

COMPILATION OF CITY COUNCIL INPUT ON 53 POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAFT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The “final work product” sent by the Comprehensive Plan Committee to the City Council on December 18, 2014 included a list of 53 possible amendments to the Draft Comprehensive Plan. These items were discussed by the City Council at workshops occurring on February 24, March 24 and March 31, 2015. The following is believed to represent the preliminary consensus on these 53 items.

#1: CORRECT LIST OF MEMBERS

Revisions made.

Comprehensive Plan Committee

Geoff Bornemann, Chair (1/14-12/14)

Clifford Van Wagner, Chair (5/13- 1/14)

Jamin Totino, Vice Chair

Sonny Bonacio

Theresa Capozzola

Devin Dalpos

Tom Denny

Casey Holzworth

James Letts

Oksana Ludd (Zoning Board of Appeals)

Steven Rowland (Design Review Commission)

Todd Skimkus

Mark Torpey (Planning Board)

Charles Wait

Janice White (5/13-4/14)

This document was prepared with assistance from MJ Engineering & and Surveying PC and the staff of the City’s Office of Planning and Economic Development.

#2: ADD AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Revisions made.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Comprehensive Plan is a unified set of policies that will guide the future development of the City of Saratoga Springs. The Plan consists of nearly 250 recommended actions and a Future Land Use map that indicates the desired location, uses and intensity of development.

This Plan sets forth the following vision for the community:

Saratoga Springs is the “City-in-the-Country.” This concept reflects a city with an intensively developed urban core and an economically vibrant central business district, with well-defined urban edges and an outlying area of rural character, comprised of

agriculture, open lands, natural and diverse environmental resources, and low density development.

The overriding philosophy that will guide future development of our "City in the Country" will be sustainability. Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development makes investments that yield long-term benefits for our community. Sustainable development enhances economic opportunity and community well-being while protecting the human and natural resources, upon which the future of our economy and our community depend.

Recognized for its commitment to history, health and horses, the City is a small, livable community with a strong sense of pride, family and volunteerism. The City's vibrant, walkable core, stable neighborhoods and high level of mobility support regional economic growth and ensure its position as a world class destination for entertainment, education and cultural activities.

This Plan updates the community's 2001 Comprehensive Plan. The process for updating the prior Plan had the following objectives:

- Community/economic sustainability
- Preservation/enhancement of historic qualities
- Strengthening of individual and collective "City" and "Country" components
- Strategic positioning for future opportunities
- Public-Private cost sharing

This new Plan has the key following objectives that have been a core part of our community for more than a decade.

- Promote a broader mixture of uses in selected areas to encourage social, business, and residential interaction and diversity.
- Implement land use and design policies to enhance our quality of life.
- Balance the cost of municipal services with revenue.
- Protect sensitive environmental resources.
- Preserve traditional community character.
- Promote pedestrian and bicycle access, transit services, and transitional neighborhood design to reduce dependence on the automobile.
- Continue investing in the amenities that contribute to our community's success.
- Support the City's sense of history and the "City in the Country" by preserving the quality of, and linkages, among, cultural and open space resources.
- Encourage and increase housing diversity and affordability as well as neighborhood vitality.
- Maintain a compact downtown with adequate parking and supporting infrastructure is essential to businesses.

- Protect open space resources that constitute a vital economic component and a valuable environmental, aesthetic and recreational amenity. It is this unique open space character that creates the inherent value of the “City in the Country”.
- Strive to provide for adequate revenue sources to maintain and enhance services.
- Maintain, enhancing and investing in the social, cultural and recreational amenities that are essential to the City’s economic and social dynamic.

This new Plan is very similar to the 2001 Plan in the following ways:

- 1) The mission statement is almost identical;
- 2) Many of the recommended action are similar; and
- 3) The location of future land uses and their intensities are almost identical.

However, this new Plan is also improves upon the prior plan. It addresses changes in the community that arose during the past decade and it anticipates new values and interest. These include complete streets policies, energy conservation, recycling, climate change, resiliency and greater protection for the community’s natural resources. The new Plan is also a “whole-community” plan in that it sets forth and relies on actions that can be undertaken by the public, non-profit and private sectors. This Plan does not burden the government with the sole responsibility for implementing this plan. The Plan’s 250 recommended actions are built around four guiding principles:

- 1) Economic Strength and Stability;
- 2) Environmental Health and Resiliency;
- 3) Transportation and Mobility; and
- 4) Community Character.

This Plan is ambitious and comprehensive. It recommends actions that are educational, investigative and regulatory. Some will cost a great deal of energy and money; some very little. Its implementation relies on opportunities and individual determination.

This Plan lays down the vision for our future and frames the challenges.

#3: DELETE REFERENCE TO DON MCLEAN

Don McLean reference deleted.

#4: DELETE ALL SIDEBARS & “DID YOU KNOW”

All “Did you know” headings to be removed. Factual sidebars to remain in general sections of Plan but removed within the specific “recommended actions” sections.

#5: REVISE DESCRIPTION OF “SARATOGA SPRINGS – A GREAT AMERICAN PLACE”

On page 3, the last sentence in the second to last paragraph of section 1.1 to be revised as follows:

“These public and privately owned open space resources are complemented by three lakes and an abundance of wetlands. The preservation of these open space resources is a key component in the City’s commitment to sustainability.”

A sidebar will be added on page 3 that will include appropriate Centennial information.

#6: REVISE VISION STATEMENT

On page 8, the word “residential” is restored in the first paragraph of the vision statement: “Saratoga Springs is the “City-in-the-Country.” This concept reflects a city with an intensively developed urban core and an economically vibrant central business district, with well-defined urban edges and an outlying area of rural character, comprised of agriculture, open lands, natural and diverse environmental resources, and low density residential development .”

#7: STRENGTHEN A GUIDING PRINCIPLE RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION

On page 10, a new (2nd) bullet point to be added:

“2.3 Transportation Mobility

- To encourage walking, bicycling and mass transit to reduce traffic congestions and improve local air quality.”

#8: STRENGTHEN A GUIDING PRINCIPAL RELATING TO COMMUNITY CHARACTER

On page 10, a new (3rd) bullet point to be added:

“2.4 Community Character

- To maintain a City that values historic preservation and architectural quality in its built environment.”

#9: USE MORE UPDATED ECONOMIC DATA

No revisions made.

#10: REVISE ACTION ITEMS RELATING TO ZONING AMEMDMENTS

On page 16, replace the phrase “Planning Board” with “all of the land use Boards”.

“3.1-21 Amendments to the Zoning Text and Map should be highly scrutinized and standards established for City Council and all the land use Boards to use in evaluation.”

#11: ADD REFERENCE TO HEALTH BENEFITS

In section 3.2 (p. 23), the following sentence to be added to end of paragraph that begins with “In May of 2012 ...”:

“These steps have recognized the inherent health benefits of encouraging walking and cycling as a form of transportation.”

#12: ADD DETAILS OF CLIMATE PLEDGE

In section 3.2 (p. 22), the list of ten “pledge elements” from the Climate Smart Communities Pledge will be added to the paragraph that begins with “In 2011, ...”:

1. Pledge to be a Climate Smart Community.
2. Set goals, inventory emissions, plan for climate action.
3. Decrease community energy use.
4. Increase community use of renewable energy.
5. Realize benefits of recycling and other climate-smart solid waste management practices.
6. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions through use of climate-smart land-use tools.
7. Enhance community resilience and prepare for the effects of climate change.
8. Support development of a green innovation economy.
9. Inform and inspire the public.
10. Commit to an evolving process of climate action.

#13: USE TERM GAMBLING INSTEAD OF GAMING

On page 17, action item 3.1.35, the term “gaming” is retained.

#14: REVISE RECREATIONAL NEEDS TO STRESS ALL INCOME LEVELS

On page 25, action item 3.2-11 to be revised as follows:

“3.2-11 Work with local and regional departments and clubs to evaluate and identify the community’s recreational needs for all income levels.”

#15: REVISE ACTION ITEM RELATING TO WATER AND STORMWATER ISSUES

On page 26, action item 3.2-27 to be revised as follows:

“3.2-27 Identify and rectify water, sanitary sewer and stormwater issue areas in the City.”

#16: REVISE ACTION ITEM RELATING TO CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

On page 28, action item 3.2-43 to be revised as follows:

“3.2-43 Complete an inventory and analysis of all conservation easements to determine the City’s collective public value and monitor long term climate change impacts.”

#17: REVISE THE EMPHASIS FOR RENEWABLE/ALTERNATIVE ENERGY ACTION ITEM

On page 28, action item 3.2-44, “investigate” to be changed to “promote and encourage”:

“3.2-39 Promote and encourage the broader use of renewable/alternative energy sources such as wind, solar, geothermal or biomass.”

#18: REVISE ACTION ITEM RELATING TO UTILITY EFFICIENCIES

On page 28, action item 3.2-46 to be revised as follows:

“3.2-46 Continue efforts to increase delivery infrastructure efficiency in water and wastewater systems.”

#19: REVISE ACTION ITEM RELATING TO ENERGY COSTS

On page 28, action item 3.2-47 to be revised as follows:

“3.2-47. Encourage the city to partner with local businesses and institutions to coordinate renewable energy procurements that can reduce/stabilize long term energy cost.”

#20: REVISE ACTION ITEM RELATING TO ENERGY COSTS

On page 28, action item 3.2-49 to be revised as follows:

“3.2-49 Promote both commercial and residential solar energy projects and other community-based renewable energy technologies.”

#21: REVISE ACTION ITEM TO PROMOTE RENEWABLE/ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES

On page 28, action item 3.2-50 to be revised as follows:

“3.2-50 Work with partners, such as the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), to promote and encourage energy efficiency and renewable/alternate energy sources for the City, businesses and homeowners.”

#22: REVISE ACTION ITEM TO PROMOTE RENEWABLE/ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES

On page 28, action item 3.2-51 to be revised as follows:

“3.2-51 Encourage greater energy efficiency and provisions for renewable/alternate energy sources in new construction and redevelopment.”

#23: REVISE ACTION ITEM TO PROMOTE ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF PUBLIC LIGHTING

On page 28, action item 3.2-53 to be revised as follows:

“3.2-53 Promote the energy efficiency of city lighting and a reduction in light pollution while still maintaining safety.”

#24: ADD A NEW ACTION ITEM RELATING TO ENERGY STANDARDS

On page 29, add a new action item as follows:

“3.2-55 Encourage the development of residential and commercial buildings that exceed minimum state-level energy efficiency standards.”

#25: ADD A NEW ACTION ITEM RELATING TO MONITORING ENERGY STANDARDS

No revision made.

#26: USE CORRECT TERM FOR CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLAN

On page 29, action item 3.2-60 typo corrected: “Climate Adaptation Plan”.

#27: ADD REFERENCES TO RAIL SERVICE

On page 10, action item 2.3 to be revised as follows:

“To maintain a City that accommodates all modes of transportation including vehicles, freight, rail, pedestrians, bicyclists, and people with disabilities”.

On page 31, following the paragraph beginning with “The transit system ...”, language to be added re: Saratoga & North Creek Railway:

“The city is serviced by freight rail service. Amtrak operates year-round passenger rail service and others operate seasonal service on the Saratoga & North Creek Railway. The city supports increased bicycle accommodations on Amtrak and other rail services to promote regional tourism.”

#28: REVISE ACTION ITEMS RELATING EV CHARGING STATIONS

On page 34, action item 3.3-15 to be revised as follows:

“3.3-15 Adopt streamlined permitting standard and engineering details for residential and commercial EV charging stations. Encourage the establishment of charging stations in the city including placing them in the city owned parking garages/lots.”

#29: CHANGE PHOTOGRAPHS OF COMMUNITY CHARACTER

To emphasize our range of neighborhood/housing types, selected photos will include a rural country scene, suburban, townhouse and urban neighborhood photos.

#30: USE MORE UPDATED HOUSING DATA

No revision made.

#31: REVISE ACTION RELATING TO CITY IN THE COUNTRY

On page 47, action item 3.4-1 to be revised as follows:

“3.4-1 Maintain and promote the “city in the country” form that includes an intensively developed urban core and an economically vibrant central business district, residential neighborhoods with well-defined urban edges and an outlying area of rural character, comprised of agriculture, open lands, natural and diverse environmental resources, and low-density residential development.”

#32: REVISE STANDARDS FOR SOUTH BROADWAY ZONING

No revision made.

#33: REVISE ACTION ITEMS RELATING TO PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENTS (PUDs)

On page 47, action item 3.4-3 to be revised as follows:

“3.4-3 Continue to prohibit the establishment of Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) in the Conservation Development District of the City.”

#34: REVISE ACTION ITEM RELATING TO LANDSCAPE DESIGN

On page 48, action item 3.4-10 to be revised as follows:

“3.4-10 Create new landscape design guidelines for neighborhoods that add safety, comfort and beauty, while maintaining or enhancing ecosystem linkages, connectivity and natural services.”

#35: REVISE ACTION ITEM RELATING TO LAND USE BOARD TRAINING

On page 50, change “Design Review Commission” to “all the land use boards”. No revision made as reference is to a specific DRC-related program.

#36: DELETE ACTION ITEM RELATING TO OUTDOOR STORAGE IN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

On page 49, action item 3.4-19 relating to storage of boats, trailer and RVs in residential neighborhoods revised as follows:

“3.4-19 Investigate appropriate solutions to the storage of boats, trailers, RV’s and other large mobile items within the respective front yard setbacks of neighborhoods.”

#37: DELETE ACTION ITEM RELATING TO HIGHER DENSITY IN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

On page 53, action item 3.4-57b that permits higher residential densities for carriage houses, garages, etc. to be revised as follows:

“3.4-57 Address procedural items related to housing Citywide.

b. Investigate appropriate opportunities for the conversion, building and permanent residential use of building code compliant accessory buildings such as carriage houses and garage.”

#38: REVISE DESCRIPTION OF COMPLEMENTARY CORE LAND USE

No revision made. Sentence remains, “The Complementary Core designation offers opportunities for infill and new development that continues to support the Downtown Core.”

#39: REVISE THE DEFINITION OF THE CONSERATION DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT LAND USE

On page 59, the first paragraph in description to be revised as follows:

“The Conservation Development District designation reflects the ‘Country’ of the City in the Country. This designation allows for low density residential, outdoor recreation, agricultural and other rural uses utilizing land conservation methods such as clustering. Areas typically include single family lots and subdivisions, existing planned developments, farms, estates, and natural areas. Commercial activities should be limited to those that support rural and recreational uses and which protect valuable open space, protect natural resources and maintain natural systems. This designation reflects a rural or agrarian character that works to preserve contiguous open spaces, protect natural resources and restore and [maintain] natural systems, which will all become increasingly important and valuable community resources.”

On page 59, the second paragraph to be revised as follows:

“Development in this area shall require a “conservation analysis” and utilize land conservation methods to protect environmentally sensitive areas and features, minimize the development’s edge effects and conserve significant open space.”

#40: REVISE DEFINITION OF DENSITY CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

On page 59, the density statement to be revised as follows:

“CDD Note: The maximum density in the CDD is an average of 0.5 units per acre of unconstrained land. Unconstrained lands are areas of the site that do not contain severe constraints to development, such as wetlands, very steep slopes, stream corridors, and floodplains, as well as lands with legal impediments to development. Following a conservation

analysis by the City, constrained lands, along with at least 50 percent of the site's developable open space, shall be set aside as permanent open space through a conservation easement."

#41 / 42 / 43: REVISE DEFINITION OF SPECIALTY MIXED USE – PARKS

On page 60, the original text:

"The Specialty Mixed Use-Park designation allows for a mix of commercial uses that focus on maintaining the distinctive rural character of the City in the area adjacent to the Spa State Park – a National Landmark Property. Future growth in this area should be designed and sited as a campus-like setting to create a gateway the complements the beauty of the Spa State Park. Bicycle and pedestrian connections to the Spa State Park and adjacent uses should be provided.

The uses within this designation are complementary to the Downtown Core and Complementary Core. Some residential uses may be appropriate as well. This designation may lend itself to support research and development, creative economy workplaces, "green and clean" technology businesses, and other low impact tenants."

Proposed revisions:

"The Specialty Mixed Use-Park designation allows for a mix of commercial and residential uses that are complementary to the Downtown Core and Complementary Core and that do not negatively impact the rural character of the area adjacent to the Saratoga Spa State Park – a National Historic Landmark.

Future growth in this area should be designed and sited as a campus-like setting to create a distinctive gateway that complements the beauty of the adjacent Spa State Park. Bicycle and pedestrian connections to the Park and adjacent uses should be provided. This designation may lend itself to support research and development, creative economy workplaces, "green and clean" technology businesses, and other lower intensity uses that do not negatively impact this critical gateway to the City."

#44 / 45: REVISE DEFINITION OF SPECIALTY MIXED USE - GATEWAY

On page 61, the definition of this land category to be revised as follows:

"The Specialty Mixed Use - Gateway designation allows for a variety of low impact uses that focus on maintaining a distinctive entrance to the City. The goal for the commercial gateways is not to foster more intense or dense land use development, but rather to improve the physical appearance and attractiveness of the commercial uses. These uses are primarily commercial in nature and are complementary to the Downtown Core and Complementary Core. This designation is characterized largely by automobile access yet with aesthetically pleasing buildings and landscaping along the street with parking in the rear."

#46: REVISE ACTION ITEM RELATING TO EARLY DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS

On page 65, action items 4.1-5 to be revised as follows:

“4.1-5 Initiate Earlier Development Review by City Departments – To expedite the development review process and encourage better coordination within the often complex framework of the Commission form of government, this Plan recommends. City departments should respond to developer inquiries early in the application process. Efforts to develop and coordinate development policies among departments should be encouraged.”

#47: REVISE FUTURE LAND USE – REDUCE SIZE OR ELIMINATE SPECIALTY GATEWAY NEAR SARATOGA LAKE

Revise to remove “tail” portion of SG area (designate as RN-1) to better reflect current “water related business” zoning district

#48: REVISE FUTURE LAND USE MAP - D’ANDREA PROPERTY

Further Council consideration anticipated.

#49: REVISE FUTURE LAND USE MAP – RESORT OVERLAY ZONE

Further Council consideration anticipated.

#50: REVISE FUTURE LAND USE MAP - CORRECTIONS FOR DENSITY

A. ALLEN DRIVE: The area south of Church Street is designated CRN-1 (max density of 10.0 u/a) but zoned UR-4 (max density of 14.5 u/a).

Revise designation from CRN-1 (max density of 10.0 u/a) to CNR-2 (max density of 15.0 u/a)

B. CONGRESS AVENUE: The area south of Congress Avenue is designated as CRN-1 (max density of 10.0 u/a) but zoned as mixed-use Transect-4 that permits a higher density.

Revise the CMU boundary area to include the Transect-4 zoning area.

C. BALLSTON AVENUE: East side of Ballston Avenue south of West Fenton Street is designated as RN-2 (max density of 7 u/a) but zoned Transect-4.

Revise the CMU boundary area to include the Transect-4 zoning area.

D. FRANKIN STREET/CLINTON STREET: The area along Franklin Street, west of Clinton Street is designated CRN-1 (max density of 10.0 u/a) but has a mixture of zoning districts within. No revision required.

E. WALTON STREET/WOODLAWN AVEUNE: The area near the intersection of Walton Street and Woodlawn Avenue is designated CRN-1 (max density of 10.0 u/a) but zoned UR-4 (max density of 14.5 u/a).

No revision required.

- F. HODGEMAN STREET AREA: The area south of Lake Avenue near Hodgeman Street is designated CRN-1 (max density of 10.0 u/a) but zoned UR-4 (max density of 14.5 u/a). No revision required.
- G. PHILA STREET/COURT STREET: The area southwest of the intersection of Phila Street and Court Street is designated CRN-1 (max density of 10.0 u/a) but zoned UR-4 (max density of 14.5 u/a).
Revise to change area from CRN-1 to CRN-2 (max density of 14.5 u/a).
- H. VANDERBILT AVENUE/JEFFERSON STREET: The area that is south of Worth Street between Jefferson and Vanderbilt is designated RN-2 (max density of 7.0 u/a). But the area is zoning UR-4 (max density of 14.5 u/a).
Revise to change this area from RN-2 to CRN-2 (max density of 14.5 u/a).
- I. JEFFERSON STREET: The area that is south of Crescent Street is designated RN-2 (max density of 7.0 u/a). But the area is zoning UR-4 (max density of 14.5 u/a).
Revise to change this area from RN-2 to CRN-2 (max density of 14.5 u/a).
- J. JEFFERSON STREET: The area that is south of East Broadway is designated RN-2 (max density of 7.0 u/a). But the area is zoning UR-4 (max density of 14.5 u/a) and UR-6 (max density of 9.0 u/a).
Revise to change this area from RN-2 to CRN-2 (max density of 14.5 u/a).
- K. NELSON AVENUE: The area near Nelson Avenue and Gridley Street is designated RN-2 (max density of 7.0 u/a). But the area is zoning Tourist Related Business District.
Revise to change this area from RN-2 to SG (Specialty Gateway).

#51: REVISE THE COUNTRY OVERLAY MAP

Revise Country Overlay Map to include all areas designated as CDD.

#52: REVISE THE WORDING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION CHAPTER

Revise to include the suggested language below:

IMPLEMENTATION 5.0

The adoption of this Comprehensive Plan Update is the first step in the implementation process. This Plan is the result of considerable effort on the part of the City of Saratoga Springs and its City Council, the Office of Planning and Economic Development, Comprehensive Plan Committee volunteers, residents, business owners and concerned citizens. An active implementation process will be necessary for the Plan to have a lasting impact. Working with a range of public, private and non-profit implementation partners, the City can accomplish many of the recommended actions and continue striving toward its vision.

This Plan has many stakeholders. The nearly 250 individual action items in the Plan can be implemented by a variety of stakeholders within the community. These include entities from the private, non-profit and public sectors. Some actions can be implemented by a single entity; others with require collaboration.

The vast majority of the recommended action items are independent of other action items. These actions can be carried out whenever the individual entities have the energy, funding or “window of opportunity”. The timing for their implementation is not all that critical.

It is certainly the objective of this Plan that the vast majority of the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan be implemented within the next ten years.

Within this Plan there are some minor adjustments to the policies relating to future land uses. There are some small changes in the recommended types of land uses, as well as some modification in location and intensity. Since existing land use ordinances and zoning regulations must be in conformance with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan, it is a priority for the City of Saratoga Springs to enact some changes to bring regulations into compliance with the new policies. It is fortunate that the City recently received grant funding to help accomplish this task.

#53: FORMATING, TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS, ETC:

Revisions to be incorporated in redlined version of draft document for public review.