



## MEETING SUMMARY

### Warren County 2040 Public Workshop #1

Monday, January 22, 2023  
6:00 P.M. – 7:30 P.M.  
SUNY Adirondack

The first Warren County 2040 workshop was held on January 22, 2023, from 6-7:30 PM at SUNY Adirondack in the Northwest Bay Conference Center. The workshop was open to the public and was attended by about 100 members of the community, who signed in upon arrival, and Warren County Comprehensive Plan Project Advisory Group members.

The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the Warren County 2040 project so far, review preliminary findings, summarize public survey results, and get public feedback on main areas of focus for the Comprehensive Plan, as well as the Outdoor Recreation Economy project. Following the overview, attendees were provided with post-it notes, pens, and eight interactive stations to gather feedback on a community vision for the project. Each station included background information and questions to guide conversation, and members of the community were free to visit each one to discuss their ideas for the specific areas.

The first station included some general visioning questions for participants to respond to. The other seven stations each corresponded with one of the main areas of the Comprehensive Plan, and one was focused on the Outdoor Recreation Economy Plan. The following is a summary of the public feedback from the event, organized by station and question.

#### Station 1 – Overall Visioning

- **Show us where you live.**
  - Participants used stickers to show where in the County they live. Most were clustered around the Queensbury area, with others from Lake Luzerne, Lake George, Warrensburg, Bolton, Horicon, Chester, and Johnsbury.
- **In 1-2 sentences, write your vision for Warren County over the next 15 years.**
  - Themes of responses from participants on their vision for Warren County included sustainability and environmental protection, access to housing for all, a diverse and inclusive community, economic development, more public transit, and support for the arts.
- **What is your one big idea for Warren County?**
  - Some participants discussed their creative “big ideas” for Warren County. They included:
    - A 55+ community that has amenities that promote community and gathering;
    - A convention center in Lake George Village;



- A year-round multi-rink hockey facility; and
- Promoting the regional connection to artist Georgia O'Keefe.

## Station 2 – Who We Are

- **What more can Warren County do to attract and retain young people in its communities?**
  - Participants often recommended more “things to do” in the County, including access to public spaces for free events, more breweries and music events, and cultural events.
  - Several participants discussed economic incentives to attract young people, including promoting career opportunities locally, incentivizing remote workers, having more well-paying jobs with benefits, and incentives to stay in the County.
  - Housing was also commonly discussed, many noting the need for affordable housing options, both rentals and houses, and lowering Glens Falls property taxes.
  - Multiple participants cited the need for better and dependable community childcare.
  - Many also discussed outdoor recreation as a pull to the County, recommending discounts to residents for outdoor recreation.
  - Other suggestions included continued investment in schools, diversifying use of the occupancy tax, marketing the County on college campuses, improving high speed internet access, supporting tourism, and being a welcoming community for new immigrants.
- **What more can Warren County do to improve the quality of life for seniors in its communities?**
  - The most common response from participants was access to flexible and predictable transportation options for seniors, especially in rural regions.
  - Several people also recommended support for senior housing, including converting underutilized spaces into senior housing, building smaller homes within easy walking distance to amenities, and supporting aging-in-place through in-home health visits. Promoting senior inclusive activities and other social opportunities.
  - Others recommended support for senior-aid non-profits.

## Station 3 – What We Do and How We Collaborate

- **How are we doing? What would you like to see more or less of in the County?**
  - Participants spoke to how they think the County is doing presently, and what they would like to see more or less of. Responses included a range of topics, including:
    - Many participants noted the need for more housing options.
    - Many cited the need for more jobs, employees, and a younger workforce.
    - Some wanted to see more funding for social services and fire/EMS services.



- Some wanted to see more designated bike lanes and more plowed bike lanes and walking paths.
- Other topics included expanded health care options, charging stations, more public places to swim, more support for youth athletics and senior housing, and more recycling opportunities in communities.

#### **Station 4 – The Build Environment**

- **Housing Recommendations**

- Participants were asked to prioritize what the goals of Warren County's housing policy should be going forward. Goals with the most support included diversifying housing stock, attracting new families to increase school enrollments, attracting new full-time residents, and promoting economic development. Eliminating housing gaps and preventing displacement had several votes each, as well, while maximizing the tax base and limiting involvement in the housing market had the least votes.
- Participants also discussed their general thoughts on housing needs in the County, and the following themes emerged:
  - Future development should be tailored to local community needs.
  - Affordable housing needs to be a priority, especially for young people to better attract them to the area.
  - Short-term rentals are a major issue in the County.
  - Costs to construct in specific areas is cost-prohibitive for development.
  - There is an ongoing conflict of population remaining stagnant, and yet housing is becoming less available due to shifts in housing sizes, seasonal housing in the region, and short-term rentals.

- **Transportation Recommendations**

- Implement Complete Streets: Several participants discussed the need for more sidewalks, and the need to improve existing sidewalks for walkability and ADA compliance. Others discussed the need for new bike lanes and protection of existing bike lanes.
- Improve Roadway Maintenance: Participants recommended lighting regulations and bike lanes along roadways, road salt reductions, improving traffic law enforcement, and improving flood prevention/mitigation.
- Improve Connectivity and Expand transit: Participants again recommended improving bike lanes and sidewalks to better access public transportation. Others recommended public transit that includes rural stops, as well as improved transport for people with disabilities, and one participant recommended a renewed rail service from Glens Falls to Lake George.
- Expand infrastructure to support economic development: Participants recommended expanding quality, affordable broadband.
- Improve System Management: Participants recommended more active outreach and public engagement on this topic.

#### **Station 5 – The Natural Environment**

- **What are the most pressing environmental issues or challenges facing Warren County?**

- Participants identified issues including climate change, the danger of forest fires, air quality, overall pest management, County waste, and the overall threat that climate change poses to wildlife, outdoor recreation, the economy, etc.
- **What things in our natural environments do we need to consider for protection in the future?**
  - Participants identified several things for protection including forests, aquatic connectivity, waterways, protection from light and sound pollution, and compost waste disposal.
- **What are some sustainable practices you would like the County to adopt or achieve?**
  - Participants identified several practices, including dedicated bike lanes, a County-wide organic waste composting program, road salt reduction, community solar, pest management, supporting local farmers, and attracting more environmentally friendly industries.

### Station 6 – The Economy

- **What do you think are the County's greatest economic assets?**
  - Members of the public spoke to several existing assets of Warren County, many citing the people themselves as a great asset, as well as the existing natural resources, the natural environment, and location within/proximity to the Adirondack Park.
  - Participants also discussed the County's educational and health care institutions as strengths along with its outdoor recreation industry.
  - Others highlighted the tourism and hospitality industries as strengths of the County.
- **What are your concerns about the County economy?**
  - In addition to assets of the economy, participants discussed their concerns, many of which centered around an aging population and lack of employment opportunities due to a tendency towards seasonal jobs and the loss of key employers. Others noted a need to diversify the types of employers in the County.
- **What should the County be doing to support a strong economy?**
  - Participants recommended more robust small business support at the County level along with efforts to draw more diverse businesses to the area.
  - Others recommended that the County work as a source for information sharing and communication between hamlets and towns to share in best policies and resources.
  - Other recommendations included promoting affordable childcare, access to free winter and summer activities, mentor programs, and making full-time residency more attainable for young families.

### Station 7 – Quality of Life

- **What factors contribute to quality of life?**
  - Participants identified the following as contributing to quality of life:



- Transportation
  - Outdoor recreation, open spaces, green spaces, parks
  - Social connectivity
  - Sense of community / welcoming community
  - Lack of light pollution
  - Good schools
- **What are the most pressing problems impacting quality of life in the County today?**
    - The main theme identified by participants as pressing problems impacting quality of life in the community continued to be access to quality affordable housing and cost of living.
  - **How could Warren County work to maintain or improve quality of life for residents?**
    - Participants suggested working to increase housing access, paving bike paths, protecting and growing outdoor recreation opportunities, taking steps to increase diversity, and making social services more accessible to residents further north.

#### **Station 8 - Outdoor Recreation Economy**

- **What is your favorite spot for outdoor recreation in Warren County, and why?**
  - Participants identified several great areas for outdoor recreation in Warren County, including Crandall Park, Queensbury land conservation trails, kayaking on the Hudson, West Mountain, Lake George, Gore Mountain, biking the canal trails, Lake George area rock climbing, Cole's Woods for cross country skiing, Dean Farm trails in Strong Creek, Siamese Wilderness Area, and Gurney Lane.
- **Are there new or improved outdoor recreation opportunities you would like to see in Warren County?**
  - New ideas centered around improving bike trails, skating rinks, hockey rinks, improving use of waterways, and one suggestion for an outdoor archery range.
- **Do you have ideas about how to grow the outdoor recreation economy in Warren County?**
  - Participants discussed the need to attract a younger demographic to the County to support the outdoor recreation economy.
  - Several noted the need to improve/increase the number of trails, have more dedicated bike lanes, better promote bike safety, and improve general trail maintenance, markers, and signage.
  - Others noted that they want to see more access to waterways, lakes, rivers, and the upper Hudson.