

County of Rockland
New York
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



PUBLIC WORKSHOP #4 SUMMARY REPORT
September 17, 2010

BFJ Planning

ROCKLAND COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
PUBLIC WORKSHOP #4 SUMMARY REPORT
Rockland County, New York

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Salvatore Corallo

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I. INTRODUCTION

As part of the planning process for the Rockland County Comprehensive Plan, the County hosted their fourth and final public workshop September 15, 2010. The workshop was attended by approximately 40 participants, all with various backgrounds ranging from Rockland residents to business owners to advocates for environmental protection. Their participation and ideas helped to better inform the planning process.

County Executive C. Scott Vanderhoef, Rockland County Chairwoman of the Legislature Harriet Cornell, and Commissioner of Planning and Public Transportation Sal Corallo opened the workshop with introductory remarks. Next, the Comprehensive Plan consultants, BFJ Planning and McLaren Engineering, presented an overview of the Comprehensive Plan process and several draft chapters of the Plan to solicit feedback from attendees. BFJ presented the draft Services and Information chapter, while McLaren presented the draft Infrastructure chapter. As part of the presentation, BFJ also discussed continuing planning efforts, including ongoing work with the Rockland County Planning Department to develop a computer model for New City using Community Viz software, as well as information on the upcoming public hearing on the Draft Plan and Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS).

Following the presentation and a brief coffee break, the audience participated in an open house session on all of the draft chapters of the Plan. This session included representatives from the consultant team and Rockland County Planning Department staff who were positioned at various stations. Each station included a summary of the draft recommendations of the Plan and provided an opportunity for the public to see how their past input was incorporated into the Plan, to add further comments, or revise the draft recommendations. A copy of the Draft Workshop Plan, entitled "Rockland Tomorrow" was also made available at each station.

At the end of the open house session, members of the consultant team presented the items discussed at each station, including additions or changes to the draft recommendations. The presentations were beneficial for all attendees because they provided an opportunity to hear all the points discussed. As part of the next step in the plan development process, BFJ Planning will meet with the Technical Advisory Committee to further review all public comments received and incorporate where appropriate into the Draft Comprehensive Plan.

II. WORKSHOP AGENDA

Rockland County Comprehensive Plan Final Public Workshop (#4)

15 September 2010

1. Introductions
2. Presentation by BFJ Planning and McLaren Engineering
3. Coffee
4. Open House on Draft Workshop Plan
 - Open house stations for all draft chapters
5. Plenary Session on Draft Summary of Recommendations

III. PRESENTATION BY BFJ PLANNING AND MCLAREN ENGINEERING

Below is a summary of the consultant team’s presentation (by Frank Fish, Michael Keane and John West of BFJ Planning and Steve Grogg of McLaren Engineering):

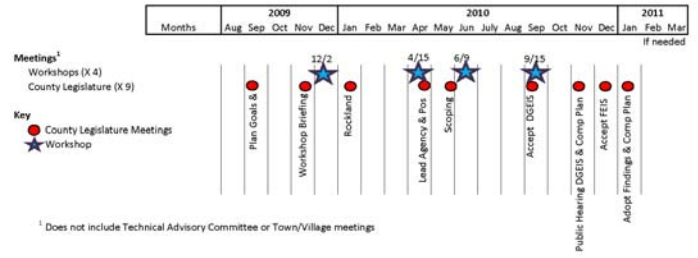
1) Project Summary

Frank Fish, Principal of BFJ Planning, provided an overview of the Comprehensive Plan process, including the project team, the schedule, a description of the Plan contents and its general purpose. The public workshop schedule, upcoming public hearing on the Draft Plan and DGEIS, and project website were also discussed.

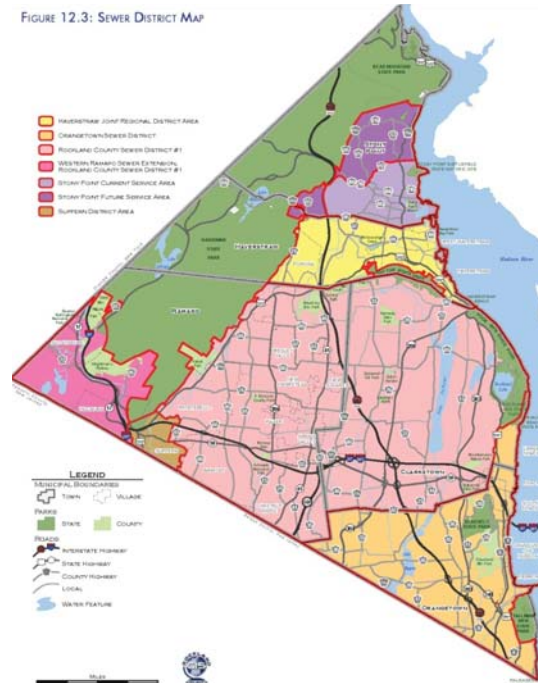
2) Workshop #4 Topics

The next segment of the presentation included a review of the remaining draft chapters of the Plan: Infrastructure and Services and Information Resources. Steve Grogg summarized the draft Infrastructure chapter, including existing resources, supply, and demand for water, sanitary sewers, solid waste, energy, and natural gas. Some of the preliminary recommendations covered included promoting water conservation and reduction in impervious surfaces, investigating potential additional water sources, identifying sewer system capacity constraints, and upgrading infrastructure for new business.

Michael Keane continued with a summary of the Services and Information Resources chapter. Services and facilities were covered, including law enforcement, fire and emergency services, educational facilities, libraries, and religious institutions. Health care and County agencies were also discussed. Some of the preliminary recommendations discussed included expanding house opportunities for seniors, young adults, disabled persons, and persons



Rockland Comprehensive Plan Key Dates



Rockland County Sewer Districts Map

with disabilities, and seeking institutional and corporate partners to reinforce the County's centers.

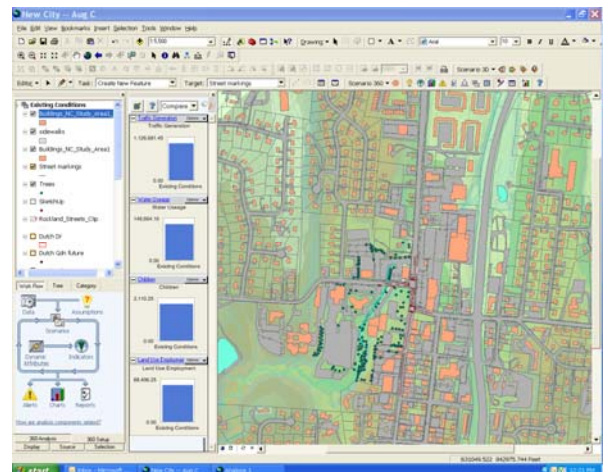
3) Continuing Planning with Community Viz

Following a brief discussion of plan implementation measures by Frank Fish, John West concluded with a presentation on continuing planning with the Rockland County Planning Department; specifically, utilizing Community Viz software as an implementation tool for the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. West covered the primary tools of Community Viz, including its assistance with visualization of new development proposals; how the software program builds off current County GIS technology; how Community Viz is used to compare development alternatives; and how it measures impacts (such as traffic, school children, water use, population, etc.).

As an example of this tool, Mr. West showed a sample study of New City, including a Community Viz video of existing conditions and potential improvements along Main Street near Dutch Gardens.



Visualization of Existing Conditions along Main Street in New City Using Community Viz



A Sample of Using Community Viz to Measure Potential Impacts of Development or Land Use Decisions

IV. OPEN HOUSE ON DRAFT WORKSHOP PLAN

Following the presentation and brief coffee break, workshop attendees participated in an open house session on all of the draft chapters of the Plan. Tables - or open house stations - were set-up as follows:

- Demographics, Aging, and Housing
- Open Space and Environment
- Historic and Cultural Resources
- Land Use and Zoning
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Infrastructure, Services, and Information

Each open house station contained presentation boards that listed a summary of the Draft Workshop Plan recommendations, as well as a copy of the Draft Workshop Plan, entitled "Rockland Tomorrow". During the open house session, participants walked from table to table to review and comment on the draft recommendations. Following the open house session, members of the consultant team presented the items discussed at each station, including additions or changes to the draft recommendations.

A summary of public comments on each open house station is as follows:

DEMOGRAPHICS

- No comments.

AGING

- No comments.

LAND USE AND ZONING

- Focus acquisition of open space on contiguous areas.
- Recognize that open space is destroyed by recreational use, no matter how limited, and act accordingly.
- Create and enforce a 30-meter buffer along both sides of all streams.
- Current Plan notes that Clarkstown will be conducting a study of the Route 59 corridor; they are actually looking at all State corridors as part of their road plan.

TRANSPORTATION

- Do not support CRT across Rockland as part of the Tappan Zee Corridor project.
- Strongly encourage the adoption of alternative routes (bike/pedestrian paths, e.g.) to connect pockets of homogenous communities.
- Explore relocating the Nanuet rail station to the Nanuet Mall to promote its revitalization.
- Focus on the impact of transit on community character (e.g. Tappan Zee Corridor project).
- What is the Plan's recommendation for the West Shore Line?
- Need more specific recommendations:
 - Promote bike routes between towns, increasing connections between municipalities.

- Address issues with the Route 9W shoulder near Lamont-Doherty.

NATURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

- Protect Rockland's streams by establishing buffers (100 feet or 30 meters, e.g.) on either side of the streams.
- Protect riparian habitats and vegetation along streams by eliminating the recommendation to establish trails along streams.
- Prevent clear-cutting of large tracks of land.
- Create a task force composed of County, town and village representatives, as well as volunteers and experts (scientists, architects, planners, builders) to deal with regional issues of climate change, sustainability and water.
- Address issue of property owners creating berms along roadsides, which has negative impacts on flooding and stormwater runoff.
- Develop an educational campaign about pesticides and herbicides for homeowners and landscaping companies, and explore regulations to limit or prevent their use.
- Host seminars for homeowners and members of the development community (builders, architects, landscapers) on green products and techniques available.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

- Focus acquisition of open space on contiguous areas.
- Recognize that open space is destroyed by recreational use, no matter how limited, and act accordingly.
- Protect riparian habitats along streams by eliminating the recommendation to establish trails along streams.
- There are nine existing farms in the county, not four.
- Explore creating an agricultural district in Rockland to preserve the remaining active farms.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

- Support adaptive reuses of important historic resources to prevent their destruction.
- Promote the use of naturalistic fencing and other materials (discourage bright white plastic/vinyl).
- Develop a model municipal historic preservation law with teeth.

HOUSING

- Allow young adult and/or service provider housing at the ends of active adult communities.
- Emphasize mixed-use development where it makes sense.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Focus on redevelopment of abandoned, underutilized parcels before developing open spaces.
- Focus on attracting data centers in addition to the biomedical, front office/professional service and tourism sectors.
- Note that the successor program to the Empire Zone program is the Excelsior program.
- The Plan needs a stronger position on economic growth: retaining and creating new jobs. Job loss has secondary impacts because of the loss of valuable members of the community.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Reinforce and strengthen the discussion on water conservation. Adopt planning guidelines to require more water conservation.
- Include a discussion on the need for water for fire protection (ISO recommendations establish insurance rates which have a direct impact on county residents).
- Require connection to municipal/County water for new developments.

SERVICES AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

- For Summit Park Hospital/Nursing Care facility, first determine what use will replace the current facility, then provide funding for the new facility.
- Encourage mergers of nonprofit agencies with overlapping missions and activities.
- Promote greater cooperation between nonprofits and governmental social services agencies (Federal, State, and County).
- Does the County have any authority to purchase tax-delinquent properties for the construction of affordable housing or community facilities (adult care, mentally challenged facilities)?

V. CONCLUSION

The final public workshop for the Comprehensive Plan was successful in reviewing the progress of the Comprehensive Plan and how public comments and input have been integrated into the Draft Plan. A total of four public workshops covering each chapter of the Plan were held during the comprehensive planning process. At the previous workshops, roundtable discussions were held on each draft chapter; for some chapters, roundtable discussions were held more than once. The fourth (and final) public workshop held on September 15th tried to reflect these discussions, as well as the public comments received via the Comprehensive Plan's website, www.rccompplan.com, County Executive's Office, Rockland County Legislature, and Rockland County Planning Department.

As part of the next step in the plan development process, BFJ Planning will meet with the Technical Advisory Committee to further review all of the public comments received, and where appropriate, incorporate into the Draft Comprehensive Plan. A public hearing on both the Draft Comprehensive Plan and DGEIS is anticipated for November 2010.