

Town of York Comprehensive Plan Update



Community Engagement Strategy

October 2023

The Town of York, along with its planning team CC Environment & Planning and Labella, and in partnership NYS Department of State Smart Growth Planning Grants Program, is developing a Comprehensive Plan Update. The Plan will build upon the existing 2006 Comprehensive Plan by updating current conditions, reviewing recent, relevant plans and studies, and integrating Smart Growth principles into comprehensive goals, objectives, and strategies. The key to successful plan development and, more importantly, plan implementation is a creative and inclusive Community Engagement Strategy. The planning team will employ a variety of techniques to ensure that the plan is well informed by the community it is intended to serve and thus positioned for successful implementation. These fall broadly within the categories of Leadership, Outreach, Education, and Participation.

Leadership

Community engagement begins with a leadership committee. An Advisory Committee will guide development of the Comp Plan Update. At the time of this writing, this committee has been developed and is providing guidance and input on community engagement. The committee is made up of stakeholder representatives including people who live, work and lead in the Town of York. Members represent Town government, code enforcement, community, agriculture, and education. The current membership includes:

- Scott Hulbert (ZBA)
- Molly Cummings (True North Farm & Yoga)
- Leslie Hamilton (Triple H Farms)
- Frank Rose (Deputy Supervisor)
- Carl A. Peter (Code Enforcement)
- Becky Lewis (Trail Town Committee, Linwood Gardens)
- Steve Beardsley (York Central School)
- Joe McIlroy (Planning Board)
- Davies Nagel (Trail Town Committee)

The Advisory Committee will meet approximately 10 times during the planning process and participate in public workshops and events. Key roles and responsibilities of the committee are to serve as a first forum to react and respond to components of the plan as they are developed; to identify problems, issues, and solutions; to inform and enrich the planning team's understanding; to help engage the public; to provide and seek support for plan implementation; to encourage/facilitate publicity; and to provide updates to the stakeholders and the community they represent. Planned committee meetings are listed below. It is anticipated that committee meetings will be approximately 60-90 minutes in duration and will be held at the York Town Hall.

| Town of York Comp Plan Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule | | | |
|--|--------|-----------------------------------|---|
| When | Time | Theme | Topics/Outcome |
| Tuesday, August 15, 2023 | | Process, Roles & Responsibilities | Introductions, Review the Comp Plan process, schedule, roles and responsibilities |
| Wednesday, September 20, 2023 | 6:30PM | Information and Engagement | Existing plan/info, Community participation plan, data share |
| Wednesday, October 18, 2023 | 6:30PM | Current Conditions 1 | Findings/Community Profile Part 1, Public Workshop Draft Plan |
| Wednesday, November 15, 2023 | 6:30PM | Current Conditions 2 | Findings/Community Profile Part 2, Studies, Public Workshop Plans Final |
| Wednesday, January 17, 2024 | 6:30PM | Plan Outline and Implementation | Plan outline, Pre-mortem, |
| Wednesday, February 21, 2024 | 6:30PM | Vision and Smart Growth | Final vision statement, Final outline, Smart Growth Principles |
| Wednesday, April 17, 2024 | 6:30PM | Draft Plan | Finalize draft plan for public, board reviews, plan/annnc public workshop |
| Wednesday, May 15, 2024 | 6:30PM | Reviews | Presentation of draft plan to public, boards, and SEQR docs, workshop |
| Wednesday, July 17, 2024 | 6:30PM | Revisions | Work through comments and revisions |
| Wednesday, September 18, 2024 | 6:30PM | Final Plan and Now What... | Final plan adoption, implementation, training and implementation tools |

Outreach

A variety of outreach tools and media platforms will be utilized including a designated webpage, flyers, mailings, news releases, and email notices to keep the public up to date and engaged throughout the planning process. Social media will be utilized by creating a Facebook page and linking with existing, appropriate local government and community Facebook groups. We will provide advertisement at, and/or attend, existing community events (pop-ups), submit to existing newsletters, and engage groups that may have specific interest in this planning process such as the high school Participation in Government class. The use of QR codes will make it easy for many community members to connect immediately and directly to project information online and via social media. Examples of sources for existing events, newsletters, and/or social media include those listed below. A more complete list is attached at the end of this plan.

- True North Yoga & Farm
- Polling
- Woodlawn Distilling
- Dublin Corners Farm Brewery
- River Ridge Farms
- Craigs Creamery
- York Presbyterian Church and other churches
- York Historical Society
- York/Leicester Senior Citizens Luncheon
- Davis Trailer World
- York Sports Boosters
- York Sportsman Club
- Local farms
- Linwood Gardens
- York Central School and PTA
- Hillcrest Estate
- York Kiwanis Club
- Trail Town Committee



Mailings and notices will be sent out early in the planning process letting the community know about the planning process and identifying opportunities about how to be involved. These early notices will direct the community to the Town’s website and Comprehensive Planning page and Facebook page for more information and updates. These sites will be designed to inspire public response with clear requests and instructions for a simple feedback process as described above. The Town’s digital billboard may also be used.

Education

Education about the comprehensive planning process and about key issues in the Town of York will be publicly accessible throughout the planning process via all the tools and activities described in this strategy document. In addition, we will develop an educational opportunity for community members via a series of fact sheets posted online and to social media along with a webinar series described below. Educating the public about key issues in the Town will help gain awareness, build interest, and facilitate informed and productive conversations and solutions.

Did You Know...Fact Sheet Series

A simple fact sheet series will be developed utilizing information collected during the first phase of the planning process. This will include several brief fact sheets (in the form of flyers and social media posts) covering interesting and important

facts about the Town of York and corresponding Smart Growth Principles that are guiding this comprehensive plan update. For example, one fact sheet may provide facts about the Town of York's infrastructure and utilities combined with current climate projections and a tie to the principles of sustainability, climate resilience and green infrastructure. Another sheet will provide information about demographics, economic and housing development with a tie to sustainable land use, regional coordination, and social diversity. The fact sheet series will be non-technical and include illustrative maps and photos to help convey information and inspire participation. Each sheet will include an invitation and clear instructions about how to participate in the planning process. These sheets will be posted online and shared as social media posts. Hard copies can be printed and shared at meetings and existing community events.

Winter Webinar Series

The planning team will develop a three-part winter webinar series to advance understanding of issues critical to the Town of York. These online webinars will be advertised for live attendance and will be recorded and posted on the Town's website for community members to view and comment on later. Based on our experience it is helpful to open these webinars up to neighboring municipalities as they are almost always topics of interest to the surrounding region. Each webinar will include presentations from local *and* regional topic experts followed by Q/A and discussion. Topics will be identified by the Advisory Committee and Planning Team along with feedback from the first public workshop. Topics could include issues relating to renewable energy projects and land use, agriculture and environment, rural economic vitality, climate resilience, and community capacity.

Public Participation



Participation by the Town of York's community members and stakeholders is critical to the success of this project. We will strive to give every member of the community multiple opportunities to learn and understanding about the planning process, help create a vision for York's future, provide ideas about priorities, recommendations, and projects, and to offer feedback as we develop planning tools. All our outreach and education tools described above will be developed to encourage positive, creative, and playful interactions that are productive and help build consensus around challenging topics. Ultimately our goal is for the community to be aware and inspired to participate at any level in this planning process. We need the community to feel a sense of ownership in York's vision for the future and to understand how they can take part in the action required to get there.

Achieving the level of participation necessary for development of a strong comprehensive plan requires innovative outreach techniques that are specifically suited to the community. The Town of York is spread out into several hamlets without a strong, single point of contact for community members. This is further exacerbated by a trend across many rural communities where we have seen continual declines in participation at municipal public meetings and events by community members. Finally, there are underrepresented and hard to reach segments of the community that require consideration. Our approach addresses these and other challenges to public participation by employing a diverse and ambitious set of engagement tools that are designed to be exciting, motivating, accessible, and inclusive of traditionally marginalized groups such as senior citizens, veterans, minorities and youths. These tools include direct mailings and engaging with existing establishments (churches, schools, farms, etc.) and groups as described in the Outreach section above. Use of digital platforms including a project website and Facebook page will provide a brief overview of the project and project schedule, an events calendar, survey links, and clear invitation and instruction for participation opportunities and how to provide input and feedback throughout the planning process. As described above, we will make use of existing municipal meetings and events, create targeted surveys and mailings, schedule stakeholder interviews as needed, and conduct interactive public workshops and educational webinars. Finally, we will document the outcomes of our engagement activities and clearly integrate them into the vision, goals, and strategies of the plan update.

Public Workshops

The purpose of the Public Workshops is to educate community members and stakeholders on key issues identified as part of the planning process, explore challenges and how issues relate to smart growth principles. Workshops will be designed to increase understanding of the Town's resources, available data, issues, challenges, and best practices; identify priority projects and build support for potential solutions; and nurture partnerships to facilitate implementation for the plan update. All workshops and the public hearing prior to plan adoption will be advertised via public notices, news releases, flyers, email blasts and posted to the project webpage and social media accounts.

Workshop #1 – Perspective, Priorities, and Vision: A public workshop will be conducted in the inventory and analysis phase of the project so that community members can participate in creating a vision, help identify existing information relevant to the plan, provide input on challenges and opportunities, and inform priorities, goals, and strategies. An in-person and virtual version of this workshop will be provided on the same date. The virtual version will be via a recorded Zoom workshop from 12pm to 1pm. The in-person option will be hosted at the Town Hall and will be from 6:30pm until 8:00pm starting with a presentation introducing the need, value, and process of the plan update, identify importance of community involvement, and list opportunities to participate throughout plan development and implementation. This will be followed by an interactive session around creating a vision, review of existing conditions/issues and SWOT analysis.

Workshop #2 – Plan to Action – A public open house will be held to review plan recommendations, draft project designs, and to inform the implementation strategy. Participants will be presented with the draft plan with interactive session to follow to provide feedback that will inform final documents. The interactive portion of the meeting may include poster boards with the option to provide written comments, breakout sessions to explore different aspects of the draft plan, and an open Q/A discussion period. An open house format will be available for a one-hour period followed by a 2 hour workshop format and ending with a final one-hour open house providing maximum opportunity for public participation.

Stakeholder Roundtables and Interviews

A roundtable meeting will be held with members of the community and surrounding region representing key stakeholder groups as identified by the Advisory Committee. We anticipate three breakout sessions covering Business and Economy, Land Use (including Agriculture and Natural Resources), and Community Development and Capacity. These will be broadened as needed and/or an additional roundtable may be added. Interviews will be conducted with key stakeholder representatives that cannot or will not participate in any other way than a direct interview conversation. A template will be created to guide individual interviews to ensure consistent and comparable results.



Surveys and Feedback

Every community engagement tool described above will include an invitation and link or QR code to lead community members and stakeholders to surveys conducted via Survey Monkey or a similar online platform. Paper copies of the same/similar surveys will be developed and distributed as needed at meetings and popup events. Surveys will be developed with the support of the Advisory Committee. Issues important to the Town of York will be highlighted and demographic information will be collected from respondents to help ensure we are reaching a diverse public. Similarly, the community will be invited to provide feedback throughout the planning process via mail, email, or phone. These instructions will be included at all meetings, events, on the website and social media posts.

Implementation Schedule

Below is a projected schedule for implementation of the community engagement strategy.

| Town of York Comprehensive Plan Update Community Engagement Schedule | | 2023/2024 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Sep |
| 1 Leadership | Advisory Committee Meetings | 20 | 18 | 15 | | 17 | 21 | | 17 | 15 | | 17 | 18 |
| 2 Outreach | Advertisements, articles - Social Media, Newsletters, Pop-up events, etc. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Mailings/Notices | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Develop Website (will be updated and maintained throughout) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 Education | Fact Sheet Series Development and Posting | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Winter Webinar Series | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 Participation | Public Workshops and Hearing | | | | | 31 | | | | | | | |
| | Stakeholder Roundtables and Interviews | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Develop Surveys | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Conduct Surveys | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Opportunity for Questions/Feedback | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Existing Meetings, Events, Groups, Facebook, Websites

- True North Yoga and Farm
 - Foodlink Event October 28th
- Polling
- Woodlawn Distilling
- Dublin Corners Farm Brewery
- River Ridge Farms
- Craigs Creamery/Farm Drop Pick up
- York Presbyterian Church and other churches (4)
- York Historical Society
- York/Leicester Senior Citizens Luncheon
- York, New York Area Community Page (508 members)
- Greigsville Neighborhood Watch (340 members)
- Friends of the Genesee Valley Greenway (1.6K followers)
- Post Office
- Swede Special Effects
- Linwood Turf
- York Trail Town Committee (228 followers)
- York Small Business Association (32 members)
- Little Italy Nature Preserve FB (286 followers)
- Davis Trailer World
- York Sports Boosters
- York Sportsman Club
- Lawnel Farms
- Howlett Farms
- Linwood Gardens
- York Central School and PTA
- Hillcrest Estate
- York Kiwanis Club
- York Hardware
- The Barn Restaurant
- Davis Trailer World



Department of State

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