

Meeting Notes

Project Name: City of Plattsburgh: Final LWRP and Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Updates

Project #: 2020-012.10

Meeting Title: LWRP Review (Task 19)

Date & Time: Wednesday, May 6, 2020 at 3pm via Zoom

Attendees: City of Plattsburgh: Malana Tamer, Matthew Miller, Ethan Vinson

NYS DOS: Barbara Kendall

Saratoga Associates: Emily Gardner (egardner@saratogaassociates.com), Dan Shearer

Behan Planning & Design: John Behan

Finch Network: Amy Bonn

Committee Members:

John Clute – resident; former city counsel

Scott DeMane – Zoning Board member

Curt Gervich – SUNY professor; Planning Board member

Jillian Kara – SUNY student

Patrick McFarlin – Local attorney; City Councilor

Renee McFarlin – IDA; County Economic Development Director; involved in regional work groups

Ron Nolland – Zoning Board chair

Rick Perry - Planning Board member; former Building Inspector

PJ Whitbeck – real estate

Gerri Favreau – Clinton Co. Historical Assn., Adk. Coast Cultural Alliance, Old Base Museum

Campus, History Community

Purpose/Intent of Meeting:

Review Draft LWRP after NYS DOS comments; identify items for update.

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Bullet Items of Discussion:

1. Document sections were reviewed as outlined below, focusing on Sections 2 and 4, by subarea.
2. General note for all projects – accessibility should be clearly noted – to include transportation options (walkability, bikability, public transit access), as well as ADA access.
3. General park/recreation discussion:
 - a. Consider the winter season with proposed projects or activities – cross-country ski trails; can areas at hand launches be cleared for skating on the lake? Any sledding areas?
 - b. Need to keep in mind maintenance of projects/parks. Form a friends group?
 - c. Q. Is there a recreation master plan? A. one was developed in 1971, has not been updated. This could be a proposed project.
4. Section I: Waterfront Revitalization Area (WRA) Boundary

- a. WRA Boundary vs HMA Boundary and City line – HMA boundary will be adjusted to be coterminous with the City line on the water side.
 - b. Q. regarding Saranac River area boundary – why so close to the river in some areas, but larger in other areas? A. Boundary was established by including all parcels touching the river, then taken to the nearest street, so size varies with parcel size.
5. Section II: Inventory
- a. Update existing transportation/recreation to include the Empire State Trail and most recent Saranac River Trail/Greenway information.
 - b. Correct “Point Au Roche” – page 44
 - c. Goal to connect Terry Gordon bike path to Battlefield Park
 - d. Recent development efforts – Q. re: Brownfield status. The Brownfield Opportunity Area program includes multiple steps before funding would be available for specific projects. City completed BOA Step 1 in 2010 – Barbara will check on the status and inform the committee as to whether the City can move forward and what next steps would be.
6. North End Subarea
- a. Update text to include results of the Beach Feasibility Study (Phase I)
 - b. Status of regional recreation facility? YMCA is taking the lead on the effort, considering the Crete Center and an area across Rt 9
 - c. City Beach - mention kayak launch/rentals (if not already included)
 - d. There are a number of historic elements in the area; a museum was a previous idea (but may not be appropriate now – would like to see existing museum campus be the focus)
7. Cumberland Ave/Wilcox Dock Subarea
- a. Update to include the new docks added (approx. 28 slips)
 - b. Healthy Lung Trail – is in need of repair; this could be acknowledged as a future project
 - c. Include John Ruff’s recent efforts/projects
 - d. Proposed residential area on projects map – the wooded area (approx. 18 acres) was contaminated, and development is highly restricted. City to pull deed to review constraints, may need to update or remove note on map.
 - e. Note that Wilcox Dock itself is owned by Canal Corp, with an agreement in place for marina operation by the City
 - f. Noted that on a busy day, there are a lot of kids in the area. A play area (or two!) should be a priority.
 - g. Q. re: the Elks Club property – a lakefront parcel with an attractive building that may be available for sale.
8. Dock Street – Durkee Street – Downtown Subarea
- a. Update to include WRRF grants/improvements
 - b. Include Farmers Market relocation/MLD updates
 - c. Include current SRT Phase III plans
 - d. Include NYSEG remediation (moving forward this year through this subarea)
 - e. Include DRI plans (“existing” projects in inventory section, proposed/upcoming as projects)
 - f. Note the expansion of the Broad Street parking lot
 - g. Discussion re: Green Street improvements – possible traffic light need, pedestrian access, existing abandoned rail spur. Need to improve walkability. In short-term, property on west side of Green St may be used for NYSEG river access during remediation.

- h. Include the recent improvements to the Co-op – there is desire to continue the momentum for the entire block (possible ESD Main St grant funds)
 - i. Parking area behind the co-op – potential to be an interesting urban space, pocket park. There was a historical plan for a riverfront park (1970s?)
 - j. Can a pedestrian bridge be suggested to cross the RR tracks to Dock Street? Perhaps near train station?
 - k. Properties between Bridge and Broad Streets – ownership is generally by a single owner, who may be interested in selling them for future development
 - l. Q. Can concepts be provided for Dock Street area? A. This will be part of the upcoming Harborside Master Plan, which will also include the Green Street area.
 - m. Interest in potential hand launch locations in this area, which should be complemented by upstream locations
 - n. Incorporate the marketing/wayfinding ideas from Boire Benner group for downtown (DRI)
 - o. Is there a way to also incorporate public art ideas from Outside Art?
9. Old Base Subarea
- a. Efforts to market the museum campus as a destination (led by CCHA); a historic signage inventory was recently completed
 - b. There are numerous historical markers and interpretive panels around the campus
 - i. Friends of Old Stone Barracks are planning to add panels near Valcour Brewing
 - ii. Possible additions to the list:
 1. Old Stone Barracks (National Register)
 2. Clyde Lewis Park
 3. Oval Craft – housed in old firehouse
 4. Plattsburgh Air Force Museum (operates under the Battle of Plattsburgh umbrella)
 - c. Need to correct: “officer’s club building” to “administration building” – site of former officer’s club building is now Harborview Condos
 - d. Note the Battlefield Planning grant
 - e. Should more be proposed for the Old Base Marina?
 - f. Possible additions to development opportunities:
 - i. Identify the private property with tennis courts as potential future development
 - ii. Identify the Alamo building as a potential future development site
 - iii. Building north of City Court is also abandoned
 - iv. Administration building at end of oval also has potential for reuse
 - g. It was noted that the Transportation Museum did not open last year; it needs a new roof.
 - h. US Oval – potential rink was discussed (existing paved spot for one, but water supply was never installed)
 - i. Is there a possibility for more parking on the west side of the oval? When sports are played, cars often park on the lawn. No Parking signs were recently put in. *note that an overlay parking district applies to this area.
 - j. Could parking be added near the chapel? There is no convenient parking here.
10. Upper Saranac Subarea
- a. City-owned riverfront parcel at Allen/Waterhouse – currently used for fishing access, could be improved
 - b. Fort Brown – potential for parking, benches, interpretive signage. Shoreline is too steep for direct water access or hand launch

- c. South Platt Street Park (Fox Hill Park) – popular for sledding; adjacent to Fort Brown – there is an existing informal trail connection between them. Has potential for river access/hand launch because the bank is not as steep here, and parking already exists.
 - d. Riverview Park – lesser-known park, but a great asset
 - e. SUNY Plattsburgh campus – has installed disc golf; new interpretive signs and trails in Ruger woods.
 - f. This subarea was added late during the draft process. Please share any project ideas.
11. Next Steps
- a. SA to update Draft
 - b. Public Meeting for LWRP updates
 - i. Originally planned for mid-late June, but given COVID-19 status and unknown “reopening” and ability to hold in-person gatherings, perhaps meeting should be delayed to late summer or fall?
 - ii. Before draft is “final” and complete, any proposed laws, zoning updates, etc will need to be adopted. May be best to update the content as discussed, then shift into the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning parts of the project to ensure all relevant policies/regulations are in place, allowing time for ‘reopening’.
 - iii. It was noted that outreach events/meetings can apply to all aspects of the project (LWRP, Comp Plan, Zoning) and don’t need to be distinct.
 - iv. SUNY Plattsburgh may be able to contribute to student engagement (Environmental Leadership and Environmental Planning fall classes).
 - v. Alternative engagement ideas:
 - 1. Pre-Public Meeting Options Activities
 - a. Press Republican Article
 - b. Facebook & Instagram Postings to build awareness of event
 - c. Info Flyer in MLD bills or postcard with QR code
 - d. Online Survey
 - e. Flyer at Farmer’s Market
 - f. Personal emails/phone calls to target groups encouraging them to participate
 - g. Spot on local radio station
 - 2. Public Meeting via Zoom in late June
 - a. Info packets for participants ahead of time
 - b. Overview of Project Goals
 - c. Breakout meetings to cover topics and report back to entire group
 - d. Maybe give some gift certificates to local businesses away throughout the process
 - e. Zoom may work better for getting information out than for “information in” and deep discussions.
 - 3. After Public Meeting
 - a. Post video on City site/social media
 - b. Press Republican article
 - c. Public comment site online