

INTRODUCTION, VISION, AND PLANNING GOALS

Introduction

The Village of Sleepy Hollow has embarked on an update of its Comprehensive Plan and Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (Waterfront Plan) at a key moment in the Village's history. With substantial changes coming soon at both a regional and local level, Sleepy Hollow has an opportunity to influence how these changes affect the Village, creating positive impacts for residents, the business community, and other local stakeholders. Additionally, much has already changed at both the local and regional level in terms of demographics, economic conditions, and broader planning principles since the Village last adopted a Master Plan in 1980 and a Waterfront Plan in 1997.

These prior plans were both developed during very different conditions of the former General Motors site on the waterfront. In 2018/2019, the Village is anticipating a new phase for the site, which is in the process of transforming into a new catalyst for increased economic activity, public open space, and access to the waterfront for all of Sleepy Hollow. The mixed-use development planned for this site, Edge-on-Hudson, will bring new residents, commercial space, a hotel, and public open space to Sleepy Hollow. The Village now has an opportunity to take a proactive role in ensuring that this substantial local change benefits the existing community.

At a regional level, Sleepy Hollow is in a position to prepare for the impacts of the New Tappan Zee Bridge, which is nearing completion just to the south in the Village of Tarrytown. In particular, links to the Westchester Riverwalk and Shared Use Path on the new bridge create an opportunity to capture regional visitors, bringing new tourism to the Village year-round. Also at a regional level, changing downtown retail trends are putting pressure on small businesses throughout Westchester County, New York State, and nationwide. Sleepy Hollow has unique characteristics to build on that can help strengthen and improve its local retail market to create a more vibrant downtown, even in the face of challenging global market trends.

Sleepy Hollow has strategic advantages that make it a vibrant and attractive community for long-time residents as well as newcomers and visitors. However, this plan also acknowledges that the Village has some challenges to address to improve the downtown, waterfront area, and other residential neighborhoods:

- Sleepy Hollow has a compact, walkable, mixed-use downtown area and established residential neighborhoods; however, there are limited connections among these areas, especially for pedestrians and cyclists.
- The community is socioeconomically diverse, and benefits from the many diverse cultures that make up the Village's character; however, underrepresentation of the Spanish-speaking population is a challenge, along with housing affordability and economic mobility.
- The Village has the potential to create a thriving downtown, with an attractive main street scale and historic buildings; however, storefront vacancies and limited diversity in types of businesses hold it back from providing all of the resources desired by local residents.
- Sleepy Hollow has a well-known brand and historic identity that attracts visitors, especially during Halloween season; however, the Village is not known as a destination during other times of year and many visitors do not venture down Beekman Avenue and to other commercial areas.

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- Substantial investment in the community is coming in the near future, with the phasing of Edge-on-Hudson; however, the Village needs to guide how the impacts of the new development occur to make sure that they benefit the entire Village, rather than changing its culture.
- Sleepy Hollow owns strategic properties and has an opportunity to leverage private investment and public funding sources to create a central public common, improve connections between neighborhoods, and expand recreation resources. In particular, plans for the East Parcel will create a unique asset for current and future residents, while also attracting visitors to the Village year-round.

Ultimately, the objective of the 2019 Comprehensive Plan is to emphasize these strengths while identifying strategies to overcome challenges and make Sleepy Hollow an even better place for existing residents, a more active community for local businesses, and a more attractive destination for year-round visitors.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- A Village-wide foundation for future decisions on development and zoning, capital budget, and general policy decisions.
- An expression of the community's vision and goals for the future.
- A guide to track implementation of short-, medium-, and long-term goals.

Why update Sleepy Hollow's plan in 2019?

As a general practice, many communities try to update their comprehensive plan every 10 years or so. This ensures that the plan is reflective of current trends, changing planning principles, and evolving local priorities. Sleepy Hollow's last comprehensive plan was adopted in 1980. The Village also has a Waterfront Plan from 1997, which includes the entire Village within the waterfront boundary, so there has been some more recent planning. However, given the age of those two documents, 2019 is a good time to create a new plan that responds to the many ways that the Village has changed in the past few decades.

The updated comprehensive plan will evaluate current demographic trends, explore the potential impacts of recent and planned development projects (such as Edge-on-Hudson), and include up-to-date planning principles. Notably, the new plan will help to clarify the Village's priorities with respect to principles of sustainability and will also help plan for the impacts of climate change. The plan will also respond to changing regional and economic trends, such as the changing downtown retail environment.

Finally, the 2019 comprehensive plan update is in part funded by a grant from the New York State Department of State (NYSDOS), facilitating a planning process that is only partially financed using local taxpayer dollars.

Planning Process

The Sleepy Hollow comprehensive plan is being updated in coordination with the Village's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP), or Waterfront Plan. Many New York State communities choose to update these two planning documents separately. However, since Sleepy Hollow's "Waterfront Revitalization Area" includes the entire Village, it makes sense to conduct a parallel process to coordinate the Comprehensive Plan and Waterfront Plan.

The year-long planning process is led by a steering committee made up of local residents, business owners, and community leaders, with the assistance of a consulting team. The committee meets about once a month to provide guidance to the consultants, discuss input from public outreach events, and review

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drafts of the two plans. The process includes substantial public outreach, described in more detail below, to gather input from the community to develop a Vision and Planning Goals, identify key issues and opportunities, and prioritize planning recommendations. Once a full draft of the plans are complete and approved by the committee, the drafts are turned over to the Village Board of Trustees to initiate compliance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). Then, the trustees will hold a public hearing (expected in early 2019) before finalizing the Comprehensive Plan and Waterfront Plan for adoption.

INSERT TIMELINE

Public Outreach

Starting with a community meeting in January 2018 to establish key priorities and answer questions about the planning process, the public outreach program for the Sleepy Hollow Comprehensive Plan and Waterfront Plan was designed to engage all members of the community, as well as regional partners, in developing a vision for the Village's future. Over a period of more than a year, the Village solicited public input on existing issues, potential opportunities, and the community's aspirations for the future. Guided by a steering committee made up of a cross-section of community representatives, the planning process ensure that the Comprehensive Plan and Waterfront Plan are truly collaborative products that reflect Sleepy Hollow's unique characteristics, concerns, and values.

The Village and planning consultants developed a broad public outreach program to guide the process of gathering meaningful input from the community. The public outreach program identified a range of ways to engage the community in an interactive, iterative process. Through a series of public workshops, focus group meetings, a public survey, and online tools, the public outreach program was created to achieve the following objectives:

- Provide a clear overview of the process and intended outcomes.
- Allow for numerous opportunities for public participation and feedback.
- Build an understanding of the Village's diverse needs and interests.
- Identify the community's priorities to guide implementation.

Effective public outreach requires multiples methods of reaching diverse members of the community. These methods were also tailored to the specific characteristics of Sleepy Hollow, based on collaboration between the planning consultants, steering committee, Village staff, and community organizations.

Overview of Public Outreach Program

The public outreach program included each of the following components:

- Public workshops
- Focus group meetings
- Public survey
- Online tools
- Outreach to the Spanish-speaking community

Summaries of these various outreach methods will be included in the final plan.

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Vision Statement

Why create a comprehensive plan vision?

The comprehensive plan vision creates a guide for the Village to follow during the planning process as well as during implementation of the plan. It is a high-level, conceptual statement of what the community hopes that the Comprehensive Plan will achieve. The Vision should express a consensus view of the community's aspirations for the future and collective values to direct the planning process and create a framework for the Village's implementation of Plan recommendations. The Vision is created based on input from the community, starting with public workshops, and continuing with focus groups, surveys, and other conversations with local residents, business owners, and community leaders.

The Village of Sleepy Hollow:

- Values its history while also highlighting its diverse culture to ensure a more inclusive future.
- Creates a vibrant downtown with improved connections to neighborhoods, train stations, and the waterfront.
- Protects and enhances natural and recreational resources and activities for residents that also attract visitors year-round.
- Plans for regional and local trends so the Village guides change in a way that improves quality-of-life for its residents and businesses.
- Engages the entire community to promote social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

Planning Goals

Planning goals help to organize policy recommendations in the plan. Within each Action Item, a series of goals is developed based on key issues raised by the community and the Village.

The goals are helpful during the planning process as a way to keep the Steering Committee focused on the community's top priorities. If a Comprehensive Plan policy recommendation doesn't help to achieve one of the goals, either the recommendation doesn't reflect the priorities of the community, or the plan is missing a goal to achieve the community's vision.

Then, during the implementation phase, the goals continue to play a role by providing direction to Village staff as they make decisions about policies, projects, and partnerships.

Connectivity

Capitalize on the Village's walkable scale by improving connections between neighborhoods, downtown, the waterfront, train stations, parks, and schools.

Reduce traffic congestion and mitigate parking issues.

Enhance existing cycling routes and identify locations for new bicycle infrastructure.

Housing

Preserve the character of existing residential neighborhoods.

Identify strategies to retain existing and provide new affordable housing.

Resolve issues related to code-compliance, safety concerns, and maintenance to improve quality-of-life for all residents.

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Natural Environment

TBD

Sustainability

Identify strategies to reduce local energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

Reduce waste, increase recycling, and encourage efficient use of water and other natural resources.

Preserve Sleepy Hollow's natural beauty and support a healthy ecosystem.

Municipal Services

Take advantage of opportunities to enhance efficient space utilization of municipal services.

Upgrade outdated public safety services.

Improve energy efficiency of municipal buildings.

Parks and Open Space

Pursue opportunities to provide additional athletic field space.

Improve wayfinding and connections between parks and trails.

Upgrade existing parks and expand access to the waterfront.

Land Use and Zoning

Remove barriers in the zoning and building codes to promote new development and entrepreneurship.

Enhance the Village's commercial areas by increasing flexibility to respond to changing retail trends and allow for emerging business types.

Implement zoning changes to promote sustainability.

Community Organizations

Encourage public participation in community planning efforts and civic engagement.

Recognize the role that community organizations play in providing critical services to local residents.

Attract new arts and cultural organizations to Sleepy Hollow.

Economic Resources

Attract investment to expand the local tax base, enhance the vitality of commercial areas, and promote job creation.

Encourage smart growth principles in areas with access to local goods and services, infrastructure, and public transportation.

Create new opportunities for the local economy by promoting small business creation and attracting new business types.

Employ strategies to increase year-round tourism in Sleepy Hollow.