



STAKEHOLDER MEETING SUMMARY FOR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Overview

In July 2020, the Town of Coeymans kicked-off a targeted update to its 2006 Comprehensive Plan to reflect the current needs, opportunities, and vision for the community. As part of that effort, stakeholder meetings were held to learn more about key challenges and opportunities in the Town of Coeymans. The purpose of these meetings was to learn more about critical challenges and opportunities in the Town based on particular topic areas. Key stakeholders included property owners, business owners, Town staff, regional partners, community leaders and more. Six stakeholder groups were held over the course of several days in August and September 2020. The meetings were held at Town Hall following social distancing guidelines and procedures related to the COVID19 pandemic. For those that were unable to attend the meetings in person, a follow-up meeting was scheduled via Zoom video conference or via one-on-one phone calls.

Stakeholder groups included:

August 5, 2020, Coeymans Town Hall, 18 Russel Avenue, Ravena

- Infrastructure, Mobility and Transportation
- Economic Growth, Land Development and Business
- Open Space, Recreation, Agriculture and the Environment
- Education, History and Culture

September 11, 2020, Via Zoom Video Conference

- Infrastructure, Mobility and Transportation
- Open Space, Recreation, Agriculture and the Environment
- Education, History and Culture

Via Phone Call

- Regional Partners

Following is a summary of items discussed during the stakeholder meetings.

Note: Stakeholder discussions held on September 11 via video conference were follow-up discussions for those that were unable to attend the in-person, socially distanced meetings on August 5, 2020. For the purposes of this summary, those discussions have been combined.



Infrastructure, Mobility and Transportation

- Highway department
 - Responsible for road maintenance and stormwater needs
 - Water lines and sewer lines need to be upgraded
 - Roads – all roads in hamlet have been repaved within the last three years
 - Funding for roadway improvements allotted through Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement (CHIPS) funds
 - Highway Department is also in charge of parks maintenance
 - Staffing
 - 3 seasonal
 - 1 full time for parks
 - 7 additional full time

- Wastewater/stormwater/water
 - Just completed main trunk line upgrade from the fire house down
 - There are still some stormwater capacity issues
 - Just built a retention plan
 - Just switched from wet sludge to dry
 - Staffing
 - Three staff. Hours: 6:00AM-2:30PM
 - 0.82 MGD permit level
 - Average flow approximately 350,000 to 500,000 GPD
 - Inflow and infiltration (I&I) is a significant issue
 - Many homes in the Village have gutters that connect to the system
 - Resources being expended to process clean stormwater
 - I-87 disrupts natural water flow
 - The Town has separate stormwater and sewer lines, but some homes connect gutters to sewer
 - Wastewater treatment plant was built in 1971
 - Slip lines are a possible solution for pipe upgrades but costly
 - Issue arises during heavy rainstorms. Increased flow
 - Will be upgrading main trunk line from the Village. 8 inch to a 12 inch line
 - Water treatment plant in Village built in 1952
 - Water – 3 districts and includes all of Village, hamlet and parts of New Baltimore
 - Sewer – 1 district and includes just the Village and hamlet
 - 400± users in hamlet
 - 1,200± users in Village
 - Frequent requests for water/sewer connections?
 - Industrial park is the largest but they do all of their own work to build infrastructure
 - Aging infrastructure is the most important issue
 - Would be good to increase plant's flow but would create additional challenges with permitting
 - As of now there is enough capacity in the system



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- May need more capacity in 10 to 20 years. Will likely see water and sewer towards Bethlehem and Martins Hill Road
- Plant could double in size in the future
- Septic and wells
 - Concerns about septic systems and wells in the Martins Hill Road area due to are of systems and proximity of homes to one another on a hill
- Water for fire protection
 - Some flow rate challenges in hamlet
 - Waiting on funding form DSNY for PRV pit on James Drive
 - Areas in Village with dead end lines which create poor flow for fire hydrants (Laura Lane, South Clemens Avenue, Harris Avenue)
 - Several roads off Main Street in Village are dead ends which creates a challenge
- Town departments coordinate and communicate with each other on a daily basis
- New Baltimore just did an upgrade to their wastewater treatment plant. A potential missed opportunity for intermunicipal coordination
- Financing for sewer
 - Flat rate fee for residential and metered for commercial
 - Approximately 75% of sewer users are in the Village of Ravenna and 25% in the hamlet
 - Inexpensive rates compared to the rest of the state
 - Metered sewer would be more efficient for residential properties and would encourage best practices to reduce usage. There has been significant push back to the idea
 - Metered sewer connections would also help in tracking intake and infiltration (I&I)
 - New meters are very sophisticated
- Sewer and water infrastructure is all mapped but on hard copy maps. No electronic versions available.
- Still rely on a lot of institutional knowledge to identify infrastructure location and issues. Will be a challenge when current staff retires
- Biggest challenge for infrastructure is funding
- Went under consent order from 2000-2016 due to broken pump that resulted in a sewer discharge into the river. No new connections were allowed during that time
- At this point the sewer treatment plant would need to be expanded to expand the district
- The Town has a capital improvement program, but it is not formalized
- Transportation
 - NYSDOT
 - Just completed paving project on Route 144
 - Paving project planned for Route 9W
 - Some signaling upgrades planned over next two years
 - Route 144 Bridge replacement over Hannacroix Creek will be coming up next year
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 - CDTC
 - Port of Coeymans is the largest private marine port terminal in the region
 - CDTC does not have a close relationship with the port



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- Planning for trucks and truck traffic is important
- Route 144 from Selkirk to Albany County boundary is on CDTC's radar for freight
- There have been some good past planning efforts in Coeymans and work completed
 - Sidewalks in hamlet
 - Some improved multi-modalism
- Freight challenges are some of the most important issues currently
- Capital Region Trails Plan does not include specifics for Coeymans
- Improved walkability is still important
- Important to coordinate plans and recommendations with Ravana
- Not enough population density to invest in public transportation service like a CDTA shuttle service
- Freight issues are the top priority for this area of Albany County
- Coeymans is demographically an aging community
- Discussion of possibility of dedicated off-ramp for truck off I-87 to Coeymans Industrial Park
 - Would reduce truck traffic on local road
 - Would be a significant challenge in terms of funding and approvals
 - Would require an interchange justification process and would have to produce a public benefit

Economic Growth, Land Development and Business

- Economic development has occurred at the Port but the rest of Town has remained relatively stagnant
- Opportunities for business development along Route 9W
- Coeymans Industrial Park/Port of Coeymans/Carver Companies
 - Industrial park mostly built out at this point
 - Carver Companies has been renovating old houses
 - Hoping to bring new businesses into community
 - Off-shore wind is the next big project. Could bring in up to 500 additional jobs to the community
- Community should be more walkable
- Main Street used to have more business activity and more activity in general
- The key is how to draw people to Coeymans and to get more professional businesses downtown
- Revitalization of community is key
- Need better training opportunities for the local workforce
- Needs to be more collaboration between industry and the community
- Good opportunity to buy property but hard to make a profit
- Barrier to economic development
 - Better coordination between Town and Village
 - Many of the same issues still exist since the last Comprehensive Plan was done
 - Apathy towards the community
 - Plan needs to be implementable
- RCS Community Business Association



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- Membership organization
- Provides resources to help small businesses
- Organization started four years ago
- All volunteer organization
- Starting to develop a guide for local businesses
- Business opportunities in Coeymans need to be better marketed
- Housing inventory in Coeymans is low and houses tend to be old and in need of significant repairs
- Land development process is easier now and takes less time
- There is a perception issue about Coeymans
- Off-shore wind project slated over the next eight years. Hoping to begin in January 2022
- Need for more local businesses
- Riverfront property should be the most valuable
- Mixed-use development good for the waterfront
- Interest in Coeymans is less of an issue than having economically viable projects and businesses
- Return on investment for properties is low
- Overall vision for community
 - Need long term between residents and businesses
- Need marketing
- Village is significant part of the Town and should be part of the conversation

Open Space, Recreation, Agriculture and Environment

- Coeymans Landing Park
 - Gazebo recently painted
 - Plans to finish installing posts and ropes throughout park
 - Soccer field is part of park
 - Soccer field primarily used by soccer club
 - Fields are available on a first come first serve basis
- Major recreational needs
 - More maintenance staff
 - Funding for maintenance and upkeep
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- Maintenance equipment all housed in one location
- Community Beautification Department maintains Town parks as well as four public cemeteries
- Joralemon Park has the highest use for recreation
- Village
 - Mosher Park – has rental pavilions
 - Albany County recreation program uses Mosher Park during the summer
 - Friendship festival
 - Pool
 - Still opened this year
 - Town helps with cost for pool
 - Pool receives about 600-700 users per day on the weekends and 300-400 users on weekdays



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- Pool costs about \$70,000 per season for about two months of use
- Agriculture
 - Growing number of small-scale farmers in the future
 - Without water and sewer infrastructure, there is little development pressure
 - Coeymans Hollow is primarily in a flood plain
 - Environmental constraints restrict development
- A lot of solar projects right now
- A lot more vacant land popping up
- Some people are buying up vacant lots speculating future growth
- There should be some development in Town but rural character should be retained
- Industrial should be focused in northern part of Town closer to river
- Hamlet needs higher density residential development like condos or townhomes
- Raven has potential to be the next Hudson
- Natural Resources Inventory (NRI)
 - NRI effort started with a request for information to Albany County by the Hudson River Estuary Program to gauge interest in the County
 - Coeymans established a Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) to oversee the development of the NRI
 - The CAC held monthly meetings during the development of the NRI
 - Held a public meeting to present preliminary maps
 - Some members of the public who attended were skeptical about climate change and sea level rise
 - The Town is diverse ecologically with high quality resources
 - Significant fish and wildlife areas near the waterfront
 - Important wetlands and tidal march areas
 - Hamlet
 - Risk posed by sea level rise
 - Town should be aware that there are resources available to waterfront communities
 - Kingston and Catskill are good models for adapting to sea level rise
 - Another challenge identified was the prevalence of steep slopes throughout the town and land slide susceptibility
 - Coeymans Creek supports trout spawning which is rare. Classified as a trout stream
 - Best management practices would be good for the Town to prevent develop in areas with steep slopes
 - A lot of clay soils which originated from glacial Lake Albany. Soil type favors establishment of wetlands. Many wetlands have been drained by farmers over the years
 - Members of the Conservation Advisory Council were concerned about industrial growth without proper environmental reviews
 - Key takeaways from the NRI include:
 - The Town has several important biological hotspots, including the riverfront, forests, wetlands and mouth of the Hannacroix Creek
 - Many important contiguous forested areas
 - Protection of water supply is critically important as mmost of the Town is on well water
 - Opportunities for expansion of recreational resources



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- Hudson River access is very important both ecologically and economically
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- Stormwater
 - Village of Ravena received funding from the Hudson River Estuary Program for green infrastructure. They identified an area where daylighting of a stream was proposed
 - Town is not an MS4 community but it is still in the Town's best interest to implement best management practices for stormwater
 - A good resource is the Planning Board Guide to Stormwater Management from the Lower Hudson Coalition
- There is a need for planning board training in Coeymans

Education, History and Culture

- The Town originated around industry and the use of natural resources
- Natural resources still drive industry in the community
- Coeymans has a rich history that should be celebrated dating back to the 1600s
- Coeymans has two stone houses that are some of the oldest in New York State
- Continental Army built ships in Coeymans
- Three years ago the Town did sewer maintenance and had a small archeological dig as part of that and found significant Native American artifacts
- Coeymans waterfront is one of the greatest resources in the Town
- Main Street in Ravena started to change in the 1960s
- Ravena-Coeymans Historical Society
 - Volunteer organization
 - Operates a museum
 - No admission for museum
 - Has 180 members
 - Volunteers are aging. Need for younger generation of volunteers
 - Organization chartered by the NYS Department of Education
 - No overhead. Village pays for museum space
 - Fully handicap accessible
- Funding for restoring historic properties is a challenge.
- Very little coordination at Planning/Zoning Board for historic properties
- Need gateways in major corridors
- Need to market the potential in Coeymans
- Balance of history, community, industry, farming, etc.
- Should be more coordination between school district and Historical Society
- Hamlet is in a historic district
- Challenge with absentee landlords
- Too much low-income housing
- Pieter B. Coeymans Elementary School
 - School is a large component of social experience for students and families
 - Town is very supportive of schools
 - School programs very popular. Drama productions attract nearly 400 families
 - Parents very supportive of the arts in Coeymans
 - School district after school homework help which is utilized by over 30 students



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- Pieter B. Coeymans Elementary School has over 450 students

Health, Community Services and Emergency Services

- Fire
 - Five fire districts in Town
 - All volunteer
 - Town does not have an EMS provider
 - 100-125 calls per year
 - Most common calls are car accidents
 - Not many structure fires in Town
 - Have the ability to respond on the River for the Industrial Park
 - Some specialized training for industrial areas
- Police
 - Works often with fire departments
 - Biggest issue is funding
 - Town wants to add bicycle patrol
 - Working on a plan for vehicle turnover
 - Most vehicles going on 100,000 miles. Ideally would not go beyond 50,000 miles
 - Hard to keep officers. Pay is not competitive enough
 - Currently have 23 officers
 - Police department could use more space
 - Combined Town and Village police
 - Most frequent emergency calls are domestic issues. Calls down since COVID started
- Coeymans Hollow Fire Department
 - More residential and agricultural
 - Department runs first response with EMS
 - Approximately 200 calls/year
 - Most calls are medical emergencies
 - Biggest concern are retaining and recruiting members
 - Total of 50 volunteers with about 30 active
 - Coeymans Hollow a rural area and difficult to keep staffed during the day
 - Fire district elects its own officers and have a lot of autonomy
- Riverview Baptist Church
 - Historic church located in Coeymans Landing
 - 10 years ago church building was in rough shape
 - Historically, Riverview Baptist Church was primarily an African American church. Less so currently
 - The community internalize what the Town views itself as
 - Church building is 94 years old and was designated a National Historic Landmark due to its significant African American history
 - During the Great Migration, many black men came to work in the brick yards in Coeymans
 - Riverview Baptist Church is the last place of worship in Coeymans Landing. Provides a necessary community service
 - The building includes a fellowship hall and serves as a community center



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- Church holds a popular block party annually which attracts a number is community members
- Greatest attraction in Town is the waterfront
- Church holds a summer camp for the Albany County Youth Work Program
 - During the summer of 2020, Riverview did not hold a summer camp due to COVID 19, but did host Ecological Management Interns as part of the Albany County Youth Work Program
 - Ecological Management Interns developed and conducted a community survey for residents in the Coeymans Landing area to learn about needs and opportunities
- Coeymans waterfront has a lot of potential
- Image of Coeymans Landing needs to change and improve
- Reimagine Coeymans Landing
- Sidewalk improvements in Coeymans Landing was a great start
- Abandoned buildings need to be addresses
- Town needs to be more unified
- More police presence needed
- Be a more connected community
- No major investment in Coeymans Landing in nearly 20 years
- Need for better lighting downtown at night
- Coeymans Creek area could be more inviting
- Younger generation in Coeymans Landing want improved recreational opportunities

Regional Partners

- Albany County
 - County Planning is available as a resource to communities. Not intended to be a barrier to development
 - Coeymans has challenges with County 239m referrals and getting approved for projects
 - Most issues with 239m review are related to not having complete application materials and environmental reviews
 - Industrial Park expansion
 - A more comprehensive approach to industrial growth would be preferred
 - The Town should preemptively inform developers of what is needed to get through the process more efficiently and to streamline the 239m process.
 - Projects tend to get disapproved at the County Planning Board due to lack of proper documentation for projects
 - Agricultural and farmland protection measures and stream corridor protection are important form the County's perspective
 - At one time Coeymans was considering an Agriculture and Markets grant to complete the agriculture and farmland protection of the Comprehensive Plan. Westerlo is taking a similar path
 - Stream buffers were discussed at one point and should be revisited
 - Updating and adopting the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan should be discussed
 - The Coeymans NRI should be used in identifying and prioritizing natural resources important to the community, to update the natural resources section of the comprehensive plan, and to develop watershed and stream corridor protection



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measures. . The inventory can also be used to designate critical environmental areas (CEAs) and evaluate the effects of proposed land use and zoning changes.

- To improve 239m referrals it would help to examine and standardize the procedures for the environmental review of development proposals and SEQR requirements
- Village of Ravena
 - Village is restricted in terms of geography
 - Village recently completed a Comprehensive Plan
 - All entrances into Village come from the Town
 - Always go through the Town before entering the Village
 - Need to better gateway treatments into the Town and Village
 - Main Street in the Town and Village need a lot of work. Closed businesses an issue and a need for streetscape improvements
 - A lot of truck traffic through the Village
 - The Village would be very supportive of an off ramp from the Thruway to the Industrial park to reduce truck traffic on local streets
 - Truck traffic should be a real priority
 - Need for more local businesses in the Village
 - Ravena and Coeymans do not get enough recognition. Wonderful places to live
 - Branding and marketing the Town and Village should be a focus
 - Many people in the area shop in Albany or Glenmont and don't utilize local shops
 - Taxes in the Town and Village are reasonable. Water and sewer rates are much lower than in other parts of the Capital Region
 - Village is business friendly from a cost perspective
 - Big concern in last comprehensive plan was the need for senior housing. There are not many options currently
 - The Town and Village are in need of housing that allows people to age in place
 - Town has plenty of property for further residential growth
 - Housing that allows people to age in place can support many different demographics
 - Need for good quality and well-maintained rentals.
 - Challenges with property maintenance and zombie properties
 - Oakwood Manor is not well maintained
 - Water/Sewer challenges
 - Village utilizes sewer and pays 80% of cost but has no recourse or input because it is Town owned
 - From the Village's perspective, they do not want to dissolve the municipality
 - A shared services approach is preferred to full consolidation
 - Need for better communication and coordination between Town and Village. Had been improving before the COVID19 pandemic
 - Town and Village should have more joint events
 - Internet service is critical to get to everyone in the Town who does not currently have adequate service

**Coeymans Comprehensive Plan Update
Invited Stakeholders and Schedule**

Stakeholder Group	Meeting Date/Time	Contact Name	Affiliation	Title	Contacted On (Date)	Reminder sent	Attending (Y/N)	Zoom Call 9/11	Participated (Y/N)
Infrastructure, Mobility and Transportation (Sewer, Water, Streets, Transit, etc.)	8:30- 9:30AM	Scott Searles		Highway Superintendent	7/21/2020	8/3/2020	YES		YES
		Keith Geraldson		Chief Sewer Plant Operator	7/21/2020	8/3/2020	YES		YES
		Michael Williams	CDTA	Senior Planner	7/21/2020	8/3/2020	NO		
		Brent Irving	CDTA		7/21/2020	8/3/2020	NO		
		Sandra Misiewicz	CDTC	Senior Transportation Planner II	7/21/2020			Yes	YES
		Chris Bauer	CDTC					Yes	YES
		Pat Barnes	NYS DOT	Region 1 Director	7/21/2020	8/3/2020		Yes	YES
		Chris Ward	NYS DOT	Acting Resident Engineer - Albany County	7/21/2020	8/3/2020	YES	Yes	YES
Henry Traver	Village of Ravena	DPW - Water	7/21/2020	8/3/2020	YES		YES		
Economic Growth, Land Development and Business	10:00- 11:00AM	Carver Laraway	Carver Companies	owner	7/21/2020	8/3/2020	NO		
		Nick Laraway	Carver Companies				YES		YES
		Marlene McTigue	RCS Community Business Association				YES		YES
		Rebecca Marion	RCS Community Business Association				YES		YES
		Joy Iaffalo	RCS Community Business Association	President	7/21/2020	8/3/2020	YES		YES
		Michael Biscone	Village of Ravena, attorney		7/21/2020	8/3/2020			
		Aaron Flach	Flach Development		7/21/2020				
		Albert McHugh	McHugh Group Ltd	owner	7/21/2020	8/3/2020	YES		YES
Billy Biers	WM Biers	owner	7/21/2020	8/3/2020					
Open Space, Recreation, Agriculture and Environment	11:30AM- 12:30PM	Scott Searles		Parks and Maintenance Supervisor	7/21/2020	8/3/2020	YES		YES
		Neil Porlier	Board of Assessment Review		7/21/2020	8/3/2020	no		
		Ingrid Haeckel	NYS DEC	Conservations/Land Use Specialist	7/21/2020	8/3/2020	NO	Yes	YES
		Al Collins	Collins & Son	owner	7/21/2020	8/3/2020	YES		YES
		Mark Stanton	Stanton Farm		7/21/2020	8/3/2020			
Gary Bogardus	Land owner/Farmer		7/21/2020	8/3/2020					
Education, History and Culture	1:30-2:30PM		The Little Red Schoolhouse Historical Society		7/21/2020	8/3/2020			
		Joseph L Boehlke	Ravena Coeymans Historical Society	President	7/21/2020	8/3/2020	YES		YES
		Fred Engelhardt	RCSCSD	Assistant Superintendent of Schools	7/21/2020	8/3/2020	YES	Yes	NO
		Harry Sturges	Town Historian		7/21/2020	8/3/2020	Maybe		
		Hakim Jones	Pieter B. Coeymans Elementary School	Principal	7/21/2020	8/3/2020		Yes	YES
		Tom Sweeney	Alcove Preservation Association	President	7/21/2020		NO		
		Cynthia Kunz			7/21/2020	8/3/2020	YES		YES
		John Bonafide	SHPO	Director, Technical Preservation Bureau	7/21/2020	8/3/2020			
Health, Community Services and Emergency Services	3:00-4:00PM	Daniel Contento	PD	Officer in Charge	7/21/2020	8/3/2020	YES		YES
		Mark Deyo	Coeymans Fire District	chief	7/21/2020	8/3/2020	YES		YES
		Bill Kapusta	Coeymans Hollow Volunteer Fire Company	Chief	7/21/2020	8/3/2020	YES		YES
		Brian Dunican Jr	Ravena Rescue Squad Inc.	Chief of Operations	7/21/2020	8/3/2020			
		Virginia Pearson	Ravena Rescue Squad Inc.	President	7/21/2020	8/3/2020			
		Rev. Dr. Roxanne Jones Booth	Riverview Missionary Baptist Church	Co-Pastor	7/21/2020	8/3/2020	YES		YES
		Bill Bruno	Town EMC	EMC Director	7/21/2020	8/3/2020	no		
Jeff D'Ambrosio	Ravena Fire Co/TownEMC		7/21/2020	8/3/2020					