has a devoted organization for housing. This may be a model to examine going forward.
  - i. It was said that creating a designated housing entity seems like low hanging fruit for implementation. While there may be a disconnect currently between people advocating for housing and those actually completing housing projects, a designated entity may help bridge this gap.



- b. When discussing transportation and infrastructure, it was discussed that there is funding out there for smaller communities, but they may not have the staff or capacity to utilize it. This provides an opportunity for more collaboration among areas within the county to best utilize funds.
- c. It was also said that while it did not come up in interviews so far, childcare may become an overarching theme, as well, as it is related to many of the discussion areas of the plan.

#### 8. Natural Environment

- a. As the severity of climate changes worsens, the Warren County area may become a climate haven for people moving upstate. This creates both an opportunity for the area, as well as a potential strain on existing housing/other resources.

#### 9. Economy

- a. It was stressed that the County needs to plan for a more resilient economy by diversifying employers in the community.
- b. There is also a question of how the County can better connect students with job opportunities that exist locally.
- c. There is also an opportunity to expand the workforce.
- d. Will have to address the challenge of attracting employers further north. There was discussion of whether the previously cited "no businesses are interested in locating north of Exit 14" is outdated.
- e. Occupancy Tax: It was mentioned that there is a willingness to discuss the best use of occupancy tax dollars going forward.
  - i. It was also expressed that it would be helpful to have some education for smaller communities within the County on how to best use their occupancy tax.

#### 10. Quality of Life

- a. Some identified features of the "quality of life" discussion so far include the benefits of having access to such a variety of life and activities in the County, the need to address mental health, an opportunity to invest in County youth.
- b. It was also noted that "quality of life" may have different definitions for everyone, so conversations around defining that will be helpful.

#### 11. Next Section to Tackle: The Built Environment

- a. On November 14<sup>th</sup> the consultant that completed the County Housing Study will be presenting their findings. This will be open to the public and the PAG is encouraged to attend.
- b. The housing study will be used to inform the housing discussion of the Comprehensive Plan's built environment section. At the next PAG meeting, the



Housing Study will be synthesized and discussed for work on the Comprehensive Plan.

- c. Other reports and studies will be used to inform this section including the housing section of the Regional Five County Plan, the Town of Lake George's completed housing study, local Comprehensive Plans, and others.
- d. It was noted that the plan should make sure to have long-term benchmarks to ensure some accountability.
- e. In discussing potential additional stakeholders to consider in the process it was mentioned that it may be helpful to check back in with the stakeholders involved with the Housing Study to see how they feel about the completed plan and next steps.

## 12. Next Steps for Public Engagement

- a. The first public workshop for the project will be held in January. The goal of this meeting will be to review the findings of the plan survey and dive into the organization of the plan. Future public workshops will dive into specific sections of the plan.
- b. The survey will be released in November and PAG members will help to get the word out. There will be a press release and information on social media about the online survey.
- c. The next PAG meeting will be held in December.

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 [mgalway@labellapc.com](mailto:mgalway@labellapc.com) within five business days of issuance.

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

*Mirren Galway*

Cc: All Attendees