



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

Location: Warrensburg Fire House

Date: May 6, 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 resident
	Scott Sopczyk	Glens Falls Transit Transportation Director
	Patrick Dowd	City of Glens Falls Community Development Director
	Molly McCarthy	Revolution Rail Co. General Manager
	Nathan Etu	Town of Queensbury Supervisor At-Large
	Brady Stark	Town of Queensbury resident
	Haley Gilligan	City of Glens Falls Ward 2 Supervisor
	John Behan	Behan Planning
	Norabelle Greenberger	LaBella Associates
	Devin Bulger	LaBella Associates
	Chris Round	LaBella Associates

Six members of the public were also in attendance.

Meeting Summary:

1. Meeting Review

- Norabelle opened the meeting with a recap of the desired outcomes established at the beginning of the planning process, which are:
 - Clarify identity and direction
 - Encourage a "Whole County" perspective
 - Integrate and streamline existing plans
 - Serve as an informative primer



- Align resources and needs
- Support municipal level initiatives
- Foster ongoing public engagement

These desired outcomes are still felt to be comprehensive and accurate expressions of the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

- The plan section previously referred to as “Our Quality of Life” has been updated to “Arts and Institutions.” This update was made to better reflect the specific organizations and activities this plan section captures and because quality of life has been identified as the overall outcome as progress made in any of these plan sections.
- The schedule for the remaining meetings was previewed. The Economy and Arts and Institutions issues, opportunities, and trends will be the focus of PAG meeting six. PAG meeting 7 will feature a discussion and evaluation of priorities and objectives across all plan sections.

2. The Natural Environment

- Land Resources
 - The group, led by John Behan, reviewed a series of maps to facilitate discussions around land use and cover, surficial geology, and topography as context for understanding development patterns seen in the County. As expected, settlement is concentrated along water bodies (rivers and lakes) and major transit routes.
 - The maps highlight the prevalence of septic systems in sandy, well-drained soils, near water bodies, which create potential issues for nutrient loading because sandy soils are not effective filters.
 - The emergence of invasive species harmful to the County’s timber stock was discussed. The presence of Hemlock Woolly Adelgid is growing; 80% of the trees in the Lake George watershed are hemlock. Similarly, ash trees are under threat from the Emerald Ash Bore. Large scale efforts are needed to treat and harvest trees to create buffers and to capture the value of the timber before damage from the insects destroys that value.
 - Dead timber resulting from trees that are not reached in time create a higher risk of wild fires; fire that have more fuel burn more intensely.
 - The group discussed opportunities for developing more value-added wood manufacturing capacity in the County, such as Cross Laminate Timber, to capture more value from timber, diversify the timber economy, and increase the market for distressed trees that are harvested. The group also discussed whether a co-op model could be developed to create outlets and value-add capacity for small lot property owners.
 - A question was raised as to whether there are any landowner resources for conservation and easements for landowners not located in current NGO service areas. Most opportunities currently only exist around Lake George.
- Water Resources
 - The group reviewed a watershed map and discussed watershed dynamics in the County. Eastern County waters flow to Canada; western waters flow to the Schroon and Hudson Rivers.
 - The issues captured in the memo are derived from the two recent watershed studies – the LCLGRP Upper Hudson Watershed Study and the Lake George Watershed Study.
 - John noted that, based on those plans and a comparison to other County’s he has had involvement in, Warren County is ahead of the curve on the use of road salts, but still has a way to go because there are still several communities where it is in use and the salt lasts a long time in water.



- Scott mentioned contaminants like microplastics and PFOAs are currently missing from the issues facing water resources – they will be added. This is already an issue present in the Jenkinsville neighborhood water supply in Queensbury.
- The group discussed NGO partner organization's roles in water management and the implications of their potential withdrawal from these roles. Since Lake George is so well served by these NGOs, is there a need and opportunity for the County to provide similar services to the smaller water bodies?
- Paul suggested that the Darien Freshwater Institute and Jefferson Project can establish Warren County as a hub and destination for water management research and education. These learnings can also filter to other waterbodies in the County.
- The group discussed access to and amenities at smaller water resources in the County, like Chester Creek and countywide canoe access points, especially along the 40-miles of County owned land with Hudson River frontage.
- Paul posed the question, "What other industries might be attracted to the County's water resources and how do they align with the recreation and preservation goals?"
- Air Resources
 - Using the example of the summer 2023 Canadian wildfires, the group discussed the impacts of climate change on air quality and associated challenges, such as increased demand for HVAC, improved indoor filtration, impacts to school openings and related recreational activities, and power grid issues.
- General County Role
 - The County can help with grant matches in communities that would otherwise struggle to meet match requirements.
 - As the County implements action steps related to the Hazard Mitigation plan or address projects on the capital projects list, those can be opportunities for an expanded scope that includes amenity upgrades beneficial to the local community. For example, a culvert replacement could also include a boat launch.
 - A lot of work and conversation around Natural Environment issues is happening within community-based committees, but the issues and initiatives from the committees are not currently being reported out or coordinated across topic areas. The County can play a role in organizing and disseminating that information to identify overlaps, gaps, and opportunities for resource sharing. Committees mentioned during the meeting, including the Adirondack Invasive Species Coalition, Water Quality Committee, Climate Action Committee, and the Watershed Coalition, which is no longer active. These, and other committees not mentioned, overlap and intersect with County-based committees and departmental scope, presenting significant opportunities for coordination and streamlining.

3. Additional Items

- County Planning Presentation
 - Discussed the upcoming presentation to the Board of Supervisors in June. The goal of this meeting is to present issues and opportunities across topic areas and identify any gaps prior to advancing recommendation development.
- Arts + Institutions Stakeholders
 - The group suggested several local partners to include in outreach on this topic, including:
 1. Glens Falls Hospital
 2. Hudson Headwaters Health Network
 3. The Hyde Museum
 4. Advokate



5. LARAC
 6. North Country Arts Council
 7. Lake George Arts Project
 8. Charles Wood Theatre
 9. Champman Museum
- PAG committee members will send Norabelle any additional partners to include in that outreach.
 - A focus group conversation will be coordinated within the next few weeks to gather issues and opportunities from those partner groups.

4. Public Comments

- Adirondack Folk School was also recommended as a partner outreach to include in outreach.
- It was noted that there have been a lot of studies on the County's lakes, especially Lake George, but not many on rivers. What information might the County be missing without this study?

The next PAG meeting date was set for June 3, 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