



RAW RESULTS OF PHASE ONE PUBLIC INPUT (SWOT) MEETING

Prepared by

Turner Miller Group
Planning Consultants

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INTRODUCTION

On June 9th 2016 at 7:00 PM, the Town of Mamakating Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee held a meeting for the purpose of collecting background data, views and opinions from community residents and stakeholders. Given that this was the first public meeting at the outset of the Comprehensive Planning Process, the purpose of this meeting was to identify public and stakeholder sentiment regarding existing conditions within the Town.

To accomplish this, Turner Miller Group - the Comprehensive Plan consultants - coordinated with the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee to design a meeting that would consist of numerous break-out groups.

This meeting was well-attended by roughly forty members of the public and local media. The meeting began with introductions and a welcome by the Chairman of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee – Andy Weil. Andy provided a short description of what a Comprehensive Plan was and why the Town was undertaking its update. Max Stach, AICP explained the purpose of the public meeting, introduced the process that the consultant team had undertaken thus far, and provided a framework for the workshop procedure.

METHOD

Prior to the meeting, a number of tables had been set up around the Town Hall meeting room. As attendees entered the meeting room, they chose places at various tables. It was explained, that attendees that arrived together as part of an interest group might want to spread among groups to have their perspectives represented amongst multiple groups, but few if any people changed their groups.

One or two members of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee were assigned to each group as facilitators. In some groups these facilitators were assisted by members of the consulting team. These facilitators started by introducing themselves and having the members of the group introduce themselves and record their names and contact information on a sign-in sheet. Ground rules for respectful conduct were given and enforced. In order to avoid groups from being "steered" by members of the Comprehensive Plan Committee, facilitators were asked not to contribute their own opinions to the group discussion.



The facilitators then led their group through the SWOT exercise. This exercise has facilitators prompting group discussion on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats present or confronting the Town of Mamakating. It was clarified that a strength was an existing positive quality of the Town, while an opportunity was a circumstance that was not present in the Town yet but could be pursued. Likewise a weakness was an existing negative quality of the Town, while a threat was a circumstance that was not present in the Town yet but could develop in the future. Groups were given approximately five minutes for introductions and ten minutes each for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Time periods were not strictly enforced. With some groups proceeding more slowly than others, an additional five minutes was added at the end of the process to allow groups to finish.



Break-out Groups - June 9, 2016

Following the group voting each group reported their results and a single compiled list was created.

Once the master list was compiled, participants were asked to vote on the compiled master list of top responses by placing up to six red adhesive dots next to the responses they felt were most important on the master list. Each person had to decide how to allocate each dot among the various responses in the four categories. Attendees were allowed to use all six dots in one category or on one item, or to place single or multiple dots among the various responses in different categories however they wished. Because there was only one Master List and only a few persons could vote at a time, this was done during an informal discussion period where several groups continued to talk amongst themselves. This also allowed opportunities for attendants to engage members of the steering committee one-on-one informally.



Facilitators Compiling Master Lists of Responses - June 9, 2016

Upon completion of the voting and discussion of the Master List results, the consultant team announced the close of the meeting, and announced the availability of Existing Conditions documents on the Town website. A suggestion box on the website was also advertised for those that wished to provide more input. It was announced that the results of the SWOT meeting would be posted once they were compiled.

Lastly, Chairman Weil thanked all attendees for coming and closed the meeting. It is noted that the responses set forth below are paraphrased notes of more robust discussions held at the meeting. Since the Steering Committee members and consultant team were directly involved as facilitators, these discussions will be reflected by the continuing involvement of the group facilitators as Steering Committee members.



Participants Voting on Compiled Master Lists - June 9, 2016

RESULTS

These are the raw results from the exercise and no analysis of results is offered at this time. The number included next to each

Strengths

- Rural Character and Low Density 17
- Basha Kill and Eco-Tourism 12
- Natural Environment 10
- Wurtsboro-Sullivan County Airport 9
- Water Resources 8
- DEC Access Points and Trails at Basha Kill 3
- Good, Vibrant and Active Governance 3
- Historic Resources and the D&H Canal 3
- Peace and Quiet / Quaintness / Small Town Feeling 3
- Walking Opportunities 3
- Community Organizations / Community that Cares 2
- Local Farms 2
- Outdoor Sports and Recreation 1
- Phillipsport Community Center 1
- Safe Community / Public Safety 1
- Senior Citizens with Disposable Income 1
- Wurtsboro Business District / Main Street 1
- Green space on the edge of Orange County
- Healthcare Access
- Home Ownership and Vested Interests
- Proximity to New York City / Transportation to Metro Area
- Schools and Library / Complete Hometown Services
- Second Homes
- State-Owned Land
- Two Community Colleges
- Unused Agricultural Land – Winterton Side
- Wurtsboro Board of Trade



Weaknesses

- Disconnected Government 8
- New York State Taxes / High Taxation / Balance of Tax Base 5
- Road Network 5
- Broadband Internet Access / Cellular Service 4
- Inadequacy, Arbitrariness, and Holes in Town Zoning 4
- Lack of Senior Living Opportunities 3
- Poor Promotion of Town 3
- Insufficient Public Transportation 2
- Lack of Jobs 2
- Insufficient Restaurants 1
- Lack of Hotels and Hospitality Services 1
- Over-regulation 1
- Gateway to Sullivan County
- Healthcare
- Inconsistent Character
- Lack of Market Knowledge
- Limited Agricultural Activity
- Negativity in Press
- Police Presence
- Poor Access to Funding Opportunities
- School System
- Vacancy – Vacant Businesses and Homes
- Winter Weather

Opportunities

- Promotion of Eco-Tourism / Regional Trendsetter in Eco-Tourism Development 11
- Connections with Neighboring Towns (D&H Canal Trail, O&W Rail Trail, Route 209) 5
- Wurtsboro-Sullivan County Airport 5
- Breweries 4
- D&H Canal Improvements to Enhance Context as Recreation and Tourism Hotspot 4
- Seasonal Sporting / Cycling and Equestrian 4
- Improvement of Bus and Trolley Service 3
- Farm-to-Table Trends 2
- Boutique Appeal 1
- Bed and Breakfasts / Potential Lodging and Hospitality 1
- Downtowns and Hamlets as Potential Retail Centers 1
- Historic Resources 1
- Second Home Developments 1
- Solar Energy / Emerging Technology Development 1
- Green Building Practices
- Greenway and Ridge Preservation
- Senior Living
- Small Business Development
- Incorporating Successful Strategies from Neighboring Municipalities
- Two Major Access Routes



Threats

- High Density Housing 18
- Unscrupulous and Exploitative Developers 12
- Low priced land 4
- Environmental Threats / Development that Exploits Water Resources 9
- Litigation Against the Town 3
- Abundance of Exempt Properties 2
- Brain Drain / Lack of Jobs to Retain Youth 2
- Increase in Low Income Population 2
- Advertising Out-of-Zone Activities (e.g. AirBnb) 1
- Complacency, Apathy, and Lack of Citizen Involvement / Engagement 1
- Development in Inappropriate Areas 1
- Dilapidated Buildings 1
- Failure to Prepare for Future 1
- Higher Taxes 1
- Lack of Services for Seniors 1
- Limited Aquifer Resources 1
- Residential Overdevelopment with Imbalance of Property Types and Incomes 1
- Seasonal Economy 1
- Casino Industry Growth
- Continued Demise of Downtowns
- Government Non-Cooperation
- Lack of Social Structure
- Light and Noise Pollution
- Limited Natural Resources
- Outside Money Trumping
- Traffic Dumping
- Unfunded Mandates
- Upgrading of Route 17 to Interstate 86 and Closing of Exits
- Weak Building Codes

