



## **Nyack Comprehensive Plan Update**

### **Opening Public Workshop: Meeting Summary**

Nyack, NY

#### **Prepared on behalf of:**

The Village of Nyack  
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## Introduction

As part of the planning process for updating its Comprehensive Plan, the Village of Nyack hosted an opening Public Workshop October 19, 2015. The workshop was attended by approximately 70 participants, many with knowledge of or involvement with the Village's existing Comprehensive Plan—which was adopted in 2007—and/or other issues related to zoning, land use, infrastructure, municipal facilities, sustainability and other issues facing Nyack. All of the participants provided ideas that will help to inform the planning process. In addition to the general public, nearly all of the members of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee were in attendance, as were all of the Village Board of Trustees, Village Administrator Jim Politi and representatives of the Planning Board.

Mayor Jen Laird White opened the workshop with introductory remarks explaining the overall process and introducing members of the consultant team. Next, the lead consultant, BFJ Planning, presented an overview of the program and process and an outline of the components of the plan contents.

Following the presentation and a brief coffee break, the participants were welcomed to visit each of six open house stations, which were organized around different topic areas relevant to chapters of the plan. At these stations, participants discussed issues and opportunities, potential project ideas, proposed land use changes and other potential ideas that should be considered. Content from the discussions are summarized below.

The next steps in the Comprehensive Planning process involve additional meetings between the BFJ team and the Steering Committee, public workshops and design charrettes while the consultant team develops a draft of the plan, including existing conditions and preliminary project ideas based on public input.

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## Workshop Agenda

### 1. Welcome

### 2. Presentation

- Overview of Comprehensive Plan Process
- Outline of the Plan
- Intro to Open House Format

### 3. Open House Discussions

- Socioeconomics and Housing
- Land Use and Zoning
- Transportation, Infrastructure and Utilities
- Historic, Cultural and Municipal Resources
- Economic Development
- Environment, Open Space and Sustainability

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## Presentation

Below is a summary of the consultant team's presentation by BFJ Planning.

### 1. Overview of the Comprehensive Plan Process

Frank Fish, Principal of BFJ Planning, provided an overview of the Comprehensive Plan update process, including a discussion of the reasons for conducting an update of the Village's plan in 2015. The overview also included a description of the project timeline, which includes a public hearing before the Village Trustees adopt the plan.

### 2. Key Concepts for Nyack's Plan

Susan Favate, Principal of BFJ Planning, then introduced key concepts that the Steering Committee and consultants have used as a starting point for the plan, including sustainability, coordination with regional and ongoing plans and the importance of developing an implementation strategy for the plan. The presentation then went through a series of maps to introduce chapters of the plan that would be covered in the open house segment of the workshop.

### 3. Workshop Objectives

The presentation concluded with an overview of the objectives for the open house segment of the workshop. The open house format allowed participants to visit each of the six stations, provide input to resource experts by talking about issues and mark the location of issues and opportunities on large scale maps. The open house stations were divided into six stations by topic area: Socioeconomics and Housing, Land Use and Zoning, Transportation, Infrastructure and Utilities, Historic, Cultural and Municipal Resources, Economic Development, and Environment, Open Space and Sustainability

## Open House Discussions

### Socioeconomics and Housing

- Concern about density of housing development on the waterfront
- Affordable housing
- Public access and uses on waterfront
- Open space on waterfront—protection of Hudson shoreline
- Workforce and artist housing—utilize tax credits
- Accessible housing for handicapped
- The proliferation of high-density development in certain areas, i.e., Main and Midland, is dwarfing the single-family homes and changing the nature of the Village. Why?
- Concerned about integration of housing—housing should not isolate communities
- Concerned there is not enough support for new development to can help sustain business area
- More encouragement to build owner-occupied homes; rentals are fast outnumbering owned properties, making for too many transitional residents who don't have the same investment in a clean, beautiful village
- Not enough parking at the waterfront
- "Ugly Nyack"—how development looks from the river
- Opening public pier again/maintaining public spaces and views

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## Land Use and Zoning

- Access to waterfront
- Universal mail survey
- Do not become Fort Lee
- Incubator business
- TZ Vista discussion—transparency and timing of decision
- Zoning conversions
- Land use in gateways
- No residential on waterfront
- Clear explanation for residents on how comp plan, text amendments, zoning, Architectural Review Board, Planning Board all fit together

## Transportation, Infrastructure and Utilities

- River Club—new ownership—marina?
- Water-based transit to and from Manhattan
- Nyack is an underutilized jewel—need more activity to maximize waterfront, e.g., hobie cats, kayaking, paddleboarding
- Need a mooring field plan to create a destination for boaters (moor, launch, dine)
- Few places in Nyack to dock and dine
- Marina has slips for small boats (<30') but need active mooring field for larger boats
- Marina should serve transient as well as seasonal boaters
- Could Nyack have a Boatel?
- Contamination on the waterfront limits ability to dredge
- Need greater boat access on the waterfront
- Ferry service would benefit residents and business owners
- Keep bus stops limited to places not in front of homes; when a bus stops, the fumes and noise go right into someone's bedroom or living room; A quality of life issue, especially for those who have respiratory illness
- Hybrid trolley system from ? to Upper Nyack and from river to hotel to Old World
- Could ferry parking be located under the Tappan Zee Bridge in South Nyack?
- Sunday service on TZ Express/later service on Red and Tan #9T
- Link to Kykuit excursion
- Ability for current roads to handle increasing traffic in Nyack
- 1<sup>st</sup> Ave and Broadway intersection needs four-way stop sign
- No U-turns at 1<sup>st</sup> Ave and Broadway
- Walking/biking tours to Nyack via boat from NYC
- Bicycle strategy to support bicycle tourism while minimizing impacts on locals and encouraging local bicycle network
- Study of second stormwater conduit for capacity of the Nyack Brook (Big Dig) along High Street; grant for federal funding
- Walkability—Need improvements throughout the Village; pedestrian-friendly scale, preserve historic slate sidewalks, wayfinding signage for pedestrians and visitors, direct visitors from Main Street to the Pier

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- Clear, open, well distributed analysis of how/if infrastructure can support new dense housing throughout the Village and if it can't, cost implications for residents vs new tax revenue
- Existing Comp Plan includes text on street that dead ends at public land on waterfront (Lavita Street)—potential pocket park on the water?

## Historic, Cultural and Municipal Resources

- What is the best use of the Helen Hayes space?
- Need to reflect the density of historic resources—see County survey of historic sites (copy in Nyack Public Library)
- Museum of the Historical Society of the Nyacks as cultural facility
- Social: include youth voice in developing this plan
- Rethink Town Square
- Art museum in Helen Hayes space (like DIA: Beacon)
- Keep old high school and field a public use
- Industrial art space like GAGA
- Nyack storefronts need classy signs that jut out like “8 North” plus hanging flower baskets
- Historic districts (landmarked?)
- We need a stronger Architectural Review Board and a Historic Preservation unit within it
- It should not have to take constant private fundraising, time and effort to save each important building or space—it should be part of Village government
- Protect the BOCES field and the old high school in case school district ever wants to sell
- Make Barren Hill Cemetery replant trees and install wind and solar to power the Village

## Economic Development

- St. Anne's school: potential adaptive re-use (small business, creative services, residential)
- Assess demographics: does Village need more/less of any particular income group, e.g., to support retail?
- Need more middle class housing and more affordable taxes on homes
- High-density development near Main and Midland has not supported retail in the neighborhood
- Add a cultural institution, like DIA: Beacon
- Tourism ferry/boat rides to bring in visitors (regional)
- Concern about new parking deck—need transportation/parking plan
- Tall ships special events and other maritime events
- Flood protection and infrastructure upgrades must be made first before major new development
- Make waterfront more pleasant; One unified space/place, not so many scattered smaller projects
- Make Memorial Park more of a Village asset: natural, green, no more fences, asphalt
- Is there a strategy for what kind of tenants to attract to empty storefronts? Seems random and not family friendly—No bagels or stationery store, but tobacco and vaping
- Better-organized parking for street fairs, parades or shuttles?
- Something to bring people down Main below Broadway
- More grocery options, especially for low-income families

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- Re-open Riverspace as cultural center—supports area retail
- No more car parking, but examine parking policies (hours/pricing)
- Examine parking asset management—hours of operation vs revenue; Help downtown merchants attract and retain customers vs losing them to the malls
- Stop commercial conversion to residential
- Preserve and add new places for business (non-retail) such as office, co-work, maker space
- Light manufacturing/industrial, proactive business outreach—LED lighting, solar
- More business to be accessible to people who move out of town; shops need to be open later and daily
- Commuters in high-density condos won't shop here—they go to the City or White Plains
- Supermarket
- Inform residents with a clear analysis of how taxes split between residential and commercial
- Parking signage must be better for customer convenience
- Attract sustainable industry
- Freeze industrial/residential conversion

## Environment, Open Space and Sustainability

- Let's be as cool as San Francisco—and have 100% compostable take out containers; ban the plastic bag
- We have one of the great natural resources in the country in our magnificent river and for the long term, there is nothing that will benefit this community more than public, intelligent access to the river for residents and visitors
- A major concern is the possible vulnerability of the old High School field—now that football is being removed—to development; It is the only usable green space by the surrounding community, which has very small yards and heavy traffic
- Walkway along waterfront?
- Memorial Park is a big green waterfront space that needs to be revisited; The placement of the huge, black asphalt and chain link fence right by the river sightlines has many people upset and the removal of the Gazebo, replaced by a skateboard park right on the river is a regressive, non-ecological affront to the riverside
- Skateboard park not green and right in front with basketball court not green so Memorial not even as much green as on map—Nyack needs more green, protect BOCES field
- Porous pavement where possible
- Please rethink Memorial Park
- Pocket park up the hill?
- We need more space north of Memorial Park for water uses; We do not want condos on the waterfront
- Nothing residential on the waterfront
- Only LEED construction—Village sustainable by 2030
- Solar panel construction tax rebates
- Explore wind power possibilities
- Need green space for dogs



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## Conclusion

The opening public workshop was extremely helpful in gathering public opinion on the issues facing the Village and some of the potential opportunities that should be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. Many ideas were brought up, impacting development, boating, transportation and the waterfront

The next step in the process of developing the Comprehensive Plan will be for the Steering Committee to discuss outcomes from the first public workshop and develop a preliminary list of issues and projects that should be discussed at future public workshops. The BFJ team will continue to refine the existing conditions research based on feedback from this meeting and will begin to outline draft chapters of the plan, develop sustainability indicators and prepare for upcoming public workshops and charrettes.

The second public workshop is scheduled to be held in early December 2015.