



Glens Falls Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan Draft Community Participation Plan November 2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION 1

 1.1 GLENS FALLS SMART GROWTH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 1

 1.2 PROJECT TEAM 2

 1.3 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PLAN..... 2

2.0 PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES 3

 2.1 GLENS FALLS COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE..... 3

 2.2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION..... 4

3.0 PROJECT COMMUNICATION 5

 3.1 LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL CONTACTS..... 6

4.0 SCHEDULE 8

DRAFT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The City of Glens Falls has recently undergone a renaissance. Advancing the projects identified in the DRI Strategic Investment Plan and enhancing connections/redevelopment of Pruyn's Island are part of a larger citywide effort to revitalize Glens Falls. Successful redevelopment projects along Glen, South, and Warren Streets, including the restored Empire Theater mixed-use project, the Mill Apartments, Village Green, and Warren Street Square, have initiated additional private investment downtown. These types of projects are establishing downtown Glens Falls as a new center of social gravity midway between Lake George and Saratoga Springs.

1.1 Glens Falls Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan

The City of Glens Falls and its Comprehensive Planning Committee will prepare a Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan to establish the objectives that the community wants to achieve, and will guide future sustainable growth within the city, enhance the local cultural identity, and protect natural and cultural local resources. The Comprehensive Plan will address the following general Smart Growth principles:

- Promote mixed land uses in focus areas.
- Create an adequate range of housing opportunities and choices.
- Promote development and redevelopment where infrastructure is adequate and sustainable.
- Build on traits that make a distinctive and attractive community with a strong sense of place.
- Promote well-planned and well-placed public spaces.
- Promote sustainable compact neighborhoods.
- Increase mobility and circulation within jurisdictional lines and improve connectivity with areas outside jurisdictional lines.
- Promote sustainable mass transit that reduces the local levels of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Promote walkable/bikeable neighborhood designs.
- Promote and integrate clean energy resources and related incentives.
- Improve green infrastructure and resident's participation to this effort.
- Increase resiliency to extreme weather events.
- Encourage social diversity and integration.
- Expand planning and implementation efforts across jurisdictional lines, to increase effectiveness, sustainability, and resiliency.
- Promote community and stakeholder collaboration in planning.

This plan is pursuant to General City Law § 28 / Town Law §272-a / Village Law 7-722. This plan will reflect current needs and future aspirations of the community by engaging residents, stakeholders, and local leaders and will serve as a roadmap for decision-making, resource allocation, and project planning over the next 10–20 years.

1.2 Project Team

A Comprehensive Planning Steering Committee (CPC) comprised of stakeholders and city officials, has been assembled to guide the work. Environmental Design & Research, Landscape Architecture, Engineering & Environmental Services, D.P.C. (EDR) has been selected to work with the CPC on the development of this project. Prospect Hill Consulting (PHC) will assist EDR, the CPC, and the city with the development of this plan. The New York State Department of State will administer the Smart Growth Grant funds and provide technical oversight and assistance as needed.

1.3 Community Participation Plan

Community participation provides an opportunity to inspire community leaders to advance a shared vision for the future of the city and its neighborhoods born of local values. The process will provide clear direction to officials and other stakeholders as to how to implement the recommendations that result from the planning initiative in ways that benefit the entire community. It is equally important to recognize the character and culture of the community, including the physical characteristics of different areas of the city as well as the social and physical networks that connect residents, institutions, and businesses; and how they see themselves fitting into the larger picture of the city's future. Throughout the planning process the community will be continuously informed about what is happening, provided ample opportunities for stakeholder involvement, and listened to regarding community concerns and ideas, so that informed decisions are made.

The goal of this Community Participation Plan (CPP) is to describe the public outreach and participation efforts that the city and the project team shall conduct during the development of the Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan, pursuant to the local and State statutes.

The CPP will identify key individuals, organizations, and entities to be involved, as well as the visioning process and roles and responsibilities in coordinating the entire outreach process, logistics, and the proposed schedule of community workshop/events. Community engagement is a fluid sharing of information, ideas, concerns, and solutions among city staff, the CPC, EDR, and the community in general throughout the planning process. To achieve this, various communication tools will be used to access a variety of forums providing multiple opportunities for the community to learn and voice ideas, issues, and opportunities which will include a combination of public workshops, formal presentations, focus group meetings, pop-up meetings, online survey instruments, a project website, and social media engagement.

2.0 PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES

Community participation will be one of the driving forces behind the successful development of the Glens Falls Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan. The following sections of this CPP summarize the measures that will be in place to maintain effective communication between the Comprehensive Planning Committee and the community throughout the process.

2.1 Glens Falls Comprehensive Planning Steering Committee

A Comprehensive Planning Committee (CPC) has been established to provide guidance and serve as a project steering group during the project. The role of the CPC is to facilitate dialog with the community, keep City Boards abreast of activities, establish and confirm strategic direction, recommend, review and validate vision, goals, and policies, program & project recommendations, and maintain the momentum into implementation.

Table 1 – Comprehensive Planning Committee

Name	Affiliation
Bill Collins	Mayor
Bob Curtis	Resident, former City Clerk
Patrick Dowd	Community Development Director
Jeff Flagg	Economic Development Director
Sara Frankenfeld	Warren County Planning & Community Development
Matt Fuller	Meyer, Fuller & Stockwell
Allison Hargrave-Gaddy	Lake Champlain - Lake George Regional Planning Board, City of Glens Falls Zoning Board of Appeals - Chair
Matt MacDonald	City of Glens Falls Zoning Board of Appeals
Joy Kaczmarek	Resident
Sara DiLandro	Glens Falls City School District Board of Education
Tom Landry	City of Glens Falls Planning Board
Alberta Parsons	Resident
Patricia Tatich	Resident
Michael White	Comprehensive Plan Committee - Chair

As the Glens Falls Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan moves forward, the CPC will meet up to twelve times over the course of sixteen months leading the development of the plan. The first meeting will serve as the project kick-off meeting and will review the project scope and schedule, discussing communication and file sharing protocols, begin to identify important stakeholders in the process, and discuss public outreach activities. In advance of each CPC meeting, EDR will prepare an agenda and will distribute meeting materials to the Comprehensive Planning Committee via email.

2.2 Public Participation

A variety of activities will be used throughout the process to engage the public. Methods to engage the public include interviews and/or focus groups with local and regional stakeholders, a community survey, pop-up tables, two public workshops, one public hearing, and a project website. Prior to each event EDR will prepare press releases, email blasts, flyers and social media announcements, and individual mailings. Outreach efforts will encourage participation from populations who have been underrepresented in previous planning processes. Meetings and public engagement events will be scheduled at times that are convenient to underrepresented communities (e.g., at night or on weekends instead of during the day) and at locations that are ADA accessible. Each method of public engagement is summarized below.

Stakeholder Interviews/Focus Groups: Working with the city and CPC, the Project Team will identify key individuals/groups in the community that have been or will likely be involved in the future growth of the city. This may include public and private sector individuals such as private landowners, businesses or neighborhood groups. Up to four in-person or virtual meetings will be held to review the proposed planning process as well as identify opportunities and challenges associated with the particular stakeholder theme such as housing and downtown development, transportation and mobility, public health and social services, and open space, recreation, and cultural. A one-on-one setting is preferred for the stakeholder meetings as people are more comfortable expressing their ideas and desires.

Community Survey: A community survey will be created and distributed to gather public input which will inform development of the Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan. This includes the public's vision for the future of Glens Falls and feedback regarding the existing conditions.

Public Workshop #1: An in-person public workshop will be held to focus on the goals of the study, findings from previous plans, the community profile, and to solicit input on participants visions and aspirations for the city.

Advertising for the survey and workshop will be a collaborative effort between the city and the Project Team. The Project Team will be responsible for creating marketing materials, a press release, and the materials for the public workshop and the online survey with generous advance notice to garner maximum publicity, awareness, and participation. The site of the workshops must be accessible to the public.

Public Workshop #2: The second workshop will focus on what was learned from the initial outreach and engagement and to present preliminary findings, strategies, and proposed actions for the Comprehensive Plan. It is anticipated that the development of a Future Land Use Plan will also be shared during the second public workshop.

Public Hearing: A public hearing will be held at a Common Council meeting for the plan to be considered for adoption. A presentation will be made regarding the Final Comprehensive Plan, a summary of the Full Environmental Assessment Form, and a SEQRA Positive or Negative Declaration. The Project Team will assist the city as necessary with the scheduling, publication, and facilitation of the Common Council public hearing.

Project Website: Throughout the duration of the plan's development a website will be developed and maintained with important and public information such as what the Glens Falls Comprehensive Plan is, how to be involved and engaged in the process, any maps and public documents, and who to contact with questions or ideas. The website will give the opportunity for members of the community to join a mailing list that will provide updates.

Pop-up Table Events: Throughout the comprehensive planning process the city, project team and committee members will coordinate opportunities to have pop-up tables at various community events. These tables will be a promotional tool to get the word out about opportunities for members of the community to provide input towards the development of the plan. Possible opportunities for a pop-up table include; hockey games at Cool Insuring Arena, the farmers market, the mall, and more.

Following the conclusion of each public engagement event, a summary will be developed and shared with the committee and the community as a whole. A Community Participation Summary Report that summarizes all public comments, survey and stakeholder interview results and meeting summaries. will be developed and assembled

3.0 PROJECT COMMUNICATION

Project Updates -Project updates and engagement opportunities will be publicized through a variety of channels to ensure broad public participation. The coordination of outreach materials and meeting/event logistics will be led by EDR with support from city staff.

Contact Database – A community contact list will be updated by EDR and used on a regular basis to keep key stakeholders up to date on the comprehensive planning process. Members of the public will be able to subscribe directly to project updates through the project website.

Coordination with Local Media - All public meetings will be publicized in the community through press releases to local media outlets. Local media will also be invited to attend public events.

Project Website – EDR will maintain a website with background information on the Glens Falls Comprehensive Plan and Smart Growth Principles as well as ways to get involved in the planning process. Announcements, events, and any maps and public documents will be posted to the website. The public will also be able to use the **contact form** on the website to submit comments and or questions at any time.

Outreach Materials and Social Media - EDR will develop outreach materials to develop interest and encourage participation. All announcements related to public meeting dates and venues, project status, and/or the availability of reports will be publicized by way of press releases, flyers, business cards, and/or social media announcements and will be displayed and distributed in the community, at public events, posted to the project website as well as the city's official website, and on the City of Glens Falls social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, etc.). Steering committee members may also be called upon to share information via social media.

3.1 Local, State, and Federal Contacts

The following information provides contact information for the project team.

City of Glens Falls

Contact information for the City's primary representative is listed below:

Mr. Patrick Dowd, Community Development Director

City of Glens Falls

42 Ridge Street

Glens Falls, NY 12801

communitydevelopment@cityofglensfalls.com

New York State Department of State (DOS)

The DOS is the primary sponsor of this comprehensive plan and has provided funding for the project. In addition, the DOS will provide oversight, direction, and technical assistance throughout the duration of the project. Contact information for the DOS representative for this project is provided below:

Ms. Lesley Zlatev

Revitalization Specialist

New York State Department of State

Office of Planning, Development & Community Infrastructure

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4.0 SCHEDULE

Development of the Comprehensive Plan Update began in September of 2024 and is expected to continue for sixteen (16) months. This schedule will be amended as required to best meet the needs of the project as it moves forward.

Glens Falls Comprehensive Plan																
	2024				2025											
	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
Project Initiation Meeting																
Comprehensive Planning Committee Meetings (12)		●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●
Community Participation Plan																
Community Survey and Stakeholder Interviews			●	●												
Review Local and Regional Planning Efforts and Ongoing Initiatives																
Community Profile																
Community Visioning Workshop #1					●											
Community Visioning Workshop #2									●							
Draft Comprehensive Plan																
Reviews by the Comprehensive Plan Committee and City Council																
State Environmental Quality Review																
County Planning Boards Review																
Final Comprehensive Plan																
Public Hearing and Local Adoption																