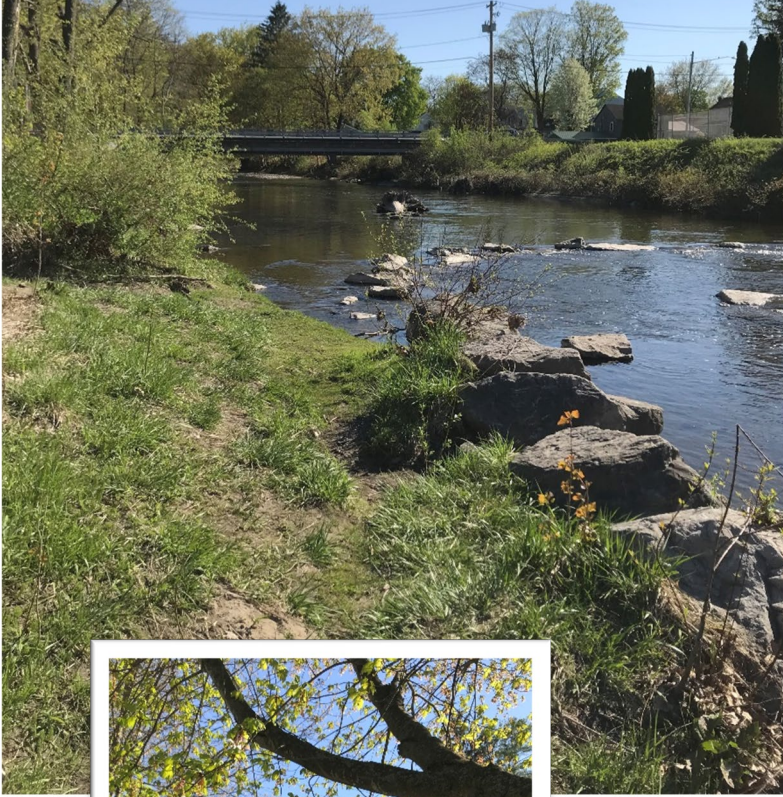


VILLAGE OF BALLSTON SPA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



April 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Executive Summary

The Comprehensive Plan presents an overview of the current state of the village, what challenges it faces and a vision for the ideal state. The purpose of the plan is to lay out guidelines and goals for the village in a broad sense. It is the role of future decision makers to determine how resources will be used to accomplish those goals. Stated another way, the plan is presenting the “why” and suggesting options for the “what” and “how.”

The process was undertaken by a cadre of dedicated village volunteers, supported by the Village Board, with assistance in preparing the plan documents from a team of professional planners. The plan provides a vision and set of goals to guide the village in the next 10 years of its development.

An abbreviated version of the village Vision statement:

Ballston Spa will continue to enhance and preserve the charm, historic character, and natural resources of the community for future generations, while encouraging opportunities for the economic growth of small businesses and improving the quality of life for residents.

The Comprehensive Plan takes into consideration the village’s unique history, identity, character, and values while addressing each aspect of the village by utilizing previous reports, undertaking substantial community outreach, and balancing the needs of residents and businesses to foster the community’s vision.

Village leadership, with support from the advisory committee and all participants, seem to agree that the major community effort dedicated to the making of the plan will be best complemented by an equal and greater commitment toward putting the Plan into action. The goals of this plan will be reviewed yearly by the Village Board to assess what has, and has not, been accomplished. A set of goals and an implementation framework are included in the plan to shape the actions of the village in the years to come.

In looking ahead toward organizing the village to implement the many projects recommended in the plan, it may be helpful for the village to establish a more formal planning and community development function within the village administration. This could be staffed on an interim, part-time basis through a consulting arrangement. That function may initially be focused on technical services to support grant-writing tasks.

Some of the key projects noted in the plan include:

- Create and adopt a fully updated zoning ordinance for the village including a set of illustrated development design guidelines to help shape investment in all major districts in the village.
- Prepare a Brownfield Opportunity Area nomination study as currently funded with a NYS grant and focus redevelopment opportunities in that area. (This may become a long-term project recognizing the opportunity in this area is significant for village growth and development.)
- Continue to develop a unified capital improvement program for all village infrastructure (utilities, streets and sidewalks, streetscape amenities, etc.) and secure grants and local funding for implementation.
- Support planning and development of a village-wide trail system including volunteer efforts along with appropriate professional planning and design support as required.
- Address the diverse housing needs and opportunities including housing rehabilitation grant programs and accessory housing provisions in village code.

Getting projects completed will be the measure of the success, and by doing so, the Comprehensive Plan will serve to guide the future of the Village of Ballston Spa for the benefit of current and future generations.



Comprehensive Plan Objective

The Comprehensive Plan guides decisions affecting the physical development and redevelopment within the Village. The process for the development of the plan is critical to its success, and ensures that the final document reflects the desired vision for the community. Consideration of input by residents, landowners, business leaders, appointed and elected officials, and other stakeholders is baked into the plan through community participation. The plan is a guiding document and presents a vision and goals reflective of Ballston Spa's unique history and natural character. It provides a process, together with specified objectives, policies, and strategies to guide the village to build upon its strengths while becoming a community able to meet future challenges head-on.

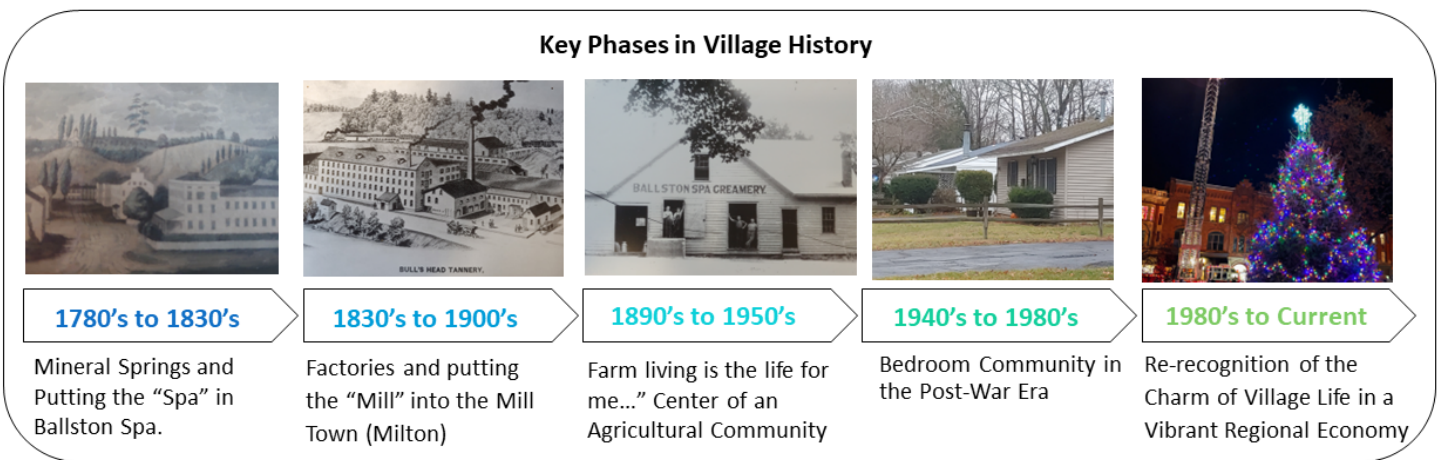
Overall, the Comprehensive Plan articulates a shared community vision and desired future, defines various long, medium, and short-term goals and objectives, and provides guidelines for decision making within each of the below-listed focus items, as they relate to those goals and objectives. The plan includes an implementation and action framework outlining the recommended course of action including key steps and projected time frame to accomplish the identified strategies. The Comprehensive Plan is responsive to the following themes:

- Response to effects of climate change and the information revolution.
- Government responsibility for its buildings, parks, utilities, and storm water management.
- Relationship of built environment to village character and uses by residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Actual residential uses vs. permitted uses and guidance for preparing future regulations.
- Recognition of Village's position in the Capital Region's economy and what it means for future investment by residents and businesses.
- Social and community cohesion and quality of life issues.



Historic Overview of the Village of Ballston Spa

In planning for the future, it is helpful to understand community history—what forces led to the creation of the village, what were the subsequent reasons for the continued growth and change in the village and what is the current role of the village in the regional economy looking forward? Of particular importance is recognition of the phases through which the village has transitioned. Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee Member, John Cromie, a local history expert, prepared the overview of village history that follows.



Images courtesy of Saratoga County Historical Society Online Collection and Ballston Spa Business and Professional Association website

Ballston Spa grew in a most unlikely location. The early settlement was located by a hemlock swamp at the southern end of an ancient fault's floor. Two streams, one much larger than the other, had sliced their way through the fault's hanging wall. The smaller Gordon Creek flowed onto the swampy floor without a definite channel. Along the length of the fault, mineral springs flowed.

The larger Kayaderosseras had found its miles-long course between fertile, clay-loam to the south and sandy, gravelly soils to the north until it reached the flat of the fault's floor. There the low-banked creek wound, turned, and was joined by the Gordon in a configuration that caused ice jams and flooding. Beyond the confluence, the stream flowed through a wide flood plain on its way to Saratoga Lake.

The forests of the Kayaderosseras provided abundant game for the Iroquois who lived along the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers. Not considered an optimal area for settlement, the area was set aside for hunting. It is surmised the salty nature of the springs of Ballston Spa and Saratoga Springs attracted the hunted and hunter.

Two factors created the settlement, which became Ballston Spa, into this less-than-ideal environment. A mineral spring and a "chance" drawing of a lot by a young boy in Manhattan in 1774. It was the luck of that draw (and being on the winning side of the Revolution) that resulted in Nicholas Low owning the land which included the spring.

Low (rhymes with "cow") was a New York City merchant, financier, and land speculator. In 1792, Low built a rooming house facing his spring for summer visitors. His ownership was bounded by the center line of Ballston Ave. on the west; West High on the south; Milton Ave. on the east, and North Line Road to the north. By 1792, Low had sold all his land down to south of the Kayaderosseras near where Prospect Street now runs. He kept his land encompassing the springs.



Mineral springs were assumed to aid one's health and were good for what ailed or could ail a person. Most all these natural outflows in this young nation offered only rudimentary lodging. Low opted to begin a business venture and built a complex that could entertain as well as house. He built a spa.

The Sans Souci Hotel, opened in 1804, offering 150 rooms, a large ballroom, dining room, and gracious public areas. The hotel's parties, dances, food, social life, and excursions to nearby places attracted people of money from along the eastern seaboard, especially the South and New York City. In 1807, Low, with support of other hoteliers and boarding house owners, used his influence to have the state legislature establish Ballston Spa as a village to eliminate the influence of Milton's town government, which he could not control. He owned property in the Town of Ballston to secure a freshwater spring. His lands and the neighboring Alcott farm determined the village's reach into that town. It was Low's influence that resulted in Ballston Spa becoming the seat of county government in 1819.

Not understanding that a successful operation must make money for all its participants, Low sucked the money out of his enterprise. He rented land for home/businesses; he sold water; he took rent from proprietors of the hotel, bathhouses, and billiard hall, and most of the staff at the Sans Souci Hotel came from New York City. It was difficult for residents to build capital. During periods of recession and distress, the people suffered. Within 20 years, Saratoga Springs, whose local people copied Low's development of a spa, had taken over the role of America's watering place, and never looked back. Thus ended Ballston Spa's first reason to exist.

Ten years before the 1823 sale of his Ballston Spa interests, Low sensed the spa was not working and invested \$80,000 in a woolen factory. Having sold all his water rights, he opted for steam to energize his operation. After 30 days of operation, the large walking beam which transferred power to machinery broke under its own weight. By that time, Britain was flooding its former colonies with goods, and Low abandoned the project. The building lay vacant, but for squatters, and machinery was stolen. In later years the three-story stone building became a plaster mill, oil cloth factory, box manufactory, and produced grinding wheels. Finally, it housed Haight's tannery, which grew into the present factory complex on Bath Street. The original mill having been razed a century ago.

In 1832, New York's second railroad wound its way through Ballston Spa, as it ran from Schenectady to Saratoga Springs. It appears a portion of that road's original embankment exists on Front Street's south side.

The gorge formed by the Kayaderosseras provided Ballston Spa with its second reason for existence, waterpower. Its high walls allowed as much water to be held back as high as dams could safely be constructed. In addition, the configuration of the creek's fall and its banks provided for a series of mills back to Milton Center. Water held back by one mill became a water source for the next. By the time water reached the fault's wall, west of Milton Avenue, the duration of usable water rivaled that of river mills.

While small mills needed relatively little capital, larger enterprises needed larger pools of cash. The closest banks were in Albany, Schenectady, and Waterford. To answer that need, in 1838, thirteen men pooled \$100,000 and formed the Ballston Spa Bank, the precursor to Ballston Spa National Bank, in the building that now houses its downtown branch.

With power, transportation, and capital, Ballston Spa was off and running. Over the next twenty years, cotton became king. Ballston Spa could compete with Cohoes and the mills in Massachusetts. The McMaster and Smith families made fortunes in New Orleans cotton brokerages and banking and built mansions on West High Street. Sylvester and son Isaiah Blood moved their scythe business from the Mouringkill in Ballston to the



Kayaderosseras, just above the village. Other lesser mills were strung along the creek to the area near present day Kelly Park, where the flood plain widens.

As factory owners built homes near their factories, so did the workers. The factory-town concept where the mills provided housing and provisions to workers (for a cost) did not take hold in Ballston Spa.

Isaiah Blood's philosophy was a worker was more productive who strived for self-betterment. He subdivided a large tract that became the north end of the village and sold lots to his workers, who built homes for their families. Blood's sharp-edged tool factories grew during the great Irish immigration, giving the north end an Irish persona for the next century.

At the same time, mill workers built homes along Saratoga Avenue and the area of Mechanic Street, called "The Island." Shop keepers and merchants often had their enterprises in our current downtown on Milton Avenue and Front Street and residences along lower Milton Ave and West High Street.

The Civil War propelled Blood's production as it did the Rock City Falls paper mills of George West. It put a crimp in cotton manufacturing. With his new wealth, West bought the lower cotton mill by Milton Avenue. In 1878 a millworker spilled a kerosene lamp on the factory's oil-soaked floor, consuming the factory in flames. Out of the ashes arose the brick factory complex now a multiuse facility at Milton and Prospect. Built for making manilla paper for bags, the factory became a major employer for the next generation.

The third major industry arrived in 1881. The Bull's Head Tannery owned by brothers-in-law Matthew Vassar and Samuel Haight moved from Milton Center. Expanding during its first 20 years, it attracted the current wave of immigration, resulting in an Italian community in the flats around the tannery and their church, the Irish established St. Mary's.

Nationally, industry became consolidated, primarily through the establishment of trusts, designed to corner markets and control pricing. Ballston Spa was not to be left out, and its major factory owners were early activists in organizing the sharp-edged tool trust, paper trust, and leather trust.

The Kayaderosseras became a wastewater system for the paper and tanning industries, polluting Saratoga Lake, a playground for wealthy Saratoga Springs visitors. Governor Theodore Roosevelt earned his chops as a conservationist by going after Ballston Spa's paper mills and in the process created the bedrock case of our nation's environmental laws.

The main building at the axe factory burned in 1901, and tools made with the Blood label were manufactured elsewhere. Unable to compete with more modern factories, the paper mill closed in 1914. Ballston Spa's second reason for existence was over. Its third had already begun.

Unlike waterpower, electricity and steam are unrestricted by geography. Industries gravitated to cities with extensive transportation opportunities, dense population, and greater availability of capital. Normally a death knell for most small communities dependent on waterpower for production of wealth, Ballston Spa prospered. The fertile loamy-clay soils around the village came to its rescue. It didn't hurt that Thomas Edison decided to site an electrical company at Schenectady creating a nearby demand for farm products.

James L. Scott and Louie Schwarz understood the situation, purchased the old opera house, and, in 1898, created a cold storage facility to store fruit and produce until the market offered favorable prices. The building was across the tracks from the railroad station in the middle of the village. The structure later housed the post WWII plastics factory, Tufflite, and now retails antiques.



Many of the small farms of Malta, northern Ballston, Charlton, Galway, and Milton changed from subsistence to cash crops, such as potatoes and apples. The abundance of milk cows attracted a chocolate maker from Brooklyn. Frederick Bischoff took over West's old mills and residence.

For the next 50 years, Ballston Spa became the center of a prosperous farming community, as families from the surrounding towns came to Ballston Spa to trade, shop, and socialize. Stories were rampant of the loss of tenant farms at card tables in the Medberry Hotel. Youth of farm families boarded in the village to attend high school.

Factories did not disappear. In addition to the tannery, knitting mills making socks and utilitarian cloths were established. Several other industries prospered. For its population, millworkers continued to find work in Ballston Spa.



Front Street looking east, 1912

Shopkeepers did well. By the 1920s, the block left empty after the Sans Souci Hotel was torn down in 1887, was filled with store fronts, as it is today. A housing surge east and west of the downtown that began in the 1890s continued until stopped by the great depression. Mostly middle and upper middle-class housing, it was occupied by merchants, managers, and professionals.

While the 1930s took a toll on most communities, Ballston Spa came through the depression relatively well. Everyone had to eat, wear shoes, could not live without chocolate and work socks were favored. The village would have been considered a self-contained community, except the sense of community had spread well beyond its boundaries. Even as late as 1962, when the local historical society was formed, it was titled, Ballston Spa Area Historical Society and embraced members from Galway, Charlton, Malta, Ballston, and Milton.

Within its bounds, the village was not terribly unified. The Kayaderosseras was the dividing line. Those north of the stream had their stores, school, fire company. It was their territory. Those south of the Kayaderosseras had theirs. At night it was not safe for kids of one side to go to the other. The families to the south and east of downtown were sort of above it all, although grouped as south enders by those in the north. This rivalry crumbled in 1957 when the village came together to celebrate its sesquicentennial.

Technology was slow to affect farming, until restrictions caused by the depression and WWII ended. Then it came with a rush. Within ten years, small farms that had brought wealth to Ballston Spa were obsolete. By 1955, Ballston Spa's fourth reason for existence was well underway.

Schenectady's General Electric and American Locomotive Company were well positioned to prosper during WWII and the cold war. The Watervliet Arsenal was producing weaponry. They needed thousands of workers. The tannery was slowing down and closed in the early 1960s. Knitting mills and the new plastics forming company, Tufflite, paid modest wages. Former mill workers found well-paid employment in Schenectady and to a lesser extent, Watervliet. General Electric scientists and engineers found a village in which to raise their families. The village's first suburban style development opened in 1956, as 91 homes were sold in "Forest Park" across from the fairgrounds. Ballston Spa became a bedroom community. Its wealth, for the first time, came from outside itself.

Community identity was shifting. School centralization was completed in the 1950s. Family activities and social interaction revolved around the children's schools. Slowly, areas gravitated away from Ballston Spa to Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake, Galway, Saratoga Springs, and Shen.



Ballston Spa's position as a bedroom community for Schenectady was short lived. By 1965, General Electric was pulling one division after another out of Schenectady. Alco was failing. Worse, the construction of the Northway made Colonie Center Mall and other large shopping centers minutes away. Ballston Spa's downtown businesses could not compete. First national chains like Newberry's and Endicott Johnson closed. Then clothing stores like the Style Shop and Buchdahl's shuttered, followed by the department stores of Pearl's, Betor's, and Steiner's (which was the last to turn the key).

Unlike Saratoga Springs, which was skirted by the Northway, Ballston Spa was four miles away, too far to feel its beneficial effects. The once prominent north/south corridor of NYS Route 50, which runs through the village, had shriveled. For the first time in its 170-year history, Ballston Spa had no reason for its existence, and nobody seemed to realize it. However, everyone was aware store fronts were vacant. Retail spaces were looked at as possible residential units.

In the mid-1980s something strange happened. Two young fellows took over an empty store on Front Street and began to sell high-end clothing with labels torn off. CJ Outfitters attracted students from Union, Siena, Skidmore, and SUNY Albany to Ballston Spa. Merchants of Ballston Spa took notice. About the same time, a second effort was made to set up a business association, with the help of Saratoga Springs Chamber. It succeeded, and the Ballston Spa Business and Professional Association was born. Efforts to promote the village began with earnest. The need for capital investment was answered by Amsterdam Savings (now Key Bank), which opened a branch in the village, as well as other regional and national lending institutions. After twenty years, things began to look up for the village.

During the 1990s a definite population shift had occurred, and the Northway corridor had widened, and more industries and businesses had located within it. Four miles from a Northway exit and 30 miles from Albany was no longer that far. Small business retailers adjusted to big-box competition, specializing in unique items and specialty services. Many were looking for a proper venue to sell their wares. Its fifth reason for existence had found Ballston Spa.

Once vacant or underused store fronts took on new life as proprietors of specialized, unique shops opened their businesses. At first, a few specialty restaurants opened. Soon, the village became known for its variety of eateries, from diners to formal fare. A decades-long trend of non-owner rental properties among modest older housing began to reverse, turning neighborhoods back to family-oriented streets. Throughout this later period, non-profit organizations did not falter, but worked to encourage the community's growth and social cohesion.

Each period of prosperity for the village brought its own buildings and architectural styles. Each succeeding generation has had sufficient funds to keep up the housing stock. A varied geography creates pockets of interest throughout the community. Neighborhoods are small and often anything but homogeneous. Services expected within a village are within easy reach. But for the three suburban style neighborhoods, every lawn differs from one neighbor to the next and greenery is abundant.

Among Capital Region villages, Ballston Spa is in a class by itself because of the way it was shaped in its 230-year history. As the area's population increases, so will Ballston Spa's uniqueness, which forms its prosperity, if it can stay the course.



Vision

Ballston Spa will continue to enhance and preserve the charm, historic character, and natural resources of the community for future generations, while encouraging opportunities for the economic growth of small businesses and improving the quality of life for residents.

Self-described as “a village of friends” Ballston Spa residents recognize its unique sense of community, safety, and quaint and cozy character. A more interconnected village can be achieved by linking nearby regional trails to neighborhoods and downtown destinations, supporting a community greenway-historic corridor along the Kayaderosseras and Gordon Creeks, and enhancing sidewalk and streetscape infrastructure to serve both local economic development and community interaction.

The village’s proximity to larger cities such as Saratoga Springs, nearby I-87, and the greater Capital District help continue to make Ballston Spa an accessible and desirable place to live, work, and visit. By improving its infrastructure, enhancing its diverse and affordable housing stock and preserving its many historic community assets, Ballston Spa will continue to set itself apart as a unique and valuable destination— ***“We’ve really got a gem here!”***



Festival in Wiswall Park



Community Profile

Introduction

Beginning in late 2021, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee held twice monthly, open to the public, topic-based meetings. The topics were identified as important elements to be addressed in the comprehensive plan by the committee. This Community Profile reflects the topics of the committee meetings and includes selected findings from reports recently completed for the village including an Existing Conditions Report, Economic Development Plan and Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan.

The Community Profile includes a brief historical overview of the village and an overview of the goals from the 1993 comprehensive plan. The profile also includes some of the initial collective thoughts and observations of the committee relating to the respective topics. The topics include:

- Governmental-built infrastructure
- Information technology and climate change
- Built environment
- Housing
- Utility infrastructure
- Stormwater management
- Economic considerations
- Social considerations

Each subsection of this community profile includes the Steering Committee’s summary of each month’s topic. As these are considered major topics the village will face over the next 10 to 15 years, it is recognized that the comprehensive plan can play an important role in guiding how these issues can be addressed by both village government as well as other partners who are living and investing in the village—from neighborhood residents, to the business and development community and the other government entities and nonprofits. (Steering Committee meeting summaries and links to meeting minutes and videos are provided in the appendix for the reader’s convenience.)

Among the many assets of Ballston Spa, perhaps its greatest asset (besides its people), is its rich history. This history is preserved by its architectural heritage and will continue to provide economic dividends.



Previous Comprehensive Plan and Current Plan Initiative

Looking at the previous Village of Ballston Spa Comprehensive Plan, it is striking that the goals listed are very similar to the goals expressed by the Steering Committee in the creation of this Comprehensive Plan, see inset 1993 list. While an amount of continuity in vision is a good indicator, the overall feeling currently is that the goals set forth in the 1993 plan did not come to fruition to the extent the community had hoped. The goals and implementation strategies for this new comprehensive plan are focused on ways to really make a difference in the village, so that the same set of needs is not identified again in twenty years.

Village of Ballston Spa Comprehensive Plan (1993) Primary Goals

1. Preservation and Revitalization of the Local Economy.
2. Preservation and Enhancement of Historic Resources and Aesthetic Character.
3. Evaluation and Rehabilitation of Village Infrastructure and Police/Fire Services.
4. Evaluation and Enhancement of Community Services.
5. Evaluation and Enhancement of Recreational Services.

Specific land use goals for the Village:

1. The development of a more attractive and successful central business district.
2. The preservation of our small village identity and unique Victorian culture.
3. The development and enforcement of a comprehensive signage program.
4. Recommendations to amend the current zoning ordinance in order to clarify areas of confusion and accommodate the growth and expansion of the Village that has occurred over the past 25 years and the accompanying changes in land use.
5. The identification of Village-owned vacant property and the determination of the most appropriate uses.

Village Properties and Infrastructure

Recognizing the age and extent of existing village buildings, parks and other properties, utility infrastructure, and the magnitude of costs for upkeep and improvement of these assets, the village needs to be increasingly proactive in planning for its maintenance and prioritize the projects needing improvements. In order to be prepared to apply for competitive grants and dedicate taxpayer funding for infrastructure investment, the village must define what needs to be done.

The village recently put together a list of important capital improvements with assistance from the Chazen Companies (now LaBella Associates) that outlines important water, wastewater (sewer) and stormwater infrastructure projects. That capital improvement project list is an excellent outline of initial needs across these systems. The list provides an initial foundation for a broader, system wide inventory and assessment of the current state of all village-owned infrastructure for that should be developed in the future. A link to the capital improvement list is included in the appendix.

For financial planning it will be important for the village to create an annual budget set aside to address the maintenance/capital replacement needs of the public buildings like the Village Hall, Department of Public Works, Police/Court buildings and Swimming Pool. A broad range of grant and subsidized loan programs exist from state and federal agencies that can be tapped to address village infrastructure needs.

The overall management of infrastructure in the village will benefit by expanding and formalizing a Department of Public Works capital plan and updating it and resetting priorities periodically. Public Works can prepare property owners for the shift in state and federal government energy policies, by encouraging green practices and promoting mindfulness of the current and new restrictions in village infrastructure.



Climate Change

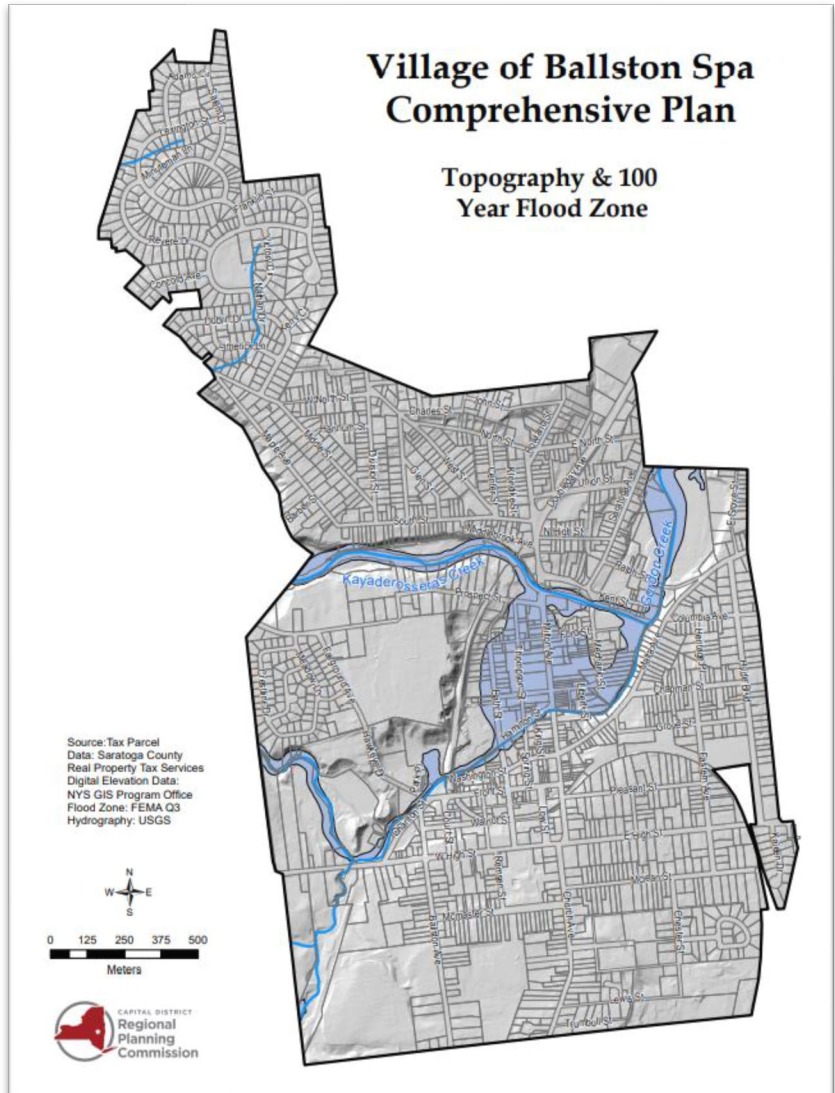
Uncontrolled forces include situations and events that are beyond the control of the village such as climate change and ever-changing technological advances that will continue to impact life in the village in many ways. It is important for the village to take steps to address issues of climate change and protect itself from severe weather damage or dangers, such as flooding during intense storms. As various climate change impacts manifest themselves, village leaders should devise a process identifying actions to prevent or minimize adverse effects and exploit the positives. The map entitled Topography & 100 Year Flood Zone (Map 7 of the Existing Conditions Report) shows that part of the downtown is in the 100-year flood plain (roughly from Prospect Street to Hamilton Street and from Bath Street to Malta Avenue), making it more vulnerable and a priority area for protection measures.

Despite these constraints, overall, the village’s natural assets and geography place it in a desirable location in terms of serving as a potential host to people seeking refuge for several reasons. In particular, those seeking relief from severe weather and relocate due to the climate. Wildfires, tornadoes, hurricanes, sea level rise, damaged ecosystems—these events are unfortunately not uncommon in other parts of the country and world. Regions like upstate New York and established communities like Ballston Spa offer a locational advantage that can be attractive to those seeking to relocate due to environmental forces.

Due to the increasing number of electric cars on the road, the village can make itself more inviting by providing and encouraging deployment of charging stations, which is another amenity for both visitors and residents. These facilities can be in the public and private parking areas, so no on-street parking is lost. The state and federal government is subsidizing the installation of the charging stations, and they could create a cash flow for the village.

Information Technology

As the steady march of technologic change continues, so too are the challenges and opportunities presented to the Village of Ballston Spa. From a governmental administration perspective, continual investment in



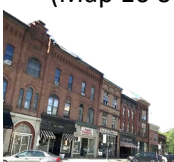
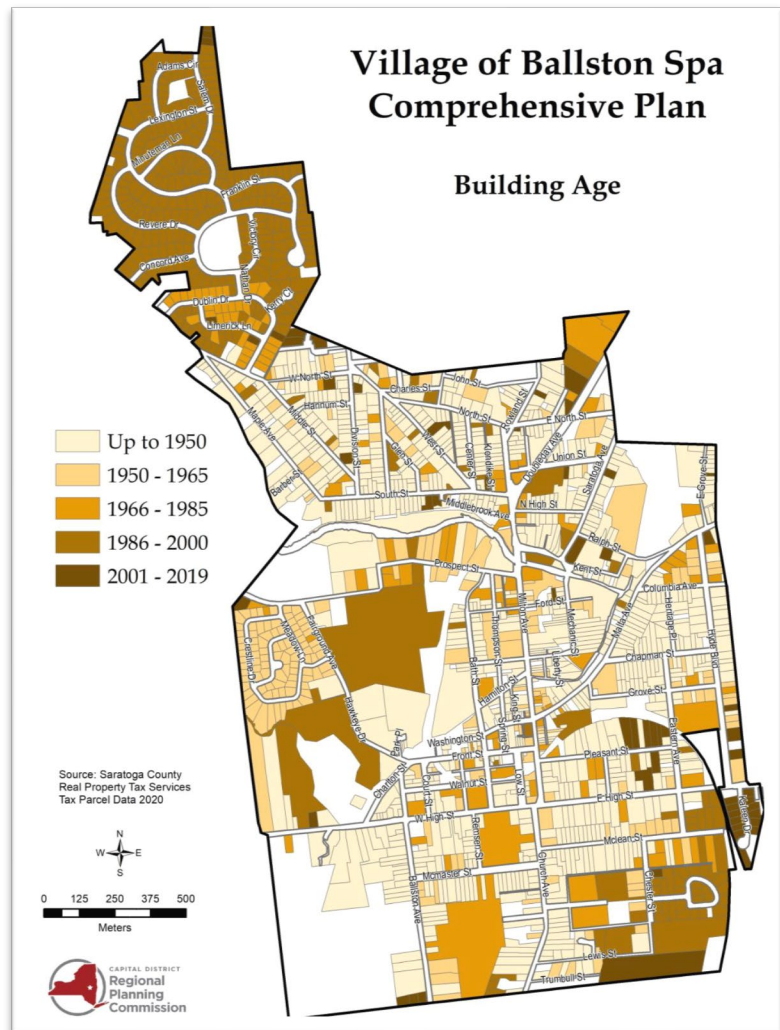
information technology (IT) by the village will be imperative—including hardware, software, support and training. Ideally, such investment will be based on an assessment of IT needs and deployment of a reasonable plan that is aligned with village capacity and available resources. Recognizing the increasing importance of information technology (IT) on management and maintenance of village systems and operations, the village should consider a plan which centers around personnel responsible for operating, updating, and securing all the uses of IT by the village and for on-going training of village employees. Village IT should facilitate accessible, easy-to-find information; trusted delivery of services and communication between residents and government; and to enhance village operations.

Approximately 4 percent of all workers in the village worked from home, according to the 5-year estimates, ending in 2019. These estimates are from before the pandemic, however, and remote work has become much more prevalent over the past two years. Even as things begin to return to normal, remote work continues in popularity and shares of workers who stay home may increase across all the age groups. It will be important for the village to factor this into its future and to ensure that the village has high speed internet access for residents and businesses to be attracted to the village.

Considering advances in information and communication technology from a social and economic perspective, one can see a range of issues and opportunities. Continued advancement of work-from-home opportunities renders village residential life increasingly attractive for current and future residents. Hence, supporting expansion of broadband service including fiber optic networks will be important for the village in many ways. On the other hand, as technology continues to advance rapidly, the “digital divide” between those who are comfortable keeping up with tech and those who are not so inclined will likely grow, potentially leaving an increasing number of people who will not be able to fully participate in the technology-based society. (Which may be an ideal state for some people and not so ideal for others.)

Built Environment of the Village

The variety of architectural styles present in the village helps create the image of the community and attracts people to visit, live in, and invest in the village. Popular architectural styles change over time and the village includes an example of just about every major American architectural style of the past two centuries. The Building Age map (Map 16 of the Existing Conditions Report) shows the approximate ages of the buildings in the village. It shows



that at least 70 percent of the village was built before 1950. The ages and styles of the downtown buildings and in the residential neighborhoods are a significant part of the charm of the village. They are valued assets that will benefit from reasonable and appropriate guidelines and regulations for their upkeep.

An effort to inform property owners of the valuable aspects of their properties and to present guidelines for them to follow to preserve this value would be helpful. The village’s historic appearance can also be protected through enforcement of zoning codes. While there is a need for reasonable regulations to protect properties and investments downtown and in the historic district, regulations should not be so restrictive as to discourage those who would like to move to or invest in the village.

As an incentive to invest in the preservation of historic properties, there are state and federal historic preservation tax credits, however, these programs include restrictions and requirements which may make eligibility not feasible for many potential applicants. (See www.preserven.org for more information.)

Often-overlooked areas of the village are the major gateways on New York State Route 50 (Milton Avenue/Church Avenue). These areas are important in forming a visitor’s first impression of the village. To effectively manage the primary entrances, the village government should seek expanded partnerships with the surrounding towns of Milton and Ballston to advance shared economic development goals.

The village’s significant green canopy of its “urban forest” should also be recognized for its importance and value. Trees are noted by the US Forest Service to increase residential values, make downtowns more inviting to shoppers who spend more, and, if strategically placed, can mitigate heating and cooling costs. The Steering Committee noted that a conflict exists along Milton Ave between mature trees and sidewalk maintenance. Tree roots have caused sidewalk heaves, but all attempts should be made to save the trees while also fixing the problem and advancing accessibility in the village. (Note: advances in urban forestry have included development of structural soils that can support sidewalk construction while accommodating healthy habitat for appropriately planted street trees.)

Vacant and underutilized property in the village detracts from the overall charm and it is recognized that this issue warrants additional attention. The chart below (from the Existing Conditions Report) lists some of the vacant commercial properties in the village. There is an opportunity to adaptively reuse or infill these properties in order to increase the vibrancy of the village and to capture additional tax revenue.

Address	Notes	Tax ID	Property Class	Acres	SqFt	Year Built
92-96 Front St		216.32-1-89	481 - Att Row Bldg	0.04	6,610	1950
24 Washington St		216.32-1-6	541 - Bowling Alley	0.69	12,167	1920
2017-2019 Doubleday	condemned	203.72-2-1	485 ->1use Sm Bld	1.38	25,274	1955
125 Bath St		216.32-1-96.2	710 - Manufacture	6.35	77,699	1930
149 Ballston Ave		216.-3-9	642 - Health Bldg	15.83	129,609	

Housing

There are approximately 2,480 housing units in the in the village with about 57 percent owner occupied and 37 percent rented. The number of housing units in the village has increased only slightly since 2000. Since 2000, approximately 82 total housing units were reported as added to the housing stock, about a 3 percent increase.



The rate of housing unit increase has been far below Saratoga County, which has seen a 23 percent increase from 2010 - 2019.

The map entitled Land Use (Map 8 of the Existing Conditions Report) shows that over 75 percent of the village land use area was classified as residential/mixed use with residential in 2020, shown in the yellow, orange and fuchsia colors. The preponderance of housing is single family, with some two and three family and mixed use. The Steering Committee has expressed interest in the village considering the potential benefits of adding housing units on single family lots through accessory dwelling units. The addition of new units through these measures may help keep living in the village more affordable.

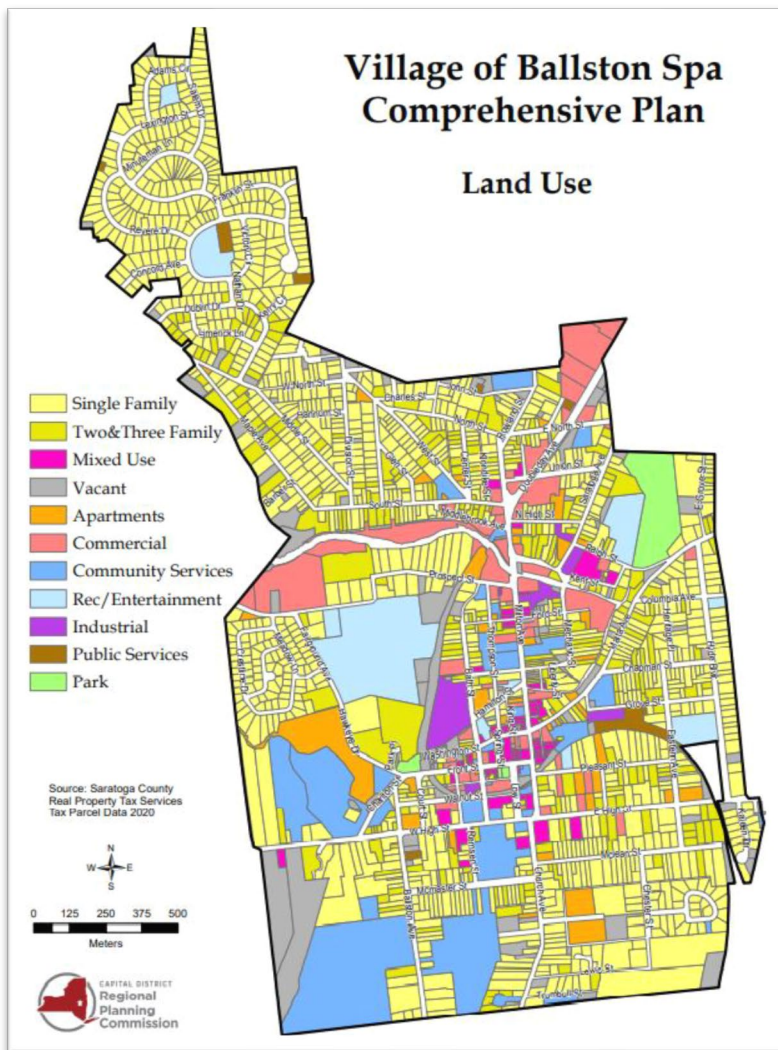
Major rental projects have been built in the last few years within a few miles of the village providing a contrast to village life. Recognizing these growth patterns, it will be increasingly important for the village to differentiate itself in order to maintain its unique character, provide a positive environment for home ownership, and discourage the use of single family homes as multiple or short-term rentals. Local property

maintenance codes, when properly prepared and enforced, can help prevent the housing stock from being exploited by residents, absentee landlords, and large corporate entities. To be successful in a village, enforcement should begin with incentives and rapid response to small infractions like trash-strewn lawns, unshoveled sidewalks and excessive noise, and should involve the homeowner, landlord, and/or tenant.

Stormwater Management

Ballston Spa’s history and form are in large part due to the confluence of geology and hydrology—land and water. While groundwater springs were the first reason the village developed, the sloping, narrow valleys of the Kayaderosseras and Gordon Creeks focused surface water so it could be readily harnessed for its industrial phase of development that benefited from the renewable resource of hydropower. Today, stormwater management is often forgotten by many—until the system breaks down or is overloaded and flooding or other damage occurs.

In general, Ballston Spa has weathered some very significant storms and has avoided serious flooding. It is fortunate because east of the village is a very large flood plain that can absorb large amounts of stormwater



flow and helps prevent the Kayaderosseras from backing up. Much of the village's flooding is localized and a product of surface runoff and the drainage system. When more than 100-year storms have occurred, there may have been some flooding at the confluence of the Gordon with the Kayaderosseras, but no significant damage.

As stormwater runs across urban areas like the village, the surface water can become polluted as it runs over pavement and parking lots, picking up oil and other pollutants before flowing into a nearby river or stream. High volumes and velocities of stormwater runoff—during larger storm events—can cause not only flooding and property damage, but also excessive erosion which can contribute sediments and excessive levels of nutrients that are not healthy for lakes and ponds.

Further, almost all older communities in our nation that have sanitary sewer systems like Ballston Spa, sections of the storm and sanitary sewer systems had been combined into a shared system. While those older engineering design standards were once considered sufficient for routine rainfall events, when overloaded during large storms, the combined sewer overflows and discharges into streams, rivers and other surface waters, bringing damaging pathogens and pollutants into natural water bodies.

In 2003, smaller communities like Ballston Spa were brought under the Clean Water Act and required to have a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System or MS4. Ballston Spa's MS4 is regulated by the Clean Water Act with the goal of limiting adverse impacts to area surface waters including Gordon Creek and Kayaderosseras Creek and ultimately Saratoga Lake and the Hudson River. The village participates in the Saratoga County Inter-Municipal Stormwater Management Program administered with the assistance of Cornell Cooperative Extension. As part of the village's responsibilities as an MS4 community, it is required to develop and implement a stormwater management program plan (SWMP).

It is no surprise, considering the age and extent of the village's street system, that the village's stormwater management system is in serious need of a full assessment. After addressing immediate concerns of sanitary sewer cross-connections and failing catch basins, a full-system audit of the storm sewer system is in order, followed by a capital plan to support the measures identified in the audit. As time, money, and talent permit, modern evaporation, storage, and absorption techniques can be constructed as demonstration projects in the village.

Particular attention can be given to capturing stormwater before it enters the system. Immediate, short-term, and long-term goals include making basic repairs to the system and enhancing maintenance protocols; conducting an engineering assessment for cross connections, dead-ends, and inappropriate connections and identifying alternative designs to reduce stormwater from entering the sewer system, including the use of naturalized "green infrastructure" solutions. Fortunately, these solutions have several potential funding sources of which the village could take advantage, as shown in the implementation framework section below.

Economic Considerations

Ballston Spa is well-positioned among the region's economic activity centers. Saratoga County is prosperous and growing. Ballston Spa distinguishes itself as a residential oasis in which people can still afford to buy a home and residents value the village, the school, and the community. The region's population has moved up the Northway from Albany to the point where Exit 12 is an acceptable drive to and from the Albany area. These factors support our downtown and determine demand for housing. The continued economic health of the village requires we build on these strengths.



The Economic Development Plan showed that over a quarter of village families make between \$100,000 and \$149,999, as do over a third of married-couple households. Almost half of non-family households live on \$35,000 or less. This includes people living on social security, social services, and subsidized housing (e.g., Doubleday Woods). These statistics underscore the wide range of economic levels in the village.

The largest employment group among village residents is the service industry (education, health, etc.). This indicates Ballston Spa is not a “company town” driven by one employer, rather its families are supported by a diverse set of employers including those in health, education, and government. These are generally stable employment sectors and with the rest of the employment divided among a wide range of other occupations, Ballston Spa is relatively protected from economic downturns.

Most employed residents of Ballston Spa travel within a 30 or so mile radius from the village for work. That is approximately the same radius from which downtown businesses draw most of their customers. It is fair to say that Ballston Spa’s economic health is tied directly into that of the Capital Region. The economic drivers that bring money to Ballston Spa are coming from Saratoga Springs, Clifton Park, and Albany, and throughout the Capital Region. Anecdotal evidence from business owners shows that their clientele regularly travels from communities 25 or 35 miles away. Business owners have repeat customers from Lake George, Troy, Glens Falls, Schenectady, Niskayuna, etc.

The Steering Committee identified that when visitors arrive downtown, it is important to incentivize visitors to spend more time there. For example, creating opportunities for longer term parking in the Central Business District. The public parking lots should be pointed out through obvious directional signage at major intersections and through updates to online mapping services. Easily accessible public bathrooms would also help people spend more time downtown. Bathrooms in the library, Welcome Center (Bottle Museum), and police station could be opened to serve the public.

The Economic Development Plan also envisioned expanding the business district down Washington Street and west on Front Street to Iron Spring Park. The portion of Washington Street that dead ends west of Bath Street also holds potential for commercial/retail development. The expansion of uses in some residential areas to allow home businesses is also of interest to the Steering Committee.

The greater the diversity of businesses and of people experiencing the village, the more its attractiveness increases, which in turn draws more people to Ballston Spa. Responsibility for creating a diversity of businesses falls largely on Ballston Spa Business and Professional Association (BSBPA) and building owners. The government’s fundamental role is to provide reliable infrastructure for businesses, ensuring their investments in the community, and secondarily to have an articulated promotional plan that describes its activities to support a positive image of the village. A necessary element in promotion and marketing is to articulate a simple message that encapsulates a desired image. The promotional plan should support current businesses and encourage the development of new ones.

A village position could be considered which would focus on public affairs and communicate with residents as well as businesses. The ideal would be an apolitical person who understands the ins and outs of the village and is not only able to help people navigate policies but advocate for changes when needed.

More cooperative efforts should also be focused on bringing those who spend a good part of their day in or near Ballston Spa to the downtown to shop and use services in the village. For example, the Ballston Spa Central School District schools in or adjacent to the village house 4,100 students and over 800 staff and this large



number of people (including parents) is an audience that could be engaged to add to the prosperity of the downtown. County workers commute to the village as well as the hundreds of people each week who use the county services. More work is needed to market village businesses to those who may work within a 5-to-15-minute drive from it.

Social Considerations

There are some future opportunities - and serious challenges - potentially impacting the social fabric of the village, including increasing population pressure due to the development of the electronics industry and the generally favorable living conditions in the Capital Region. One good way for the village to prepare to meet future challenges, whatever they may be, is by encouraging residents to become involved in social organizations that will help the community meet the challenges. This will allow decision making in the village to become more inclusive, consistently bringing new members onto boards and committees.

As the older population ages out of participating in public service, younger residents will have to take over. About a third of the village is between 18 and 49. The village should encourage the next generation to be involved in decision making and implement a process to appropriately bring new faces and voices onto village volunteer boards and village staff. Many in this age group are busy with kids and jobs and have little time, so outreach must be in places where it can be effective.

Service groups like the Lions Club and Rotary, along with its exchange program, provide opportunities for community service. Rotary is currently exploring its Interact club program for young people ages 12-18 to introduce students to community projects. As the volunteer base increases, so will the known talent pool for governmental positions, allowing them to turn over regularly.

Collaboration, not just between government and organizations but among organizations, is important to foster communication among residents and supporters of the village. This serves to improve village amenities and the delivery of services. Ballston Spa, overall, is a middle-class community with a large lower income segment. Whether accomplished through a paid liaison or otherwise, a robust, inter-related network of non-profits is essential. Some of the non-profits present and active in the village include Life Works, Rebuilding Together, Community Emergency Corps, Ballston Area Churches Association, Veterans' Housing Coalition and Job Link.

Ballston Spa Central School District as well as the village library bring families from adjoining towns into the village, providing a major resource for community organizations. The village benefits from its two museums which bring people into the village and promote the history of the area. Attention to the arts, culture, and history is important to the quality of life in the village and is instilled in children by the school district. These institutions are assets to the community and should be recognized as such.

Open Space

The village should work to improve aesthetic character of existing parks and open spaces and consider further development of existing parks such as Victory Circle in the Colonial Hills area. Anecdotal evidence from the



Rotary volunteers working for Rebuilding Together constructing a gazebo for the veteran's home on Church Ave.



Steering Committee informs that smaller parks (downtown “pocket parks” like Iron Spring and Wiswall) and public spaces in the village are used more than the larger areas, due to their location. The larger parks (like Kelley Park and the Victory Circle) have little of their potential realized as gathering and recreation space, as they are more out of the way. These parks should be developed so they become destinations and their use can



Playground at Kelley Park



Iron Spring Park Pollinator Garden on Front Street, created by the Ballston Spa House & Garden Club

be tied to where they are situated. Kelley Park’s adjacency to the Kayaderoseras Creek invites the development of a creek trail system to engage with the natural surroundings. Victory Circle is in the middle of the Colonial Hills neighborhood and would lend itself to family centered activities like a playground/play space, dog park and gathering spaces. The Village Cemetery may not be village owned but is a huge space suitable for passive recreation like an interpretive walking trail, jogging and walking dogs, to which the Cemetery Association agrees.

As a community with plentiful green spaces, gardens, trees and natural habitats, it is important to recognize and celebrate these features as a wonderful part of life in Ballston Spa.

Transportation

The Village of Ballston Spa has a diverse transportation system that is supportive of vehicle travel, cyclists, pedestrians, and transit riders. Most roads within the village are low-volume local roads, but high volume roads like NY Route 50 and 67 run through the village. The unique character of the village offers a pedestrian oriented layout, however, gaps in sidewalks and bicycle infrastructure can make it difficult for many to safely traverse the village by foot or bicycle. Additionally, there is the potential for improved connections to nearby regional trails presenting the opportunity for economic development within the village, and in general, a more integrated multi-modal transportation network. Key recommendations in the Village Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan are shown on the map, below.

Street signage has gone missing over the years and is needed for people to navigate side streets. In the past emergency vehicles had been known to get lost. (Today, fire trucks and ambulances are tied into the county-wide emergency services mapping.) The village has identified 91 missing street signs and is enlisting the aid of the county to replace them.

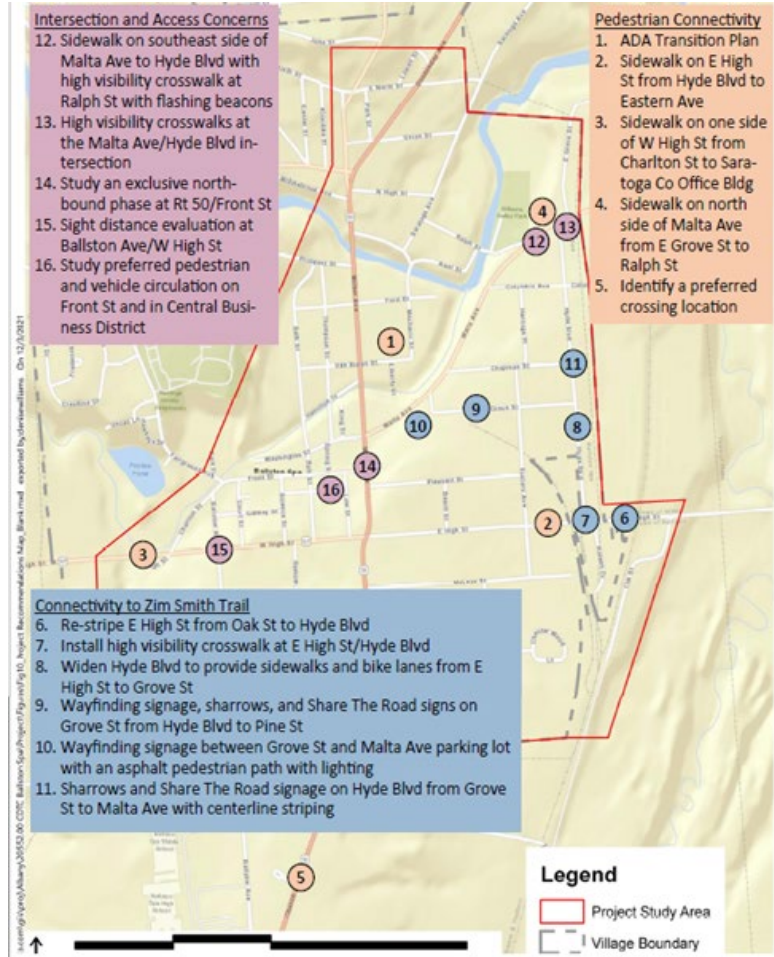
NY Route 50 carries about 15,000 cars a day and causes traffic congestion during commuting (rush) hours. The traffic congestion is most likely related to the growth of Saratoga County in the last few years—and the growth in general of vehicle registrations/vehicles on the road. Much of the traffic comes from or goes to the Northway from the rapidly growing areas north and south of the village. Traffic congestion’s silver lining is that it gives the community a sense of vitality and prosperity. It is preferred to the use of a by-pass, which has damaged other small downtowns.

Luckily, motorists are not just driving through the village. Many are stopping and parking, bringing commerce to the community, but also making it difficult to find places to park near the popular areas downtown. The Parking



Advisory Committee found there is not a lack of parking spots, but rather insufficient enforcement, people’s expectation that they should not have to walk a block or two to their destination, the lack of signage and maps (including online maps) of public lots, and a need for an overall parking plan. During off hours, the county lot is available, but it is not well posted. Not-for-profit lots could be made available when not normally used, in return for village snow clearing.

The January 2022 Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan and the Existing Conditions Report of 2021 find sidewalks generally exist in the village but could be in better condition and intersections could be made safer and easier to use. A priority has been established to address sidewalks needed along Malta Ave and to improve sidewalks leading to downtown. As properties are developed or re-developed, sidewalks made part of projects can be financed with little impact on the ultimate owner. The current reimbursement program has failed, and something further must be inaugurated to promote repair and replacement of faulty sidewalks.



Priority Issues

In addition to meeting the broader goals of the comprehensive plan described above, the Steering Committee established a list of priority issues to address:

1. Definition of the existing “community character.”
2. Historic Preservation – the Ballston Spa Historic District was established in 1984. Further exploration of a local historic district or historic standards for future development within the district should be explored.
3. Downtown Ballston Spa - advance the goal of a vibrant, walkable downtown area.
4. Compatible Growth – establish/expand opportunities for economic and appropriate growth and:
 - preserve the village’s historic, natural, and architectural character
 - preserve and enhance the quality of life for all classes of residents
 - anticipate changes to the economic, social, and environmental conditions over the next 10 to 15 years.

Community Character

The first priority issue is the definition of the existing community character. This step is crucial to guide infill development that occurs in or adjacent to established neighborhoods. It also informs future preservation methods of community character during the land use review process and will assist in minimizing potential impacts of new development.

To help inform this definition, input from the community survey and the visioning session were used. Also, a visual preference survey was distributed to the Steering Committee with images shown from other similar communities to serve as points of reference. The visual preference survey included images related to existing areas of the village and images related to potential changes to the village which were discussed in prior Steering Committee meetings. These included residential, transition zones, additions to the central business district, creek-side greenway trails, highway commercial, industrial conversion and gateways to the village.

Residential

The highest rating on the visual preference survey was given to a tree lined and well-maintained residential street, as seen in the image at the right. The committee recognized that the absence of design review for residential zones may put this desired character at risk in the future and revising this policy is recommended as the village looks to update its zoning ordinance.



Residential

Transition Zones

These areas were described as chances to allow residential uses to have home businesses and create a transition between commercial and residential areas. Properties in transition zones are suitable for low-level commercial/business uses and will have to be treated on an individual basis. For instance, one can do much more on a wide well-traveled street like Bath than on Ford Street. It is important that activities related to these home businesses should be properly managed to ensure there is very little impact on neighboring residences.



The intensity of the businesses would have to be gauged to specific properties and their location, so that too intensive uses are not allowed. Those areas designated transitional should be in a separate zone, or as suggested, in an overlay area in a residential zone. Design review should be included in the zone to ensure appropriate consideration to the existing neighborhood context is followed. The highest ranked image of a transitional zone is the one shown at right.



Transition Zone

Two possible transition zones between the Central Business District (CBD) and purely residential areas could be the Bath Street area and lower Malta Ave., which could offer home-oriented businesses.

The least favorable image on the visual preference survey was one of a building that have been converted from a single family residential to a commercial building with most of its design features removed, surrounded by asphalt and business signage that is too large. The photo was included to show what can happen without design guidelines.

There are a couple vacant and underutilized properties in the currently defined CBD and the concept of a transition zone would offer other options that may be sufficient to address foreseeable demand. Nonetheless, it is recognized that new investment, and appropriately planned and well-designed new development, will be a welcome complement to renovation of the older building stock.

Creek-side Greenway Trail

The committee identified the creeks in the village as an underutilized asset and a feature that helped differentiate it from surrounding communities. Where the terrain and adjacent land uses are compatible, the creek corridors can provide an opportunity to add trail systems, especially on the old rail bed that runs along the



Creek-side Greenway Trails—On the left a more naturalized nature trail. On the right a pathway with additional amenities



Kayaderosseras. A route along the creek could provide residents of Kelley Square and Colonial Hills a pleasant way of walking downtown as well. Ultimately this could connect further up along the Kayaderosseras to neighborhoods outside of the village. Currently, the walking route is on streets where there are no sidewalks. A pedestrian bridge over the creek is desirable as an alternate to the vehicle bridge on Milton Avenue. Small, designed areas like the pictures above were well reviewed in the visual preference survey. The left picture includes some informational signage and a pedestrian bridge, and the right picture shows a more built out meeting spot with pavilions, pavers, stone benches, covered bridges, and other architectural elements. Re-opening the underpass at Iron Spring Park could be a chance for a more built out trail option.

Highway Commercial

The committee’s response to commercial buildings in the visual preference survey was not positive, indicating large commercial buildings lacking quality architectural character and large open areas of pavement are not favored. However, large commercial buildings already exist along the northern entry along Route 50. This area can be made more attractive through improved approaches to site planning design standards. These would include architectural design guidelines so buildings fit into the desired Ballston Spa setting, signage that is well-designed, and landscape amenities including street trees, other plantings, attractive lighting and appropriate accommodations for pedestrians and the pedestrian environment. The image at right was the highest rated due to its contextual design and is an example of a chain store blending into the architectural style of a community.



Highway Commercial

Industrial Conversion

A highly ranked image of a former factory conversion which maintained many original elements while allowing some new features is shown on the right. A similar reuse of space is desired at the industrial space located at 125 Bath Street



Industrial Conversion



(Angelica). The factory conversion on 20 Prospect Street (The Factory) is another good example of adaptive reuse of industrial space.

Gateways to the Village

The concept of a gateway is to have a welcoming visual cue that one is entering a community. For example, historically, many upstate villages had gateway features constructed either at the village boundary or at a main entry to their downtown district. The NYS Route 50 corridor presents an opportunity to create gateway treatments to welcome visitors traveling to/through the village. The committee is interested in considering more of an architectural and landscaped gateway—a visual reference example is provided in the historic image to the right.



Gateway— historic example

Along the northern entry to the village at NYS Route 50, there is no sense of arrival as the character of the corridor is a typical commercial highway strip that could exist anywhere. The landscape here is mostly a horizontal plane of pavement with overhead utilities, free-standing signs and occasional landscaped areas. Adding some landscape architectural enhancements along the corridor would do a lot to make this gateway to the village more unique and inviting. For example, adding street trees and other greenery, low level lighting, red brick structures, etc. that would signal to travelers they have entered the Village of Ballston Spa.

In contrast, as one approaches the entrance to the village along NYS Route 50 on Church Avenue from the south, the highway commercial uses rapidly transition near the village line to a greener and more residential landscape character, which creates a unique and peaceful image of the village.

Conclusion

The Steering Committee reiterated what was also heard from the visioning workshop participants, which is that most residents want to keep things relatively the way they are, and guidelines in the code will help with that goal. There is a consensus that Ballston Spa should not try to be like other communities, but hold on to, nurture and enhance its own unique community character. Toward the goal of continuing the existing community character, and what kind of growth and change is desirable—and what kind is not; the committee recommends neighborhood workshops for robust discussion during the process of developing the zoning ordinance update. This way, future zoning changes are built upon community consensus.

Historic Preservation

The Ballston Spa Historic District was established in 1984, extending much of the width of the village along Route 67 from West High Street to Eastern Avenue. Although existing local village laws provide for basic review procedures and some design guidance for this district, it is recommended that additional guidance and standards should be developed to clarify the expectations and procedures for review boards and applicants alike. To help support this, code enforcement officials should ideally be knowledgeable and comfortable with historic architecture and best-practice preservation guidelines. In addition to support for training of local



officials, the development of a village-specific set of historic preservation design guidelines would be of great value not only to local officials but to owners as stewards of these historic treasures.

Downtown Ballston Spa

The downtown Central Business District of the Village of Ballston Spa represents the core engine of the community, and as such, should be nurtured and preserved to enhance this vibrant, active and walkable neighborhood that serves residents and visitors alike. While there are many parallel efforts which must be worked on to help achieve this, a core component is supporting and expanding the local business community.

An update of the zoning codes is necessary to modernize and expand the list of allowable uses in the downtown area to ensure they reflect the economy in which we live today. In a mixed-use neighborhood commingled with residents and businesses, this includes the reality that many people can and do choose to work from home these days. It is appropriate to revisit the home occupation provisions in the zoning code to ensure that sufficient latitude is provided for current and expected future home occupations. Understanding that there are different types of home occupations, it is recommended that the revised code should recognize two or three “levels” for this use – one which is a simple home office which requires no, or perhaps one, additional employee with no additional demand for parking, material storage or traffic impacts; and other levels which may have more activity and potential impact to the neighborhood. Recognizing these different levels would allow the code to treat them accordingly, identify where they are each appropriate, and set some basic performance standards for their lawful operation. Other uses may include shared incubator office space, electric vehicle charging stations, breweries/distilleries, cannabis dispensaries and similar emerging trends. Taken overall, a wider variety of different commercial activities and residential housing types should be promoted in a mixed-use environment.

An update of the zoning code is also recommended to more effectively manage the physical built environment of the urban landscape which shapes the village. While this topic is covered in more detail in the Land Use Vision section below, it is recommended that the primary one or two zoning districts which comprise the core of the downtown move toward a more “form-based” code approach over traditional zoning. This approach would emphasize desired building form, massing, fenestration and architectural scale while providing more allowance and flexibility for what uses would be permitted inside them. It is expected that this system would promote new construction which reinforces the “historic downtown” form of the village while providing more flexibility and incentive for prospective businesses.

Another important component of the downtown is improving how it connects to the residential neighborhoods and places of interest which surround it. There was no disagreement among the participants in the planning process that the Village of Ballston Spa should continue to work on enhancing the sidewalks and pedestrian amenities which create an inviting walkable environment (along with addressing other important infrastructure



needs). These streetscape improvements include areas of new sidewalk, walkway repairs, street trees, landscaping, lighting, crosswalks as well as improved signage.

A coordinated public wayfinding signage program should be pursued which identifies places of interest, public parking, trails, shopping loops, historic locations and businesses throughout the downtown. Locations for public bathrooms should also be established and identified within the wayfinding program. The overall connectivity of the downtown should eventually be expanded to include a system of walking paths and trails—preliminarily identified on the Future Land Use Vision Map (shown on page 33)—which connect to the Kayaderosseras Creek and surrounding environs such as the Zim Smith Trail.

The village has been hosting the county buildings as the Saratoga County seat. The county government is an important economic driver in Ballston Spa and the village must foster communications with county leaders to enhance the benefits of the county presence.

The condition of buildings within the downtown, as well as the larger village overall, is an important consideration in boosting community pride and attracting visitors and tourism activity. In order to address this, the village should work on enhancing code enforcement efforts throughout the village to ensure that properties are well maintained and managed, establishing and following through with reasonable fines and protocols for enforcement. To further this effort, it is recommended that the village consider establishing a registry of rental properties to enable periodic inspection which ensures the premises are safe and well kept. Likewise, local business and property owners should be encouraged to make facade and property improvements to enhance their business and improve the overall quality of the village. The Ballston Spa Business and Professional Association (BSBPA) has solicited and presented Beautification Awards recognizing renovation, restoration, interior and exterior improvements and landscaping for both commercial and residential properties for many years. This effort could be continued as part of an annual community-wide beautification event, organized as a friendly competition by the village and the business community, with awards and public celebration. This could be coordinated with the village-wide curbside trash pickup day and expanded to include residential neighborhoods as well as part of a wider village “beautification day.” The village should look to pursue grant funding for facade improvements to support this annual initiative, celebrating and showcasing the most improved properties. The village should lead by example by starting with their own properties, such as Village Hall. Such an effort could be contagious, inspiring others to make improvements as well. Enhancing the overall cleanliness and visual aesthetic of the village will improve community spirit and help to better capture some of the pass-thru tourism traffic which winds its way through the village each year.



Lastly, many residents of Ballston Spa reflect positively on the overall sense of community which the village offers. Much of this can be attributed to the different community events which bring people together at various times of the year such as Arts in the Park, Movie Night, concerts and sledding downtown, which are presented by the BSBPA, and other volunteers, with sponsorships. The village should take on an active role and work to enhance and expand these different community events to occur with a variety of family-friendly activities throughout the year. This effort would strengthen the sense of community, improve community pride and support local businesses.



Compatible Growth & Sustainability

Looking forward, it is important that the changes we plan for today put the Village of Ballston Spa in a more secure and sustainable position to thrive in this changing world. Severe weather events, energy dependence and a changing economy are all considerations of importance in this plan. In the big picture, the village should seek to make itself more resilient, independent, and adaptable to navigate the uncertainties ahead. Inherent in the implementation recommendations are several strategies related to sustainability and compatible growth. A few focused elements are expanded upon below.

The village should seek to minimize any restrictions or obstacles to the adoption of solar energy systems, however, provide some reasonable guidelines for solar panel installations which help to protect the character of the community and avoid conflicts with neighbors. Solar energy system adoption in commercial and civic properties should also be promoted and encouraged, as well as public access points for electric vehicle charging facilities.

As the village zoning is updated, new provisions for enhanced stormwater mitigation should be integrated into the standards which encourage contemporary best-practices such as permeable pavements, bioswales, rain gardens and similar “green” methods to reduce runoff. Design standards for site planning should emphasize the use of more native landscaping and generous green spaces while minimizing unnecessary parking and paved surfacing where possible. Recreational improvements and trail connections along the creek should be completed in conjunction with stormwater and flood mitigation efforts wherever possible to help leverage grant funding and improve flood resilience. The state building code requires stringent requirements for energy conservation in terms of insulation of new construction. Renovations for older properties are often more difficult as retrofitting existing conditions can be challenging. There are subsidies and grant programs available for a range of eligible applicants. These kinds of services would be highly advantageous to many village property owners and property managers.

Overall, maintaining a relatively compact, mixed-use commercial center with an attractive walking and biking network will create a more sustainable community and one which will remain very attractive to new generations of residents and business owners for years to come.



Community Engagement

Steering Committee Meetings

The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (committee) started meeting in December of 2021 and held twice monthly, topic-based meetings that were open to the public from January – October 2022. Each topic was based on identified needs of the community and areas of improvement. The village website and social media pages were used in disseminating information related to the plan committee meetings and plans.

Village Board Informational Meetings

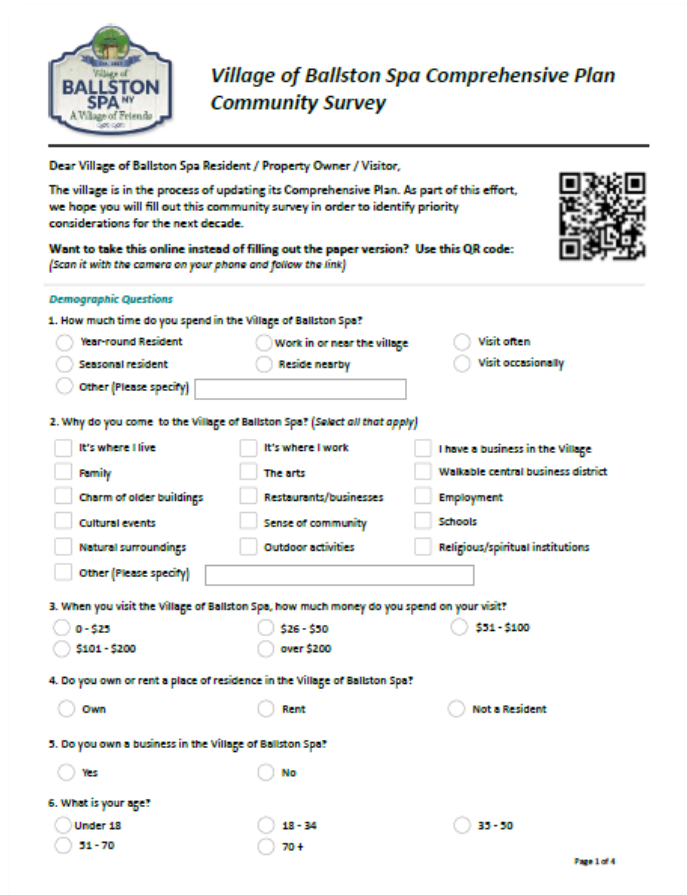
Behan Planning and Design provided a brief presentation on the planning process to the Village Board in July 2022. An overview of the committee meetings and community survey outreach was covered. Behan Planning and Design presented an overview of the plan including proposed policies, recommendations for future land uses and potential revitalization projects in January 2023.

Community Survey

A public survey was created by Behan Planning and Design with input from the committee and was active between early July of 2022 through the end of September 2022. Both a paper version and online version were made available. Paper surveys were sent out to residents along with the village water bill and a link to the online survey could be accessed directly from the village website. Posters were also placed in many shop windows in the village as well as the public parks. The posters, like the one at right, had a QR (quick response) code that linked to the online survey. Social media posts were also made for the village Facebook page and a link was added to the village website in the news blog and on the Steering Committee page. A table was set up for public outreach about the survey at a July 14 public concert at Iron Spring Park.



Poster for Community Survey



Front page of Community Survey



The committee made a push at the beginning of the school year to get the Ballston Spa Central School District’s high school students to take the survey. Eighteen percent of all survey respondents were in the Under 18 age category.

At the close of the survey, the total number of paper and online responses was 808. Along with gathering general demographic information, the purpose of the survey was to gain the public’s input regarding what improvements and enhancements could be made within the community regarding village infrastructure, housing, economic considerations, natural resources, accessibility, walkability, etc. The questions developed stemmed from the topics discussed at the Steering Committee meetings.

Most people that took the survey were village residents or resided close by (74 and 13 percent, respectively). Nearly three-quarters of those that took the survey own a home in the village and 72 percent work outside of the village.

A selection of the most highly rated responses is included below:

Respondents listed that the biggest draws to Ballston Spa are its restaurants and businesses, walkable business district and neighborhoods, schools, sense of community, and charm of older buildings.

Approximately 89 percent of respondents strongly agree or agree that it is important for the village to create an annual budget set aside to address deferred maintenance on public buildings (like the Village Hall, DPW, Police/Court, buildings, Swimming Pool).

Chart 1 -Housing type response chart

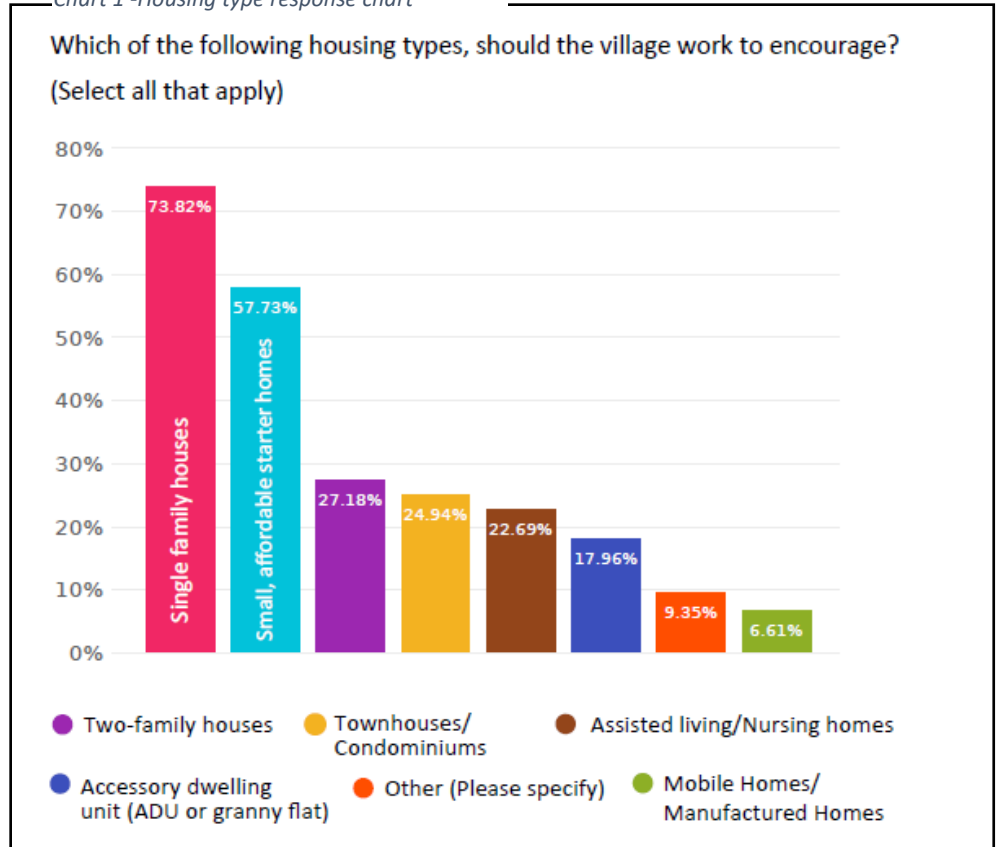
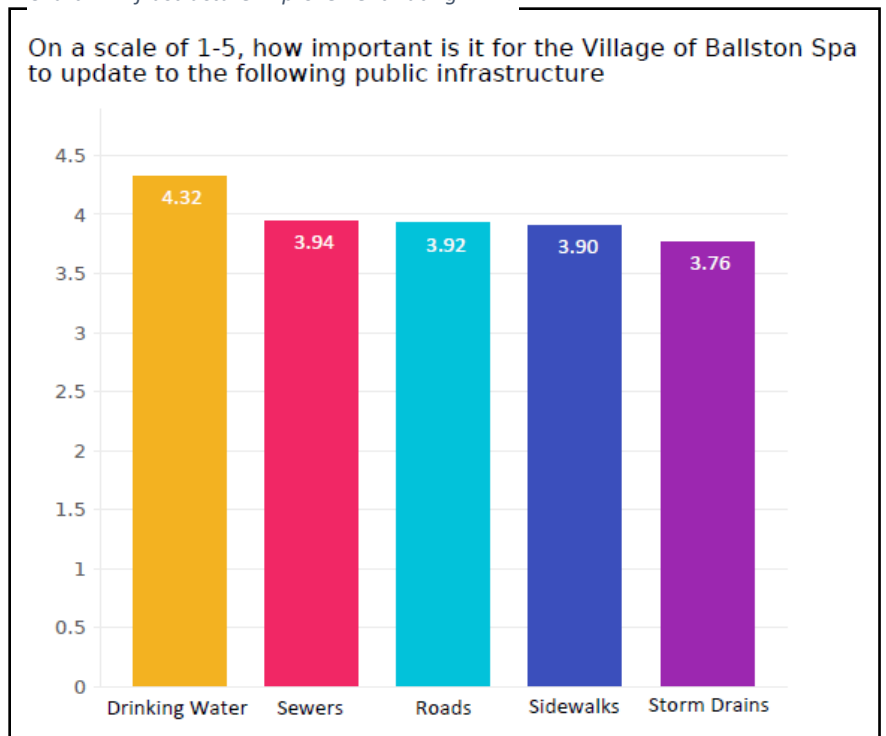


Chart 2 - Infrastructure Improvement Rating



About 82 percent of respondents said it is very important or moderately important for the village to take steps to address issues of climate change and protect itself from severe weather damage or dangers (flooding during intense storms, etc.).

Approximately 77 percent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the community’s buildings are such an important part of Ballston Spa’s image that design standards are needed for new development in order to maximize compatibility with existing structures.

Roughly 80 percent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that there is a need for improvement in the walkability (repair/add sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, etc.) of the entire village.

When asked which types of housing the village should encourage, most respondents were interested in single family homes (73 percent) or small, affordable starter homes (57 percent). It is striking that any type of multi-family housing received 27 percent or less of supportive responses, as seen in chart 1.

About 60 percent of respondents strongly agree or agree that allowing home-based businesses would be good for the village's economic development.

When rating needed public infrastructure improvements, all 5 categories were rated highly as chart 2 shows.

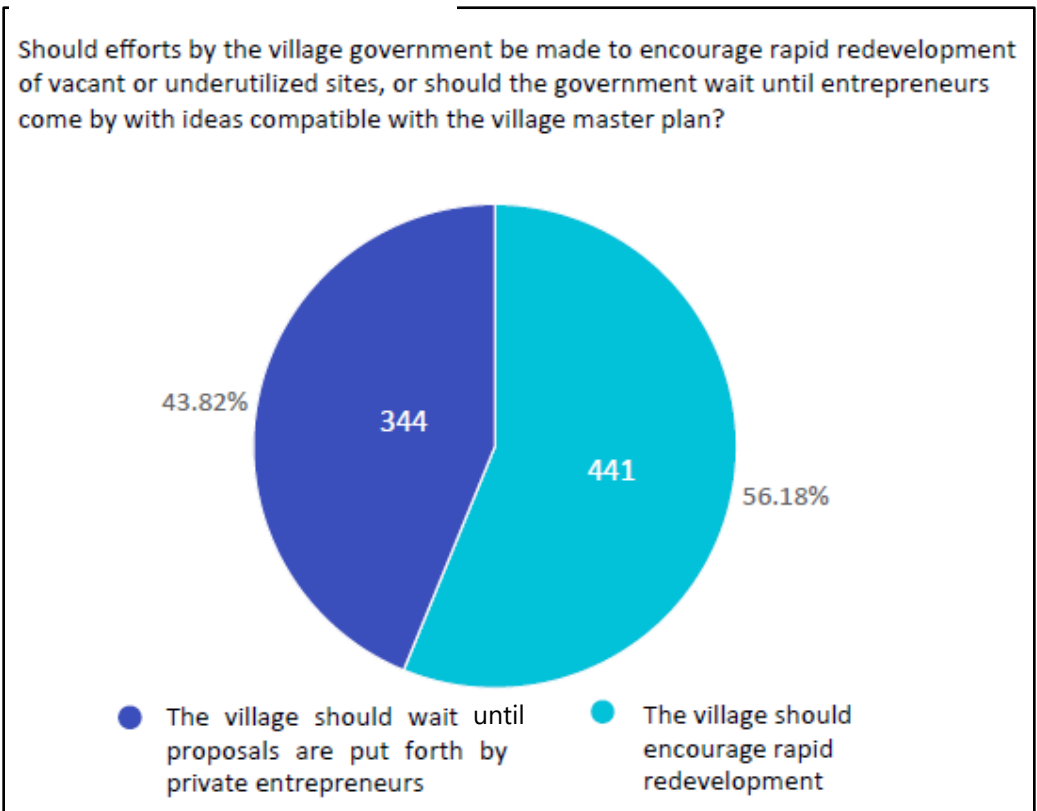
Roughly 78 percent of participants said it was very important or moderately important for the Village of Ballston Spa to take steps to actively promote or encourage the use of alternative energy sources for its municipal and community use.

Almost 83 percent of the survey respondents thought it is very or moderately important to enhance broadband internet access/options in the village.

There was one question where the survey respondents were split in their response, see chart 3. The question was about the pace of redevelopment of underutilized sites in the village.

Many people wrote in that there should have been a third option for this question which was more of a balance between the two - that it is not a binary issue.

Chart 3 - Development survey response



Feedback

Selected write-ins from the “any others” box at the end of the survey:

“A sidewalk on the south side of Prospect Street from The Factory to the fairgrounds with adequate lighting and trash receptacles is needed to provide a safe walking path to events at the fairgrounds. It is a major safety issue and an accident waiting to happen!”

“On another note, when I first moved here in 2002 the Christmas lights were all strung across the street and look very nice. They stopped doing that a few years later. You should really bring them back and make our town look very festive for the holiday season. That will attract others to come here and visit and shop.”

“The village should work on accessibility and ease of getting around town by bicycle and foot. As well as focus on outdoor recreational opportunities for the villagers and visitors.”

“I think updates to Kelley Park would be greatly appreciated by the residents. Basketball court, roller hockey rink, tennis court. Maybe utilize that empty fenced in area of the park between the pavilion and playground.”

“Change the zoning to allow for common sense development. The zoning in the village does not make any sense and is outdated. The sooner the zoning changes the faster new/improved development will occur.”

“Water lines in the village need massive repair NOW. Walk down Van Buren and you can see every house has dug up their line because it froze in the middle of the road. This should not be the homeowner’s responsibility that the village lines are so low they’re above the frost line. Unbelievable this hasn’t been addressed. Cost me \$15K last year!”

“Diverse businesses would be nice vs what is there. Encouraging different businesses. Encouraging upkeep of homes and businesses in the village. Better parking vs on street which fills.”

The full set of survey responses are in the appendix.



Visioning Workshop

On August 30, 2022, consultants and the village Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee held an in-person Visioning Workshop at the Saratoga County Office Building. Additionally, participants were also able to access the event on Zoom with two consultants from Behan online to facilitate the virtual meeting. Over 50 participants were in attendance for the in-person meeting and approximately 30 for the on-line session.

The consultants presented information on the meeting purpose, agenda, project schedule and similar information to orient any members of the public who were not part of the committee. Behan facilitated the presentation with an overview of the project to the community as well as an update on the progress of the committee to date and selected survey results from the recently closed Community Survey.

Attendants were broken up into several discussion groups in a round-table setting, each one having at least one Committee member. Virtual attendants followed the same procedure but worked together as one group.

Participants were given a 2-page worksheet when they signed into the meeting. This worksheet was created to facilitate the activity at each table group and asked participants to share thoughts based on the following questions/prompts, including:

1. What attributes do you think make the village an attractive place to visit, live, invest money or start a new business?
2. How would we like to enhance each of those attributes?
3. What 3 words might you use to describe your ideal future “vision” for Ballston Spa?

A Steering Committee or consultant team member served as the “lead volunteer” at each group table and took notes on behalf of the group. The role was to support the discussion of each group, help keep the conversation going, ask questions, and take additional notes.

After the completion of the table discussions, the participants were asked to come together again to share the responses and ideas that each group came up with. The “lead volunteer” from each discussion group recapped them for the audience.

After the workshop was concluded, Behan Planning and Design collected and organized the notes and public comments into a complete summary, which is provided in the Appendix. The ideas collected were used to create the vision and inform the development of the plan.



Poster for Public Workshop



Presentation at Visioning Workshop



Group participation at Visioning workshop



Land Use Vision

In order to plan for and promote the orderly growth and development of the village in keeping with the wishes of the community, a general plan for future land uses should be established. This plan has been graphically depicted in the Future Land Use Vision Map, shown on the page following. The Future Land Use Vision Map is not intended to act as a replacement for the zoning map, but it is instead designed to help inform the agenda of more detailed land use decisions which are made when the Village Zoning Map is updated. The vision map is intended to be used as a general guide to the broader goals of the community in making land use decisions, and as such, future zoning updates should be in general conformity with it.

The Future Land Use Vision Map is roughly broken down into nine different “character areas” which roughly represent the long-term goals of the community with respect to how different neighborhoods should develop. These character areas are described in more detail below.

Downtown Central Business District

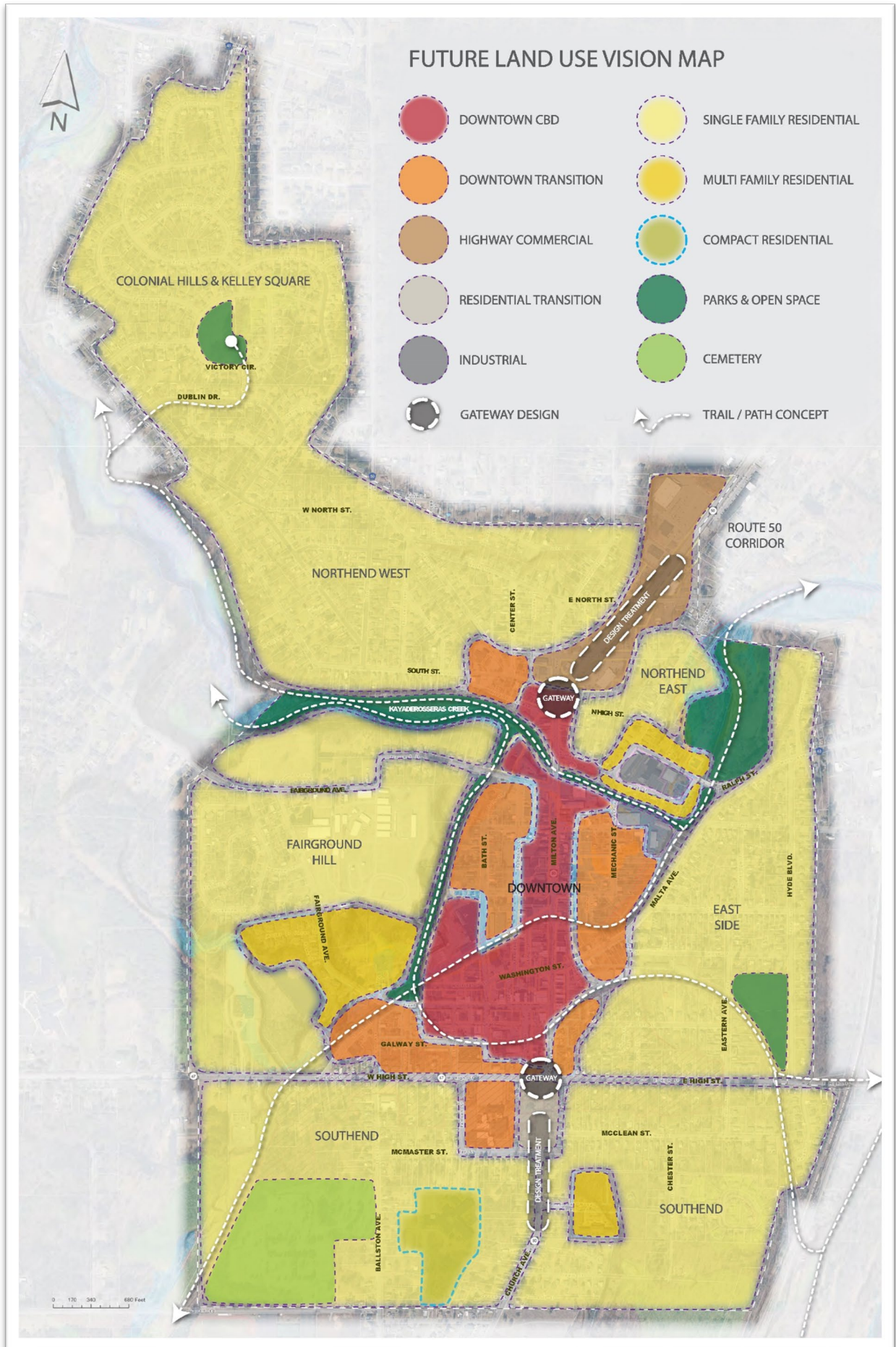
The Downtown Central Business District represents the commercial core of the village, and as such, is envisioned to have the densest commercial development, focused on pedestrian-oriented retail and mixed-use commercial uses with inviting, walkable sidewalks and engaging streetscapes, facades and public spaces. Buildings in this neighborhood are encouraged to maximize their use of the site, utilizing up to 100% of their parcel for building footprint and extending up to four stories in height, as compatible with neighboring development. The groupings of downtown buildings form the urban fabric of the center of the community, with multiple adjacent buildings working in concert to create a continuous urban street-wall of welcoming retail windows. Not only does this form reinforce the historic building patterns of the village, but it also shapes the outdoor spaces of our public realm where we gather as a community. For these reasons, the form, massing and relationship of buildings within the Downtown CBD is very important.

The first-floor ground level of buildings within the Downtown area should be commercial uses, ideally suited toward retail and/or service uses which primarily cater to locals but also are attractive to visitors and tourists. Some dwellings that are transitioning into commercial may offer the front rooms on the first floor of the building for commercial use and the rear portion for family use, due to their layout.

The ground floor facade should provide the highest level of transparency and fenestration to provide an open, inviting and well-lit commercial space along pedestrian sidewalks. Upper floors may contain any combination of commercial retail, service, office or residential uses.

As noted for the downtown vision above, the Schedule of Uses by Zoning District (Schedule A in the Zoning) should be expanded and modernized to increase the types of different uses allowed and provide more fine-grained control over where and how they are permitted. Understanding that the allowed uses in the CBD are not as important as the form and relationship of the buildings, the village should consider the adoption of a form-based code for this neighborhood.





"A Village of Friends"



Downtown Transition

The Downtown Transition neighborhood is intended to serve as a “transition” between the downtown core of the Central Business District and the surrounding residential neighborhoods while also allowing the commercial activity of the downtown room to grow. This neighborhood generally mirrors the extents of the existing R-2 zoning district, allowing a combination of residential, commercial and mixed-uses at a smaller scale and intensity than found in the CBD. Buildings here would be limited to not more than three stories, with building setbacks, massing and scale designed to be sensitive to the existing built environment of the neighborhood. Site design here would also include attention to highlighting and celebrating greenspace and urban landscape design, while limiting visibility of expansive areas for off-street parking and similar functions. The existing residential uses here would be augmented by smaller scale retail, offices, services, restaurants, home occupations and other commercial operations as properties redevelop. Due to its commercial nature and strong relationship with the CBD, the village may wish to consider a form-based code approach for the Downtown Transition district in conjunction with the CBD. However, teardowns of existing buildings should be discouraged. Every building that is torn down, or so neglected that it becomes obsolete, subtracts from the village image.

As part of the process for the zoning code update, it is recommended that zoning development workshops be conducted with property owners in the areas considered for Downtown Transition uses. This way, consensus can be developed toward the details of the zoning changes. Topics to be explored would include documentation of desired (and discouraged) elements of design character, building height, massing, permitted uses, special permit/provisional uses and prohibited uses.

Highway Commercial

The Highway Commercial neighborhood encompasses the Route 50 corridor coming into the northern outskirts of the village. This area is predominated by (and most suitable for) automobile-oriented commercial uses which would otherwise be inappropriate within the historic older blocks of the village. It is recommended that this neighborhood continue to serve this necessary purpose. This travel corridor represents one of the busiest gateways into the village, however the auto-centric uses with large front-yard parking areas and lack of lawn or landscaping do not typically present an attractive backdrop to create a welcoming gateway into the village. It is recommended that design guidelines or standards be developed specifically for this area to improve future redevelopment, and that corridor design treatments be developed which would visually tie the roadway together into a more consistent theme. These elements could include a consistent pattern of street trees, lighting, landscaped medians or similar design elements. These corridor design treatments and design guidelines would help to set a backdrop for the more “official” gateway into the village (described in more detail below). A similar corridor design treatment is recommended along the Route 50 corridor at the southern end of the village as you approach the southern gateway.

Residential Transition

The Residential Transition neighborhood reflects areas where older residential neighborhoods, which were once quieter streets, are slowly transitioning into small scale commercial offices as the roadways become more heavily traveled and the existing residential buildings are attractive for office and related uses. This transition can often be seen happening very slowly, where occasional existing single-family houses are converted into office space for a law office, dentist, realtor or similar use. The southern approach into the village along Route 50 approaching High Street is one example of this evolution. Allowing these conversions to occur, while maintaining the distinct look and feel of the original residential use, is very important to capture new economic



growth while protecting neighborhood character. If done correctly, the only visible change to the property is often a new commercial sign in front. The residential transition neighborhood is intended to capture and sensibly manage this gentle growth. Commercial uses allowed in this area would be mostly limited to professional offices with little impact to the surrounding neighborhood. Specific design standards for this area would be necessary to strictly limit and screen any off-street parking, provide attractive signage, accommodate ADA retrofits (which also allow seniors to age in place) and maintain the residential character of any converted property. Like the downtown transition area, this neighborhood is intended to provide a buffer between heavier downtown commercial uses and residential districts, however, is largely limited to working within conversions of former single or multi-family houses.

Industrial

The Industrial neighborhood represents areas where more specialized manufacturing, technology or light industry would be conducted. Appropriate buffers and performance standards would be established to help ensure compatibility with neighboring uses in this tight-knit setting. The industrial district is small, but flexibility in uses could be added to the zoning code (perhaps by special permit) so that buildings could be converted instead of sitting vacant.

Single Family Residential

The Single Family Residential character area represents the largest area of the village and defines the sections where single family residences are generally most suitable. These areas are most commonly attributable to the existing R-1 zoning district. Despite the reality that one generalized character area represents a majority of the village, there are many different types and scales of residential neighborhoods found in Ballston Spa—primarily based upon the history and economic setting when these sections were developed.

Older historic residential neighborhoods, with very small narrow lots, are visibly quite different from newer suburban developments with wider lots and larger building setbacks with many variations in between, like historic neighborhoods with broad lots and larger building setbacks. Despite this variation, the current zoning code does not reflect the actual built environment of many residential parts of the village and treats these different neighborhoods all the same in terms of dimensional setbacks, lot widths and heights.

In order to protect the existing character of these varied neighborhoods, a more fine-grained zoning approach is appropriate. It is recommended that the single family residential land use area adopt a more “context-based” approach to managing future neighborhood changes. A context-based approach would not only rely on a set of standard dimensional requirements but would additionally consider the surrounding context of existing houses to determine what is most appropriate for that portion of the village. Such an approach would alleviate the need to create many slightly different zoning districts and would potentially provide a much more customized and sensitive regulatory tool to maintaining neighborhood character. This system should also allow for more flexible integration of future accessory dwelling units.

Multi-Family Residential

The Multi-Family Residential land use areas represent areas which are generally more suitable for multi-family living, including duplexes and senior living. Priority goals in these areas should be working toward development of smaller-scale individual multi-unit construction, much like cottage courts, in lieu of larger apartment “boxes” which do not fit into the fabric of the historic village. Design standards and limitations should be considered for these areas to ensure that new development is in keeping with the desired scale and character of the village,



while still providing more efficient use of land and housing type diversity which meets the needs of younger residents, local workforce and seniors.

Compact Residential

The Compact Residential land use area is primarily intended to replace and support redevelopment of the unique former nursing home use at the Maplewood Manor property. This character area would be re-imagined as a denser single-family neighborhood with options for small lot detached homes, townhomes, cottage homes and similar compact, efficient layouts organized around useable open space such as a central “village green.” This redevelopment would aim for a residential density which equals or exceeds the older historic village residential neighborhood patterns. It is recommended that design standards for this neighborhood layout be established for site planning, buffering and architectural character.

It is recommended that this site be considered as part of a special conceptual design study during the zoning update. The study would more closely consider the level of density and housing form that would make both economic and community compatibility sense. It will be important that a sufficient lot count/unit count be achieved so that issues of real property tax, housing affordability, reasonable return, quality neighborhood design and open space amenities can all be appropriately addressed and balanced.

Parks And Open Space

The Parks and Open Space character area represents active and passive public parks or otherwise open natural areas which have been identified as important areas for conservation as well as potential linkages as part of an intra-village trail system. Trails along the creeks and connecting thru the village were noted as highly desirable by the committee.

Gateways

Two prominent “gateway” areas into the village are identified on the Future Land Use Map, at the northern and southern ends of the downtown commercial core. These two areas were selected to receive distinct landscaping, beautification and “Welcome to



Rendering of smaller, cottage-style homes in a compact residential setting.



Trail Building Teamwork. The Village of Pittsford has taken a collaborative approach for trail building, working closely with the Town of Pittsford and other partners to create an improved system that connects the village together, with the larger town and the region. Above the Erie Canalway Trail and below, screenshot of interactive trail map hosted by the town.



For trail related maintenance issues, please contact the Parks Department at (585) 248-6495. Any other concerns can be directed to the Department of Public Works at (585) 248-6250.

Trail
Sidewalk



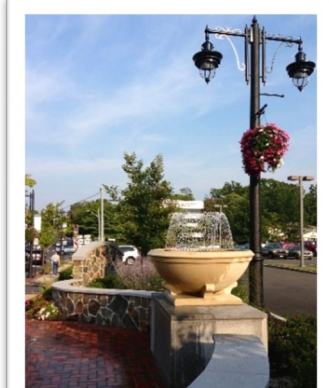
Ballston Spa Village” historic signage to celebrate the entry into the community and reinforce the village identity.

Gateway Concepts for Ballston Spa

Creating a visual cue as a “Welcome to Ballston Spa” can take several forms. For example, a simple, unified entry sign with landscaping would offer a low-cost option. Example below at the entrances to Central Nyack, an unincorporated hamlet in the Town of Clarkstown.



Images to the left illustrate how streetscape improvements can serve as a gateway treatment and add to community identity.



Water features and other architectural treatments can all be used to help create a gateway feature. Public art, like sculptural elements, could be an interesting way to celebrate Ballston Spa’s identity.



Community Goals and Implementation Framework

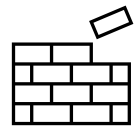
The intent of the Steering Committee is to set achievable goals that are ambitious in nature to propel the prosperity and livability for all socio-economic classes of the community in a positive direction. The committee ran through various action statements that were created to incorporate most of the issues discussed during past year of committee meetings. The committee discarded concepts deemed not viable and rated others based on their immediacy. The committee also assigned the goals as short, medium, long term or ongoing. In general, a short term goal should be accomplished within 3 years’ time, a medium within 5 years and a long term goal in 10 years’ time. The resulting framework that follows has goal statements with potential implementation steps listed beneath and selected potential funding sources identified.

Two priority projects are identified (and outlined in yellow dashed lines) to get the ball rolling toward implementation. The first is a zoning code update and design guidelines that will have village-wide effects (goal #1 and #2). The second priority project is continuing the Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) process as it is a phased process that can potentially have farther reaching effects than the discreet contaminated land parcels identified (see goal #20).

(Note—there are literally dozens of state and federal grant programs that may be applicable to these categories of activities-- a more detailed evaluation of grant program eligibility will be an important task for advancing each goal of the comprehensive plan in the coming months and years.)

COLOR KEY - SHORT TERM goals in red, MEDIUM TERM in purple, LONG TERM in green, ONGOING in blue

Built Environment & Land Use



SHORT TERM

PRIORITY PROJECT #1

1. Include flexibility in zoning

The process and product for the updated zoning law should be advanced with community buy-in. Allowing flexibility in uses and area requirements, while also requiring the character and charm of existing buildings and uses to be retained, will make zoning more generally accepted and allow for enforcement.

For instance, it would be helpful to explore creative ways to address existing non-conforming uses. Uses that can provide proof of continuous active existence and documentation of no adverse effect on neighboring properties of the village, or the village as a whole, could be provisionally allowed to continue by special permit or similar mechanism. The burden of proof should fall on the applicant and not the village.

Steps to move forward with the zoning initiative include:

- Create a small ad-hoc committee to oversee zoning update process.
- Hire a consultant to help manage the project and draft recommended zoning changes.
- Conduct public outreach for community input, especially in neighborhoods where significant changes are discussed.



- Revise zoning law.
- Adopt revised zoning law.

Potential Funding: Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) Community Planning/Linkages Program. Several New York State agencies (NYSDEC, NYSDOS, etc. have programs that can often support zoning activities related to each agency’s respective program goals (e.g., climate resiliency, energy conservation, etc.). (As well, the village may wish to update the zoning code independently without the time and scope constraints imposed by state/federal grant program requirements.)

2. Develop design guidelines

Basic zoning codes often fall short in guiding growth and change in a community. Zoning codes typically do not make clear what a successful, compatible design looks like, and similarly, often fail to prohibit projects that detract from the community assets. Develop design standards and guidelines to help inform reviewing boards, officials and property owners design and build projects that maintain and enhance village character and community assets. The inclusion of design guidelines for the Historic District would be of particular importance as well as for other important districts in the village including, but not limited to, the Central Business District. (Ideally, the design guidelines element would be integrated into the zoning scope of work if time and funding permits.)

- Create a committee to oversee the process of creating design guidelines.
- Hire a consultant to research existing conditions, conduct outreach for input and create recommended design guidelines for each zone.
- Revise and add to the zoning law.
- Publish guidelines for widespread use.

Potential Funding: Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) Community Planning/Linkages Program. New York State Council on the Arts, Preservation League of New York State.

3. Strengthen property maintenance code/enforcement

To promote pride in maintaining property and discourage exploitation, property maintenance should be more strongly codified in village law including enhanced enforcement provisions to address neglect, failed maintenance and safety concerns of properties.

- Clarify responsibility for property maintenance and occupant conduct by property owners and, to the extent practicable, tenants.
- Establish periodic inspections of rental units to ensure safety, maintenance, elimination of overcrowding, and other conditions that will devalue a building beyond its usefulness.

ONGOING

4. Encourage compatibility with local character

Ensure building and site development is designed to be compatible with the scale and desired character of the community. Of particular importance is along entrance routes, the downtown and historic districts to maintain the image of a friendly, approachable community. Promote the village’s older architecture and spruce up the traveled gateways.

- Integrate a human scale factor into zoning and design guidelines (i.e., appropriate heights and setbacks) when addressing goals #1 and 2 above.
- Strengthen guidelines for adaptive reuse of older buildings.
- Plan and design gateways into village areas along Route 50.

Potential Funding: Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) Community Planning/Linkages Program.



5. Enhance delivery of building/code enforcement services

Strengthen code enforcement services so that the evolving needs of the community can be best addressed. These services may include, but not be limited to, proactive review and enforcement for property safety and maintenance issues, conservation of historic architectural resources during, and, once a new zoning law is enacted. Proactive enforcement is key so owners and potential investors will know their investments will be protected.

- Set up training sessions with village staff for inspectors once the design guidelines and zoning law have been updated.
- Redo training whenever laws/codes are updated/changed.

Open Space and Recreation

SHORT TERM

6. Encourage street trees and landscaped areas

Street trees, greenbelts between sidewalks and the street, lawn and landscape plantings, flower gardens and other planted and naturalized areas contribute greatly to the character and ecologic diversity of the village. Maintaining, and where feasible, expanding areas for these green spaces is encouraged as it helps unify the built environment by pulling together varying architecture and uses in the village and projects a comfortable image. Include generous landscape plantings and trees in site plans and along village streets.

- Implement the recently completed Village of Ballston Spa Urban Forest Management Plan. Especially the planting of new street trees at locations identified in the plan.
- Enlist volunteers to do a green inventory of other existing village landscape/green spaces for potential enhancement (for example the Ballston Spa Garden Club has transformed the area near Iron Spring from a forlorn and neglected patch into a beautiful, landscaped feature.)
- Use inventory to assess and create guidelines of appropriate landscape treatments for civic, commercial and residential areas.

Potential Funding: NYS DEC Urban and Community Forestry Grants

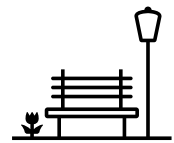
LONG TERM

7. Expand recreation resources for village parks

Development of underused parks (e.g., Victory Circle, rear of the swimming pool) and expansion of opportunities for residents and visitors to engage in recreation can provide parallel benefits in increasing local business and commerce as well as provide inherent health benefits to residents. Enhance sidewalk and pathway connections to parks and recreation resources between neighborhoods and the Central Business District of the village. Revitalize springs with updated infrastructure (Iron Spring, Wiswall, Sans Souci).

- Complete a detailed parks inventory and village-wide parks and recreation master plan.
- Implement plan (or phases of plan) when funding allows.

Potential funding: Environmental Protection Fund Grant Program for Parks, Preservation and Heritage – Parks Program



8. Creek-side Greenway Trail additions

Work with neighborhoods and other partners to create plans for greenway trails connecting village neighborhoods along the Gordon and Kayaderosseras Creeks and along former railroad and other corridors. As feasibility is confirmed and funding is available, construct trails along these corridors. Important connections may include a pedestrian bridge over the Kayaderosseras tying the North End to the Tedesco Trail and downtown, and a linkage to the Zim Smith Trail.

- Complete a detailed assessment and plan for village-wide trails system.
- Prepare feasibility studies and secure funding for design and construction of trail sections prioritized in phases.
- Implement plan (or phases of plan) when funding allows.

Potential funding: U.S. DOT Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Recreational Trails Program, Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) Community Planning/Linkages Program. (See Capital District Trails Plan for longer list of funding sources.)

Housing



SHORT TERM

9. Accommodate affordable housing opportunities.

Consider appropriate mechanism in the zoning code to permit accessory dwelling units throughout the village. Recognize opportunities to be responsive to potential population increase from outside the region due to “climate migration” from coastal areas, etc. and provide infrastructure and services to accommodate migrants from climate damaged locations. Allow housing variety in some neighborhoods from mixed use to solely single families, to accommodate accessory living units with sensible restrictions in some residential neighborhoods, especially in larger houses, as a percentage of the primary residence (in preparation for state mandates) and permit home/retail businesses on lower Milton Ave, Bath St., and other area streets.

- Zoning to enhance affordable housing goal can be integrated with goals #1 & 2 above.
- Identify priority neighborhoods for housing rehabilitation and secure grant funding to assist property owners in creating quality housing units.

Potential funding: Several programs from NYS Homes and Community Renewal including Community Development Block Grant program.

10. Manage short-term rentals to ensure compatibility with neighborhood.

Short term rentals (like Airbnb) can be a positive use to ensure sufficient accommodations for visitors, however, it is recognized that most of the adverse effects of these uses relate to management issues and inappropriate guest behavior. Review village code and strengthen policies and enforcement methods as appropriate including:

- Consideration of a registry system for property owners to facilitate communication with village code enforcement.
- Review requirements for off-street parking and other related needs.
- Address any necessary modifications to noise ordinance enforcement policies in collaboration with the Village of Ballston Spa Police.
- Assess fine/fee schedule to make implementation sustainable.



MEDIUM TERM

11. Strengthen community connectedness

Support a sense of community through a few housing-related initiatives.

- Seek financial incentives to promote owner-residents in two family properties.
- Create a registry of individuals responsible for apartments.
- Involve developers in community affairs and measure the demand for unconventional homes.
- Support work-at-home with high-speed internet and co-working space.

Potential funding: Several programs from NYS Homes and Community Renewal including Community Development Block Grant program.

Historic Preservation



SHORT TERM

12. Develop historic design guidelines

Develop, publish and distribute historic design guidelines specific to Ballston Spa that can be used to inform building owners of best practices in preserving the historic appeal of their properties, as well as assisting the Historic District Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals in carrying out the Historic District Law.

- Hire a consultant to research existing conditions, conduct outreach for input and create recommended historic design guidelines.
- Publish guidelines for widespread use and produce educational materials for village officials and residents to gain a greater understanding of preserving the village’s image through historic preservation

Potential Funding: Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) Community Planning/Linkages Program. New York State Council on the Arts, Preservation League of New York State. NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation EPF Grant.

MEDIUM TERM

13. Obtain National Registry status

Pursue National Registry status for as much of the village as possible so building owners can benefit from preservation by receiving tax credits and other incentives.

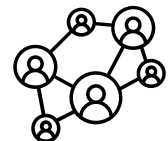
- Conduct outreach to building owners about the tax credits and other incentives of being listed on the National Register.

ONGOING

14. Develop files on every historic property in the village.

Members of the Historic District Commission, Planning and Zoning Boards, Code Enforcer and Village Historian should meet to develop files on every historic property in the village.

Social Considerations



SHORT TERM

15. Modernize/enhance administration of village services

Open communication among government, businesses and residents is important for a cohesive community. It is imperative that the village get current, then continue to stay current, up to modern best



practices, with systems and training for online and electronic tools used by the village government and appropriate access/communication with residents. This will facilitate responsiveness to infrastructure concerns, bill paying, emergencies, accomplishments and needs, soliciting volunteers, and the like.

16. Expand youth and senior community interaction

Government should continue to partner and, where appropriate, expand partnerships with village non-profits to engage new residents, youth and seniors and to encourage social and cultural institutions and organizations to offer activities for all in the region.

- Create an ad-hoc committee for community, youth and senior outreach and engage with other partners for a coordinated effort (e.g., Ballston Area Recreation Commission, village etc.)
- Committee will conduct outreach to individuals in order to increase participation in government.
- Committee will connect non-profits to youth, new residents and seniors and encourage new programming.

ONGOING

17. Promote village messaging and continued strategic planning

Continue the planning process by periodically reviewing and articulating 1) a simple message that encapsulates a desired community image, 2) a strategic plan that covers village operations and assigns responsibility, including DPW priorities and citizen communication.

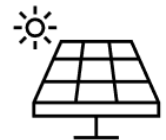
- Create an advisory group for periodic review of the messaging and strategic planning.
- Set up a schedule to reconvene the advisory group.

18. Encourage broader participation on village boards and committees

The village should continue to explore ways to encourage broader participation on village boards and committees.

- Enhanced communication of committees, their charters and membership, and openings.
- An appointment process that provides for equal consideration of any interested parties.
- Expanded accessibility to all committee/board meetings through video conferencing technology.

Information Technology & Climate Change



LONG TERM

19. Embrace smart technology across village

Embrace “Smart Technology” in government buildings and street lighting, assist residents to harness renewable energy and switch from fossil fuels.

- Conduct an audit of all technology needs and opportunities with village buildings/infrastructure.
- Support work-at-home villagers with co-working space and advocacy for investments in high-speed internet by communication companies/funding agencies.
- Create a plan and budget for phased change over to smart technology

Potential funding: NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities Grants, NYS EFC Green Innovation Grant, NY Power Authority Smart Street Lighting & Smart City Technology Grant Program.

ONGOING

20. Encourage alternative energy compatible with local character

Without sacrificing aesthetics, ensure local laws will not unreasonably restrict residents from producing their own electric power from renewable resources.



- Plan for alternative energy while creating updating the zoning law and creating design guidelines mentioned in goals #1 and #2.

Economic Considerations



SHORT TERM

21. Create action plan to promote Ballston Spa locally

In addition to regional marketing, the village should work to realize the full potential of thousands of surrounding residences, a school district with almost 5,000 students and staff, and hundreds of Saratoga County employees and visitors.

- Create ad-hoc committee or work directly with the Ballston Spa Business & Professional Association (BSBPA) to create an ongoing program to reach out to village institutions and other local users.

Potential Funding: Market New York – Tourism Grant Program, Empire State Development.

22. Upgrade downtown visitor infrastructure (rest rooms, public parking, wayfinding, trail connections, streetscape improvements)

Add infrastructure to downtown including maps, signage to parking lots, charging stations, sidewalk repairs and extension of the Zim Smith Trail and other attractions throughout the village. Seek State tourism dollars.

- Create committee to oversee downtown revitalization program development
- Hire a consultant to create an inventory, conduct public outreach and identify sites for infrastructure improvements.
- Design signage to direct visitors to the amenities
- Prioritize streetscape improvements for downtown area with overall infrastructure capital improvement program.

Potential Funding: NYS DOS Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI), NYS Department of Transportation TAP-CMAQ Program, NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities Grants

MEDIUM TERM

23. Upgrade downtown visitor infrastructure

Make public bathrooms available downtown.

- Identify sites for public facilities.

Potential funding: NYS DOS Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI)

LONG TERM

PRIORITY PROJECT #2

24. Utilize Brownfield Opportunity Area for redevelopment

Village of Ballston Spa has been awarded a \$153,000 competitive grant from the New York Department of State Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Program for a BOA Nomination Plan in December of 2021. The study will focus on what are called ‘brownfield’ sites that may or may not have contamination associated with them – such as vacant buildings or properties that have the potential for redevelopment – like the industrial space at 125 Bath Street. The BOA encompasses key sites downtown between the



two creeks. The idea behind the BOA program is to identify key properties that can revitalize the surrounding area when they are redeveloped.

- Create a committee and hire a consultant to develop the BOA Nomination Plan.
- Prioritize areas for redevelopment within the BOA to create transformative redevelopment of the central core of the village, increase access to waterfront property, and return underutilized properties to productive use.
- Prepare a Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study in compliance with the NYSDOS brownfield redevelopment program.
- Request BOA designation from the Secretary of State. This official designation allows developers who are participating in the voluntary Brownfield Cleanup Program to receive a tax credit “bump-up” to redevelop the sites in a manner that is consistent with the community’s vision and Secretary-approved plan.

ONGOING

25. Implement strategic marketing program for village

Strategic planning is necessary to exploit the village’s location in the Capital Region and proximity to Saratoga Springs by emphasizing its walkable downtown, unique shops and eateries, built and natural environments.

- Create a Strategic Planning Committee.
- Implement the marketing strategy in the recently completed village Economic Development Plan. The plan’s Action Matrix laid out strategies and stakeholders/leaders to carry them out.

Potential Funding: NYS Department of Economic Development Strategic Planning and Feasibility Studies grant, NYS Empire State Development Grant Funds

26. Encourage compatibility with local character

Policies should support investors who work within the architectural and business framework of the village.

- Integrate clear policies when implementing goals #1 and #2.

27. Encourage expansion of commerce and attractions in the Central Business District

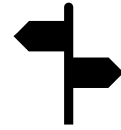
Develop a formal expansion plan for the Central Business District by creating interesting loops for shoppers/diners to roam. Identify sites for investment/business development: Make room for growth of the retail sector by extending the retail district the length of Front and Washington Streets (open the underpass at Iron Spring Park), down Bath Street and up Malta Avenue to Pine Street. Select areas for longer term parking. Help finance improvements, such as street lighting, in an expanded downtown, with a downtown Business Improvement District.

- Discuss expansion of the business district with a Downtown Revitalization Committee (mentioned in goal #18).
- Updated zoning to allow retail use extension (mentioned in goal #1).
- Gauge interest in a Business Improvement District (BID) among the village businesses.

Potential funding: New York Main Street Program (HCR NYMS), NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI).



Transportation



SHORT TERM

28. Create and implement an ADA Transition Plan

Transition the public right of way to be ADA compliant to allow free use for all (and allow seniors to age in place).

- Identify and evaluate structural barriers in the public right-of-way including curb ramps, sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signals, pedestrian accessible transit stops, multi-use trails and business entrances.
- Schedule and implement improvements, where structurally feasible, to remove or mitigate the impact of those barriers.

Potential funding: NYS DRI, HUD through NYS Governor’s Office for Small Cities

29. Improve walkability of the village

- Address issues with unmaintained or nonexistent sidewalk coverage through review and revision of the sidewalk code.
- Repair and replace sidewalks in accordance with the enforcement of a newly developed sidewalk code.
- Increase pedestrian safety with more painted crosswalks, signage, and signals, where applicable.
- Develop a three-to-five-year sidewalk improvement plan concentrating on high pedestrian traffic areas.

Potential fund: HUD Community Development Block Grant program.

30. Improve public transportation access

- Work with CDTA to add bus shelters on Route 50.
- Work with CDTA to add back bus service to Ballston Spa that was cut by 50% during/after the pandemic.

Potential fund: CDTA, CDTC, NYS DOT

MEDIUM TERM

31. Adopt a Complete Streets Policy so that transportation projects include consideration for all users, in addition to automobiles

- The Village Board should adopt a Complete Streets code to ensure that, during the municipal decision-making process, the needs of all types of transportation (i.e. pedestrians, cyclists, mass transit) are at least considered.
- Village should adopt the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan policy and standards.

32. Develop a comprehensive streetscape plan for the Central Business and Commercial Districts

- Develop a streetscape plan with public wayfinding signage and maps to identify places of interest, public parking, trails, shopping loops, historic locations, and businesses.
- Create a parking plan for the Central Business District.

33. Make electric vehicle (EV) charging stations available for visitors and residents

- EV charging stations should be made available in the downtown area for resident and visitor use. Visitors who have traveled a distance can recharge their cars while downtown or walking around the neighborhoods.



Potential funding: NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities Grants, NY Power Authority Smart City Technology Grant Program.

LONG TERM

34. Add bicycle infrastructure

- Implement recommendations in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan.

Potential funding: Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) Community Planning/Linkages Program.

Infrastructure, Village Properties, and Staffing



MEDIUM TERM

35. Update water system/management program

Increase efficiency of wells, pumps and storage systems, and root out leaks.

- Hire consultant who will create a digitized map of the water system from wells to user laterals.
- Install system to digitize water distribution, including meters that do not need to be read.

Potential funding: NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation.

36. Update sewer system/management program

Digitally map the sewer system to eliminate crossovers with the stormwater system and provide developers with accurate capacity estimates.

- Hire consultant who will create a digitized map of the sewer system.
- Create plan to eliminate crossover with the stormwater system.

Potential funding: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC).

LONG TERM

37. Expert mapping of the flood plain

Digitally map the flood plain in the village in order to petition FEMA to amend the flood maps in part of the village, as not all of the village has seen flooding.

- Hire consultant who will create a digitized map of the flood plain.

Potential Funding: NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC).

ONGOING

38. Consider separate “enterprise funding” for water and for sewer

Separate water and sewer budgeting where feasible/desirable from other village finances (recognizing outside village revenues provide a flexible budget line for the village to address other important village needs.)

- Rework village budget to separate out water and sewer.
- Fund repairs and improvements in both systems, and work with the County to develop a joint sewer permit application.

Potential Funding: New York State Community Development Block Grant Program (HCR CDBG), NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation.



39. Create unified capital improvement program for all infrastructure

Capital funds should be established and generously funded for separate purposes: water, sewer, streets and sidewalks, stormwater management, and buildings and grounds towards a unified capital improvement plan.

- Village should continue to lead a capital improvement programming process on an expanded basis. Analyze existing funding revenues and ways to set aside capital funds for the broad range of infrastructure needs in collaboration with department heads.
- Meet twice yearly to assess progress.
- Secure funding for development of capital improvement program.

Potential funding: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation.

40. Create village facilities capital improvement program

Develop a plan that will attack delayed maintenance of village buildings with a major emphasis of repairing the Police/Court Building and Department of Public Works (DPW) garage, firehouses, etc., find more room for the Justice Court, provide toilets and heat to the Village Hall's upper floors, assess feasibility of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility improvements, and, if necessary, construct new facilities.

- Form a committee with DPW and facilities managers at each departmental building.
- Create a multi-year maintenance plan, using the 2021 Ballston Spa DPW Capital Project Plan as a starting point.
- Meet twice yearly to assess progress.

Potential funding: New York State Community Development Block Grant Program (HCR CDBG).

41. Consider specialized staff

The village will better address challenges if dedicated responsibility can be assigned to specially trained employees relating to issues of management, the spectrum of IT issues, communications and repair of equipment and buildings, advance community development, housing and infrastructure needs.

- Create a committee to assess which departments/positions would benefit from specialized staff.

42. Prepare village-wide stormwater management/enhancement plan

- Complete the digital mapping of the stormwater system begun by Cornell Cooperative Extension Saratoga County.
- Begin a process of repairing faulty basins and regular cleaning.
- Identify streets that need drainage and opportunities to divert stormwater away from the system.
- Educate the public about keeping debris out of collection basins.
- Ready the village for the impending DEC audit of the system.
- Map natural springs and how their waters flow to the creeks and modify the confluence of the Gordon and Kayaderosseras to minimize flooding.

Potential funding: NYS DEC Non-Agricultural Nonpoint Source Planning and MS4 Mapping Grant, NYS AGM Community Resiliency Training Programs, NYS EFC Green Innovation Grant Program.



Organization for Implementation

It is appropriate that implementation of the comprehensive plan be managed by the village board with assignments of follow up tasks as necessary and appropriate. This comprehensive plan suggests some potential expanded committee development, recognizing that securing volunteer resources in the village will not be without its challenges, but will meet the stated goal of increasing participation in government.

In looking ahead, it may be helpful for the village to establish a more formal planning and community development function within the village administration. This could be staffed on an interim, part-time basis through a consulting arrangement. That function may initially be focused on technical services to support grant-writing tasks. Over the long term, a full department could be developed, with sustaining revenues for staff coming from administration and program delivery services associated with grant-funded projects.

This plan expires in 10 years. At that time a comprehensive planning process must be restarted, and a full review done.

This plan must be put into action. The goals of this plan should be reviewed yearly by the Village Board to assess what has, and has not, been accomplished. Getting projects completed will be the measure of the success of this Comprehensive Plan. Continuing to work together will be imperative to ensure that the benefits envisioned for the community set forth in this plan are secured.

Conclusion

The Comprehensive Plan took into consideration the village's unique history, identity, character, and values while addressing each aspect of the village. By utilizing previous reports, undertaking substantial community outreach, and balancing the needs of residents and businesses to foster the community's vision, the Comprehensive Plan will serve to guide the future of the Village of Ballston Spa for the benefit of current and future generations.



APPENDIX

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Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee Meeting Summaries

Ballston Spa's Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee has discussed major topics the village will face over the next 10 to 15 years. Below are summaries of each area which has been explored.

GOVERNMENTAL BUILT INFRASTRUCTURE

December 2021

The village must first inventory its properties and determine priorities of what is needed. There should be a strategic plan carried out over a 5, 10, to 15-year period. It is imperative to move to proactive planning for maintenance, which requires a major shift in the culture of the village. Departments have been operating as they are for a long time. It will require a sustained effort, not unlike turning a ship. To ask for money from grants and taxpayers, the village must define what needs to be done. To be proactive there must be resources. A capital fund should be created in budgets to be carried over from year to year.

UNCONTROLLED FORCES OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE:

January 2022

As various climate change impacts (to the village) manifest themselves, village leaders should devise a process identifying actions to prevent or minimize adverse effects and exploit the positives. The village must develop a holistic IT Plan that centers around a position responsible for operating, updating, and securing all the uses of IT by the village and for on-going training of village employees. The Plan needs to be updated periodically, as technology changes. (A secondary issue was discussed concerning the need for greater intergenerational connections. While a non-governmental issue, village organizations will have to segue from assumptions born in an analog/paper world to an electronic reality.)

BUILT ENVIRONMENT OF THE VILLAGE

February 2022

The variety of architectural styles in the village create the image of the community and attracts people to visit, live in, and invest in the village. The village's significant green canopy should be protected. There needs to be an effort to inform property owners of valuable aspects of their properties and to present guidelines for them to follow. Esthetics are very important, and the village's historic appearance should be protected and, especially, through enforcement of existing codes. While there is a need for restrictive laws to protect properties and investments downtown and in the historic district, regulations should not be so restrictive as to discourage people wanting to move to or invest in the village to enhance its image.

The current village code seems not to conform with the realities of a village that has grown over generations. The code should be broad and general and not too restrictive and designed to keep character and charm of properties.

HOUSING

March 2022

Serious enforcement of realistic codes is necessary to preserve the character of this village, which contains people of a wide socio-economic range, and to improve residents' quality of life. The expansion of uses in residential areas by allowing, in appropriate neighborhoods, home businesses, work from home opportunities, accessory residential structures, accessory apartments, Airbnb rentals,

etc. will make housing more affordable for homeowners, provide lower income housing for young people, seniors, and those of modest means.

To prevent this flexibility from being exploited by residents, absentee landlords, and large corporate entities, state and (to be devised) local property maintenance codes must be proactively enforced. To be successful in a village, enforcement should begin with incentives and rapid response to small infractions like trash-strewn lawns, un-shoveled sidewalks and excessive noise, involving the homeowner, landlord, and/or tenant.

UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

April 2022

Village information technology needs to be more sophisticated to facilitate accessible, easy-to-find information, and trusted communication between residents and government (in both directions), and delivery of services. It should be used as a tool to keep track of infrastructure, how it is utilized, and can be improved. Rapid technological change requires the village to have an operating IT plan that is updated periodically. Residents need high-speed access to the internet.

The overall management of infrastructure of the village, not just water and sewer, will benefit by expanding and formalizing the ad hoc DPW capital plan, and updating it and resetting priorities periodically. Design requirements for buildings should prepare property owners for the shift in state and federal government energy policies, by encouraging green practices and promote mindfulness of restrictions in village infrastructure to minimize future tax burdens. Until those latter requirements are in place, potential weaknesses should be addressed on an interim basis.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

May 2022

After addressing immediate concerns of sanitary crossovers and failing catch basins, a full-system audit of the storm sewer system is to be done, followed by a capital plan to support the measures identified in the audit. As time, money, and talent permit, modern evaporation, storage, and absorption techniques can be constructed, given limitations of soil types in the village.

ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

June 2022

A village position can be created to focus on public affairs and communicate with residents as well as businesses. The ideal would be an apolitical person who understands the ins and outs of the village and is not only able to help people navigate policies but advocate for changes when needed.

Ballston Spa is centrally located within the region's economic activity. Saratoga County is prosperous and growing. Ballston Spa distinguishes itself as a residential oasis in which people can still afford to buy a home and residents value the village, the school, and the community. The region's population has moved up the Northway from Albany to the point where Exit 12 is an acceptable drive to and from the Albany area. These factors support our downtown and determine demand for housing. The continued economic health of the village requires we build on these strengths.

SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

July 2022

Collaboration, not just between government and organizations but among organizations, is important to foster communication among residents and supporters of the village and improve village amenities and

delivery of services. Whether accomplished through a paid liaison or otherwise, a robust, inter-related network of non-profits is essential to bring up-coming generations into leadership positions in the government and community. As the volunteer base increases, so will the known talent pool for governmental positions, allowing them to turn over regularly.

LAND USE

September 2022

Another topic that came up in the visioning session was how the parks, streams and green spaces give the village its uniqueness. Does it make sense to have industrial zones along the Kayaderosseras? Perhaps a linear park can be established along the creek connecting the business area at the Blue Mill Bridge to the north end of the village. Opportunities along the creeks have yet to be studied. A conservation overlay area encompassing flood plain along the creeks could be placed in the zoning law. There seems to be a demand to allow home businesses, accessory units, and Airbnbs in residential zones.

A common theme seems to be to promote responsibility for property and its use which is tied into promoting home ownership over absentee ownership. A partial solution might be to require the occupant of the primary residential unit (if there is one) to be responsible for complying with the zoning, conduct, and maintenance codes.

LAND USE #2

October 2022

It was noted when talking of community character that most residents want to keep things the way they are, and guidelines in the code will help. There seems to be a consensus in neighborhoods that Ballston Spa should not try to be like another communities. There is a wide variety among village neighborhoods, some may be amenable to have businesses operating from homes, others not. It will be imperative to obtain the views of residents when considering land use changes.

PRIORITY ISSUES

October 2022

The committee was led through 30 various statements incorporating most all the issues discussed during past meetings. The committee discarded concepts deemed not viable and rated others based on their immediacy. The discussion resulted in the creation of 11 short term, 4 medium term, 3 long term and 12 ongoing goals.

Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Consult the [index](#) at the end of this section to search the minutes by topic.

Village Board & Comp Plan Comm Meeting July 13, 2021

Attending: Ben Baskin; John Cromie, Dick Duffy, Paul Farnan; Christine Fitzpatrick, Buddy Glastetter; Liz Kormos, Karen Martell, Peter Martin, Ellen Mottola; and Larry Woolbright
Absent: Ashley Christman; Nafeesa Koslik; Shawn Raymond; and Spencer Tacy
Also Attending: Rory O'Connor and Bob Cavanaugh

After several rounds of general discussions relating to expectations, methods, and roles of the committee and board and the process of working with consultants, members of the committee focused on how the committee will interface with the consultant.

Opinions about the committee's degree of involvement ranged from moderate but active participation to intensive involvement

The resulting consensus was that the committee should meet with the consultant once a month and between those meetings, it will meet without the consultant to finalize conclusions from the prior meeting, if need be, and to prepare for the topics of the next meeting with the consultant.

While it is recognized that the consultant will be offering subjects for discussion, the committee will also bring topics to the table. It was suggested that the committee may benefit from developing a wide range of study topics and then prioritize those which will become part of the comprehensive plan. Also it was noted the committee must be vigilant to prevent the use of boilerplate by consultants

It was agreed members of the public should have a major participatory role in meetings to compensate when various committee members cannot attend meetings. While the Village Board is the final decision maker, it was observed the committee will act in the role of overseer.

Meetings will be in evenings and a hybrid of in-person and Zoom to allow more public participation and out-of-town committee members to join in. Meetings should not last more than an hour. Minutes are to be taken.

It was decided that the two consultants selected by individual committee members, Planning 4 Places and M.J. Engineering and Land Surveying be invited to interview with the Board and Committee on July 29, from 6:30 to 8:30. Each group will have 10 minutes for a presentation and 35 minutes will be set aside for Q&A. Committee members are to develop questions independently.

Topics for discussion: September 9, 2021

INFRASTRUCTURE

- I Develop infrastructure plans for water, sewer, storm sewers, buildings, streets, parks, pool, well fields, water tower, DPW equipment.
- I Infrastructure needs for electric cars & private/public cooperation
- I Insure a more than adequate electronic infrastructure to provide residents and businesses the highest rates of coverage and data transfer possible.
- I Water and sewer systems are vital concerns
- I Effects of climate change on infrastructure.

STORM WATER MANAGEMENT:

- SW Setting up a storm water management program and position village to obtain federal infrastructure grants.
- SW Storm water is a priority
- SW Reevaluate flood plain and widening channel of Gordon Creek. How Fooths Pond and Kelley Park can be used to minimize flooding.
- SW Look into use of green roofs and rain gardens
- SW Ability of soil types in village to drain water.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- BE Maintaining the historic character of the village
- BE Parking (throughout the village)
- BE Promoting the village's multi-century, built environment and preventing teardowns as land becomes more valuable.
- BE Zoning and other statutes should require cleaner energy facilities be designed into improvements.
- BE Esthetics are important
- BE Vacant buildings can be a blight. They also can benefit neighborhoods by decreasing density, if maintained.
- BE If hotels are looking to locate in village, pressure to tear down and redevelop exists. Can be positive if buildings lost do not contribute to village character. New buildings need compatible mass and scale. Buildings that contribute to village character need protection.
- BE Building heights in CBD need to be rethought.
- BE Clean energy sources to be encouraged, but must not adversely impact neighbors.
- BE Historic integrity of village must be maintained and promoted.
- BE Design standards for new construction in downtown needed to ensure compatible fenestration and massing. Discussion needed on appearances.

HOUSING

- H Accommodating home businesses at any location
- H Effects of bringing clean energy sources into neighborhoods.
- H Overview of housing in B Spa needs study. Encourage accessory apartments for owner occupied homes
- H Should rental percentage of 48% be reduced? Encourage home ownership or do current housing preferences of younger people require more rentals?
- H Condos are needed for Millennials, up-coming Zs, and Boomers.
- H A wide variety of housing types and uses should be allowed.
- H Neighborhoods should provide for different preferences of people e.g., quiet streetscape vs. busy & active neighborhood.

ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- Econ Should market forces alone evolve to accommodate new business endeavors or is there a governmental role- especially in being a coordinator?
- Econ Address the constant need for the village to use the most current technological resources for promotion and communication.
- Econ Role of surrounding communities to partner with Ballston Spa to provide more for visitors than what the village can do alone.
- Econ Internet capacity has to be increased and updated regularly. What is role of village.
- Econ Air B&Bs are becoming a popular business but can adversely impact a neighborhood. Should have some controls. Help in accommodating people who wish to stay in village where few commercial places to stay.
- Econ Nothing wrong with home businesses, just need to protect neighborhoods.
- Econ Are pot stores a concern for business district?
- Econ Electric charging may change some ways of doing things, but commercial business will provide infrastructure.
- Econ How best to benefit from the overflow effect from Saratoga Springs
- Econ Keeping up to date with technological advances is essential.
- Econ How will climate change affect business

SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- Soc Importance of village being perceived as welcoming and receptive to responsible development, new businesses, jobs, and tax base expansion.
- Soc Plan should incorporate visions of village organizations, e.g. BSBPA, school, Brookside, BARC, churches, etc.
- Soc Update organizational list from 1994 comp plan. PF
- Soc Study how the village can maintain its population's economic diversity in the face of increasing land values.

- Soc Utilization of public spaces for enjoyment, recreation, family purposes. Victory Circle is undeveloped @ underutilized.
- Soc What changes will happen if hydrogen power becomes cheap enough to use?
- Soc Have to better accommodate electric bikes and scooters. How are they handled in Europe?
- Soc Village's walkability can be an asset bringing visitors for walks, exercise, dogs.
- Soc Use of B Spa to be family friendly with resources, like playing fields, library, school, etc.
- Soc Everything that is done should be to improve quality of life for residents.
- Soc Effects of Climate Change on expectations.

ZONING

- Z Address discrepancy between what is permitted by zoning and the uses that disregard it and adopt a more realistic approach to actual conditions that exist, resulting in develop of good planning and enforceable codes.
- Z Study the implications and uses of overlay/opportunity zones, planned unit developments, and mixed use to transition into residential zones.
- Z Zoning should allow administration to be proactive rather than reactive.
- Z Look at how the village really appears and recommend changes to current zoning. PF

VISION STATEMENT FORULATION

BUDGETS & PRIORITIES (Where vision and reality clash)

Suggestion & Solution:

***Incorporate all the prior and currently on-going studies and plans into our work. (1994 comp plan, SCPP Economic Development, Economic Development Survey of 2020, Commercial Revitalization Plan, Bike Path Plan, Focus Groups raw material, Trees and Parks report, CDRPC existing conditions with review remarks, forestry program). [will ask each member to take a plan and make certain when we discuss items the information in in the assigned plan will be incorporated in the discussion.]

The following is Karen Martell's review of how master plans are customarily organized: Most of the areas included and "Overview," "Challenges and Opportunities," and "Recommended Actions."

INTRODUCTION: Village Overview, Community Profile, Planning Process, Public Engagement, Plan Organization.

VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

PLACEMAKING: Promotes a sense of comfort, Nurtures and defines sense of community, Promotes health by creating more pedestrian friendly spaces, creates improved accessibility, Builds and supports local economy, Fosters social interactions.

ECONOMIC GROWTH: Regional and local context, Expansion and new business location, Future needs and strategies.

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY: Vehicular mobility, Public Transit, Bicycle and pedestrian mobility, (sidewalks and bike lanes), Multi-use trails.

NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING: Regional and generatio0nal trends.

HISTORIC, CULTURAL AND MUNCIPAL RESOURCES

RECREATION

NATIURAL RESOURCES, PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Topography, Geology, Soils, Water Resources, Groundwater, Floodplains and drainage, Wetlands, and Significant ecological features and habitats.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES: Stormwater, Wastewater Collection and treatment systems, Drinking water supply, Infrastructure considerations.

GOVERNANCE: Community Services and Local Government efficiency.

FUTURE LAND USE:

IMPLEMENTATION:

Present: Scott Burlingame, John Cromie, Josh Fredericks, Buddy Glastetter, Karen Martell, Ellen Mottola, Jon Taisey
Perspective Members: Carrie Chapman (by Zoom), Monique Cohen, Mathew Ercolin (by Zoom), Jackie Pelliccia, Marilyn Stephenson
Observer: Liz Kormos
Unable to connect due to incorrect link or lost audio: John Hearn, Jared Iacolucci, and Spencer Tacy; Christine Fitzgerald.
Excused: Nafeesa Koslik

Karen called the meeting to order at 7:03. Minutes of the last meeting had been sent to members. After review Buddy Glastetter moved they be approved, Ellen Mottola seconded, passed.

Karen welcomed new members of the committee and introduced the attendees who have expressed an interest in joining the committee and are being recommended to the Board.

John Cromie was asked to explain the modifications made to the original RFP. He noted all references to rezoning the nursing home, tannery, and Rickett's had been deleted. The topics of committee meetings have been added or upgraded, replacing the language of the earlier version which was less descriptive. The bulk of the RFP prepared by Regional Planning remains.

Karen reported that she had contacted a local planner who was familiar with the earlier RFP and said the earlier version was confusing as to what a firm was to do. Asking for a plan while also asking to prepare special zoning legislation may have scared away a lot of bidders who weren't sure what the RFP might be asking them to do. Karen will pass this version to him to comment on.

Scott Burlingame noted the time between the release of the RFP and deadline for questions will be impacted by holiday activities. After discussion, it was agreed the dates should be pushed back a week after initial release has occurred. It was agreed by consensus to move the deadline for questions from January 3rd to the 10th, and all the subsequent deadlines. Otherwise, the RFP was given general approval.

The attention of the committee turned to the conditions of governmental buildings. Reports of Kate Garways (swimming pool) Andrea Simmons (Library), Spencer Tacy (DPW Garage, water towers, pump houses, monuments, and John Cromie (police station/court and Village Hall were reviewed. We were unsuccessful in contacting the fire departments, but it is felt the fire stations are among the best maintained buildings.

The police/court building was the former Eagle-Matt Lee firehouse built of brick by the railroad in the mid-1800s to ensure nearby fire fighting apparatus for its buildings. It had two bays, one is used by the court and the other is a garage for police which doubles as waiting and conference area for court. Wooden cornice has fallen to the street probably due to water infiltration and the bricks are deteriorating due to rising damp caused by the ground around the building being blacktopped. It is barely adequate for the police, and totally inadequate for the Court, which needs much more square footage.

The village office has good bones; the upper two floors are not able to be used due to no handicap access, bathrooms, and heat. The existing furnace is relatively new. the building needs painting to protect wood and metal members. There is a current engineering study that indicates it needs about \$250,000 in upgrades to bring it up to date. The building was and is laid out as a bank and forces village employees to try to make do. It was noted the 9-11 memorial inhibits building proper access to all the floors. It was felt the memorial can be moved.

There is some interest in moving village administration to the office building that used to house the Journal press on Bath Street opposite the back of Augies' Restaurant. A question was raised if the village could sell a building and lease it back.

The DPW garage is probably the village building in the worst condition. It is too small for village needs and too much equipment must be stored in the weather. The building has reached its point of obsolescence and cannot be saved. The village board explored moving the operations to the former village dump site, but regulations in the Town of Malta do not permit that use.

Buildings for various water pump stations are in functional condition. Walls of studs and insulation, deteriorated brickwork, and other delayed maintenance is apparent in all of those buildings. There is concern about the standpipe's condition. The two fiberglass water towers are in good condition.

Monuments need minimal care and are in good condition. It was noted many of them have non-governmental groups looking after them.

The swimming pool needs to be resurfaced. Buildings need basic maintenance due to water damage and weathering. The mechanicals are old but functioning.

The library is in decent shape. The staff bathroom could have a renovation. There are landscaping needs. About this time, it was discovered the Zoom audio was not on, and it was turned on so those attending by Zoom could be heard and they could hear those present.

The committee began to discuss reasons for the varying conditions of the buildings. Most apparent is the buildings receiving funding from outside the village (Firehouses and library) are in the best condition.

There is a natural hesitancy for the board to increase taxes resulting in the condition of those buildings dependent solely on tax money. There was a question about water system buildings being different because they are partially supported by outside water users. Some wondered if water/sewer money was being syphoned off for other governmental uses, especially as the DPW and water/sewer employees are the same.

It was noted the raising of water rates is viewed as similar to raising property taxes. It was suggested after assessing the needs, priorities and costs could be laid out to water users to build a general understanding that rates had to be increased to pay for those specific needs.

It became obvious the village has no maintenance plan but because of the fragile condition of its hard assets, it is forced to deal with one crisis after another rather than carry out scheduled maintenance. No one knew of a proactive schedule.

A question was raised if the village hired work to be done on its buildings or used DPW staff. It was determined that DPW staff has almost exclusively been used. There was a concern that the job of DPW staff was not to do building repair and remodeling and that such work took them away from services needed by people in the village. In the long run it may more cost effective to hire outside work with specialized knowledge. It was noted the use of village employees for building upgrades is a red flag there is no planning for maintaining hard assets. Also, if these practices do not change, moving to new quarters will not solve the problem because those buildings will be neglected and fall into disrepair.

This conversation will be continued at the next meeting where the reasons why these conditions exist and what guidelines and suggestions will help the village address these problems in the future.

Karen reminded everyone to take the sexual harassment training before the end of the year. Meeting was ended at 8:10.

Ballston Spa Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee Built Infrastructure II December 16, 2021

Present in Person: Scott Burlingame, Carrie Chapman, Monique Cohen, John Cromie, Mathew Ercoline, Buddy Glastetter, Karen Martell, Ellen Mottola, Jacqueline Pelliccia, and Marilyn Stephenson

By Zoom: Josh Frederick

Excused: John Hearn, Jared Iacolucci, Naffeesa Koslik, and Jon Tacy.

Chair Karen Martell called the meeting to order to order at 7:02 PM.

Minutes of the December 2 meeting were reviewed. Motion made by Buddy Glastetter to approve; seconded by Carrie Chapman; passed.

Karen welcomed new members of the committee, Carrie Chapman, Monique Cohen, Mathew Ercoline, Jackie Pellicca and Marilyn Stephenson. She noted the purpose of the meeting is to determine the reasons the condition of governmental buildings are as they are and come up with possible solutions and guidelines for the future. Members took turns to express their views:

1. It is basically a budget issue. If maintenance had been done it wouldn't have taken much money at one time. Now the village has to spend a lot of money.
2. have to first know where we are, what is needed. There should be strategic plan that is carried out over a 5, 10, to 15 year period.
3. There doesn't seem there ever was a[n] operations and maintenance plan ~~of operations and maintenance~~ or the village knew where it was.
4. How can the village ask for money if it doesn't what is to be done? How realistic is it to be proactive if there are no resources? A fund should be created in the budget to be carried over from year to year. For instance, if acquiring land to build a new DPW, how do we get from here to there without having the money?

5. When working on buildings, it may be more cost effective to have DPW do the work they are primarily responsible for and hire contractors do work they are trained in.

6. The problem may have begun with the village acquiring buildings as they became available without assessing costs of maintenance, unique repairs (old fabric not compatible with modern methods) and fitting village functions in spaces not designed for them. It may be better to bond construction of appropriate easily maintained space and sell existing structures to help pay for it. Is the cost of delayed maintenance about the same as the cost of bonding interest?

7. The deterioration of water system structures should be handled by water charge and those moneys and sewer fees should be segregated from other village finances. Recreate a separate water/sewer department from DPW would help in that.

8. Cannot make suggestions on buildings with incomplete information, and the committee does not have sufficient information. An assessment is necessary.

9. Retrofit existing buildings to meet village needs based on architectural studies and designs. Keep the historic buildings.

10. Responsibility for caring for the built assets should be assigned to specific person(s), who can develop a planned approach to maintenance and renovation. Hire the right people to do a correct job.

11. When department heads present their proposed budgets to the board is when the funding for maintenance and improvements would naturally come before the board. Without operational plans in place, maintenance items are passed over until they become crisis issues.

12. To move to proactive planning for maintenance requires is a major shift in the culture of the village. Departments have been operating as they are for a long time. It will require a sustained effort, not unlike turning a ship.

13. The option of using other facilities, such as the former Pressroom Building for Village Offices or Emergency Corp for the police station, should be looked at.

14. A yearly review of buildings should be done as a matter of course.

15. A person can be designated- perhaps building inspector- to be a go-to person on maintenance issues and to initiate action. Add to building inspector's job description and hours.

16. Being reactive rather than proactive and depending on DPW may have been the cause for leaves being picked up on December 15, which is unacceptable and places added strain on the storm water system.

17. A search of other NYS villages can be done to find villages that don't have the problem of delayed maintenance and deterioration and find out how they have managed their operations. It will save us from reinventing the wheel. Goshen is a possibility. The factor of relative wealth will have to be considered.

18. A position of village administrator would ensure someone is in charge to make sure the village is running, everyone is moving in the same direction, and operations are being carried out according to plans. At present the Mayor is the only person in a position to do this. Given the Mayor's salary, it is not fair to expect that to be part of the elected official's job.

19. Because it has a separate revenue stream, there should be a separate water and sewer department to be responsible for the maintenance of those properties.

It was noted the suggestions made tonight are very difficult to bring together for the committee to decide what to do. Flip charts would have helped. It was suggested to use Google Share.

The next two meetings will be devoted to how changes in climate and information technology will inform future decision making relating to topics to be discussed in succeeding meetings. A discussion ensued about whether or not IT and climate change will affect the 10-to-15-year period which is the committee's focus. The general feeling that it they are already affecting us. It was noted, if past performance means anything, this Master Plan may not be revised for 30 years. A study was noted that suggests electrical power will be very expensive in another ten years, which will affect how people live.

The Comprehensive Master Plan should work on two levels. One is to provide relatively short-term suggestions, but also to act a guide for planning boards and other decision makers well into the future.

Karen mentioned that three more people have expressed an interest in being on the committee. They live in the east-side neighborhood. She felt neighborhood representation is important. Several areas of the village are home to one member. The fairground area has no one. The east side would have 9 residents if the three came on board. The decision was to wait and see if any of the committee or others can find members from underrepresented areas.

Meeting adjourned, 8:09. Next meeting Thursday, January 6, 2022 at 7 PM: “Uncontrolled Forces” presenter, Bruce Piasecki.

Ballston Spa Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee Uncontrolled Forces I January 6, 2022

Present in Person: John Cromie, Buddy Glastetter, John Hearn, Jared Iacollucci, Karen Martell, Ellen Mottola, Jackie Pelliccia, Marilyn Stephenson, and Jon Taisey

By Zoom: Scott Burlingame; Carrie Chapman and Monique Cohen

Excused: Mathew Ercoline and Nafeesa Koslik

Meeting was called to order by Chair Karen Martel at 7:05.

Minutes of December 16 were reviewed, and Marilyn Stephenson offered two corrections, In item 3 the noun “plan” should be modified by the phrase, “of operations and maintenance,” and in item 9 it should say “Cannot make suggestions on buildings with incomplete information. . .” Motion by Jackie Pellicca to approve the minutes as corrected, seconded by Marilyn Stephenson; passed.

It was announced that Bruce Piasecki had come down with a sore throat and cannot attend tonight’s meeting. It will be up to the committee to consider the effects of climate change and IT.

It was suggested that we discuss climate change effects first then IT. To begin the discussion the observation from last meeting was repeated that as more is to run on electricity, demand is expected to outstrip the capabilities of the grid in the next 10 to 15 years, and electricity will become very expensive. It may mean our lifestyles will be impacted, and we will have to adapt to live as the Europeans did in the 50s, 60s and 70s.

It became obvious voices were not being picked up by the computer, and those attending virtually cannot hear the discussion. By using a hand held microphone, the problem was resolved.

It was noted a recent TU article reported NYC will be requiring designs for all new buildings to use energy sources other than fossil fuel within the next few years. It is possible these building codes will spread to the rest of NYS and begin to apply to existing structures. The prohibition will extend to cooking. There will be no natural gas lines at all.

It is predicted our area will become wetter and hotter, which is being experienced presently. Wetter means the village’s infrastructure may be severely challenged and residents will face flooding. Hotter weather may cause social changes.

There are DEC grants for localities to pay for smart technology to address environmental concerns such as water conservation issues, bioretention (stormwater), green infrastructure, etc. Grants will also pay for engineering to address climate change challenges.

Possibilities can be explored for the village to utilize alternative energy sources, whether by using the water that flows through the village, solar, or geothermal possibilities. The village could use its real estate to produce renewables, for instance- solar. But as demand for renewable energy increases the financial benefit for property owners should be recognized by the village and modify its regulations to encourage use of those energy sources, which may be sold back to the grid.

Other parts of the country will continue to have difficulty with climate change and we will start seeing people moving back to the Northeast. Maybe not in the next five years but in ten or fifteen. There is a movement of people from downstate, not just Boomers who sell high-priced homes and move here. As sea levels rise, there will be more people coming up from the coast. The economy is better here than in most parts of upstate. We are seeing companies coming to the area from the West Coast. The technology industry needs water, and we have plenty of water. We also have a workforce and customer base, but water is primary.

Kingston has already experienced a rebirth. When IBM left it became very depressed. In the last two years, perhaps due to COVID, the property values have gone through the roof. That growth will proceed up the Hudson Valley.

It should be recognized NY’s tax structure is a major reason people are leaving the state and the economic effects of climate change may cause people to return to the Northeast, but NY’s tax climate will discourage their return here. However, the relatively lower taxes of Saratoga County may attract more than its fair share of people returning to NY.

In a recent study, Towns of Halfmoon and Ballston were among the 10 town with the greatest population increase in the state. Commercial realtors are constantly fielding calls from downstate businesses that want to relocate up here.

Within climate change are opportunities and the village should position itself to take advantage of them. It has clean air, clean water, clean electricity- things young families want. The village should promote the protection of its natural resources and attract young families and business who look at those things priorities.

If the village wants to be a leader in showing alternatives to traditional infrastructure, in its next building project it should use smart technology. It has an opportunity to promote environmentally sound building practices in its brownfield areas.

Discussion of Information technology

The village needs to ensure broadband is available everywhere for people running businesses from home and for students. There are newer platforms being developed and the village should be on top of their development and distribution.

It is essential fiber optics are brought to the village.

Unless one has access to the more expensive broadband subscriptions service will not be optimal. Larger companies in the area use a lot of the broadband, and it affects the normal consumer.

The contract the village has with an internet provider (Spectrum) is renewed each year. It may provide a way for the village to upgrade the quality of internet. Today, communication is everything.

The village should ensure it is using the best, latest technology to protect privacy, enhance village services from water usage to cleaning streets. It can help composting of leaves to be given back to residents as mulch. It can spot problems with water usage.

The village can better communicate with technology and save money. Paper billing is unnecessary. It is more convenient to have a portal through which bills can be paid online. Need to know information can be sent instantaneously to residents. Electronic payments are a must. It is possible to contract for these functions.

The village needs is a person in charge of its IT. The position would be responsible for maintain all the websites, training and security. Village staff using smart technology will need training to prevent phishing, scams, and other damaging actions. Ransome activities are very expensive and disruptive, and the village has to protect itself.

Many of the village's social/service organizations are historically based on face-to-face interaction and their existence is threatened by not connecting with those who communicate through technology. Millennials and younger have an interest in participating, but are lacking an invite. In 2021, the PTA was able to triple its 2020 pandemic level of parents by pivoting to Zoom. Millennials are more comfortable with virtual meetings.

The lines feeding village homes with internet are very old and do not provide what people need and want. The village contract with Spectrum has to be reviewed to see if lines can be upgraded. For now, the school has about 200 Wi-Fi hot spots for low income students. The village should insure all its residents have access to basic coverage through state programs.

Village government should set the tone for its residents by beginning to replace its patrol cars with electric vehicles, setting up a charging station, and replacing its streetlights with LED lamps.

The village is able to draw young people because it is cheaper to live in this area than major cities; it is clean, and there are things to do.

The village and our master plan have to be flexible to adapt to future technologies that can't be predicted.

Super energy-efficient housing exists in Ballston Spa that can produce more electricity in a year than is taken from the grid. The home was specially engineered.

Internet use comes with a downside requiring constant vigilance to minimize the taking of private information. For the village government, people have to be trained to recognize scams, ways viruses can be introduced, etc. It requires the village to be a topnotch employer, training office and on-site employees how to avoid the traps.

If the village hopes to attract world-class businesses, it must have a world-class IT professional on staff to protect their information and the information of all village residents.

The cost will be worth it if ransomware attacks and hacking are prevented. The village should evaluate its current vulnerabilities, now, and not wait for future plans.

Generally, loss of personal privacy is a tradeoff for using the internet. How we use our phones and what is on our phones subjects us to others accessing this information. But certain information one should not put out there, like personal ID numbers and financial information.

Karen asked the committee to look at the comments from the last meeting. The next meeting will be to pick up where we left off, determine why various topics will be important for future decision makers and formulate suggestions to be included in the master plan. Meeting adjourned 8:10 PM. Next meeting January 20 at 7 PM.

Ballston Spa Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee Uncontrolled Forces II January 20, 2022

Present in Person: Scott Burlingame, Carrie Chapman, John Cromie, Buddy Glastetter, Jared Iacollucci, Karen Martell, Ellen Mottola, Mathew Ercoline, Jackie Pelliccia, and Marilyn Stephenson

By Zoom: Monique Cohen, John Hearn, Jon Taisey

Excused: Nafeesa Koslik

Observers: Bob Bush, Jr., Paul Farnum, Kris, and Liz Kormos by Zoom & a couple in person and unidentified.

Due to being unable to access the Cornell sign-in page, Zoom was not able to be established until approximately 7:20. Because Zoom was exited too soon after the meeting ended, the video was not saved for this meeting.

Minutes of the January 6 meeting were reviewed. It was noted the study on electrical demand did not indicate an increase in costs over the next ten to fifteen years. The state-wide study assumed the amount of out-migration of the state's population during that time period will reduce electrical demand at the same rate as demand of the remaining population will increase. After the ten-year period the state's electrical grid will be upgraded to meet future demands. The study was not broken down by regions of the state. With that caveat, the minutes were approved.

Karen asked members to volunteer to organize introductory information for each of the upcoming monthly topics to make future meetings more efficient.

Built Environment (Feb) John Cromie & John Hearn

Housing (Mar) Karen Martell & Liz Kormos

Utility Infrastructure (Apr) Marilyn Stephenson & Mathew Ercoline

Stormwater Management (May) Buddy Glastetter & Blue Niels

Economic Considerations (Jun) Monique Cohen & Ellen Mottola

Social Considerations (Jul) Jared Iacollucci & Jackie Pelliccia

Articulating a vision (Aug) Jon Taisey

Zoning (Sep) Scott Burlingame.

The following is a synthesis of committee discussion rather than actual minutes.

The primary points concerning Climate Change from the last meeting were reviewed and analyzed.

Presuming the Capital Region will not suffer as adverse effects of climate change as the rest of the country, demographic changes will result in a significant population increase. While much of Ballston Spa appears to be built out, a greater demand will force an increase in housing prices. As a result, use changes may be demanded to accommodate more people, such as, A) Desire to build up and B) Added "mother-in-law" apartments.

Because the village includes a valley with two streams, increasingly severe storms may cause flooding issues.

If communities around the village grow, so will the size of the school district and demand for services, increasing costs for village residents. The growth will provide a larger customer base for shops and businesses within the village.

CONCLUSION

As various climate change impacts (to the village) manifest themselves, village leaders should devise a process identifying actions to prevent or minimize adverse effects and exploit the positives.

The committee reviewed the primary Information Technology concerns identified at the last meeting.

Information technology provides more and better targeted communication, customer service, and efficiency, which is and will be demanded by those making the village their home. It also carries dangers of hacking, ransomware, and the like, which requires a workforce trained in its proper use. As a mandatory component in village operations, its

operational costs are not only balanced by the benefits received by its residents, but also by potential extra costs the village may face if its operations are not properly handled.

CONCLUSION

The village must develop a holistic IT Plan that centers around a position responsible for operating, updating, and securing all the uses of IT by the village and for on-going training of village employees. The Plan needs to be updated periodically, as technology changes.

(A secondary issue was discussed concerning the need for greater intergenerational connections. While a non-governmental issue, village organizations will have to segue from assumptions born in an analog/paper world to an electronic reality.)

A discussion ensued concerning the minimal number of residents who have taken part in committee meetings and how meetings can be better publicized. It was decided reports should be presented at each board meeting. The time to be on the agenda for the next meeting has passed. It will also help once we get the kinks out of the process of saving to the committee's webpage on the village site. Ellen continues to send out press releases. A major splash can be sent out when a consultant is selected.

Ballston Spa Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee Built Environment I February 3, 2022

Present in Person: John Cromie and Jackie Pelliccia

Present by Zoom: Carrie Chapman, Monique Cohen, Mathew Ercoline, Josh Frederick, John Hearn, Jared Iacolucci, Ellen Mottola, Marilyn Stephenson

Excused: Scott Burlingame, Nafeesa Koslik, Karen Martel, Jon Taisey

Others Present by Zoom: Ben Baskin, Stephanie Duell, Liz Kormos, Kamran Parwana, Renee, Kim Slocum, Bernadette VanDenise

Meeting was opened by John Cromie at the request of Chair Karen Martell, who was ill. Minutes of the last meeting were reviewed. John Hearn moved to approve the minutes, Mat Ercoline seconded; passed.

The items listed on the committee's monthly schedule for consideration during this month's study of the built environment were read.

John Hearn and John Cromie put together a discussion guide for tonight's meeting. Members were asked if additional subjects should be added to the guide. None were offered. The first section of the guide was read for non-members watching.

Buildings are the primary components of streetscapes. People make judgments based on what they see. What do people see when entering and going through/around Ballston Spa?

1. Almost no two buildings are similar to each other (except in the several developments). If they were once, they are not now, having been treated differently by a progression of owners.
2. Architecture from late 1700s to almost the present. The varied housing styles have grown into each other over time. Little in the village is jarringly different. There are significant exceptions.
3. Buildings are generally maintained, but not picture perfect.
4. Except for churches and factories, there are no tall buildings.
5. In the older sections of the village, streets have buildings with very different uses. Defies Euclidian Zoning. Reflects the way the village has evolved over time.
6. Store fronts in downtown are full, and there is activity in downtown.

It was noted no standards exist to ensure new buildings conform to the height and size of surrounding buildings, except in the historic district.

Because height can be relative there is a question as to how tall is tall. It was explained tall would over three, certainly 5 to 6 stories.

A concern was expressed over visual inconsistencies between treatments of first floor facades and upper stories of commercial buildings. The committee should explore requiring architectural standards in areas other than the historic district.

The built environment must be considered with green space and trees and vegetation within it. Greenery is a positive attribute that makes the village inviting.

The second portion of the discussion guide was read:

Four streets serve as Ballston Spa's front yard to motorists as they drive through the village: West High Street, Church Ave., Milton Ave., and Doubleday Ave. The buildings on these street create the image of the village in the minds of non-residents.

The 2021 existing conditions report states there are 15,000 trips per day on Church Ave. and 8,000 trips per day on West High Street. It gives no figures for Milton or Doubleday Aves.

West High: Churches, government buildings, professional offices, and large to modest residences ranging in age from the 1812 John Taylor Home to 1960s ranches.

Church Street: The business strip in the Town of Ballston ends immediately at the village sign and turns into primarily single-family homes that also vary in age and size. At the intersection with Milton Ave. are commercial businesses and large houses converted to business uses.

Milton Ave.: A block of significant residential structures leads to late 19th and early 20th century business buildings. Stores below and residences on 2nd and 3rd floors. After it crosses the Gordon Creek the street becomes a mix of residential structures, churches, and businesses.

Doubleday Ave.: Sort of like a strip, but with substantial amounts of green space along the highway. What is built on the Rickett's lot will greatly affect the appearance of the northern entrance to the village.

A fifth very publicly oriented street is Front Street, which begins with mainly 19th century commercial buildings from the east end to its middle, encompassing Wiswall Park, followed by early 19th century residences and commercial structures, terminating in the Iron Spring Park and Brookside. It is the most walkable of streets and perhaps with the most pedestrians.

What are the images created by the above streets that people driving through Ballston Spa will take away with them?

Front Street's draw for visitors needs to be extended beyond Bath Street. Retail businesses on Front beyond Bath work to bring the visitor to their doors. A greater draw is needed to entice visitors to walk to Iron Spring Park and Brookside.

One structure which is totally out of context in downtown is Cumberland Farms. It comes across as not belonging.

People driving through the village see storefronts along Milton Ave. which attract their interest, causing them to come back later and visit the store.

The committee should be considering how inviting Rte. 50 appears. The area on the "Flats" between the Elks and Prospect Street seems to have a good number of pedestrians and is welcoming. However, Front Street entices visitors to walk and it is difficult to have them stroll along Milton Ave.

There was a difference of opinion concerning congestion. On one hand traffic congestion frustrates people and can be a reason for them not viewing the village in a positive manner. Diagonal parking near the corner at Front and Milton worsens the situation when there is a lot of traffic. It is also difficult to find parking at certain times of the day. The opposing view is congestion is good because it creates activity, noise, liveliness, and the feeling that this is the place to be. It might be frustrating for the resident, but it is a positive for visitors. More people driving through Ballston Spa will require more obvious parking spaces, so they will stop and make a purchase.

Another image people will take away is that there are very few national or regional store in the village. Its business district is composed mainly of small proprietor-owned shops, which give the village its je ne sais quoi.

The next two items set for discussion:

How does the built environment affect decisions to invest in the village?

1. Discourages those who look at exterior details as added expense which provide no return and will rather invest in a vanilla box.
2. Attracts those who willing to bet that village properties will appreciate faster than other real estate investments and look for long-term profit.

How does the built environment affect decisions to visit and shop in the village?

1. Look at village as an interesting place to explore
2. Neighborhoods are generally inviting with interesting houses
3. Downtown looks like a cohesive comfortable space.

Ron Murphy of High Rock Development was asked why he decided to invest in the village. His response was read:

“What brought me to the village was the untapped potential. I saw a quaint little town close to Saratoga and the Northway that I felt it could go nowhere but up. The character of the old buildings and hometown feel intrigued me. What has kept me here over the years is the willingness of the village to work with me to get my projects done without a lot of politics. I tend to get very frustrated with the politics and red tape of development projects. That seems to be changing in the last couple of months, but we will see how it goes.”

It was noted Ron’s statement goes beyond the built environment but also into the community, which the built environment should encourage. Ballston Spa’s neighborhoods have an attraction because of their environment, but also because of their approachable friendliness. While some people want to live in cities and around big buildings, Ballston Spa is for those who want to be around kids, schools, playgrounds, green spaces and downtown businesses. The appealing small-town feel is encapsulated in the view one has by the library, when driving into the village from the south.

The village has charm, even if more investment is needed in certain properties to realize the full potential of that charm or *je ne sais quoi*. It is a priority that all entrances of the village provide a welcoming sight. For example, the Ricketts property is apt to scare people away from living here or investing.

The village is fortunate due to its location in the Capital Region, with Rte. 50 running through it, and its proximity to Saratoga Springs. Saratoga has taken the course of erecting tall buildings and catering to chain stores. Some people like that, but it is sending others to Ballston Spa. Ballston Spa is what Saratoga was like 30 or 40 years ago, to Ballston Spa’s benefit.

The village has attracted investors who take the older buildings, fix them up, and repurpose them like Ron Murphy, the Elliotts, and Spencer Tacy. (It was noted Spencer had read Ron’s statement and agreed 100%.) The village is fortunate to attract people who become part of the fabric of the community.

Washington Street is developing into a retail street and can draw visitors to Bath Street where the bowling alley and Angelica Buildings sit empty. These two properties are opportunities to expand the business district.

Our built environment is supported by being an overflow for Saratoga Springs. People who are stymied by long wait times at Saratoga Restaurants are directed to Ballston Spa. Just as Saratoga Springs is looked on as a stopping off place for people traveling between NYC and Montreal, Ballston Spa can also.

At this point, there is no such thing as too much tourism for Ballston Spa. We are attempting to attract foot traffic. Should Ballston Spa be successful, then it can discuss the management of that foot traffic.

Village businesses may draw primarily from a 20-25 mile radius, but the specialty shops have to draw from at least a 90 mile radius. Ballston Spa fares well on social media and is known to draw people from Central New York, Washington D.C., and other distant locales.

The next question for the night was

How does the built environment affect decisions to buy or rent housing and live in the village?

1. Discourages those who look at residences as commodities with predictable values due to sales of similar houses in the neighborhood
2. Attracts those who want a unique home
3. Attracts those who wish to raise a family in a “small town” community

The village is configured in such a way as green spaces and downtown are in walking distance. In many other communities there isn’t the range of places for coffee or a bite to eat. It is like having the conveniences of a small city and being able to walk to them without crowds, congestion (expect on 50), or fear. Our built environment allows this to happen and draws families to live here.

Ballston Spa is being successful and success breeds success. But the village could do better by encouraging property owners to keep up their properties better than they do. Property maintenance codes can be better enforced. Garbage does not have to be on front lawns. People may be able to work together to address long-term delayed maintenance.

Ballston Spa has a lot of homes over 100 years old and it takes a special type of person to take the structures on and special types of people to work on them. To be successful, owners need to be given some slack. It shouldn’t be so difficult to maintain these structures that the buildings will be looked at as hindrances to be torn down.

Property maintenance codes should be enforced. There is no reason for cars or debris on front lawns. It will be good if the village makes good on its threat to enforce that snow be shoveled from sidewalks.

The last question in the discussion guide dealt with threats:

Threats to the village's attractiveness

1. Too much success invites greed which cannot be well controlled.
2. Unfettered teardowns not constrained by site-plan oversight by planning board or protective regulation (e.g. limit residential rebuild to size of original structure.)

Solutions:

- a) Some sites can be improved by rebuilding
 - b) Replacement buildings go through site plan review require replaced residence have same mass as original other buildings contribute to village image
3. Large overpowering projects, where control of mass, scale & fenestration are not regulated and are four or more stories in CBD and three stories elsewhere.
 4. Enforcement of a generalized (ham-handed) zoning code where provisions haven't been written to encourage "harmonious variety." Zoning should not discourage use of current architectural styles.

Item three was looked at the primary threat, especially coupled with possible destruction of green space, trees, buffers, and vegetation and development that conflicts with the historical character of the village.

This item was not fully discussed due to the time.

Proposals were received from Bergmann and Behan Planning and Design wishing to prepare the formal comprehensive plan. Monique, Marilyn, and Jared will study and review the proposals on Monday by Zoom and report back to the committee. As a review of a contract proposal discussions for negotiations will not be subject to open meeting requirements. Meeting was adjourned at 8:15.

Ballston Spa Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee Built Environment II February 17, 2022

Present in Person: John Cromie, Mathew Ercoline, Josh Frederick Karen Martell, Ellen Mottola, Jacqueline Pelliccia, and Marilyn Stephenson

Present by Zoom: Scott Burlingame, Carrie Chapman, Monique Cohen, John Hearn, Jared Iacollucci, and Jon Taisey

Excused: Nafeesa Koslik

Others Present in person: Pamela Bortoletto, Liz Kormos, and Cecile Picard

Meeting was called to order by Chair Karen Martell at 7:00

Minutes of the February 3 meeting had been sent to members and posted on the committee's webpage. Marilyn Stevenson moved they be approved as presented, Mathew Ercoline seconded, passed.

Karen announced she would ask all members for their conclusions from last meeting's discussion. The following remarks were offered.

Esthetics are very important, and the village's historic appearance should be protected and especially through enforcement of existing codes. There are homes in disrepair, in need of upkeep, or with debris or items strewn about. There is need for language regarding esthetics of the village.

While there is a need for restrictive laws to protect properties and investments downtown and in the historic district, regulations should not be so restrictive as to discourage people wanting to move to or invest in the village.

The current village zoning code seems not to conform with the realities of a village that has grown over generations. It needs to be updated to eliminate situations like a garage needing six variances before it can be built. The code should be broad and general and not too restrictive and designed to keep character and charm of properties

The variety of architectural styles in the village create the image of the community and attracts people to visit, live in, and invest in the village. There needs to be an effort to inform property owners of those valuable aspects of their properties and to present guidelines for them to follow. Otherwise, well-meaning people may unknowingly destroy important aspects of their building, damaging the whole village.

The village's significant green canopy should be protected and added to. Ballston Spa is unlike other communities around it because of the amount of green, which pulls the different types and styles of buildings together. Green space and trees create a welcoming image for people driving into the village.

Many properties adjacent to downtown need incentives to enable owners to fix up their structures and improve the appearance of their area.

For visitors to go beyond usual shopping areas, there must be attractions developed to entice them and safe sidewalks to get there.

Small, individually owned business should be encouraged to open and large chains discouraged. It is the mix of small shops that draws people here and makes our village unique and interesting. Most other area communities depend on national chains, Ballston Spa should try not to be like other communities.

A major bottleneck for people investing in the village is a part-time building inspector with very limited hours. The building department is needed not only to issue permits and COs but to be knowledgeable enough to educate about the codes and understand the significance of working with historic architecture.

The building department and village historian should communicate and work together.

The tradition of looking away if something is done outside established framework should be recognized as damaging to village character because it often leads to destruction of elements of, if not total buildings.

Architectural diversity in the neighborhoods can make it confusing and hard to apply guidelines. It is better that they be confined to more sensitive areas such as downtown and the historic district.

While people buying into the historic district should expect to adhere to guidelines, those in other neighborhoods can be encouraged but shouldn't be required to follow esthetic codes.

For residents and visitors to fully enjoy buildings and architecture, sidewalks must be walkable.

Buildings on Washington Street have become businesses and the rehabilitation of the "dress factory" will be a major addition to the street. The development of the bowling alley property will be important to draw people to the area of the tannery (Angelica) and Bath Street.

Downtown can be expanded in stages by creating loops for visitors to shop.

In the short term, enforce existing codes to address obvious deterioration and neglect.

Design guidelines be drawn which are broad and able to be adapted over varying contexts to assist building owners and they should be referenced in the village code.

A formal plan should be created to layout the processes to build growth within the existing business district and to expand the district.

One's impression of the village is reinforced by the conditions of buildings at entrances. When traveling into most, the impression is neutral if not positive. The Rickett's property and sparseness of trees and greenery adversely impact Doubleday. The lack of maintenance of the exterior of the village garage conveys the wrong message when entering through Charlton Street.

A policy is needed to define a line beyond which a building will not be allowed to deteriorate before code enforcement steps in.

New and modified principal structures should be required to conform in mass, height, and fenestration with nearby structures. Architectural styles should not be regulated so the village's variety will expand.

It was decided these minutes will be sent to Mat, who will organize the remarks and place them in a spreadsheet on Google Drive for committee members to add comments and evaluate by a date to be determined.

The subcommittee of Marilyn, Jared, and Monique reported they determined of the two proposals received, Behan's is favored because the group is local, assessable, and knowledgeable of the village. It may be a smaller firm, but it is joining with two others to form a team. It is offering to provide more value by creating a generic environmental impact statement that can be used by the village when describing the policy it is pursuing for specific actions that will need an EIS. The proposal from Bergmann was more expensive and out of our price range. Behan's was much closer. Behan was willing to discuss paring down its proposal and its price.

Concerns about going over an agreed upon price should be countered by the contract specifying the number of hours or a specific job to be delivered for a certain price. The committee or village board should be keeping track of what is being billed and question if money is being spent too quickly.

Marilyn Stephenson moved that the Committee recommend to the Village Board that Behan Associates' proposal be favored, subject to final negotiations over fee amount. Seconded by Jacqueline Pelliccia; passed unanimously.

Karen asked if any members were willing join her to negotiate with Behan. Marilyn Stephenson, John Cromie, and Mat Ercoline volunteered.

Those listening to the meeting were asked for comments. Pam Bortoletto pointed to the housing development going into a forested portion of Rowland Street as something which will change the character of its surroundings and likened it to the relocation of the village DPW and how it will impact her home next door to it. She appreciates the DPW being next to her and would not wish it to leave.

A final quote of the evening was supplied by Marilyn, "It's not that we are afraid of progress. We want to make sure it is seamlessly integrated with the village, and it doesn't stick out like a sore thumb."

Meeting was adjourned at 8:05.

Ballston Spa Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee Housing I March 3, 2022

Present in Person: John Cromie, Josh Frederick, Karen Martell, Ellen Mottola, Jackie Pelliccia, and Marilyn Stephenson.

Present by Zoom: Scott Burlingame, Carrie Chapman; Monique Cohen, Jared Iacolucci, and Jon Taisey

Excused: Mat Ercoline and Nafessa Koslik

Observers by Zoom: Gabriel Larocque and Ben Baskin

Meeting was opened by Chair Karen Martel at 7:05 PM. Minutes of the meeting of February 17 were reviewed. Ellen Mottola moved they be approved as presented; Jackie Pelliccia seconded; passed.

Karen introduced Liz Kormos, who, with Karen, had prepared a handout for the committee describing village housing and demographics. The handout had been sent to committee members for this meeting's discussion. Liz presented a power point of the handout. Observations during and after the presentation were as follows:

1. The median house value was between two peaks in the bar chart, indicating housing in the village clustered around modest, affordable housing and larger more expensive homes. Few homes exceeded \$750,000.
 2. A huge proportion of village home are pre-WWII, with very little building activity in the last 20 years.
 3. 16% of the parcels in R-1 are other than single family. All other zones have a greater rate of non-conforming uses: Commercial, 32.4%; Manufacturing, 28.6%; and Central Business District, 18.2%.
 4. An income survey found 51% of the village population is classified as low to moderate income, which opens up granting opportunities.
 5. Multigenerational homes may become more common due to the costs of childcare.
 6. There is visual evidence (on Bath Street) of out-of-state families coming into Ballston Spa. That neighborhood has more children than it has had in 40 years.
- this point, there are so few homes on the market, it is difficult to measure demand. In the past, there have been a lot of families moving to different home within the village. Currently, it is difficult for renters to buy in the village due to the short supply of homes on the market.
8. The Existing Conditions Report concluded village home prices in the \$200,000 range make village housing affordable.
 9. Predictions are large investors will be owning a larger share of the national housing stock. The village should temper that trend, encouraging local investment and discouraging large entities to prevent manipulation of rental rates.
 10. The social-economic diversity of the village is an important quality, and it should be a goal to keep rents affordable to maintain our community's identity.
 11. Accessory units in larger homes can be a source for moderate priced rentals. It would have to be determined what percentage of living area can be set off into one or more units in a residence. Something would have to be done to make those residences unattractive to non-resident owners. A technique might be for the government to make the resident of the larger unit responsible with the owner for maintenance and the like of the property. Most tenants would not want that responsibility.
 12. A payment in lieu of taxes for resident-owners to fix up two family homes could be explored. Perhaps a "Homestead Act" giving an incentive to people to buy distressed housing with rental potential. However, a break in village taxes isn't as rewarding as a break in school taxes, which, given realities, is not very likely.

13. It would be beneficial if neighbors know or have a way of becoming acquainted with non-residential landlords. Especially when tenants may be misbehaving. This may be accomplished if the village has a registry of landlords, which exists in some communities, primarily for emergency purposes.

14. Providing a strict building code that is enforced to ensure landlords maintain buildings will encourage investment, much of which comes from out-of-town investors. Economic resources within the village were not large enough to rehabilitate what has been rejuvenated recently. It only happened because money from places like NYC or Connecticut were invested in Ballston Spa. Those investors want code enforcement to protect their investments.

15. Enforcement of minor maintenance code violations may seem insignificant, (shoveling sidewalks) but the cumulative effect of lack of enforcement allows owners to not be responsible and affects neighbors' property values.

16. Consistent enforcement requires maintenance codes be clear and unambiguous.

17. In the recent past it was relatively common for young families who rented or owned two-family homes to upgrade to single family housing in the village. That has virtually stopped because of increased competition in the housing market. These families must look outside the village and its immediate area.

18. The village has no condos, nor high-end apartments.

19. The downtown economic study identified a need for work-place housing where proprietors lived in the same buildings as their businesses.

20. There are varying degrees of home businesses that can be accommodated. There seems to be no need to regulate home offices that are used exclusively by the residents where there are no signs or employees. A service business in a home with one or two employees may need to be restricted to certain areas. Home retail establishments may be more restricted in location and operation.

21. When looking at accessory units, they may not be a part of the main structure on a lot. Should tiny houses or shipping container housing be allowed? Where does modular housing fit in, if at all.

22. The data prepared for this meeting underscores the decidedly middle-class nature of the village's population and the extent to which Ballston Spa is contrasted with Saratoga Springs.

23. Even though the Historic District overlay is not shown on the handout's zoning map, it is important.

24. Under the zoning law, for a non-conforming to be "grandfathered," in most cases, it has to be shown it existed before 1949. With the new code, perhaps that can be changed to classify a "grandfathered" use to

25. The 2019 landlord/tenant law was developed by people who understand downstate landlord-tenant dynamics, where most rental housing is owned by large companies. It has changed the time for a landlord to gain possession from about 30 days or so to four months or longer. People who have a few units cannot take that hit, and the law will force them to sell to large companies, who can use percentages to absorb those costs. That law

26. Because such a large portion of our homes were built before WWII, they require a greater amount of time and energy than newer structures and are not designed to modern standards. For this reason, they should be cut some slack when it comes to applying codes and regulations.

27. The 20% jump in last year's median housing price indicates a potential change in the village's population makeup. Unless something can counteract it, many families who have lived in the village for generations may no longer be able to continue as village residents.

28. Housing in the flats is impacted by being in the flood plain, which makes it doubly expensive for home buyers. Not only must they pay mortgage interest, but also flood insurance premiums. A critical review of flood plain mapping will be helpful. Modification of the creek channel is possible.

29. The Town of Ballston has created two levels of home businesses. One is by right and the other requires a special permit.

30. The rental market in the surrounding towns of Ballston and Malta has a very low vacancy rate, even though so many units have been built in recent years.

Karen announced Behan Associates will be hired as our consultants, and they will be drawing up a contract for the village attorneys to review. The contract will be divided into two budget years. It is hoped next month.

Marilyn reported on February 28 she updated the village board on our activities. They expressed thanks and appreciation for the committee's work

Meeting was closed at 8:20.

Present in Person: Carrie Chapman, John Cromie, Josh Frederick, Karen Martell, Ellen Mottola, and Jackie Pelliccia.

Present by Zoom: Monique Cohen and Jared Iacolucci

Excused: Mat Ercoline, Nafessa Koslik, and Marilyn Stephenson

Observers:

In Person: Adrian Guadarrama, Liz Kormos, and Bernadette VanDeinse

By Zoom: Christopher Bradley and Gina Marozzi

Meeting was opened by Chair Karen Martel at 7 PM. Minutes were reviewed and amended by adding Gabriel Larocque and Ben Baskin as observers appearing by Zoom. Motion to approve the minutes, as amended, by Ellen Mottola, seconded by Carrie Chapman; passed.

Karen noted this meeting is to come up with something from the observations of the last meeting we can suggest for the future. What items are the most important; what items should the focus be on?

A theme from last meeting was the concern over properties that were not kept up and who would buy them. Is the poorly maintained property more likely to be rented out and not owner occupied? Are there things which can be done to encourage owner occupancy. Should the village determine a balance between non-owner-occupied housing and owner occupied?

Because our housing stock is 100 years old or older, many of the smaller houses are affordable. This housing may be exactly what will attract Millennials to buy and live in the village.

Discussion last meeting dealt with increasing enforcement of the codes through increasing hours and staff.

Accessory structures, which are not allowed in current zoning can provide affordable places for young people starting out or for retirees.

Property maintenance may be incentivized and made a subject of zoning enforcement.

The 20% increase in housing prices in the last year is game-changing and will make it harder for young people to enter the village's housing market. Allowing more two-family homes will make it more affordable for young families to own a home and favor multigenerational residences, if they are owner-occupied.

Perhaps home ownership can be incentivized through rehabilitation grants, which allow the homeowner to do some of the work.

It may be worthwhile for the building-zoning department to provide a quality of housing report on a quarterly or semiannual basis.

Higher village house prices benefit current homeowners because they now have extra equity to improve their homes, pay college costs, or invest.

Last meeting's discussion can be capsulized by two issues, housing affordability and code enforcement. To make homes of increasing value affordable additional uses need to be allowed in the zoning law such as home-based businesses and accessory residences, including new structures like mini houses. The allowance of these multiple uses can lead to exploitation, which can devalue neighborhoods. To prevent that from happening, the codes must be enforced proactively and the zoning law has to be realistic, which the current zoning law is not.

Because what people needed to do to their properties to afford upkeep has not been allowed not allowed, enforcement looked the other way. This has created a large number of "illegal" properties which cannot be "grandfathered" because the non-conforming use can't be traced back to the beginning of zoning or 1949. A solution is for the village to pick a number of years, 20, 10, whatever and deem any non-conforming use to have been in existence that long as "grandfathered."

There can be a mix of incentives and penalties. require the landlord to look after the properties and ensure tenants comply with things like noise ordinances. Use periodic inspection of rental units to ensure apartments are safe and the property isn't over-occupied. Incentives, for example, could be centered around beautification projects and recognition.

Tenants should be held responsible for their conduct. Landlords should be made responsible as well so they will be forced to pay attention to their property. If landlords are fined for little things like not keeping up the yard or not shoveling sidewalks, they will pay attention to their property and help prevent major neglect.

There has to be a way to prevent an owner of a house with half its wall missing from not being subject to enforcement, (which currently exists in the village). Houses should not be allowed to be overcrowded like a 1,200 sq. ft. house divided into three apartments.

Some municipalities have given tenants a right of first refusal when the landlord is selling. This provides opportunity for village residents to remain living in Ballston Spa and may provide an alternative to speculative investment, as the region grows as a center for high-tech.

We should expect and plan for speculative investment by large firms in our housing. It is happening in metropolitan areas and will spread to this area in time, as the Capital District grows its high-tech industry base.

Airbnb rentals in the village can be abused. If a house is taken for that use, a family is denied homeownership and the village is denied the benefit of that family. Also, guests can abuse the situation by disrupting a neighborhood. Otherwise, allowing Airbnbs guard against a firm deciding to knock down buildings to build a motel in the village. A vibrant downtown needs places for people to stay overnight. Airbnb guests will patronize restaurants and stores. While the business provides incentive for guests and hosts to behave, local regulations may be necessary.

When considering short-term rentals, there has to be care that spillover does not impact track rentals. Those rentals bring people to the village to shop and eat and are depended on by families.

Some areas of the village can have relatively intensive home-business uses such as surrounding the CBD like Bath, Ford, Walnut, and Court Streets and the lower part of Ballston Ave. Other neighborhoods can have home offices where there is little traffic, signage, etc. Areas in between can have moderate-use home businesses. It would be up to the code to draw lines and determine which areas need special permits. This subject will be explored further when the committee discusses village businesses.

A landlord contact list will also help keep landlords responsible because neighbors will know how to contact them. Having a contact's email and phone number will supplement what can be obtained on the County Real Property Tax Service's website.

A positive, informal aspect of a home business is neighbors often receive the benefit of the business' services.

A discussion of parameters for which home business uses may require a special permit will be saved for when the committee reviews economic issues. Quality of life questions will be taken up at that time also.

Because Ballston Spa is the County Seat, many people who do not have dependable transportation are here to obtain services the county provides. They provide an important part of what Ballston Spa is, and we don't want to lose those people. It is important to provide affordable housing in face of rising property values.

Christopher Bradley mentioned he is listening in for "Clean the Air" a non-profit with state money that tries to minimize cigarette smoking. His group can provide landlords with "Smoke Free" signs for their apartments. His group may also be able to help with beautification grants that are connected to discouraging smoking.

Karen reported the contract with Behan Associates has been received and is being review by the village's attorneys.

Summary:

Serious enforcement of realistic codes is necessary to preserve the character of this village, which contains people of a wide socio-economic range, and to improve residents' quality of life. The expansion of uses in residential areas by allowing, in appropriate neighborhoods, home businesses, work from home opportunities, accessory residential structures, accessory apartments, Airbnb rentals, etc. will make housing more affordable for homeowners, provide lower income housing for young people, seniors, and those of modest means. To prevent this flexibility from being exploited by residents, absentee landlords, and large corporate entities, state and (to be devised) local property maintenance codes must be proactively enforced. To be successful in a village, enforcement should begin with incentives and rapid response to small infractions like trash-strewn lawns, un-shoveled sidewalks and excessive noise, involving the homeowner, landlord, and/or tenant.

Meeting adjourned, 8:00

Ballston Spa Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee Utility Infrastructure I April 7, 2022

Present in Person: Scott Burlingame, Bob Bush, Jr. John Cromie, Mat Ercoline, Karen Martell, Peter Martin, Ellen Mottola, Jackie Pelliccia, Marilyn Stephenson, and Jon Taisey

Present by Zoom: Carrie Chapman, Monique Cohen, Josh Frederick, John Hearn, and Jared Iacolucci

Excused: Nafeesa Koslik

Observers in Person: Frank Rossi, Jr.

Observers by Zoom: Paul Farnum, Amy Fitzgerald (Behan Assocs. for introduction only), Jeff Gawrys, Liz Kormos, Gina Marozzi, Bernadette VanDeinse-Perez

Meeting was called to order by Chair Karen Martell. Minutes of the last meeting were reviewed. Jackie Pelliccia moved to approve them as presented, Ellen Mottola seconded; passed.

Karen introduced Amy Fitzgerald, Senior Planner at Behan Assocs., who will be working with the steering committee. Amy noted she will be joining the committee during its second meetings, for six sessions. Her first task will be arranging for public input sessions, which she will present at the next meeting. It was requested that portion of the process be held off until the fall, after the scheduled meetings have been completed. Public outreach has been scheduled for the fall, not the summer. We will begin to discuss it in August. Karen thanked Amy for joining us and that we look forward to working with her at our next meeting. Amy indicated she will be reading our past minutes in preparation.

Karen turned the meeting over to Marilyn Stephenson and Mat Ercoline, who are handling this month's topic of Village utility infrastructure, specifically, water, sewer, electricity, electronic information systems, and how communications are carried out by the village.

Mat noted this session will be devoted to using a power point to lay out information of the subjects so the committee will have the information to discuss and come up with recommendations at the next meeting. [It will be useful for the power point to be read with these minutes.]

WATER

The village draws its water from five wells in the Town of Milton which reach down to a saturated layer in glacial till from the Pleistocene era. 2.57 million gallons are available to pump per day. The water goes to a pump station where it is treated with chlorine gas, fluoride and, a compound to get rid of iron. It is tested for levels of chlorine and fluoride and for e-coli. The village extracts 283 million gallons of water a year from the wells of which 26.1% is unbilled. Some of the unbilled water is due to hydrant flushing and municipal uses like the swimming pool. Some of it may result from inaccuracies in records. Some is from leakage in the system. There has been no comparison of this percentage with other municipalities. There have been no negative water quality or purity issues identified with our water supply.

A wellfield safe evaluation report and water system feasibility study are underway. They will estimate the amount of water which can be drawn from the wells and improvements which can increase the efficiency of the wells and pumping and storage system and position the village for future grants. The cost of such improvements will be more than the village can pay from water fees.

There are no digital maps of the water system. New meters, laterals, shut offs, and the like are maintained for each property on an index card system. DPW has a written plan for infrastructure improvements. It started out as a "wish list" but had been developed into a planning document for DPW. Emergency and contingency plans have not been formalized, although past practices have filled the gap. Several levels of sophistication in meters are in homes. About 18% of residents do not read their own meters, and DPW does not have the staff to read meters. It would cost about 2M\$ for the village to install meters that would not have to be read. Some commercial development may be harmful to the water system's ability to accommodate other development. Those uses may need to be identified and inhibited by the zoning law. Improving the efficiency of pumping facilities is an option.

SEWER

The sewer system in the village is composed primarily of clay tile lines, which can be invaded by tree roots. Past studies have indicated storm water infiltration was not great enough to need addressing under a county consent decree in 1996.

Beginning about 5-6 years ago the county and village have been coordinating their efforts. New hook ups and repairs go through village and county permit procedures, which can be confusing to property owners. A past effort to streamline the process faltered.

There is a plan being developed to replace or reline sewer pipes in the village which can be executed over a five-year period. Unless snakes can be run through clay lines, there is no way to trace above ground where non-metallic laterals run, which can be problematic for homeowners. Many needed sewer improvements are contained in DPW's Capital improvement list, which is available on the village web site. The list is a basis for serious decision making to gauge its completeness, establish priorities and timelines, and procure funding.

ELECTRIC GRID

Electric usage in New York is expected to decrease over the next ten years as usage becomes more efficient and population decreases. However, for the next thirty years after that, as electricity replaces fossil fuels, the demand is going to significantly increase. Because fossil fuels are now used for most heating systems, New York's peak electric usage will shift from summer to winter.

A positive effect of added electrical power having been fed to Global Foundries is that a major part of the village shares the same line, which duplicates an earlier line. As a result, when power goes out, it does so for milliseconds.

Streetlights in the village have been transferred to LED lights. The village owns eleven decorative streetlights on Front Street. As businesses expand down Washington Street and the CBD is expanded, a decision needs to be made if the decorative lights will be installed there also.

Power demands of car charging stations will require major upgrades of delivery systems. It may be important to identify locations for charging stations. At present, much of their installation will be paid for by National Grid. The village has to be in a position to obtain the augmented distribution system to handle increased future demand. An option for a community to invest in producing its own power through solar exists; it hasn't proven to be cost effective yet. While there is an emergency plan for power loss within DPW, there appears to be no overall plan for the village.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

There seems to be nobody who has overall knowledge of the village's IT systems. People are assigned various tasks, and the village contracts with providers. Many village functions can be improved with available technology. In the short term, the village can position itself to take advantage of IT benefits. It will not take much for security to be upgraded to handle data losses or harmful intrusions. The village can copy business protocols to identify phishing and malware. Insurance companies that insure for loss through the internet have requirements the village must follow.

INFORMATION DELIVERY SYSTEMS

Currently the village uses the USPS for delivery of taxes and water bills and uses those opportunities to deliver information to citizens. Village meetings are public and have a wider viewership through Zoom. Legal notices are in the Gazette and sometimes on the website. Press releases are at the direction of the mayor and sent by the Village Clerk. No one is assigned to take photos when opportunities present themselves. Code violations and DPW notices are generally done through posting notices on individual properties. The village website has been redesigned. Keeping it current is a challenge. The mayor can send out email blasts. About 80-100 residents have signed up for them. Social media presence is somewhat hit or miss. Emergency communications from and into the village have not been developed to assure communications will go to where needed, short of plugging into the county's reverse 911.

At the end of the presentation Karen announced the Village Board appointed Bob Bush, Jr., Peter Martin, and Steve Springer as alternates to the Comp Plan Committee with the proviso that the Committee could accept them as full members. It was observed that the committee is a fact-finding body whose end product is to offer recommendations, and more ideas and perspectives which can be added to the mix the better. John Cromie moved, and Jon Taisey seconded that Bob Bush, Jr., Peter Martin, and Steve Springer be full members of the committee; passed. Meeting was adjourned.

Ballston Spa Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee Utility Infrastructure II April 21, 2022

Present in Person: Bob Bush, Jr., John Cromie, Peter Martin, Jackie Pelliccia, and Marilyn Stephen

Present by Zoom: Mat Ercoline, Amy Fitzgerald, and Jared Iacolucci.

Excused: Scott Burlingame, Carrie Chapman, Monique Cohen, Nafeesa Koslik and Ellen Mottola,

Observers in Person: Donna Martin, Frank Rossi, Walter and Becky Smith, Bernadette VanDeinse-Perez

Observers by Zoom: Paul Farnum, Jeff Gawry, and Liz Kormos

In the absence of Chair Karen Martell, the meeting was opened by John Cromie, who explained the short attendance is due to spring break. Minutes of the last meeting were reviewed; Marilyn Stephenson moved they be approved; Peter Martin seconded; passed.

Marilyn and Mat prepared a list of recommendations to begin the committee's discussion. Marilyn presented them. They included

- A. Obtain grants to carry out recommendations of two studies of the water system, when they are completed, and reassess water loss.
- B. Periodically update and carry out the DPW Capital Project plan.
- C. Seek grants for remote-read meters.
- D. Identify land uses harmful to ground water-fed water supply and restrict uses through zoning.
- E. Require new construction design to follow certified energy efficiency standards.
- F. Coordinate sewer permit process with county.
- G. Expand underground electric lines and period lighting with LED throughout CBD.
- H. Seek funding for Level 3 EV charging stations.
- I. Create and periodically review IT capital plan.
- J. Regular system and security audits and training.
- K. Improve electronic communication with village residents concerning infrastructure concerns, accomplishments, payment of bills, and emergencies.
- L. Investigate feasibility of free Wi-Fi in CBD and eliminate cell dead zones.

An excused member offered the following thoughts, which inadvertently were not expressed during the meeting:

The Existing Conditions Report produced last year did not address utility infrastructure, but noted the village is mostly built out and population will not increase significantly.

If the village uses more than 30% of well capacity, now being used, through sales outside of village and the 26.1% loss is decreased, the return on investment (2M\$) for remote-read meters may make a switch feasible.

Water/sewer breaks and repairs are an opportunity to add to mapping.

If financially feasible, move electric utilities underground during street and sidewalk replacement.

The village's information technology design is twenty years behind current trends.

Because the two water studies have not been done, the committee does not have the knowledge to recommend their findings. It will be up to the village board to evaluate and implement.

Metering village properties will better illustrate the amount of water not being billed, whether through leakage or otherwise.

While there may be a grant to install charging stations, National Grid charges around \$275/ month. If that isn't paid by users, it may be too expensive for the village to maintain.

Electrical infrastructure may include private wind turbines and solar panels. If used by residents, their impacts on neighbors pose their own zoning considerations.

Water/sewer billing for over-charged accounts should be more resident friendly.

The Village needs to create digital maps of its water and sewer infrastructure.

An energy audit of village properties and the overall community will create a base line for future decision making.

An information protection plan is an essential to handle threats and emergencies to online data.

Residents want to receive and pay their bills online, and the village web site's payment process is not user friendly.

The home page should have rolling snippets linking people to specific pages and information for new residents.

Email and Facebook is not messaging most choose. Text sign-up should be offered to be used exclusively for targeted alerts of DPW activity in a neighborhood and emergencies. If not overused the sign-up's existence will spread by word of mouth.

Remote-read water meters are worthwhile to make a concerted effort to obtain grant funding.

Whether water conservation devices are required by the state in commercial or residential buildings, the village code should reinforce the requirements and not depend on state regulations.

Renewable energy systems for commercial and residential buildings should be encouraged through incentives, some of which may be grant funded in the future.

The village's website should take cues from commercial sites and flash teasers to important information while residents are paying their bills.

The village's outside IT consultants are paid to provide guidance when asked, not deal with implementing procedures and operations.

Care should be taken to accommodate preferences rather than dictate electric uses for all construction.

Improvement to village's IT infrastructure is dependent on rapidly changing technology, making it impractical to suggest specific actions. Rather, village government should continuously evaluate the feasibility and priorities of adding IT services.

Not all the village is on the National Grid circuit that feeds Global Foundries. It would benefit the village's livability if the circuit was extended to include all the village.

Until there are accurate maps of water and sewer lines that show their capacities, developers of large projects should be required to prove to the planning board that existing systems will not be overburdened by the development.

Water source protection studies for village water would have to be done in cooperation with municipalities of Milton and Saratoga Springs as they draw water from the same area and have jurisdiction over the aquifer.

DPW's capital project plan, which identifies projects and sets priorities, should be formalized, adopted by the board, and reevaluated every couple of years

Ballston Spa should work with County Sewer to come up with a universal application for new connections and repairs, which will benefit other municipalities.

When planning consumer amenities, the village should avoid competing with businesses and support downtown. For instance, install slow EV charging stations geared to visitors coming to the village to shop or walk around.

General themes from discussions of the last two meetings:

Village information technology needs to be more sophisticated to facilitate accessible, easy-to-find information, and trusted communication between residents and government (in both directions), and delivery of services. It should be used as a tool to keep track of infrastructure, how it is utilized, and can be improved. Rapid technological change requires the village to have an operating IT plan that is updated periodically.

The overall management of infrastructure of the village, not just water and sewer, will benefit by expanding and formalizing the ad hoc DPW capital plan, and updating it and resetting priorities periodically.

Design requirements for buildings should prepare property owners for the shift in state and federal government energy policies, by encouraging green practices and promote mindfulness of restrictions in village infrastructure to minimize future tax burdens. Until those latter requirements are in place, potential weaknesses should be addressed on an interim basis.

The committee decided a tour around the village for members and representatives of Behan Associates will be valuable. It will last about two and a half hours, and for Behan, it will have to be during the business day. To permit more members to take part, it was decided to have it over two days, beginning at 3:30 pm. The first afternoon will be May 10 and we will meet at Victory Circle. The second day will be May 17.

Meeting adjourned.

Ballston Spa Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee Stormwater Management I May 5, 2022

Present in Person: John Cromie, Mathew Ercoline; John Hearn, Karen Martell, Peter Martin, Ellen Mottola, Steven Springer, and Marilyn Stephenson

Present by Zoom: Scott Burlingame, Bob Bush, Jr., Carrie Chapman, Monique Cohen, Josh Frederick, Jared Iaolucci, and Jackie Pelliccia.

Excused: Nafeesa Koslik

Observers in Person: Frank Rossi

Observers by Zoom: Paul Farnum, Gina Marozzi, Shawn _____

Meeting was opened by Chair Karen Martel at 7:00. Minutes of the prior meeting were reviewed. It was noted Marilyn Stephenson's name was incorrectly spelled. Otherwise, motion by Peter Martin to approve the minutes; seconded by Marilyn Stephenson; passed.

Blue Niels of Cooperative Extension who works as Storm Water Consultant for municipalities in Saratoga County was introduced by Karen.

Blue began with a quick history of the Clean Water Act from its genesis in Cleveland's Cayahoga River fires and enactment in 1972. In 2003, smaller communities like Ballston Spa were brought under the Clean Water Act and required to have a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System or MS4. MS4 Communities are required to use public education, participation, and involvement; detect and illuminate illicit discharges, prevent construction site run-offs, and good housekeeping, in general.

Most construction sites in Ballston Spa will not be large enough (one acre or more) to come under federal and state regulations dealing with construction and follow up, the village has the option to apply the regulations to smaller sized parcels.

Impervious surfaces common in municipalities like Ballston Spa don't let water absorb into the ground. It is collected and sent to streams increasing flood potential. Municipal storm water discharge often carries with it organic pollutants, pathogens, nitrates, heavy metals, and sediment, adversely affecting water downstream. This problem is exacerbated by unprotected construction sites. When in a natural state, much of this storm water sent to streams would have recharged aquifers.

In an area of 75-100% impervious surfaces, runoff is increased 5.5 times and soil infiltration is decreased by 70% from the natural state. For areas of 35-50% impervious surfaces the figures are 3 times and 30%, respectively. Streams become moderately impacted when the percentage of impervious surface in the watershed reaches 15% and highly impacted at 30%. Until they reach the mobile home parks, the Kayaderosseras and Gordon flow through areas of low impact. Between there and the village there is a moderate amount of impervious surfaces. The village is the first major area of impervious surfaces that affect the Kayaderosseras. It isn't until Bog Meadow and Lake Lonely reach the Kayaderosseras that water running from that sub-watershed has a high percentage of impervious surfaces.

It is important to explain to the public and key players: 1) the impact of storm water discharge on waterbodies, 2) the pollutants of concern, and 3) steps to reduce pollutants and contributors of the pollutants. Areas to be reviewed are storm water systems, street and bridge maintenance, winter practices, municipal building & grounds maintenance, and solid waste management. The first flush of a storm washes off the majority of pollutants from impervious surfaces. Techniques exist to capture that water prior to it entering streams. Simple policy changes such as requiring bagging of leaves and lawn waste and having holding areas to dump snow can reduce pollutants in streams.

Municipalities are to have a transparent process through which the public is able to give input, which results in evaluation and responses. People should know who to contact with these concerns, and reports are available for review, usually on the web. The village's consulting engineer usually prepares annual reports. Cornell Cooperative Extension, through Blue's position, works with county and local planning staff to assist 16 municipalities (including Ballston Spa) with storm water management and reporting.

Points of storm water discharge are to be reviewed once every five years to identify illicit discharges but tracing the discharge to a source can be difficult and expensive. Enforcement is focused on having the problem fixed. Techniques such as porous parking surfaces and discharging water through a gutter system into green infrastructure are available to minimize runoff.

Interactive maps are available that show the location of the 100-year flood plain (areas where there is a 1% chance of flooding each year.) The maps are assumed to be accurate. Maps also show soil types, which can be accessed to show where basements will need sumps. (The presented map indicated most all the village's east side and Colonial Hills are difficult soils for basements.)

It helps to minimize flooding if the rate of runoff is slowed down by various methods. Small structures can be built in existing storm drainage lines to impound and slow down water. But it is difficult to do that if the village doesn't know where its lines go and what condition they are in.

Committee members had a lot of anecdotal evidence of failures of village storm water drainage. Chesterwood Court floods during storms and water rises from catch basins, county buildings have no storm water

retainage causing water to rush into West High, pool in front of Christ Church, and wash down Low and Springs Streets. In the North and Center Street areas, storm water is not caught in basins and races in a torrent down the streets. In other places street are lower than the collection basin. Although pooling on streets may retain water, the water absorbs heat from the pavement, and when it does reach the streams it can warm water, harming trout.

Blue asked members to list locations where these events occur for his information and to look into the problems. A location and condition inventory of the village's storm water system is essential. Repair and upgrading will require allocation of money.

While the village can act within its boundaries, it is affected by municipal actions relating to upstream and downstream maintenance. For instance, anything that inhibits waterflow into the flood plain near the end of Northline Road may result in village flooding. It will be important for the village to be part of intermunicipal agreements. The critical area that causes flooding is the confluence of the Gordon and Kayaderosseras Creeks. There are a few things that can be done to minimize water backup, but nothing corrective. Foot's Pond and the high banks of the Kayaderosseras may provide opportunities for retaining flood waters. Ownership issues would need addressing.

A system can be added to existing storm sewers that is essentially a box that catches pollutants in the first flush of rain and allows the water to evaporate or seep into the surrounding soil. The system is bypassed by large storms, but it can result in 0 discharge during minor storms. There is another system that creates a vortex to separate out organics and trash from the water. All of those systems need regular maintenance. Some soils are too wet to use them.

Mayor Rossi noted the village is working inter-municipally on water and sewer upgrades and was able to use the committee's work to help show the village's need for grants.

Although the interactive map shows catch basins and outlets, it lacks information on the condition of the basins or how they are connected to each other. When there is a questionable discharge found, the computer program will then be able to trace back the discharge to its source.

In areas of the village, storm sewers cannot work because of springs coming out of hill sides, shallow naturally impervious layers, and other reasons that are reflected in soil types. These conditions are relevant even in a mostly built out village because of redevelopment.

Except for a general county study, there is no readily available data on natural water sources that cause the village's "water abundance." On site observations, noting wet areas, listening for constantly running storm sewers, and studying soil maps can be done to begin developing a map.

Karen thanked Blue for his presentation and reminded everyone of the village tour next Tuesday at 3:30 beginning at Victory Circle. The second phase will be on the next Tuesday, May 17, at 3:30 beginning at the Village Cemetery near the columbarium. 3:30 was the latest Amy could do it and have it fit in her workday.

Ellen asked everyone to familiarize themselves with the Village of Ballston Spa Economic Development Plan prepared by Saratoga County Prosperity Partnership in 2020, as June's topic will be economic development.

Meeting ended at 8:40 pm.

Ballston Spa Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee Stormwater Management II May 19, 2022

Present in Person: Scott Burlingame; John Cromie, Karen Martell, Ellen Mottola, and Steve Springer; From SCCCE: Blue Neils, and Ariane Tanski

Present on Zoom: Carrie Chapman; Monique Cohen, Mathew Ercoline, John Hearn, and Jared Iacolucci

Excused: Bob Bush, Nafeesa Koslik, Peter Martin, Jackie Pelliccia, and Marilyn Stephenson.

Observer in Person: Adrian Guadarrama

Observer on Zoom: Liz Kormos

Meeting was called to order by Chair Karen Martell at 7:00 PM. Minutes of the prior meeting had been reviewed; there were no corrections. Scott Burlingame moved they be approved as presented; Ellen Mottola seconded; passed.

Karen turned over the meeting to Blue Neils, Saratoga County Cooperative Extension Associate Community Educator, Stormwater Management. Blue explained his group's maps of the inlets and outfalls for municipalities in the county and how they trace the flow downhill until it reaches an outlet at a stream or wetland or the lines of another municipality, like those in a state highway.

The DEC has published a draft of new standards for municipalities that operate under MS4 permits, like Ballston Spa. There are 6 categories MS4 communities must comply with. The third and sixth have the most on impact Ballston Spa. The third requires mapping from inflows to out flows. The sixth requires cleaning and maintaining the system. Blue introduced Ariane Tanski who works with him producing maps of stormwater systems.

Ariane presented a map with village catch basins, presumed flow, and outflow points. When one clicks on a catch basin, data describing it pops up as well as a photograph. Two common problems exist. First, because sumps below the discharge pipe are not regularly cleaned, when rainwater falls into the basin debris is churned up and flows to the next basin and eventually the outflow. Second, grout around outlets and basin walls has failed, water erodes the soils around discharge pipes and undermines streets and catch basins.

Catch basins at the DPW garage were shown. In one, debris fill the chamber halfway to the top of the discharge pipes, grouting is missing, and a petroleum sheen is on the water. In another, equally filled and with ungrouted connections, has rusty colored water, which indicates water used to clean rusty equipment goes into the storm system. That would be a major red flag when DEC does an audit under the MS4 permit.

Another phenomenon is that many of the pipes from catch basins do not seem to go anywhere. Pipes are directed to centers of streets rather to the Gordon Creek and create a concern they may dump into the sanitary system. Other catch basins seem to have no outflow. The mapping and inventorying is hindered by difficulty entering catch basins in Route 50 without holding up traffic or getting killed.

Because it was developed and modified over a couple of hundred years, the village's stormwater system reflects the inconsistencies caused by overlaying the perceptions of each generation that touched it. Unlike most municipalities, Ballston Spa is in serious need of an assessment of its system. There are at least three suspected sites suggesting sewage discharge into the stormwater system. If that is verified, it must be reported to DEC, and the village will have the expense of tracing to the cause and eliminating the cross-over. The village may be able to borrow cameras from larger municipalities to explore where pipes lead and points of intrusion.

In some portions of the village, it may be cheaper to abandon the system and build one to modern standards. The village may wish to extend the current studies of its water and sanitary sewer systems to include the stormwater system to meet its requirements under the MS4 permit and assess its functionable ability.

Blue and his staff have focused much of their time on larger municipalities that have staff and are more likely to attract the attention of DEC. Because of the master plan effort, they have given more attention to Ballston Spa.

As a MS4 community, the village in 2003 agreed to perform various actions relating to its stormwater system. That agreement is the legal nexus which allows DEC to require those acts be carried out. DEC will audit communities to ensure compliance. When it finds non-compliance, the DEC will issue a notice of apparent violation. DEC is interested in compliance, not punishment, and will work with a municipality. But if a municipality drags its feet and blows off DEC, significant fines will be levied. Most communities in Saratoga County have been audited. Ballston Spa is on the short list of those who have not.

When a major problem, such as crossover of storm and sanitary systems is verified, the "clock starts ticking." At this time, that means the municipality has to actively identify, trace, and eliminate the problem. There is no set time frame but there is to be no delay. Proposed rule changes would require the source be identified in one day and eliminated in five days. Those deadlines may be eased in the final regulations, but stringent deadlines are anticipated.

Funds are available from the State Revolving Fund for sewer and potable water projects which are also interested in eliminating crossovers with stormwater systems in lower income communities, which Ballston Spa at this point still qualifies well. State stormwater funds may help pay for revamped or redesigned lines and include methods for water retention during downpours. Water Quality Improvement Projects Grants are available. The Environmental Facilities Corporation has an innovation program for storm water. It is a two-step program. If the village lands a grant for planning, it will be in line for funding construction.

Blue's staff can set the village up for its own audit by completing the reconnaissance it has begun as far as they can. Because the village will be able to show all its outfalls have been inspected, it will show compliance with that requirement of the MS4 Permit.

An observation from last meeting was, because certain soils in much of the village are not conducive to basements future, new building in those areas should not be permitted to have basements. Blue noted in much of the country, homes do not have basements. It a peculiarity of the Northeast that people think there should be

basements. In flood plains a building's entry has to be 2 feet above the 100-year flood level. In most other countries it is the 500-year flood level. New housing in the Flats and Island may have to be built on piers.

Ballston Spa has weathered some very significant storms and has avoided serious flooding. It is fortunate because east of the village is a very large flood plain that prevents the Kayaderosseras from backing up. Much of the village's flooding is localized and a product of the drainage system. When more than 100-year storms have occurred, there may have been some flooding at the confluence of the Gordon with the Kayaderosseras, but no significant damage. It was noted the area around the intersection of Mechanic and Ford Street is not in the flood plain and the rise to that area is almost imperceptible.

Multiple springs naturally emerge from hillsides and other places in Ballston Spa which can cause problems for property owners. It is probably best to catch the water and transfer it to the Kayaderosseras as quickly as possible. However, there may be too many springs making a program control all springs unaffordable. Those springs can have a detrimental affect by transporting pollutants from a site, such as Rickett's, onto "downstream" properties. Current testing is beginning to determine the extent of the plume.

It was observed by Amy Fitzgerald of Behan Associates that the discussion has laid out the attention the stormwater system needs and that the comprehensive plan should state goals and how they may be achieved. Particular attention can be given to capturing stormwater before it enters the system. Blue suggested immediate, short-term, and long-term goals: 1) bring the system up to "snuff" with repairs and maintenance; 2) have an assay done to eliminate cross connections, dead-ends, and eliminate what shouldn't be in the system, and 3) look for ways to reduce stormwater from entering the system, respectively, without throwing a million dollars at a ten-cent problem.

Goals may also relate to policies, like bagging leaves, which affects the cost of maintenance of stormwater systems. Changes begin by being able to convey the financial reasons to residents so they will understand, if not accept, policy changes. To be realistic, goals are to be tempered by the degree of infrastructure maintenance and financial support which can be expected of village government.

Blue and his staff will complete the survey of catch basins and out-falls and put together a succinct report of its findings and a list of top-line, red-flag items that need immediate attention.

A holistic goal:

After addressing immediate concerns, a full-system audit of the infrastructure is to be done, followed by a capital plan to support the measures identified in the audit. As time, money, and talent permit, evaporation, storage, and absorption techniques can be constructed.

The format for August meetings will be managed by Behan Associates and will be two visioning sessions with breakout groups including at least one committee member. Breakout groups can be set up through Cornell Zoom

Karen reminded all the second meeting in June will be on the third Thursday the 23rd, because of scheduling conflict for the room. Meeting was adjourned

Ballston Spa Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee Economic Considerations I June 2, 2022

Present in Person: Scott Burlingame, Bob Bush, Monique Cohen, John Cromie, John Hearn, Jared Iacolucci, Karen Martell, Peter Martin, Mathew Ercoline Ellen Mottola, and Jackie Pelliccia

Present on Zoom: Carrie Chapman and Marilyn Stephenson

Excused: Nafeesa Koslik and Jon Taisey.

Observers in Person: Frank Rossi, Jr. and Liz Kormos

Observers on Zoom: Bernadette VanDeinse-Perez, Dave Womer, and "IPad"

Meeting was called to order by Chair Karen Martell at 7:05 PM. Minutes of the prior meeting had been reviewed; there were no corrections. John Hearn moved they be approved as presented; Peter Martin seconded; passed. It was asked if the Steering Committee will have access to the map, in digital form, which Blue and Ariane are developing. It is expected we will be receiving it when it is done.

This month the committee is looking at the local economy, led by Ellen Mottola and Monique Cohen. Ellen noted that the 2019 Economic Development Plan put together by the former Saratoga County Prosperity Partnership is a summary of a lot of data points relating to the downtown business district. It identified four goals: enhance the CBD, the quality of place, economic development and marketing, and small business environment.

The report includes a series of action items and assigns responsibility for each one. Committee members are encouraged to access the report and Action Plan Matrix on the Village's website. Topics mentioned in the study are similar to those reviewed over the months by this committee.

When people arrive downtown, there should be reasons for them to do more than one thing. If someone comes for a haircut, that person should be enticed to stick around and shop or do something else. For instance, parking time could be extended so people would not have to go to their cars as soon as they do now. It was suggested a major need is public bathrooms, so people do not have to load into their cars and go to McDonalds, Stewarts, or wherever, and leave town. Bathrooms could be made part of the Zim Smith Trail, if it came into town. In the meantime, bathrooms in the library, Welcome Center (Bottle Museum), and police station could be opened to serve the public.

The plan also envisioned expanding the business district down Washington Street and west on Front Street to Iron Spring Park and Brookside. The portion of Washington Street that dead ends west of Bath Street also holds potential for commercial/retail development.

It was suggested that businesses could be enticed to locate in those areas through governmental financial benefits like tax breaks or other incentives like expedited site plan review. Village taxes and coffers may not be large enough to make a difference. If zoning allows single-family homes in the Bath Street; Court and Walnut Street areas to have home businesses with minor retail uses, they will act to draw people through the areas to be developed as CBD, increasing the likelihood commercial enterprises will open down Washington and Front Streets. Special events in Iron Spring Park will also familiarize potential customers with businesses along western Front Street.

A business Improvement district was suggested in the economic plan. It would form a taxing district, and the property owners would elect representatives to use the money to promote and improve the business area. Troy's is focused primarily on promotions. However, a development district can address hard infrastructure and beautification. Village merchants 30 years ago were willing to form an improvement district, but it was at a period when the legislature was moving from special legislation to general legislative authority, and the opportunity passed.

Saratoga Springs acts as an economic driver for Ballston Spa. People who visit Saratoga Springs often look at the village as another place to experience. They see it as a quaint, not self-conscious, pleasant place.

Cienteles of village businesses regularly come from communities 25 or 35 miles away. Business owners have repeat customers from Lake George, Troy, Glens Falls, Schenectady, Niskayuna, etc. One business has customers come often from further down state. Many customers visit from Schenectady area because they want to experience the village. Some people say Ballston Spa is Burnt Hill's Saratoga Springs.

Although Malta tried to create a walking downtown, it is dependent on the automobile. Ballston Spa is the downtown experience for Malta residents.

People look at downtown as a source for goods, services, and entertainment. Having a movie theater would draw kids and families. Providing places for young kids to play and older kids to gather will add to the attraction of the community. Activities like the farmer's market draw people downtown. Wiswall Park is our village green and should be used for that purpose.

Downtown is the engine of our village. The greater the diversity of businesses and of people experiencing the village, the more its attractiveness increases, which in turn draws more people to Ballston Spa.

Responsibility for creating a diversity of businesses falls largely on Ballston Spa Business and Professional Association (BSBPA) and building owners. The government's fundamental role is to provide reliable infrastructure for businesses, ensuring their investments in the community, and secondarily to have an articulated promotional plan that describes its activities to support a positive image of the village. Because almost everything a village does is publicized, it creates an image. By not considering the effects of publicity, too often a negative image is produced unintentionally. Perhaps, if funding materializes, the village could have a designated person as a public information officer.

Much of Ballston Spa's marketing and promotions are carried out by BSBPA. Until the village's past financial crisis, it had contracted with BSBPA to market the village. SEDC has not picked up the promotion assistance that had been provided by Prosperity Partnership. Saratoga Chamber receives the County's tourism funds and the State's I Love NY money, but focuses its funds on Saratoga Springs. While BSBPA belongs to both Saratoga Chamber and the Greater Capital District Chamber and has good relations with them, their money has not been used to fund village promotions. Preliminary efforts by village trustees are being made to encourage the county to assist with promotion.

A necessary element in promotion and marketing is to articulate a simple message that encapsulates a desired image. An effort should be made to find an appropriate moniker for the village. Currently it uses two, "A Village of

Friends” and “A Strolling Village.” A group had been created to look at branding or re-branding. But after its first meeting, COVID hit, and the momentum was lost.

Any brand should support the businesses and encourage new business owners. It should also convey the message that it is a great place to buy a home, raise your kids, and have a good life. While looking at rebranding, the current tag line, “Strolling Village” ought not be overlooked. It implies people are downtown window shopping as well as walking through safe neighborhoods. The effort to find a brand for the village should be re-started and focused on where the village should be going in the next fifteen years.

There are 4,100 students and over 800 staff at the schools. This large number of people (including parents) will add to the prosperity of downtown if they can be encouraged to shop and use services in the village. Whether it be through gift certificates or other come-ons, an effort should be focused on bringing those who spend a good part of their day in or near Ballston Spa to the downtown. More cooperative efforts with the school will help.

It is important to be aware of the major gateways to the village. They form a visitor’s first impression. To efficiently manage the primary entrances, the village government should seek partnerships with surrounding towns, especially Milton and Ballston. Malta tends to do its own thing, but shares two important secondary entrances to the village.

The remaining goal from the 2019 economic development study, “enhance small business environment” will be discussed at the next meeting, June 23 [not June 16]. Meeting was adjourned at 8:15.

Ballston Spa Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee Economic Considerations II June 23, 2022

Present in Person: Monique Cohen, John Cromie, Karen Martell, Mathew Ercoline, Ellen Mottola, and Jackie Pelliccia

Present on Zoom: Bob Bush, Carrie Chapman, Jared Iacolucci, Marilyn Stephenson, and Amy Fitzgerald

Excused: Nafeesa Koslik, Scott Burlingame and Peter Martin

Observers in Person: Bernadette VanDeinse-Perez

Observers on Zoom: Liz Kormos and Anne M.

Meeting was opened by Chair Karen Martell at 7:06. Minutes of the June 2 meeting were reviewed. Marilyn moved they be approved as presented; Ellen Mottola seconded. Passed.

Karen introduced Ellen and Monique Cohen, who continued last meeting’s discussion by proceeding to the 2019 Economic Development Plan’s fourth goal: “Foster supportive conditions and offer valuable resources to help small businesses and proprietors prosper and grow throughout the village.”

Topics to explore are collaboration and communication within the business community, co-working spaces, home businesses, capitalizing on those who work from home, and short-term rentals.

A recent episode illustrated the need for collaboration and communication where businesses were unable to proceed with a plan because of a lack of clarity of rules for use of Wiswall Park. Businesses feel there is a lack of clarifying communication especially from the village. It occurs over signage, display of items on the sidewalk, and, until recently, outdoor dining among other issues. Policies of the village often lack specificity, and there is no established system of communication between the village and business owners. In addition to marketing the village, another BSBPA role is to help businesspeople understand governmental policies and how to navigate them, but the role is difficult because village policies are vague and do not cover many of the questions that come up. Also, for many of the business owners, primary contact with the village is regulatory in nature, when something is wrong. Very few village officials drop in to visit the owners.

An effort can be made to make policies more specific to provide greater guidance. BSBPA and the village could be proactive and develop policies that anticipate requests rather than treating each situation that comes along separately. In addition, a set process can be established to address questions unanswered by the written policies. Establishing policies without addressing real-life concerns can result in rigid, unworkable requirements. Because of the unlikelihood of being able to cover all the bases, rather than trying to do that through policymaking, procedures can be established to workout arrangements beneficial to the village and the business entity. Once similar situations continue to occur, then a policy covering those needs can be articulated.

There seems to be a lot of interest in co-working space. The idea is based on a belief that there is a demand from those working from home for business services unavailable in their homes and for meeting space. The availability of co-working space will encourage the development of more home offices in the village. An increase of

home offices and businesses can impact parking and other neighborhood amenities. Village infrastructure must be able to support more businesses, especially a more powerful internet service than that provided by Spectrum, which has a lock on the village. It will be worthwhile to look for competition.

Short-term rentals are not necessarily neighborhood friendly, with people going in and out of a house, creating noise or disruption. They also may take away affordable housing in the village. They provide housing in the village for visitors which is preferable to the construction of a motel, which would likely result in tear downs. Short-term renters will be introduced to the village and may return to shop or live here. The village has no regulations governing short-term rentals and people take advantage of that. If special permits or licenses were issued, they could be taken back for bad behavior.

Ellen and Monique highlighted a statement from a business owner relating to that person's interaction with village government.

It sure would be nice if any village officer would stop in to learn about my business. (Other than one trustee) the only interaction with the village is to make sure I'm complying with zoning and fire ordinances— necessary and I have no issue with that. But it should not be my only interaction with the village in such a small village. It would be appropriate for our police force to reach out to businesses. We are their eyes and ears on their streets. A few months ago, the liquor store was robbed, and I heard about it on Facebook. As a business two doors down, I would have loved if someone had made an effort to touch base with me. And obviously our motto, "Village of Friends," is not being embraced by our local government. I am not calling anyone out, but I will hold all of them to seek a spirit of collaboration and working to improve our village and not divide our village. I can't honestly feel the village really wants businesses to succeed. I feel they are more interested in policing us. If businesses feel the village doesn't want them to be successful, why would we stay here?

This perspective underscores the need for a liaison between village government and businesses. Someone is needed to work with and communicate with business owners and ensure their needs are addressed when it comes to interaction with the village. In addition, it would be very helpful to foster an awareness among village officials, staff, and volunteers of how important their actions are as representations of our village.

A determination at the last meeting was that the sphere of economic influence from which businesses draw is about a 30 or so mile radius around Ballston Spa. The economic health of village businesses is dependent on the overall economy of the greater capital region.

Two other factors that affect business is the school district with its 800 or so employees and the county offices. It was felt more had to be done to attract those people into the downtown. For some reason there seems to be a barrier between people working around the village and downtown businesses. The recent discussion in the county of moving its offices to the former State Farm offices at Exit 12 is a major threat to the village economy. More work is needed to market village businesses to those who may work three or four miles away from it.

Charts from last year's existing conditions report done for the steering committee indicate the largest employment group among village residents is the service industry (Education, Health, etc.). A bit less than half of the employed are scattered among other working groups. Many of those employed in education are probably working for the school district. But others in education can work for area colleges. Many of those in services and government can be working in Albany. It may be important to ask people how far they travel to their workplace. It may well be that a large number of residents travel 30 or 40 miles from Ballston Spa. It can probably be assumed people work along the Northway Corridor from Albany to Glens Falls, but, primarily to the south.

An interesting statistic from the Existing Conditions report is that the age group with the highest percentage in the labor force is those from 25 to 29. Age groups 20 to 24 and 31 to 34 follow right behind. This indicates a very active, young workforce in the village.

The information indicates Ballston Spa is not a company town and its families are supported mainly by health, education, and government. Those areas are generally stable employment sectors. With a wide range in other occupations, Ballston Spa is relatively protected from economic downturns.

Over a quarter of families make between \$100,000 and \$149,999, as do over a third of married-couple households. The educational level among working adults in Ballston Spa is not as high as among Saratoga County or state residents. Almost half of non-family households live on \$35,000 or less. This includes people living on social security, social services, and subsidized housing (Doubleday Woods). These statistics underscore the wide range of economic levels in the village.

It appears most employed residents of Ballston Spa travel within a 30 or so mile radius from the village. That is the same area from which downtown businesses draw their customers. It is fair to say that Ballston Spa's economic health is tied directly into that of the Capital Region. The model can be described by drawing concentric circles emanating from the village. But it doesn't mean closer circles are more important. For instance, Saratoga Springs and Clifton Park are probably more influential than the immediately surrounding towns.

However, due to social media, it is not uncommon for people to come into the village from the Boston area, Long Island, NYC, Washington D.C., or Mid-NYS. They may not be regular customers, but they show the reach the village has.

Facilities and techniques can be developed that will encourage visitors to stay a few days, including lodging, to more shops, to promoting unique characteristics of the community and surrounding area. Parking areas available for longer-term parking will be helpful.

The conversation reverted back to the topic of the need for a liaison between the village and downtown businesses. It was felt a position could be hired by the village to perform this function. Rather than marketing, the function should be focused on public affairs and communicate with residents as well as businesses. The ideal would be an apolitical person who understands the ins and outs of the village and is not only able to help people navigate policies but advocate for changes when needed. [Secretary's note: this description resembles the manager form of local government]

The economic drivers that bring money to Ballston Spa are primarily in Saratoga Springs, Clifton Park, and Albany, but are really throughout the Capital Region.

The committee in its discussions over the months keeps coming to the same conclusion. We need to understand what makes us unique. Geographically, Ballston Spa is centrally located among the region's economic activity. Saratoga County is prosperous; it is one of the few counties in the state that is growing. Yet, Ballston Spa must distinguish itself. It is a residential oasis in which people can still afford to buy a home. The fact that our residents value the village, the school, the community is something that should get out and be promoted. In many ways, the Capital Region is defined by Northway Exits. The population has moved up the Northway from Albany to the point where Exit 12 is an acceptable drive to and from the Albany area. These factors support our downtown and determine demand for housing. The continued economic health of the village requires we build on these strengths.

It was noted the village webpage does not have an updated list of steering committee members. That should be corrected.

Jackie and Jered will lead next month's discussion on social considerations. Because concerts at which we wish to distribute surveys happen on Thursdays in August and the general difficulties of meeting in August, the visioning sessions will be merged into one on September 1 for two hours. Discussions of land use and restrictions of reality can be compressed in one meeting each in October.

Amy will develop surveys to be distributed at the concerts and filled in electronically. She will send drafts to committee members. The surveys will draw questions from each of the topics discussed over the months. In addition to the village website, Facebook and other social media, the survey can be handed out through the BSBPA table at the Farmer's Market.

Based on the need for more powerful internet service, the question was posed if there ought to be an effort to contact Green Light and find out what their criteria may be for extending it service to Ballston Spa as a competitor to Spectrum. Members were asked to get the word out, even though the effort would not be part of the committee's work.

Amy has added information to the steering committee's webpage, but the site is restricted as to colors and techniques and cannot send a link to Behan's website for interactive questions. It was noted there has been no press release on the village's web site announcing that Behan has been hired or that a planning process has been going on. Producing informational releases for the village is no one's job. If they are to be done, they will have to be supplied by someone involved in the Master Plan process (over and above those done by Ellen announcing our meetings in the press).

There being nothing further, the meeting was adjourned 8:15.

Present in Person: John Cromie, Mathew Ercoline, Jared Iacolucci, Karen Martell, Ellen Mottola, and Jackie Pelliccia, Steve Springer.

Present on Zoom: Bob Bush, Carrie Chapman, Monique Cohen, Mathew Ercoline, John Hearn, Marilyn Stephenson, and Amy Fitzgerald

Excused: Scott Burlingame, Nafeesa Koslik, Peter Martin, and Jon Taisey

Observers in Person: Liz Kormos and Frank Rossi

Observers on Zoom: Anne M. and Jeff

Due to power problems with the computer, the meeting was delayed until 7:20, at which time it was called to order by Chair Karen Martel. Minutes of the last meeting were reviewed. Motion made by Ellen Mottola to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Jared Iacolucci; passed.

Karen introduced Jared and Jackie Pelliccia who will be leading the discussion on Social Considerations. The topics to be discussed are Demographics, Social Organizations, Culture and Education, Transportation and Parking, Parks and Public Spaces, and Coming Challenges.

There are slightly more than 2,300 households in the village of which a bit more than half are families. Children raise the average family size to 2.79 individuals as compared to 2.1 for all households, indicating village families are of a modest size. The existing conditions report shows 56.6% of the households are owner occupied and 36.6% are rented.

The largest household income level is \$100,000 - \$140,000 at 19%, but it is 3.1% smaller than the proportion in Saratoga County. About 1/3 of village households exist on \$50,000 or less, which exceeds the county percentage. 6.3% of the households make over \$200,000, which is 5.2% less than the county. The takeaway is that Ballston Spa, overall, is a middle-class community with a large lower income segment. It also comes as no surprise that the village has very little racial diversity.

95% of the residents have a high school diploma or greater education, which exceeds the national average. However, only 35% of the residents have a graduate or professional degree, which is lower than the national average. In any case, the education level may be the reason why there is only a 2.2% unemployment rate. About 2/3 of the workers are classified as white collar; 14% blue collar, and 20% in unskilled service jobs. The median household income at \$71,000 is higher than in most communities. The village has twice the national rate of educators and librarians and three times the number of architects and engineers. The median age is 41 years, which is three years older than the national average. The village has fewer residents under 14 than the national average and more over 65 than the national average. It can be concluded the village has an aging population. Of those over 50, almost 60% own their homes and over half of the home owners live in non-family housing, meaning these people, as age impinges live style, may not have family to assist them. Due to this dynamic, social organizations may have increased importance in the near future.

As the older population ages, younger residents will have to take over. About a third of the village is between 18 and 49. A positive technique to encourage the up-coming generation will be to have procedures in place that bring them into decision making. Many in this age group are busy with kids and jobs and have little time. But it is important that boards and committees make room for these people, perhaps through term limits.

Of the social organizations in the village, there are a couple that serve the lower income population, especially Life Works and Rebuilding together. Both have a county-wide scope, but are easily available to village residents. Veteran and community housing seeks housing for veterans. Job link helps people seeking employment.

While diversity is usually viewed in racial and ethnic terms, the village's diversity is economic and to a lesser degree relates to disabilities. However, Life Works does have programs for immigrants and migrant laborers.

Service groups like Rotary and its exchange program give the community opportunities it would not otherwise have. Rotary is currently exploring a partnership with its Interact to introduce students to community projects.

With its schools in or adjacent to the village, BSCD as well as the village library bring families from adjoining towns into the village, providing a major resource for downtown businesses and community organizations. It helps to have that large proportion of educators and librarians within the village population. The village benefits from its two museums which bring people into the village and promote the history of the area. The abundance of daycare possibilities provides an array of early childhood education which is important to young families, allows parents to be more productive, and attracts people to reside in the village. Attention to the arts, culture, and history is important to the quality of life in the village and is inculcated from one's early years by the school district.

The vast majority of village residents who travel to work drive their own autos. About 10% carpool and relatively small numbers walk, take taxis, or a bus. At the time of the report, 2019, around 4% worked from home. That pre-pandemic figure probably understates the number of people today working from home. Approximately 90 households do not own a car and depend on public transportation or family and friends. About 20% have one car, making it difficult to handle two work schedules. A large majority have two or more cars (77%). Given the people who do not have cars or those who don't have access because the one car is being used elsewhere, there is a good number of people who depend on the walkability of the village.

Rte. 50 carries about 15,000 cars a day and Rte. 67 handles about 8000 cars along West High Street. Greenfield Ave & West Streets, Rowland Street, Malta Ave., East High Street, Ballston Ave., and Fairground Ave, carry a significant number of cars. Traffic congestion on Rte. 50 is most likely related to the growth of Saratoga County in the last few years. The population increase is a momentum swing for the village, and the community should carefully consider how to engage that increase of population.

Much of the traffic comes from or goes to the Northway from the rapidly growing areas north and south of the village. Rte. 67 South and Northline Road are jammed at times. Milton Ave. is bumper to bumper certain times of day. Traffic congestion's silver lining is that it gives the community a sense of vitality and prosperity. It is preferred to the use of a by-pass, which has damaged other small downtowns.

Motorists are not just driving through the village. They are stopping and parking, making it difficult to find places to park near the popular areas. The Parking Advisory Committee found there isn't a lack of parking spots, but rather insufficient enforcement, people's expectation that they should not have to walk a block or two to their destination, the lack of signage and maps (including online maps), and a need for an overall parking plan. During off hours, the county lot is available, but it is not well posted. Not-for-profit lots could be made available when not normally used, in return for village snow clearing.

CDTA has two routes running through the village. One runs almost 20 hours a day from Schenectady to Wilton Mall, and the other is geared for commuters who work in Albany. Other nearby areas are not accessible to those who do not have car transportation. The commuter run provides one-car households with more options.

The January 2022 pedestrian and bicycle master plan and the Existing Conditions Report of 2021 find sidewalks generally exist in the village but could be in better condition and intersections could be made safer and easier to use. A priority has been established to address sidewalks needed along Malta Ave and to improve sidewalks leading to downtown. As properties are developed or re-developed, sidewalks made part of projects are able to be financed with little impact on the ultimate owner. The current reimbursement program is not working, and something further has to be inaugurated to promote repair and replacement of faulty sidewalks.

Street signage has gone missing over the years and is needed for people to navigate side streets. In the past emergency vehicles had been known to get lost. (Today, fire trucks and ambulances are tied into the county-wide emergency services mapping.) The village has identified 91 missing street signs and is enlisting the aid of the county to replace them.

Smaller parks and public spaces in the village are used more than the larger areas. Victory Circle has little of its potential realized. It could be a gathering/recreation space for the northern portion of the village. Kelly Park is underutilized. The Village Cemetery may not be village owned but is a huge space suitable for passive recreation like jogging and walking dogs. The Cemetery Association wants it used in that manner.

Trees are noted by the US forestry service to increase residential values, make downtowns inviting causing shoppers to spend more, and, if strategically placed, can improve heating and cooling costs. It was noted a conflict exists along Milton Ave between mature trees and sidewalk heaves. Based on the effects of tree removal and replacement by the Lincoln Block, it seems mature trees are more valuable than the sidewalk. The sidewalk should be lifted, and tree roots trimmed every 15 years or so.

There are some serious future challenges to the social fabric of the village. The increase of automation will replace a lot of human labor, greatly affecting 15% to 25% of our workforce. The international move away from fossil fuels to electrification will create major challenges for our older buildings that are not well fitted for energy delivered through electricity. Climate change will cause people to return to the northeast due to extreme weather conditions, rising sea levels elsewhere, economic viability of intensive agriculture, and other changing conditions. Increasing population pressure due to the development of the electronics industry and the generally favorable living conditions in the Capital Region is a force that could damage the village if not recognized and taken on as a challenge.

The best way for the village to prepare to meet future challenges, whatever they may be, is by encouraging residents to become involved in social organizations that will help the community meet the challenges and for

decision making in the village to become more inclusive, constantly bringing new members onto boards and committees.

Because of the increasing number of electric cars, the village can make itself more inviting by providing charging stations. The state is funding their erection and they create a cash flow. There are monetary techniques to encourage turnover at the stations.

Challenges of retrofitting housing stock to meet future requirements for energy efficiency as electricity replaces fossil fuels will be formidable. Because such conversions will be expensive, but result in higher resale values, it will be more likely homeowners rather than landlords will take on that challenge. Encouraging home ownership in the village should result in sooner and more successful retrofitting.

National trends are going in the other direction. Large corporations are buying up tracts of housing to rent them out. New York's 2019 landlord tenant law favors corporate landlords because the required complicated processes and inability to spread the risk of non-paying tenants are pushing the small locally based landlords out of the business.

Major rental projects have been built in the last few years within a few miles of the village, providing a contrast to village life. The village must use whatever means it can to differentiate itself, provide a positive environment for home ownership, and discourage single family homes as multiple or short-term rentals. Local laws exist that require landlords to provide tenants the right of first refusal if the property is to be sold.

Jackie and Jared's presentation ended with the following questions to be discussed at the next meeting.

1. How do we keep diversity in the face of rising housing values and cost of living?
2. As the population ages, how can we assure a good quality of living?
3. How can the village encourage more participation from young adults?
4. How do we support social organizations?
5. What role does the village play in addressing coming challenges posed by technological and demographic changes?
6. How can we best improve transportation in the village?
7. How can we preserve and enhance the parks and public spaces in the village?

* * * * *

Amy had sent out a draft of the survey to gauge opinions of residents and visitors concerning the topics we have been discussing. It is needed to be finalized before the concert at Iron Spring Park next week. It was decided committee members access the survey on Google Drive, make edits, and send suggestions for changes to Mat Ercoline by Monday night. He will collate the modifications and edit the survey accordingly, creating the final product on Tuesday. Behan will have the survey available through a QR code and print for the concert on Thursday, July 14. It was suggested we should not depend solely on the concerts for distribution. There should be plenty of copies to be passed around and placed in businesses, library, senior housing, and other locations people go. Behan will make available paper copies for those who do not use electronic media, and electronic versions on the village Facebook page, website and distribution of QR codes for others.

Members volunteered to distribute the surveys at the various concerts.

A concern was expressed that in the minutes of the last meeting, it was noted no one in the village was responsible for press releases announcing the hiring of the consultant and the operations of the committee, it seemed the scope of work by the consultant was not being followed. The consultant is hired to be responsible for public outreach.

The Mayor noted that outreach was on the consultant's invoices and that he was worried that the consultant's product so far does not seem to match its requests to be paid 25% of the contract amount. He is setting up a meeting with the consultant and Karen. Issues like the one just raised should be part of that discussion. The consultant was asked months ago to pull the information and ideas of the committee together, which Amy may be working on. Also, the consultant was to report to the board no later than July, and that has not happened yet. We are in a critical period if we are to be engaging the public in a visioning session in September.

A concern was expressed that the Thursday before the Labor Day weekend is not a good day to expect residents to turn out to take part in a two-hour visioning session. It was suggested that another day be selected. Other dates in September would be equally bad because the community would be getting into its school routine.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:51.

Ballston Spa Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee Social Considerations II July 21, 2022

Present in Person: Mathew Ercoline, Jared Iacolucci, Karen Martell, and Jackie Pelliccia.

Present on Zoom: Carrie Chapman, John Cromie, John Hearn, Marilyn Stephenson, and Amy Fitzgerald

Excused: Scott Burlingame, Monique Cohen, Nafeesa Koslik, Peter Martin, Ellen Mottola, and Jon Taisey

Observers in Person: Liz Kormos and Bernadette

Observers on Zoom:

Meeting was called to order by Karen Martell at 7:07. Jackie Pelliccia moved that the minutes of the last meeting be approved as presented; Mat Ercoline seconded; passed. The meeting was turned over to Jared Iacolucci and Jackie Pelliccia to continue the discussion. During a review of the prior meeting's subjects, Jared noted a significant fact is the large number of residents over 50 and the ramifications of an aging demographic. That fact leads to the question of how to incorporate younger residents into the fabric of the village, to have them included on boards and committees, so they will be in a position to take over the reins from those who are aging out.

Limits on the number of positions a person could serve in and creating an environment where one-term service is expected coupled with advertising of open positions would go a long way to opening up village service. Voter lists can be used to identify recipients of advertising of open positions. A well devised system will create a population more aware of village operations and knowledgeable future leaders.

A Zoom option for meetings is very important to attract a broader number of people. Our own meetings have shown it to be a viable function that helps parents with young families to be involved.

Another subject from last meeting was the benefit of all the greenery throughout the village and how the trees and shrubs make the village pleasant pace to walk. Jared reported on a recent meeting of Malta Avenue School administrators, neighbors, and village officials at which safe sidewalks were discussed. A common refrain was the need for painted crosswalks and signage. Speed bumps and dips to slow traffic were also discussed. Past experience has indicated not only lack of enforcement but also lack of understanding by enforcers.

A question was raised if committee/board seats are open and the village needs to fill them? The two attending trustees indicated current committee and board seats are filled but there will be ad hoc committees needed in granting processes when the village receives grants. A second question asked if positions are currently filled by a who-knows-who process or if there is a system in place to generally solicit residents. In response, it appears there is no system, positions may be posted on a Facebook page, but people are often selected through personal associations.

It was noted there appears again to be a communication issue. If there is insufficient publicity then people do not hear of a chance to participate, and valuable participation of newer or younger residents will not happen.

In response, it requires extra work to solicit participants, and it is natural human action that appointments are filled by who knows who, not just in Ballston Spa, but everywhere. The Master Plan Committee was originally named that way. There being no system to fall back on, the two open seats of the Historic District Commission were filled that way. Also, there are relatively few seats on governmental boards and committees. Other committees of residents could be established, like a budget committee or ad hoc groups to sift through issues in major topics for Village Board decision making.

In a discussion regarding vacant buildings and enforcement of codes, it was noted that vacancy isn't a problem as much as the appearance of a property. It depends on who the village wishes to attract. Like 'success breeds success' if properties have unkept lawns, siding falling off buildings, derelict autos, people will be put off from investing in the village. Enforcement mechanisms are in place to discourage property neglect. There must be a willingness to use those mechanisms.

In some circumstances blight may result due to homeowners not having the wherewithal to maintain their properties. Fines become punitive and ineffective in those situations, which may be better addressed through partnerships with entities like Rebuilding Together. Our local organizations can bring residents together to help the aged, the single parents balancing family and job, the economically stressed, and others who wish to maintain their property but cannot. Other communities have organized days when volunteer work parties took on such tasks. The village could do the same.

Barring a door-to-door survey, there is no accurate way of determining if blighted properties are due to out-of-town owners, homeowners facing challenges, or other causes. The results of any survey would become

quickly dated. In most communities, property upkeep has little correlation to age group or any other demographic. Process will have to be addressed on a case-by-case basis through enforcement.

When considering parks at the last meeting, it was obvious the one park area that has remained undeveloped is Victory Circle. Its development will be a benefit to residents of the northern portion of the village. One Colonial Hills resident had suggested the circle include a playground and a dog park. Increased use of Victory Circle will probably necessitate sidewalks be planned to accommodate pedestrians from other parts of the surrounding community and Colonial Hills itself. Due to the speeds on Greenfield Avenue being in the 35 to 45 mph range, there is a much higher risk of fatalities than if speeds were topped at 30 mph.

The Eastern Avenue Recreation Field is another recreational resource of the village. It is owned by the school district, not the village, but is used by residents. It could be used to extend the Zim Smith Trail into the Village. However, the major focus is its need for sidewalks. The speed of autos along that section of Hyde Blvd. is of special concern. Signs with flashing lights can be erected to alert motorists to pedestrians, and they work.

The lack of striped crosswalks, signage, recognition by law enforcement all affect the walkability and desirability of the village, impacting residents and visitors, alike.

A major concern is how to bring in the younger residents of the community not only into village government but also into social organizations and non-profits. If current community members are not willing to pick up the slack as the older generation pulls back, the future will be problematic. Perhaps government and non-profits should partner and yearly or semi-annually hold an event to showcase the opportunities to volunteer and take part in the non-profits and government.

Village volunteer groups have been seeking to increase membership, but traditional methods are failing. Perhaps use of the electronic media can be centralized and the position of business liaison discussed in an earlier meeting can be broadened to include interaction with the public. However, responsibility to grow a membership belongs with each organization and it is important to cue its leadership to methods of member solicitation and publicity. The Garden Club, through the leadership of a new member, was able to triple its membership.

To entice younger residents, membership efforts have to focus on where they are, such as school events, village celebrations and the like. An effort is beginning to do just that with the ice cream social and band concert, which will feature village non-profits. The Malta Ave. PTA's motto this year is to "Reconnect with Community." That group is uniquely able to develop community leadership.

The survey is out and for the first week there have been 135 responses. So far 200 survey forms have been printed and laminated posters with the QR code are ready to put in store windows. The village office and library have posters and forms. The survey will be mailed with water bills.

It was noted the County government is contemplating moving its operations to the former State Farm Insurance site at Exit 12. There is little the Comprehensive Plan Committee can do to address that specific potential loss to the village other than to provide guidance for future action that will make the village a more attractive place for investment and families.

Provision of up-to-date information technology infrastructure is a major need to attract families moving into the area due to expansion of the chip plants and other reasons. When people opt to move to the Capital Region and look over communities, whether its high-speed internet or charging stations, Ballston Spa should not be lacking.

As an example, the Town of Milton is planning on charging stations at the town hall, but Ballston Spa hasn't discussed with the town or applied for those grants to have charging stations in the downtown, which would encourage people to shop while their car is charging. Fiber optics are essential for people working from home. Marilyn offered to work on grants for these items.

Collaboration, not just between government and organizations but among organizations, is important to foster communication among residents and supporters of the village and improve village amenities and delivery of services. Whether accomplished through a paid liaison or otherwise, a robust, inter-related network of non-profits is essential to bring up-coming generations into leadership positions in the government and community. As the volunteer base increases, so will the known talent pool for governmental positions, allowing them to turn over regularly.

The visioning workshop will be held for two hours, 7 to 9 on August 30 at the county special facilities building auditorium. It was decided Land Use will take two meetings, September 15 and October 6, and the last meeting to discuss how our proposals may fare in the real world will be October 20. Meeting was adjourned at 8:15.

Present in Person: Scott Burlingame, Bob Bush, John Cromie, Mathew Ercoline, Jared Iacolucci, Karen Martell, Jackie Pelliccia, and John Behan.

Present on Zoom: Carrie Chapman, Monique Cohen, and Marilyn Stephenson.

Excused: Nafeesa Koslik, Peter Martin, Ellen Mottola.

Observers in Person: Judy Esposito, Liz Kormos, Bernadette VanDeinse-Perez, Frank Rossi, Jr., Joey Yovino-Young, and Jonelle Bardmess.

Observers on Zoom: Gina Rossi.

Meeting was called to order by Karen Martell at 7:04. Jared Iacolucci moved that the minutes of the last meeting, July 21, be approved; Jackie Pelliccia seconded, passed. Karen turned the meeting over to Scott Burlingame to lead the discussion of how our prior discussions will lead to decisions relating to land use.

Scott noted the topic of zoning is huge and that its basic function is to segregate out uses that are incompatible and to protect the character of the community. The format will be a discussion of various themes.

The first topic is how to handle "Misfits, Opportunities, and Unmentionables." These are the larger properties that seem to be on everyone's mind. The next topics will be "Existing Non-conforming Stuff;" "Historic Districts and Old Stuff;" "Parks, Streams, and the Great Outdoors;" "Home Businesses and Couch Surfers;" and "Accessory Dwellings and Buildings."

The Angelica/tannery property at 6.25 acres is one of the largest parcels in CBD. The former Maplewood Manor is 16 acres in R-1. Rickets is 1.25 acres in the commercial zone. Then there are the unmentionables, should decisions take the uses out of the village: county buildings in R1 and R-2; the fairgrounds (27 acres and a 9-acre parking lot in R-1, or even the Malta Avenue school and recreation field in R-1 (4 acres in the village and 3 acres in the Town of Milton). It is also possible for a developer to create a sizable parcel by buying adjoining lots. Any one of these parcels could change the complexion of the village and should be kept in mind when discussing land use.

It was noted not long ago about 60% of the village is non-conforming. Whether the percentage is accurate, the observation underscores a general lack of compliance with existing zoning. It is unclear if the existing condition is due to lax enforcement or is intentional. People may be reticent and avoid approaching the government, and their best intentions lead to deterioration. Others are bold enough to do what they wish with property and ignore the village.

New York State guidelines indicate zoning is to function to eventually eliminate non-conforming uses to produce a zone of compatible functions.

It was noted that the history of noncompliance helps give the village its *je ne sais qoi* and quaintness, so it may not be considered a bad thing. It was noted that the village has evolved over generations and different uses have been accepted. For instance, lower Bath Street area works with its single families, multiple families, warehouse, factory and school. It provides a diverse, active neighborhood that is interesting to live in and a very different opportunity than the more uniform and quieter neighborhoods. In the area around the school it is understood that parking can be a problem and there are two and three family homes, but it is an enjoyable neighborhood in which to live.

There is a question if the variety of uses in a neighborhood has been accepted because people liked it or they accepted it because they couldn't do anything about it. Living on Church Ave. near a group home and duplexes on a busy state road is a place where people choose to live. Zoning out some of the uses may not be the answer.

It seems a characteristic of the village, which gives it its positive identity, is its mixture of uses, whether mixed use residential or mixing commercial with residential, as on Bath Street. Land use regulations should be designed to protect the variety the village has to offer. At the same time regulations cannot be so lax as to allow national chains to come in, raze buildings, and replace the village's retail image. From what the committee has heard from people, the village should try to find a way that stops that type of development without requiring the public to rise up and oppose such plans.

Under current zoning, because a building's use was changed without a variance, it is sitting derelict and unsalable because it will cost so much to revert to a one family. Also, due to the law's space requirements, just to build a garage can take six variances and two months to define what an alley is. By trying to avoid mixed uses or setting up space requirements that are not realistic for many village lots, the process discourages people from engaging with it and encourages property owners to ignore it. If the law is ignored and structures built or uses changed in a reasonable fashion, generally nobody complains and there is no enforcement.

Presently, it is almost impossible to build an accessory structure in the village without needing a variance. If we like the mix of uses, then the Zoning Board needs some guidance and regulations that can actually be enforced. When it comes time to write the code, the village has to be looked at carefully. The zoning law needs to be cleaned up and modernized. The visioning session made it clear people like a mixed-use concept and consider it part of the village's character. The code should be reviewed with present-day sets of eyes. The extensive provisions regarding mobile home parks might be outdated.

The problem of communication is also in play. Residents don't necessarily know where to turn to for information or that there is a reason to seek information when they make changes to their property. As a result, there are many instances where people find themselves asking for forgiveness after the fact. As part of zoning revision, communication and education must be addressed. Whether it be brochures, public meetings, or whatever, if the effort to communicate is not carried out, the village will repeat the past.

The neighborhoods of Colonial Hills, Kelley Square, and Forest Park do not share the variety of uses other parts of the village do. Protecting their homogeneous nature provides village residents with other choices of lifestyle not available in other parts of the community.

Concerns surrounding protection of our charm and historic buildings have arisen throughout the committee's discussions and the historic district's importance has been stressed. A question is the district working and having the desired effect? Does it correlate with the historic nature of the village? Is the current process a burden rather than a resource? What should the goals be for the village as a whole.

Currently, the Historic District Commission receives a referral from the building inspector when there is an application for a building permit. The jurisdiction of the commission is limited to what can be seen from the street. The members prefer to hold their meetings on site with the owner and discuss the options with the owner. Usually, the commission votes on its decision right there and produces a written decision, which is expected to be followed by the owner and enforced by the building inspector, which does not occur with uniformity. The commission has yet to determine how guidelines are to be used and is working with Saratoga Springs', which are well laid out and informative.

In the not distant past, the commission acted without procedure, provided the owner with little guidance, and so unprepared to depend on the owner to supply the paper for its decision so the building permit could proceed. That experience left the impression that the historic district law was ambiguous and may have needed an overhaul.

It was clarified that the commission only reviews facades and does not comment on use. That is the role of the Zoning Board. The commission has met with property owners prior to permit applications. For instance, the owners of the vacant parcel on Ballston and High Streets recently met with the commission and it was suggested, because the West High Street portion of the district is a collection of various styles, the buildings be representative of early 21st century architecture.

There is concern about historic or important structures that are outside the historic district. It was felt there should be at least guidelines for when buildings are changed or property developed to require new structures to blend in and be compatible with the buildings in the village, but not require excessive uniformity nor dictate design elements.

It was noted that the visioning meeting, as in meetings of the committee in the past, Cumberland Farms is looked upon as inappropriate for the center of Ballston Spa. It is an example of what not to do. The people participating in the Zoom portion of the visioning session want to see the historic nature and atmosphere of the village retained. The public has indicated that is why they come to our village. That is why they spend their money. It is very important that guidelines be established for the historic district, which can inform building owners throughout the village.

Another topic that came up in the visioning session was how the parks, streams and green spaces give the village its uniqueness. Does it make sense to have industrial zones along the Kayaderosseras? Perhaps a linear park can be established along the creek connecting the business area at the Blue Mill Bridge to the north end of the village. Opportunities along the creeks have yet to be studied. A conservation overlay area encompassing flood plain along the creeks could be placed in the zoning law.

There seems to be a demand to allow home businesses, accessory units, and Airbnbs in residential zones. Past practice seems to be that businesses which have a traffic flow may go to the zoning board, but if business can be conducted without inconvenience to neighbors, owners would not bother going to the zoning board because they would probably be denied.

It seems most Airbnb issues result from when owners are not present and relate to noise. Guidelines for their use can be developed; perhaps special permits should be required. Perhaps owners should be required to be on site. However, it is not fair to put everyone through a process when the use is abused by a few. If the major complaint is noise then it is not an Airbnb problem, but one of enforcing the village's noise ordinance. Noise also comes from long-term rental units. It is not an exclusive Airbnb problem. A multifamily house in R-1 is not necessarily the problem, it is tenants should be quieter. There should be a way to make owners of Airbnbs and multifamilies responsible for conduct of their tenants.

A common theme seems to be to promote responsibility for property and its use which is tied into promoting home ownership over absentee ownership. A partial solution might be to require the occupant of the primary residential unit (if there is one) to be responsible for complying with the zoning, conduct, and maintenance codes. This would address the situation where the residence is owned by an LLC or Trust and the member or trustee lives elsewhere. But primarily, it would discourage people from renting a principle unit, making such homes with accessory units unattractive to investors.

Airbnbs can be a positive thing for the village by providing housing for people who want to visit here and by making it less likely that a motel may want to establish itself in the village, resulting in teardowns. However, an abundance of Airbnbs can have a negative effect by taking away units which would be rented by residents on limited budgets. It is very likely that long-term rental units will be turned into Airbnbs because current landlord tenant laws have made long-term rentals unaffordable for the small landowner.

The question of what degree of regulation is optimal so as not to be burdensome but able to protect Ballston Spa's image will be held off to the next meeting. It will be led by John Behan. John noted he was impressed with the attendance at the visioning meeting and the thoughts which came out of it. At the next meeting he will lead us to organize what exists, to document it, and how to protect it from what could be well-meaning but threatening actions.

Karen announced the next meeting to complete the discussion on land use will be on Thursday, October 6. The last scheduled meeting of the committee will be Tuesday [not Thursday] October 18, 7 PM, at which time the committee will look back at its past meetings and separate what is feasible to accomplish from what is not

Ballston Spa Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee Social Considerations II October 6, 2022

Present in Person: John Cromie, Jared Iacolucci, Peter Martin, Ellen Mottola, Jackie Pelliccia, Steve Springer, John Behan, and Amy Fitzgerald.

Present on Zoom: Carrie Chapman, Monique Cohen, Marilyn Stephenson, Jon Taisey, and Michael Allen.

Excused: Scott Burlingame, Bob Bush, Nafeesa Koslik, Karen Martell.

Observers in Person: Liz Kormos, Frank Rossi, Jr.

Observers on Zoom: None

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 by John Cromie, due to the absence of Karen Martell, who was unable to attend. Minutes of September 15 were reviewed. Peter Martin moved they be approved as presented, Jackie Pelliccia seconded, passed.

The meeting was turned over to John Behan to lead the discussion of how the committee's past observations relate to land use. The discussion will cover results of a pictorial preference survey of buildings, which had been sent to members of the committee, and potential future patterns of use and whether they should be encouraged or discouraged.

The most favorable responses to the pictorial preference survey were to a treed, well maintained residential scene. Pictures which received the next most favorable reviews were a conversion of a former factory building which maintained many original elements and a creek trail that was defined by pavilions, stonework, and other architectural elements.

The least favorable view was of a converted single family with most of its design features removed, surrounded by asphalt. John mentioned that photo was included to show what can happen without design guidelines.

It was noted most residents want to keep things the way they are, and guidelines in the code will help. There seems to be a consensus in neighborhoods that Ballston Spa should not try to be like another communities. There

is a wide variety among village neighborhoods, some may be amenable to have businesses operating from homes, others not. It will be imperative to obtain the views of residents when considering land use changes.

The creeks provide an opportunity to add trail systems, especially on the trolley bed along the Kayaderosseras. If the trolley bed could be accessed from Axe Street, it would give residents of Kelley Square and Colonial Hills another way of walking downtown other than in streets where there are no sidewalks.

The former nursing home site is zoned R-1 and could be used for single family housing. It is possible lands on the site could be made into a park for area residents.

Development along the northern Rte. 50 entry to the village should be required to add greenery, low level lighting, red brick structures, etc. that would signal to motorists they have entered Ballston Spa. The southern Rte. 50 entrance rapidly transitions to residential when entering the village and creates a satisfactory image of the village.

The committee's response to commercial buildings in the pictorial survey was not positive, indicating large commercial buildings are not favored. However, large commercial buildings already exist along the northern entry along Rte. 50. The area can be made more attractive.

John Behan noted trail corridors on the map were drawn without looking at property ownership and feasibility. The Garden Club's efforts rejuvenating the garden by the RR embankment at Iron Spring Park have greatly added to the attractiveness of the streetscape. There are other places for flowers, for instance along the Gordon Creek at Hamilton Street. A foot bridge over the Kayaderosseras can be used to better connect the north end with downtown.

Two possible transition zones between CBD and purely residential areas could be the Bath Street area and lower Malta Ave., which could offer home-oriented businesses. The intensity of the businesses would have to be gaged to specific properties and probably not include intensive uses like restaurants. If the Angelica property were to become retail establishments, it may encourage landowners along Bath Street to seek more intensive retail uses. Guidelines for the Planning Board should ensure a proposed property use will not adversely affect neighboring properties. The R-2 area south of the CBD can also be a transition zone like the Bath Street area.

If the underpass at the end of Washington Street is opened to pedestrian traffic it will encourage commercial uses on western Washington Street and create a loop with Front Street.

Lower Malta Ave. has a mix of one, two, and multifamily housing. It could also act as a transition zone and be benefited by the Zim Smith Trail if it is brought into Ballston Spa. Malta Ave. is one of the major entries to the village, and the housing along lower Malta Ave seems ripe for modified uses. South of the housing on Malta Ave. is open, undeveloped land which can be developed. Lower Malta Ave. can be quite congested, and additional businesses could make a bad condition worse. The opinions of property owners and investors should be solicited before changes are made. It has been apparent for decades those properties are not bringing in enough value to justify major improvements and allowing retail/commercial uses in the structures will add value. Design/site plan guidelines will be essential to ensure the buildings are not replaced by structures inappropriate to a neighborhood including residences.

The former Maplewood Manor site is improved by a single-purpose building, which presents challenges to repurpose the structure. Due to the costs of removal of the building, it is very likely any developer will seek a more intensive use of the property than allowed in R-1. Single family homes would be preferred, but the estimated cost of \$3M to remove the building and the current asking price make single family homes unfeasible. Perhaps the asking price is too high. Given its location, residential homes would be in keeping with the surrounding area. Perhaps a more intensive use can be devised, but apartment style buildings are to be avoided.

There being insufficient time to explore the issue of accessory housing, the committee was polled whether or not to support the concept of allowing accessory units in some areas of the R-1 zone with appropriate restrictions. All members were in favor of the concept. Behan Associates will survey members to flesh out details on the topic. Meeting adjourned.

Ballston Spa Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee Visions and Reality October 18, 2022

Present in Person: Scott Burlingame, Bob Bush, John Cromie, Mat Ercoline, Jared Iacolucci, Karen Martell, Peter Martin, ~~Ellen Mottola~~, Jackie Pelliccia, Marilyn Stephenson Steve Springer, John Behan.

Present on Zoom: Carrie Chapman, Monique Cohen, John Hearn, and Amy Fitzgerald.

Excused: Nafeesa Koslik, Peter Martin, Ellen Mottola.

Observers in Person: Liz Kormos, Frank Rossi, Jr.

Observers on Zoom: Gina

Karen Martell called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Minutes of October 6 were reviewed. John noted the heading should have been "Land Use II" rather than "Social Considerations II." Marilyn moved they be approved as corrected; Jackie seconded; passed.

Karen turned the meeting over to John Cromie, who led the committee through various statements incorporating most all the issues discussed during past meetings. The committee discarded concepts deemed not viable and rated others based on their immediacy. The discussion resulted in the following goals:

SHORT TERM GOALS

S-1. The zoning law should be written so its enforcement is generally accepted and will not be ignored, by allowing flexibility with uses and area requirements but require the character and charm of existing buildings and uses not be threatened. For instance, any non-conforming use that can prove its existence for 20 years may be allowed to continue by special permit, with the burden of proof on applicant that use does not adversely affect the neighborhood.

S-2. Develop standards to guide the Planning Board and Building Inspector and guidelines to help property owners, that will protect village streetscapes by requiring conformity in height and size to neighboring buildings, ensuring consistent designs for front facades, requiring new construction to conform to certified energy efficiency standards. Publish guidelines to be followed by the Historic District Commission and inform other property owners of the village.

S-3. Require new development to conform in mass, height, and fenestration with downtown buildings recognizes Ballston Spa should be different from other communities.

S-4. Greenery (trees, shrubs, lawns, flower gardens, etc.) should be protected and encouraged as it helps unify the built environment by pulling together varying architecture and uses in village and projects a comfortable image. Include generous green spaces and trees in site plans

S-5. To integrate affordable rental units throughout the village, and provide infrastructure and services to accommodate migrants from climate damaged locations, allow housing variety in some neighborhoods from mixed use to solely single families, to accommodate accessory living units with sensible restrictions in some residential neighborhoods, especially in larger houses, as a percentage of the primary residence (in preparation for state mandates) and permit home/retail businesses on lower Milton Ave, Bath St., and other area streets

S-6. Airbnbs are a positive use to ensure sufficient accommodations for visitors. Embracing Airbnb's means enforcing noise ordinances.

S-7. To promote pride in maintaining property and discourage exploitation, property maintenance should be codified in Village law and enforced to include appearance and upkeep of occupied and vacant properties, make property owners and tenants responsible for conduct and property maintenance, and establish periodic inspections of rental units to ensure safety, maintenance, elimination of over-crowding, and other conditions that will devalue a building beyond its usefulness.

S-8. Open communication among government, businesses and residents is important for a cohesive community. It is imperative that current electronic tools be used by village government to communicate relating to, infrastructure concerns, bill paying, emergencies, accomplishments and needs, soliciting volunteers, and the like.

S-9. Government should partner with village non-profits to engage new residents and youth and to encourage social and cultural institutions and organizations to offer activities for all in the region.

S-10. In addition to regional marketing, the village should work to realize the full potential of thousands of surrounding residences, a school district with almost 5,000 students and staff, and hundreds of Saratoga County employees and visitors. (Moving the County Complex from the village would adversely impact the village.) Traffic flow and parking sites have to be studied so locals do not avoid downtown as Saratogians do in August.

S-11. Add infrastructure to downtown including maps, signage to parking lots, charging stations, extension of the Zim Smith Trail and other attractions throughout the village. Seek State tourism dollars.

MEDIUM TERM GOALS

- M-1. Create a digitized map of the water system from wells to user laterals and digitize its distribution, including meters that don't need to be read. Increase efficiency of wells, pumps and storage systems, and root out leaks.
- M-2. Digitally map the sewer system to eliminate crossovers with the stormwater system and provide developers with accurate capacity estimates.
- M-3. Support a sense of community by supporting work-at-home with co-working space, high-speed internet, and charging stations; seeking financial incentives to promote owner-residents in two families; establishing a registry of individuals responsible for apartments; involve developers in community affairs and measure the demand for unconventional homes.
- M-4 Build Public bathrooms downtown.

LONG TERM GOALS

- L-1. Embrace "Smart Technology" in government buildings and street lighting, assist residents to harness renewable energy and switch from fossil fuels.
- L-2 Development of underused parks (Victory Circle, rear of the swimming pool) and expansion of opportunities for residents and visitors to engage in recreation, shopping, eating, and the like will increase the importance of walkable sidewalks between neighborhoods and central core.
- L-4. Construct trails along the creeks may include a foot bridge over the Kayaderosseras tying the North End to the Tedesco Trail and downtown.

ON-GOING GOALS

- O-1. Continue the planning process by periodically reviewing and articulating 1) a simple message that encapsulates a desired community image, 2) a strategic plan that covers village operations and assigns responsibility, including DPW priorities and citizen communication
- O-2. The building department should have an inspector available to meet the needs of residents, survey conditions of buildings yearly or less, be knowledgeable about historic architecture, and, once a new zoning law is enacted, enforce it proactively so owners and potential investors will know their investments will be protected.
- O-3. The Village will better address challenges if dedicated responsibility can be assigned to specially trained employees relating to issues of management, the spectrum of IT issues, communications and repair of equipment and buildings.
- O-4. Keep village buildings on a human scale along entrance routes and be wary of apartment complexes in favor of home ownership to maintain the image of a friendly, approachable community. Promote the village's older architecture and spruce up the traveled gateways.
- O-5. Strategic planning is necessary to exploit the village's location in the Capital Region and proximity to Saratoga Springs by emphasizing its unique shops, eateries, built and natural environments, and chance to explore side-street, home businesses, all of which can be best enjoyed over several days
- O-6. Policies should support investors who work within the architectural and business framework of the village.
- O-7. Separate water and sewer budgeting completely from other village finances to avoid comingling of resources, fund repairs and improvements in both systems, and work with the County to develop a joint sewer permit application.
- O-8. Capital funds should be established and generously funded for four separate purposes: water, sewer, stormwater management, and buildings and grounds.
- O-9. Develop a plan that will attack delayed maintenance of village buildings with a major emphasis of repairing the Police/Court Building and DPW garage, firehouses, etc., find more room for the Justice Court, provide toilets and heat to the Village Hall's upper floors, and, if necessary, construct new facilities.
- O-10. Complete the digital mapping of the stormwater system begun by Blue Neils and begin a process of repairing faulty basins and regular cleaning, identify streets that need drainage, opportunities to divert stormwater away from the system, and educate the public about keeping debris out of collection basins. Ready the village for the impending DEC audit of the system. Map natural springs and how their waters flow to the creeks and modify the confluence of the Gordon and Kayaderosseras to minimize flooding.

O-11. Develop a formal expansion plan for CBD by creating shopping loops for shoppers to roam. Make room for growth of the retail sector by extending the retail district the length of Front and Washington Streets (open up the underpass at Iron Spring Park), down Bath Street and up Malta Ave. to Pine St. Select areas for longer term parking. Help finance improvements, such as street lighting in an expanded downtown, with a Downtown Business District.

O-12. Without sacrificing aesthetics, ensure local laws will not restrict residents from producing their own electric power.

After the discussion, it was determined Behan Associates would have a draft Comprehensive Master Plan ready for review in a month. The committee determined it would meet to review the plan the week of November 14, preferable Thursday, November 17, depending on room availability. Meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Ballston Spa Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee Review of Draft Plan November 17, 2022

Present in Person: Scott Burlingame, Bob Bush, John Cromie, Jared Iacolucci, Karen Martel, Ellen Mottola, Jackie Pelliccia, Marilyn Stephenson, John Behan.

Present on Zoom: Carrie Chapman, Mat Ercoline, Amy Fitzgerald.

Excused: Monique Cohen, Peter Martin

Public in Person: Liz Kormos

Karen Martel called the meeting to order. Minutes of October 18 were reviewed. Ellen noted her name was among those present and it shouldn't be. Marilyn moved the minutes be accepted as corrected; Scott seconded; passed.

Karen introduced John Behan to go through the draft comprehensive plan, which was released yesterday. Before beginning, Mat noted the draft is well done and expressed kudos to Amy and her team who put the draft together. John began noting the presentation can be used to explain the draft to others and laid out the agenda of a presentation and acknowledgements. It was noted, in acknowledgements, members should be placed in alphabetical order and need not have "member" after their names. Trustees may be listed alphabetically or by seniority. John went on to explain that a comprehensive plan is to provide long-term (10+ years) goals, visions, and perspectives to guide future actions by the government. John noted the recent survey provides a basis for obtaining our community's view of itself. The village's survey was successful with 808 responses, and its results provided various conclusions, including an overwhelming percent of respondents lived and owned a home in the village and wanted better sidewalks and use of alternative energy sources.

John underscored the four-paragraph vision statement contained in the draft and proceeded to review the rest of the document. It was suggested rather than grouping all R-1 residential areas together, there should be separation of at least three different neighborhood types: suburban, 19th century worker housing, and Victorian and early 20th century larger homes. It was also noted the village cemetery, while available for passive recreation, may be better labeled as something other than "park and open space." The presentation continued describing the various use areas of the village. It was noted that commercial building renovations should also trigger landscape design changes to foster a greener business corridor. It was noted transitional areas next to downtown are suited to light commercial uses that would remain compatible to residential living, though lower Malta Ave. may become more commercial than residential. Ballston Spa's village character makes it important that a zoning code is not taken "off a shelf" by a consultant but molded to the village's needs.

John outlined the goals the committee had come up with and classified them as short-term, medium-term, long-term, and on-going. The draft offered possible funding sources for each goal.

It was suggested that sidebars be created to show other communities have achieved what is suggested by the plan. That technique may encourage people to act who would otherwise think creek trails and gateway regulations are "pie-in-the-sky." More representational photographs within the text will help in that regard also. It is also apparent gateway improvement will involve cooperation with each town.

It was also noted the document could be more critical of the village and point out what has not worked with the expectation that methods will change, even though it may be difficult to change the long-existing culture. Budgeting and reallocation of resources will be necessary to fund inclusion of IT and management experts in village government. There are many facets to this plan and it may be important to include a user's guide. A question arose if the discussion was going beyond a plan into implementation. It was felt there have to be suggestions that will lead

to a change in doing things or this plan's suggestions may become unachievable. Funding such positions in other municipalities has been tied to grantsmanship. Interestingly enough, when ideas finally come to fruition, the government is often the last party in the game. That is the way it was with the Zim Smith Trail and Saratoga's Railroad Run. That is not always the case; the Town of Milton spearheaded the Town Center Concept including sidewalks and taking over the County highway at Geysers and Rowland. The common denominator is there was a groundswell that fostered action. There is a need for this master plan to create such a groundswell, somehow. The goals section does contemplate each area of concern will require planning groups, which, if followed, will get more people involved in government and community planning.

A discussion ensued concerning emphasis of form over use. It was noted the concept only would apply to downtown and refer to new construction. In fill would have to be compatible with adjoining structures. The size and shape may preclude some uses, but many uses compatible with the structure would generally be allowable in the district.

There was a concern that the committee had not yet drawn a consensus on how to handle existing illegal uses in the new code. The idea in the draft is that those uses be "grandfathered" if they had existed 20 years and caused no harm. It was felt the amount of time may not be relevant and the text state the use be in existence for years.

There is a concern property owners in R-1 want uses or signs that are not permitted and the Zoning Board may feel compelled to grant variances, creating another level of non-conforming use, which is little different from the illegal non-conforming use. While letting sleeping dogs lie, may be a more peaceful path, if illegal, non-conforming uses are not able to become legal under the new code, there will be little expectation of the new code being enforced any better than the existing code. It was opined, without professional staff and a budget to support them, it is expected the village will continue to enforce the code against some but not others, new zoning will not be enforced, and people will do what they want or need to do, unless it does so much harm to others, there are complaints. However, that ignores the need to finance properties through banks. Banks check for zoning violations and if there are, they will not finance. It can be expected this requirement will become more stringent in the future. Unless zoning allows a relief valve, property owners could face real financial problems. Addressing this problem will be facilitated by breaking up the R-1 into separate zones as discussed earlier. In some neighborhoods non-conforming uses will be OK, in others many should go away.

It was suggested, in the language relating to IT, emphasis be added that the village must ensure its operations be constantly updated and remain current.

John went over subsequent steps in the process of plan adoption, expecting it will be concluded this coming winter. Committee members are to have their comments concerning the draft to Karen by November 28, and she will forward them on to John and Amy. The final draft will be completed before Christmas. That draft will have more maps, especially in the PDF version, meeting minutes, perhaps videos to memorialize committee discussions. Recent plans which informed this committee could be included or linked through the PDF version.

There may be no need for the committee to meet again, unless our individual reviews of comments create a need. Liz Kormos noted the next task is revising the zoning law and she invited committee members to continue by sending in requests to be appointed to the Zoning Committee when the time comes.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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Link to Steering Committee Meeting Videos

Steering Committee meeting videos can be found on the village website here:

<https://www.villageofballstonspa.org/node/2601/minutes/2022>

Public Visioning Workshop Notes

August 30, 2022, 7:00pm, Saratoga County Building, Ballston Spa, NY

Group 1

The group expressed that the village's walkable downtown with its independently-owned shops are among its best attributes and focused on the small-scale and hometown feel of the village. They point out the village's many amenities, such as the public pool and nearby parks, make for an enjoyable community experience for residents. Some areas that could use attention in terms of enhancement include aging infrastructure, overgrown areas of sidewalks, and the need to "clean-up and beautify" shared spaces like Wiswall Park. The group also pointed out that improvements could be made in communicating what activities are happening in the village to residents and visitors to the village alike in order to add to the vibrancy of life in the village.

Group 2

The group discussed the importance of preserving the village's many historic aspects, with an emphasis on important buildings and architecture throughout Ballston Spa. Other valuable resources the group identified within the village are places that both pedestrians and cyclists can enjoy, including Kelly Park, Wiswall Park, and the nearby Zim Smith Trail. For enhancements, this group focused on the need for more affordable housing so that young families and new residents will be drawn to the village. There is a consensus that maintaining the village's charm and character is very important in addition to encouraging "controlled prosperity" and compatible growth for local businesses.

Group 3

Ballston Spa's nearby location to Saratoga Springs and I-87 is advantageous. Specifically, the group asks: "What does Saratoga's proximity bring to us?" Additionally, the safety of pedestrians and cyclist could be improved, especially in the busier downtown area. The group said that adding a music venue could encourage more social engagement/events. They would like to see the museums advertised further and find ways to support local small businesses. The creation of a business improvement district (BID) may help in overseeing and funding the maintenance and promotion of the downtown area, which other nearby cities have successfully implemented.

Group 4

Attributes given by this group include the ease with which people can shop and dine out in the village. Life in the village is also more affordable compared to larger nearby cities. Homes in Ballston Spa are older but have historic charm and character that many residents recognize and wish to preserve. Upgrades to things like village technology would be beneficial. Finding better ways to communicate with residents about local community events would be helpful. The need for more signage as well as general improvements to sidewalks, roads, infrastructure would all help to advance the village.

Group 5

This group echoed many of the same sentiments as the other groups, remarking that Ballston Spa's recreational facilities, local shops, and walkable business district are great attributes; residents are friendly and neighborly. Additionally, the community transitions nicely into natural areas that surround it. The Kaydeross Creek should be cleaned up and utilized for outdoor events. Expansion of Front

Street's central business district could be expanded. The village has many shops but could benefit from a local bakery and the re-opening of the old movie theater above the pharmacy. It was also suggested that shutting down traffic on Front Street for pedestrian-only events may help get people out for events/shopping.

Group 6

The group highlighted the "coziness and historic charm" of the village. Some participants were residents raising young children that want to see the village improved and preserved for future generations. Also participating were local business owners that hope to attract new visitors to the village making it more of a destination. One participant spoke about how the village could improve its infrastructure and transportation to be more accommodating to those with disabilities. A teacher working at the local high school shared the survey with her students and helped to expand the survey's reach to Ballston Spa's younger demographic.

Bulleted summary of all notes for each question on the worksheet:

1. What attributes do you think make the village an attractive place to visit, live, invest money or start a new business?
 - Mixed business district made up of many small businesses
 - Central business district/downtown area
 - Library and Post Office centrally located
 - Recreational facilities
 - Size (smaller than Saratoga)
 - Affordability
 - School district
 - Location near I-87, Adirondacks, Saratoga, and larger cities
 - Bike trail
 - Friendly neighbors, mixed demographics
 - Charm – houses, buildings, lifestyle, aesthetic
 - Accessibility
 - Sense of community

2. How would we like to enhance each of those attributes?
 - Walkability
 - Pedestrian safety at street crossings
 - Infrastructure
 - Sidewalk improvements
 - Add parking downtown
 - Stormwater management
 - More signage
 - Tech upgrades
 - General upkeep of village, better code enforcement
 - Community Engagement
 - More continuous use of public spaces; additional informal events/opportunities
 - More advertisement of our museums

- More events in public park
 - Increase communication between the village and residents
 - Events for young families, teens, children
 - Community clean-up day
 - Business District
 - Public restrooms
 - Music venue
 - Encouraging further small business
 - Village-wide events
 - More bakeries
 - Built Environment
 - Connect Zim-Smith trail to downtown
 - Connect north side to central business district
 - Enhance corridors into village
 - Architectural guidelines
 - Public art, fountains, other engagement opportunities, etc.
 - Beautify/maintain parks (Wiswall and Kelly)
 - Reduce vacant areas
3. What 3 words might you use to describe your ideal future “vision” for Ballston Spa?
- Contemporary
 - Quaint
 - Historic
 - Diverse
 - Hometown-feel and character
 - Progressive
 - Quality over quantity
 - People-centric
 - Balance preservation with responsible growth
 - Compatible growth with existing neighborhood character
 - Green
 - Enhancement of the arts

Links to Recently Completed Village Reports

Ballston Spa DPW Capital Project Plan, November 2021:

https://www.villageofballstonspa.org/sites/g/files/vyhliif6186/f/uploads/village_of_ballston_spa_dpw_capital_projects_and_funding_sources_11-17-21.pdf

Village of Ballston Spa Comprehensive Plan Update Existing Conditions Report, June 2021:

https://www.villageofballstonspa.org/sites/g/files/vyhliif6186/f/news/ballston_spa_final_existing_conditions_report_1.pdf

Village of Ballston Spa Economic Development Plan, 2020:

https://www.villageofballstonspa.org/sites/g/files/vyhliif6186/f/uploads/ballston-spa-economic_development_plan-final_2020.pdf

Village of Ballston Spa Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, January 2022:

https://www.villageofballstonspa.org/sites/g/files/vyhliif6186/f/news/20552_final_pbmp_report_jan_2022_0.pdf

Comprehensive Plan Sources

Ballston Spa DPW Capital Project Plan, November 2021.

Cromie, John J. An Historic Overview of the Village of Ballston Spa: Phases of Change in Perspective for Development of the Comprehensive Plan, 2022.

Village of Ballston Spa Comprehensive Plan Update Existing Conditions Report, June 2021.

Village of Ballston Spa Economic Development Plan, 2020.

Village of Ballston Spa Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, January 2022.

Images courtesy of:

Ballston Spa Business and Professional Association website, October 2022.

Cromie, John.



Saratoga County Historical Society Online Collection, December 2022.

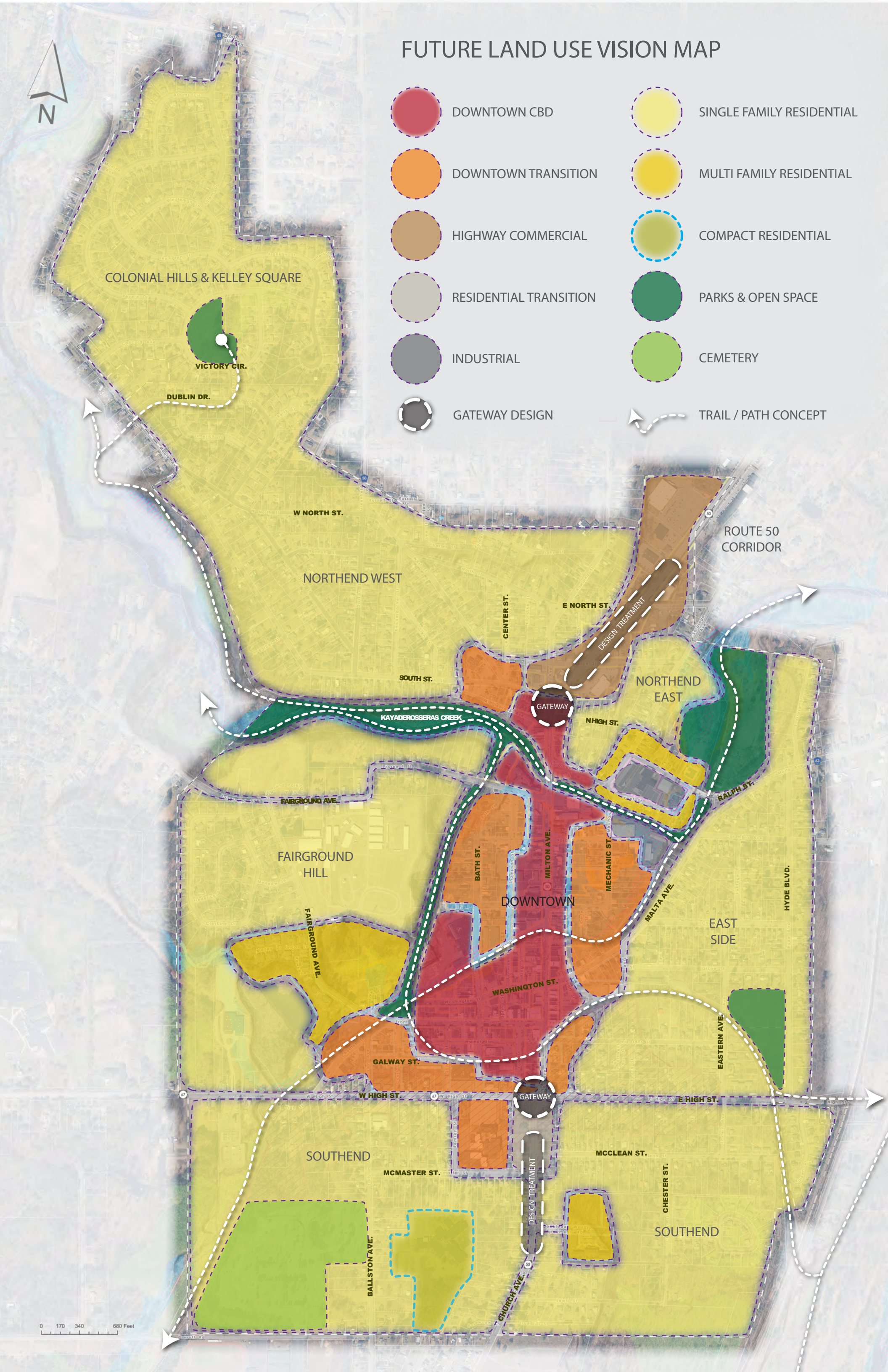
Stephenson, Marilyn.

High Resolution Land Use Vision Map

FUTURE LAND USE VISION MAP



-  DOWNTOWN CBD
-  SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
-  DOWNTOWN TRANSITION
-  MULTI FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
-  HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL
-  COMPACT RESIDENTIAL
-  RESIDENTIAL TRANSITION
-  PARKS & OPEN SPACE
-  INDUSTRIAL
-  CEMETERY
-  GATEWAY DESIGN
-  TRAIL / PATH CONCEPT



0 170 340 680 Feet















Village of Ballston Spa Land Use Map

Village of Ballston Spa Existing Conditions Map

Village of Ballston Spa

Existing Conditions



-  Village Boundary
-  Tax Parcels
-  Wetlands
-  Floodway
-  100-year floodzone
-  500-year floodzone
- Zoning**
-  R-2: RESIDENTIAL
-  R-2S: RESIDENTIAL
-  CEE: CULTURAL ECONOMIC ENHANCEMENT
-  C: COMMERCIAL
-  CBD: CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
-  M: INDUSTRIAL
-  AD: ADULT BUSINESS DISTRICT
- All other areas R-1: RESIDENTIAL
-  HISTORIC OVERLAY DISTRICT

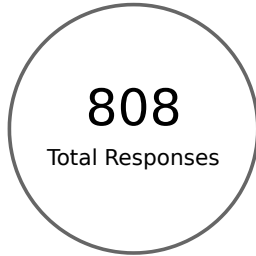
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Comprehensive Plan Survey Results



Village of Ballston Spa Comprehensive Plan



808 Completed Responses

0 Partial Responses



Page 1

Community Survey

Dear Village of Ballston Spa Resident / Property Owner / Visitor,

The village is in the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan. As part of this effort, we hope you will fill out this community survey in order to identify priority considerations for the next decade.

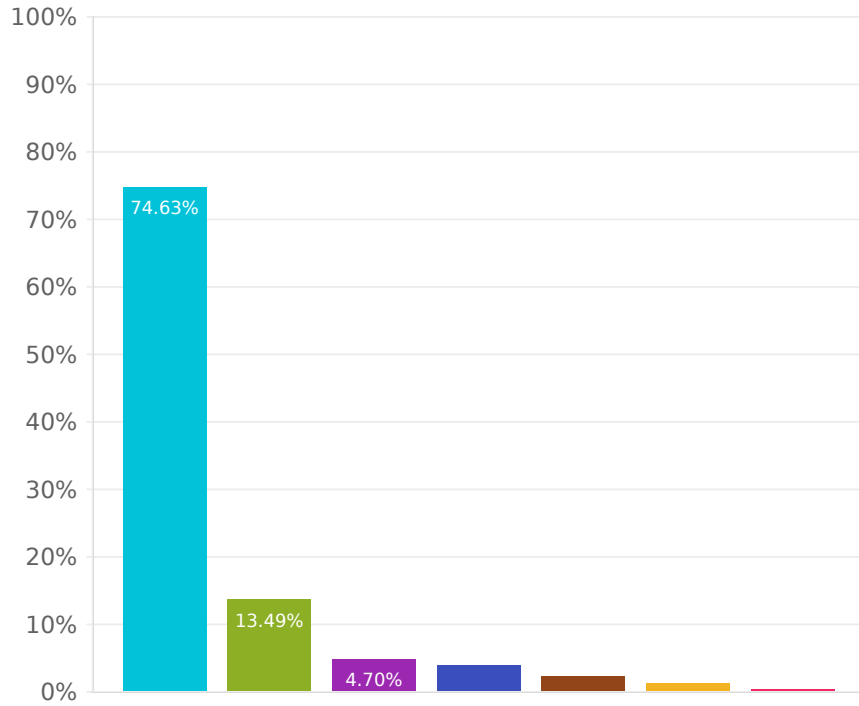
No Responses

Q1

Demographic Questions

How much time do you spend in the Village of Ballston Spa?

Answered: 808 Skipped: 0



- Year-round Resident
- Reside nearby
- Visit often
- Work in or near the village
- Other (Please specify)
- Visit occasionally
- Seasonal Resident

Choices	Response percent	Response count
Year-round Resident	74.63%	603
Reside nearby	13.49%	109
Visit often	4.70%	38
Work in or near the village	3.71%	30
Other (Please specify)	2.10%	17
Visit occasionally	1.11%	9
Seasonal Resident	0.25%	2

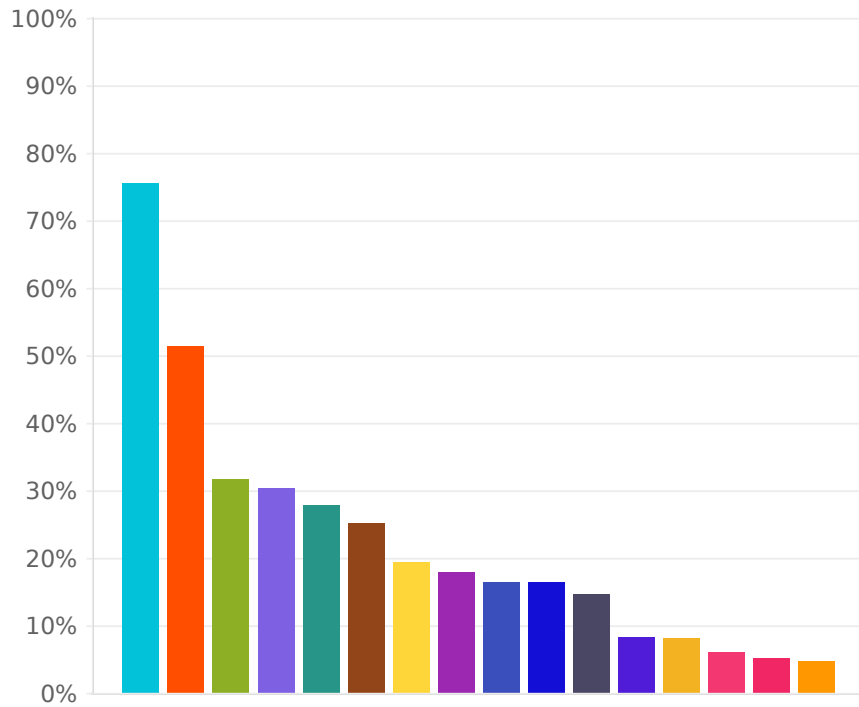
Other (Please specify)

1. Business Owner
 2. I live year round a block outside the village limits.
 3. Lived there for 15 years before recently relocating.
 4. Rental property owner
 5. Business owner
 6. Work in village and live in Milton
 7. My house (that I own) in Ballston Spa is not my primary residence. Depending on my work, sometimes I'm here nearly full time. But, there have periods where I have been away far a month or two.
 8. Landlord
 9. Landlord and visit frequently to support local businesses and family in the village
 10. own property
 11. Town of Ballston
 12. Live 1mile from village, work in bspa, kids go to bscsd
 13. 0 times
 14. only to get to school
 15. Specifically for school only
 16. Property owner
 17. Business - 7 days week
-

Q2

Why do you come to the Village of Ballston Spa? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 808 Skipped: 0



- It's where I live
- Restaurants/businesses
- Walkable central business district
- Schools
- Sense of community
- Charm of older buildings
- Natural surroundings
- Family
- It's where I work
- Outdoor activities
- Cultural events
- Religious/spiritual institutions
- The arts
- Other (Please specify)
- I have a business in the Village
- Employment

Choices	Response percent	Response count
It's where I live	75.50%	610
Restaurants/businesses	51.36%	415
Walkable central business district	31.68%	256
Schools	30.32%	245
Sense of community	27.72%	224
Charm of older buildings	25.12%	203
Natural surroundings	19.31%	156
Family	17.82%	144
It's where I work	16.34%	132
Outdoor activities	16.34%	132
Cultural events	14.60%	118
Religious/spiritual institutions	8.29%	67
The arts	8.04%	65
Other (Please specify)	6.06%	49
I have a business in the Village	5.07%	41
Employment	4.70%	38

Other (Please specify)

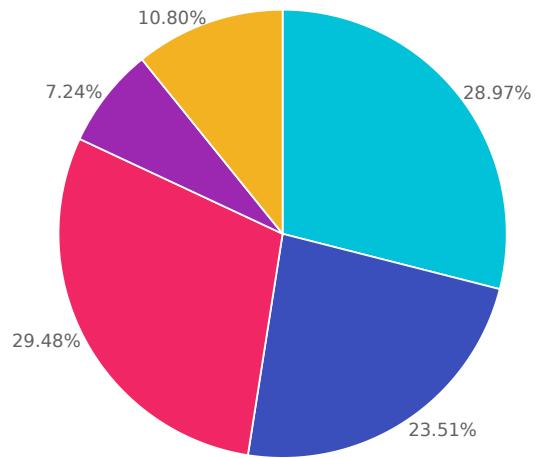
- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. It's where I was born | 7. Farmers Market | 18. PO Box to check |
| 2. Scouting | 8. Library | 19. grocery shopping/gas |
| 3. Board meeting with community orgs | 9. Business friendly government | 20. wonderful place to live |
| 4. Community events | 10. farmers market | 21. shopping and services |
| 5. Firefighter | 11. Own rental property as well | 22. I live just outside the village |
| 6. To check on rental property | 12. Library | 23. volunteer |
| | 13. I live in Town of Milton just out of the village | 24. farmer's market, friends |
| | 14. Village Pool/Ice Skating | 25. |
| | 15. Fire Department | |
| | 16. Library, pharmacy | |
| | 17. | |

26. location and small town environment
 27. small, safe quiet residential areas near other cities
 28. rural community feel, safe, quiet
 29. Concerts
 30. Old school neighborhood where kids play in the streets!
 31. Pass through to get to work/ other places
 32. to take walks
 33. skating
 34. i also live very close to the village, i also buy gas there
 35. I practice driving here
 36. Not often enough for an occasion, really
 37. go to the gym
 38. Near to where both my husband and I work and significantly cheaper homes than Saratoga
 39. walk/bike to events, stores, bike/walking trails
 40. walkable residential neighborhood
 41. laundry, ocean state, thrift stores, antiques/junk
 42. pharmacy
 43. Maintain property- houses construction + 4 fam residential
 44. The people
 45. BARC fields
 46. love old style neighborhoods - larger lots but community.
 47. moved up here and stayed
 48. It's a quaint, smaller community + not as costly as Saratoga (yet)
 49. Volunteer Firefighter
-

Q3

When you visit the Village of Ballston Spa, how much money do you spend on your visit?

Answered: 787 Skipped: 21



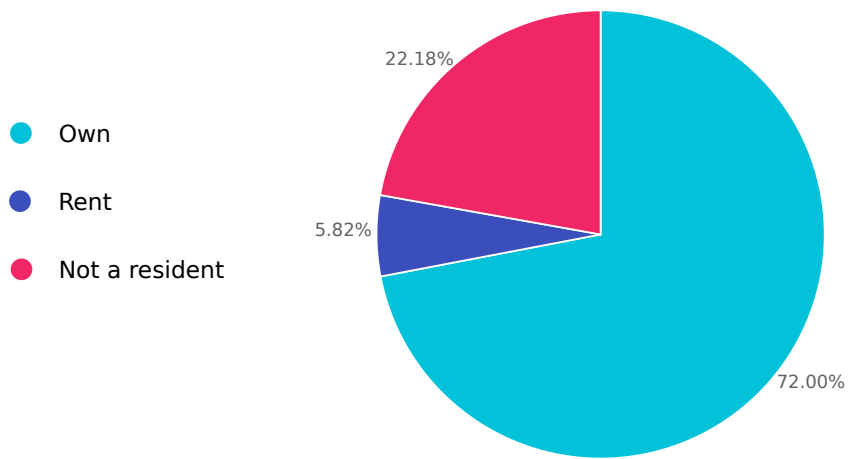
- 0 - \$25
- \$26 - \$50
- \$51 - \$100
- \$101 - \$200
- over \$200

Choices	Response percent	Response count
0 - \$25	28.97%	228
\$26 - \$50	23.51%	185
\$51 - \$100	29.48%	232
\$101 - \$200	7.24%	57
over \$200	10.80%	85

Q4

Do you own or rent a place of residence in the Village of Ballston Spa?

Answered: 807 Skipped: 1

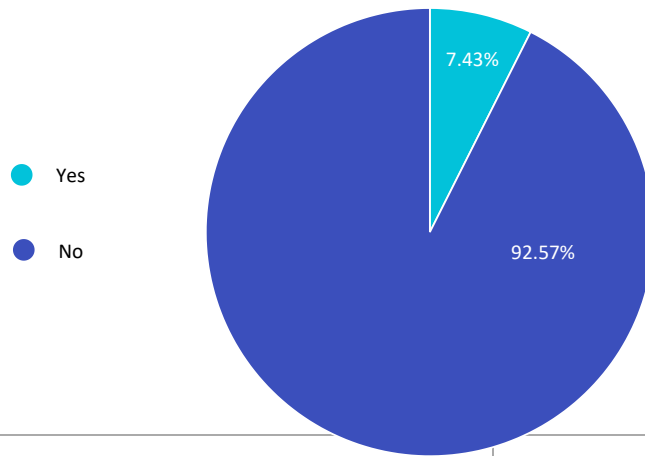


Choices	Response percent	Response count
Own	72.00%	581
Rent	5.82%	47
Not a resident	22.18%	179

Q5

Do you own a business in the Village of Ballston Spa?

Answered: 808 Skipped: 0

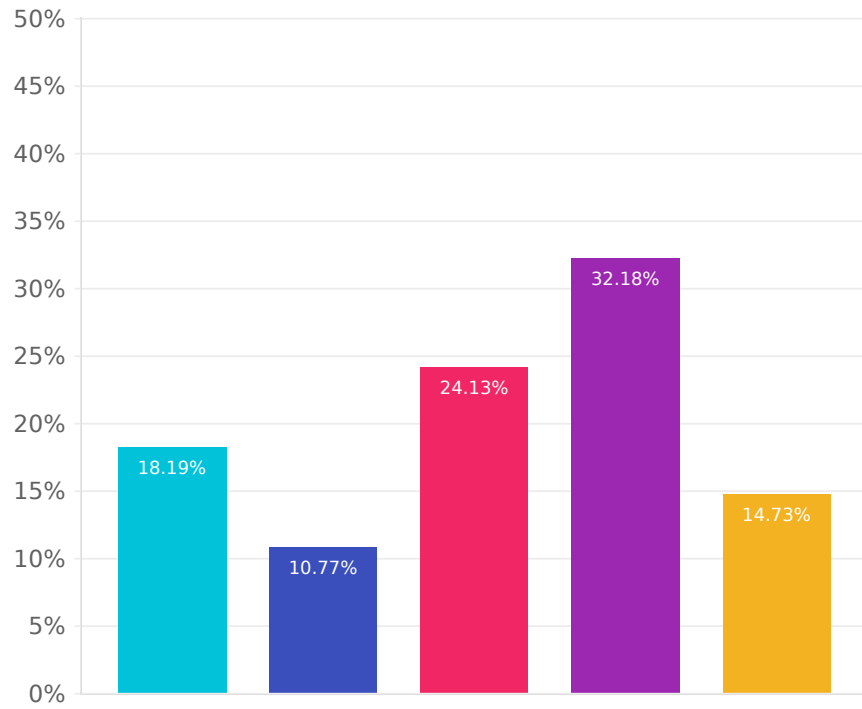


Choices	Response percent	Response count
Yes	7.43%	60
No	92.57%	748

Q6

What is your age?

Answered: 808 Skipped: 0



Under 18

18 - 34

35 - 50

51 - 70

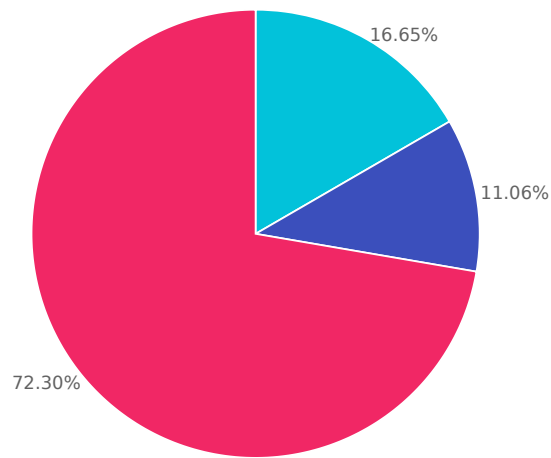
70 +

Choices	Response percent	Response count
Under 18	18.19%	147
18 - 34	10.77%	87
35 - 50	24.13%	195
51 - 70	32.18%	260
70 +	14.73%	119

Q7

Do you work in the Village of Ballston Spa?

Answered: 805 Skipped: 3



● Yes

● Yes, from home

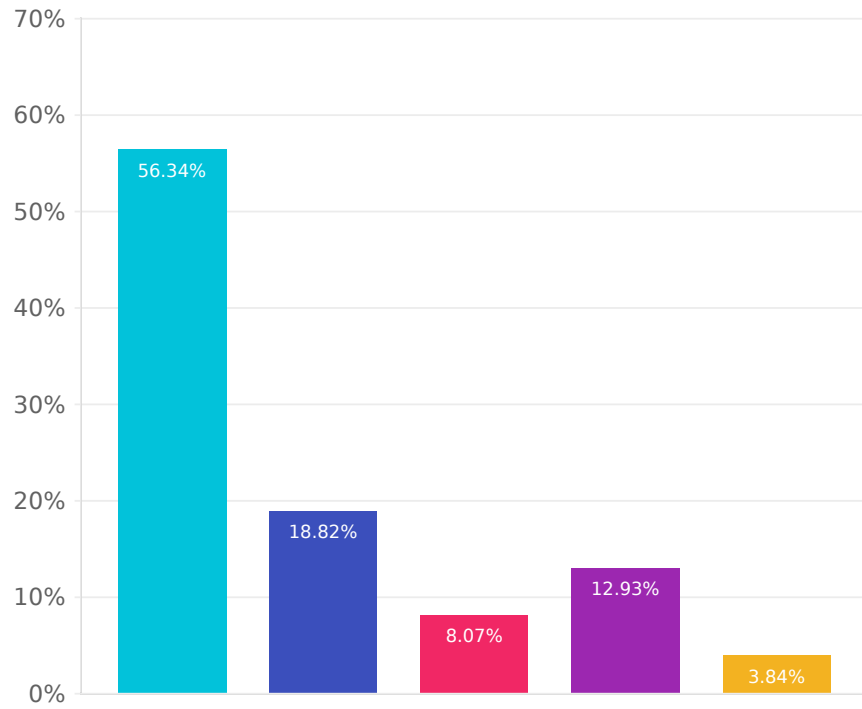
● No

Choices	Response percent	Response count
Yes	16.65%	134
Yes, from home	11.06%	89
No	72.30%	582

Q8

How long is your commute to work?

Answered: 781 Skipped: 27

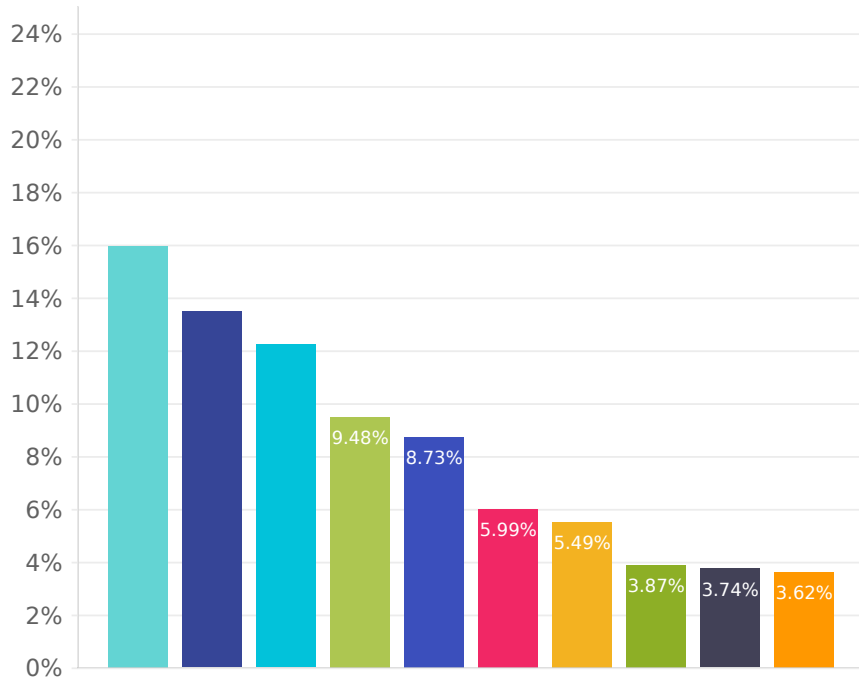


- Less than 10 minutes
- 11 - 20 minutes
- 21 - 30 minutes
- 31 - 45 minutes
- Over 45 minutes

Choices	Response percent	Response count
Less than 10 minutes	56.34%	440
11 - 20 minutes	18.82%	147
21 - 30 minutes	8.07%	63
31 - 45 minutes	12.93%	101
Over 45 minutes	3.84%	30

What job sector are you currently employed in?

Answered: 802 Skipped: 6



- Retired
- Student
- Small Business Owner
- Engineering
- Construction
- Real Estate
- Insurance
- Other (Please specify)
- Government
- Technology
- Retail
- Finance
- Law
- Stay-at-home Parent
- Education
- Healthcare
- Currently not employed
- Non-profit
- Manufacturing
- Hospitality
- Agriculture

Choices	Response percent	Response count
Retired	15.96%	128
Other (Please specify)	13.47%	108
Education	12.22%	98
Student	9.48%	76
Government	8.73%	70
Healthcare	5.99%	48
Small Business Owner	5.49%	44
Technology	3.87%	31
Currently not employed	3.74%	30
Engineering	3.62%	29
Retail	2.99%	24
Non-profit	2.37%	19
Construction	2.37%	19
Finance	2.12%	17
Manufacturing	1.50%	12
Real Estate	1.50%	12
Law	1.25%	10
Hospitality	1.25%	10
Insurance	0.87%	7
Stay-at-home Parent	0.75%	6
Agriculture	0.50%	4

Other (Please specify)

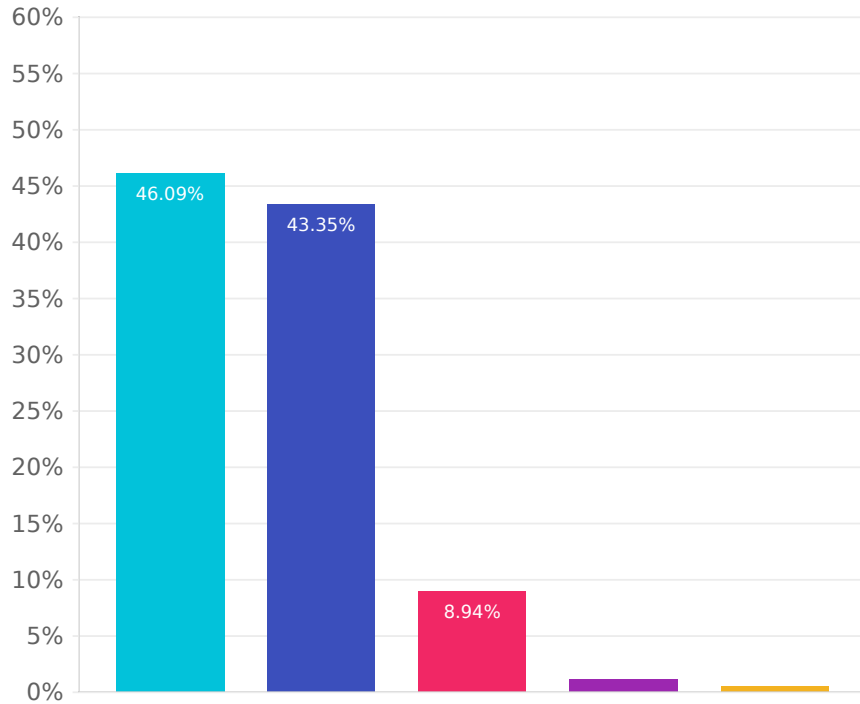
1. BSBPA
 2. Marketing
 3. Not employed in BS
 4. Retired
 5. Renewable Energy
 6. Data Analyst
 7. Small Biz Owner, Salesman work from home
 8. Realty photography
 9. Journalism
 10. Media
 11. Mangino Buick Gmc
 12. retired
 13. Stay at home mom
 14. Truck Driver
 15. Work from home
 16. Meteorology
 17. Childcare
 18. Marketing and Communications
 19. Child Care
 20. Online Marketing
 21. Clergy
 22. Advertising
 23. Communications Lineman
 24. Retired health care...nurse
 25. Entertainment
 26. Transportation
 27. None
 28. School bus driver
 29. Performing Arts
 30. volunteer work
 31. home improvement
 32. Marketing
 33. Automotive
 34. Marketing
 35. Transportation
 36. School bus driver
 37. Military
 38. Restaurant and landlord
 39. eCommerce
 40. Marketing
 41. Science
 42. Union
 43. Lumber yard
 44. Retired
 45. Marketing
 46. part-time - retired
 47. Truck Driver
 - 48.
 - 49.
 - 50.
 - 51.
 52. home health care
 53. Volunteer
 54. real estate title research
 55. Sales rep - beauty industry
 - 56.
 57. Attorney
 58. Media
 59. Insurance
 60. Law practice
 - 61.
 62. Marketing
 63. landlord
 64. security
 65. railroad
 - 66.
 67. Health/fitness
 68. garden center manager
 - 69.
 70. Marketing
 71. Advertising
 72. HVAC distribution
 73. racetrack
 74. oil and gas
 75. Transportation
 76. golf course
 77. trucking
 78. sales
 79. construction supply
 80. Retail/construction
 81. Environmental consulting (semi-retired)
 82. Dishwasher
 83. student and part time in healthcare
 84. Student and I work at a restaurant
 85. Student
 86. none
 87. Dishwasher
 88. grocery store
 89. pizza place
 90. restaurant
 91. restaurant
 92. Lifeguarding
 93. restaurant
 94. Daycare
 95. grocery store cashier
 96. none
 97. Seasonal Camp Counselor in Saratoga
 98. Maintenance/ Fieldwork
 99. resturant
 100. none yet
-

Q10

Governmental Built Infrastructure

Do you agree that it is important for the village to create an annual budget set aside to address deferred maintenance on public buildings (like the Village Hall, DPW, Police/Court buildings, Swimming Pool)?

Answered: 805 Skipped: 3



- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

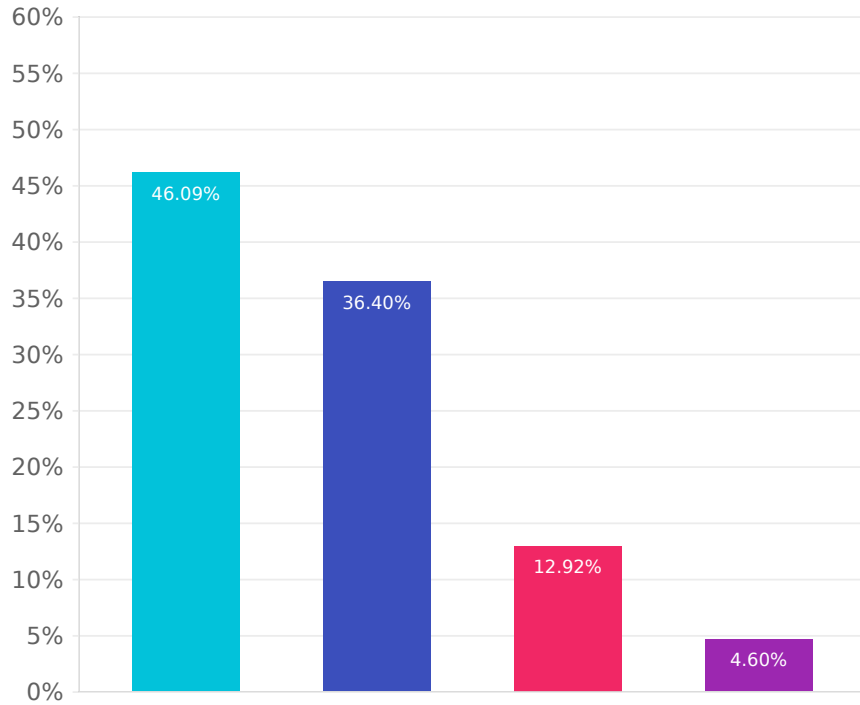
Choices	Response percent	Response count
Strongly Agree	46.09%	371
Agree	43.35%	349
Neutral	8.94%	72
Disagree	1.12%	9
Strongly Disagree	0.50%	4

Q11

Uncontrolled Forces

How important is it for the village to take steps to address issues of climate change and protect itself from severe weather damage or dangers (flooding during intense storms, etc.)?

Answered: 805 Skipped: 3



- Very important
- Moderately important
- Of low importance
- Not important at all

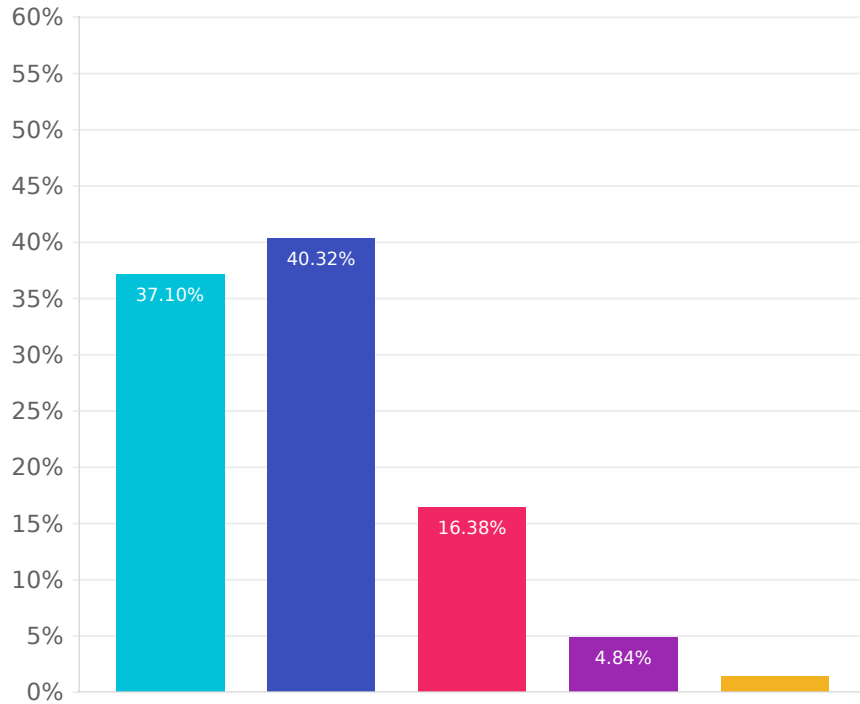
Choices	Response percent	Response count
Very important	46.09%	371
Moderately important	36.40%	293
Of low importance	12.92%	104
Not important at all	4.60%	37

Q12

Built Environment of Village

Do you agree that our community's buildings are such an important part of Ballston Spa's image that design standards are needed for new development in order to maximize compatibility with existing structures?

Answered: 806 Skipped: 2



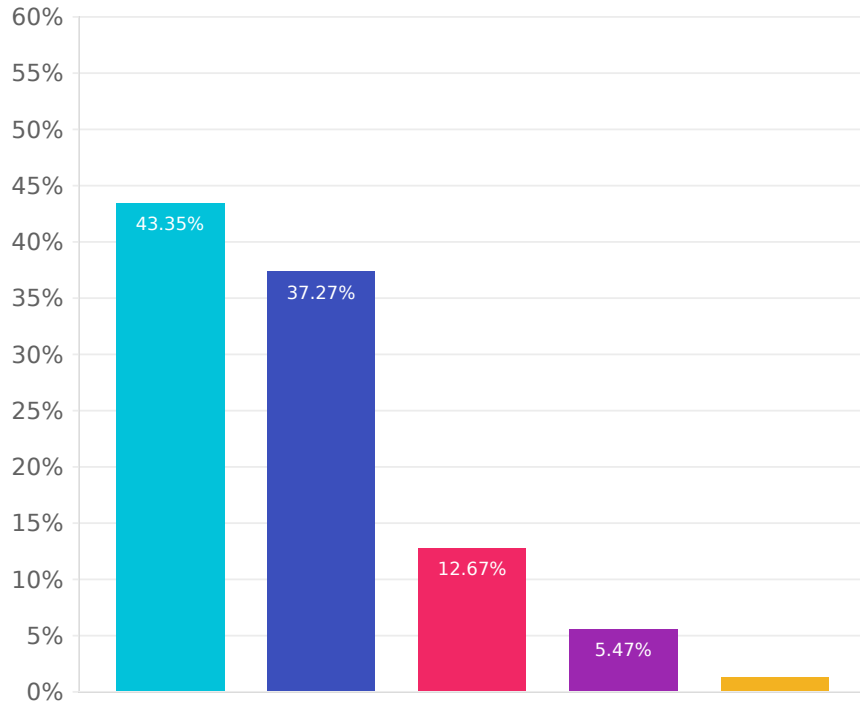
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Choices	Response percent	Response count
Strongly Agree	37.10%	299
Agree	40.32%	325
Neutral	16.38%	132
Disagree	4.84%	39
Strongly Disagree	1.36%	11

Q13

Do you agree there is need for improvement in the walkability (repair/add sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, etc.) of the entire village?

Answered: 805 Skipped: 3



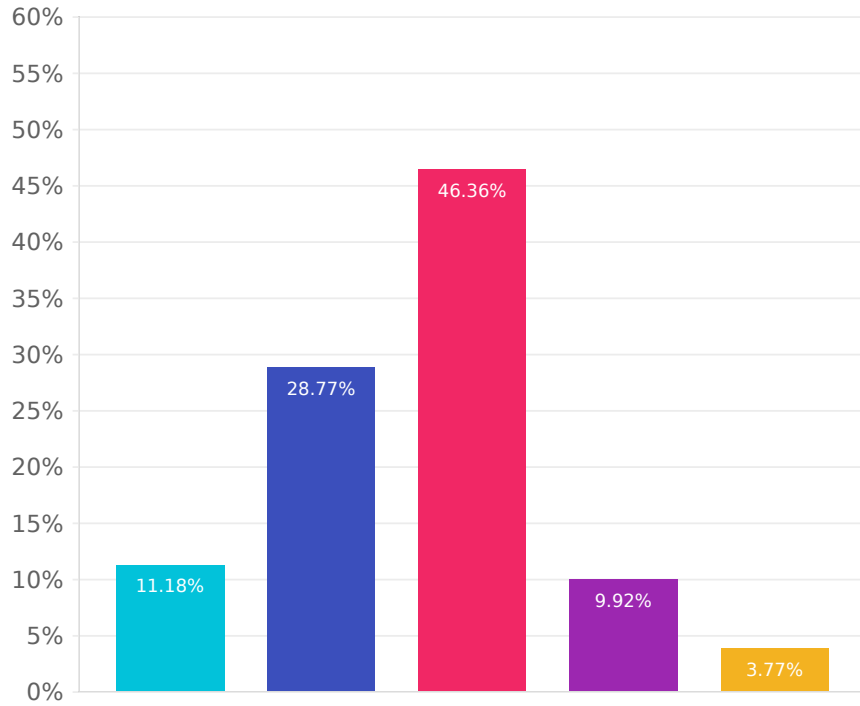
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Choices	Response percent	Response count
Strongly Agree	43.35%	349
Agree	37.27%	300
Neutral	12.67%	102
Disagree	5.47%	44
Strongly Disagree	1.24%	10

Q14

Do you agree that the zoning code should break down the village into more districts and allow a greater range of uses with protections for neighbors?

Answered: 796 Skipped: 12



- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

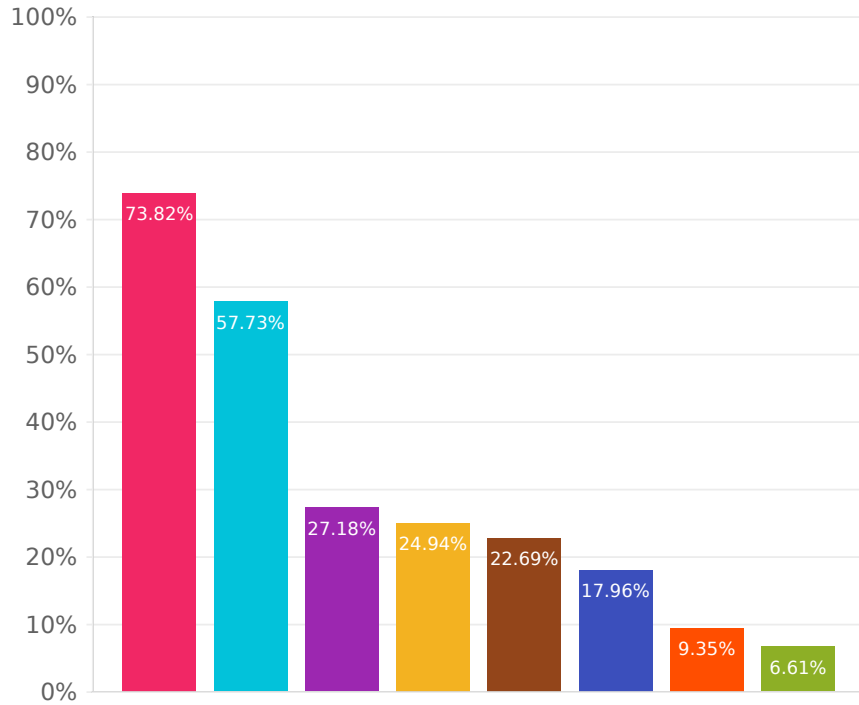
Choices	Response percent	Response count
Strongly Agree	11.18%	89
Agree	28.77%	229
Neutral	46.36%	369
Disagree	9.92%	79
Strongly Disagree	3.77%	30

Q15

Housing

Which of the following housing types, should the village work to encourage? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 802 Skipped: 6



- Single family houses
- Small, affordable starter homes
- Two-family houses
- Townhouses/Condominiums
- Assisted living/Nursing homes
- Accessory dwelling unit (ADU or granny flat)
- Other (Please specify)
- Mobile Homes/Manufactured Homes

Choices	Response percent	Response count
Single family houses	73.82%	592
Small, affordable starter homes	57.73%	463
Two-family houses	27.18%	218
Townhouses/Condominiums	24.94%	200
Assisted living/Nursing homes	22.69%	182
Accessory dwelling unit (ADU or granny flat)	17.96%	144
Other (Please specify)	9.35%	75
Mobile Homes/Manufactured Homes	6.61%	53

Other (Please specify)

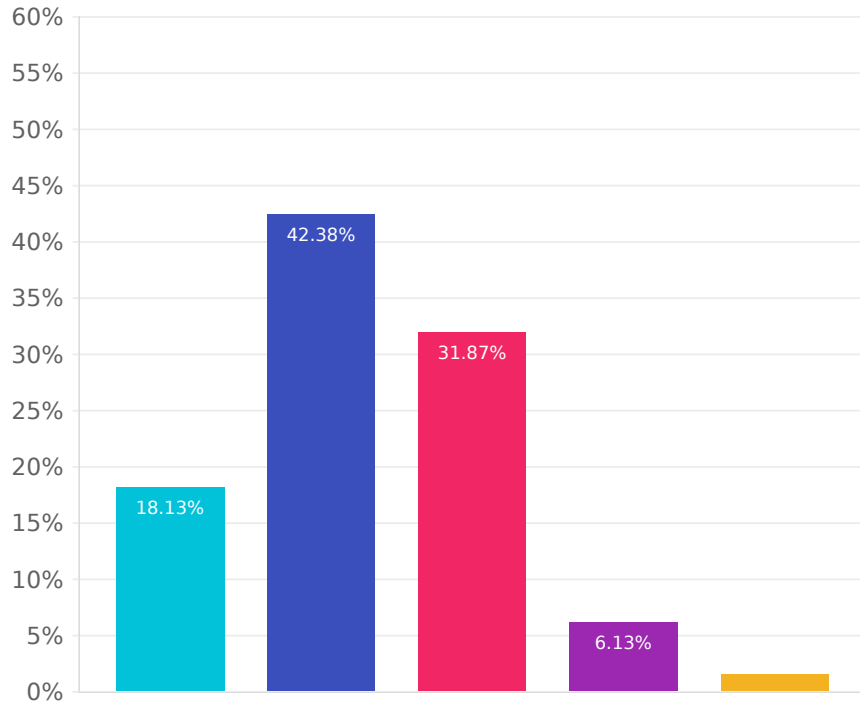
1. Affordable apartments
- 2.
3. All but Mobile Homes with zoning standards
4. Whatever fits the immediate need - projecting Ronda out may be a hindrance - what was needed prior to covid isn't needed now - that's what we can take from that - it changed the landscape of how we live - it could happen again.
5. Fix up the current properties in the village instead of building more
6. Senior housing for those lower incomes
7. Restoration of vacant homes/buildings into housing
8. Multifamily apartments
9. Please no more senior housing
10. mixed use
11. attractive, affordable rental units
12. Improving the appearance of abandoned properties and existing apartment buildings
13. Affordable apartment for working middle class people. Most apartment in and around the area are overly priced for the average person.
14. I am not sure that there is much land available on which to build new housing. I would like to see accessible and affordable housing in the village.
15. repair/update the homes already built
16. Multi family dwellings, senior housing
17. Workforce housing
18. Restrict the sale of home to landlords so that a single family can afford a home. All of the houses in my neighborhood have 2 or 3 apartments per home and none of us can buy a home because of people buying up homes to rent them out.

19. Section 8 housing
20. Affordable housing for low income residents
21. Multiple family apartments
22. Affordable housing is incredibly sparse in Ballston spa
23. No more senior living or subsidized housing (HUD, etc)
24. Senior housing/apartments
25. Triplex and Quadplex
26. Is there space in the village for new housing? Focus should be spent on updating existing buildings to make sure they are safe for their current residents.
27. Why are we looking to grow ?
28. Senior housing
29. technologically advanced self sufficient off grid homes
30. Apartments and work force housing
31. Work force housing
32. Senior housing
33. Affordable smaller apartment buildings
34. Workforce housing
- 35.
36. Affordable rental properties
37. Apartments
38. Retail on bottom apartments on top 5 story
- 39.
- 40.
41. apartment buildings
42. 55 and older
43. Affordable rentals
44. Limit Air B and B's perhaps to a minimum stay of a week or 2.
45. careful growth, maintain green spaces
- 46.
47. Senior housing
- 48.
49. Apartments
50. affordable housing
51. affordable apartments
52. a balance?
53. Less apartments and less section 8
- 54.
55. high end
56. eco-friendly housing
57. all affordable housing
- 58.
- 59.
60. i like using older buildings as apposed to building new housing.
- 61.
- 62.
63. all kinds of housing , does not matter
64. I don't know.
65. Make landlords responsible for the upkeep of their houses
66. Affordable/safe
67. apartments, low and middle income
68. mixed use
69. mixed use
70. No more building
71. luxury/seasonal
72. we need housing that is affordable to retired lower-mid middle class that are nice + not tiny spaces. Have some amenities like the townhomes + houses that are constantly being built.
73. None. Stop building houses. More green spaces!
74. Mixed use retail 1st floor/ Residential 2-3
75. Diversity is the key! Why limit ourselves?

Q16

Do you agree that allowing home-based businesses would be good for the village's economic development?

Answered: 800 Skipped: 8



- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

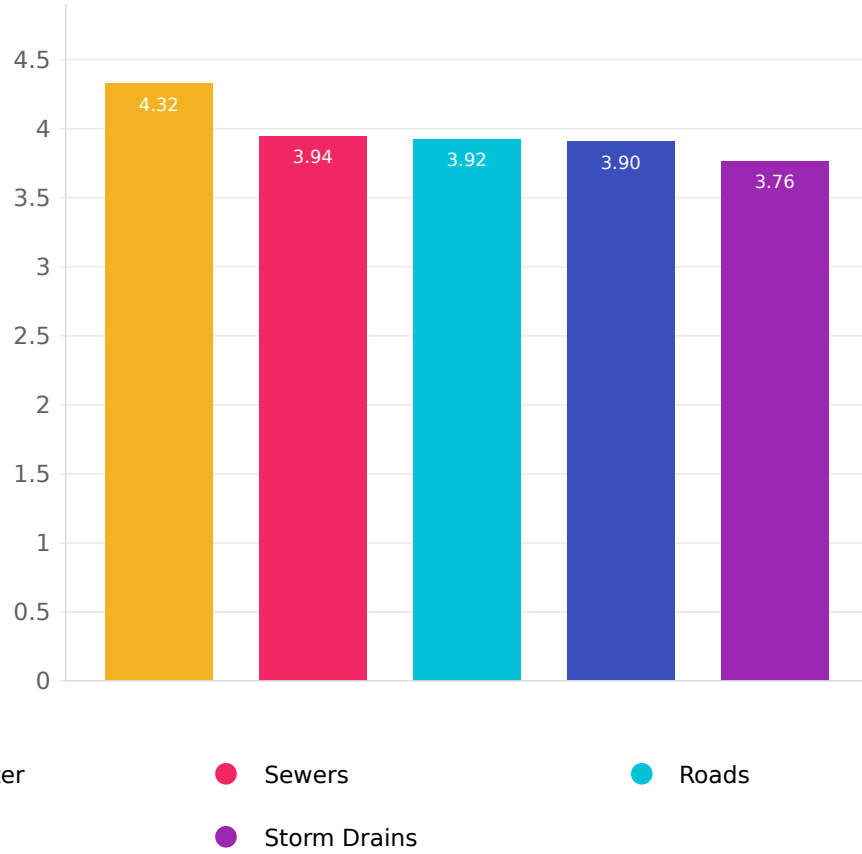
Choices	Response percent	Response count
Strongly Agree	18.13%	145
Agree	42.38%	339
Neutral	31.87%	255
Disagree	6.13%	49
Strongly Disagree	1.50%	12

Q17

Utility Infrastructure

On a scale of 1-5, how important is it for the Village of Ballston Spa to update to the following public infrastructure:

Answered: 805 Skipped: 3



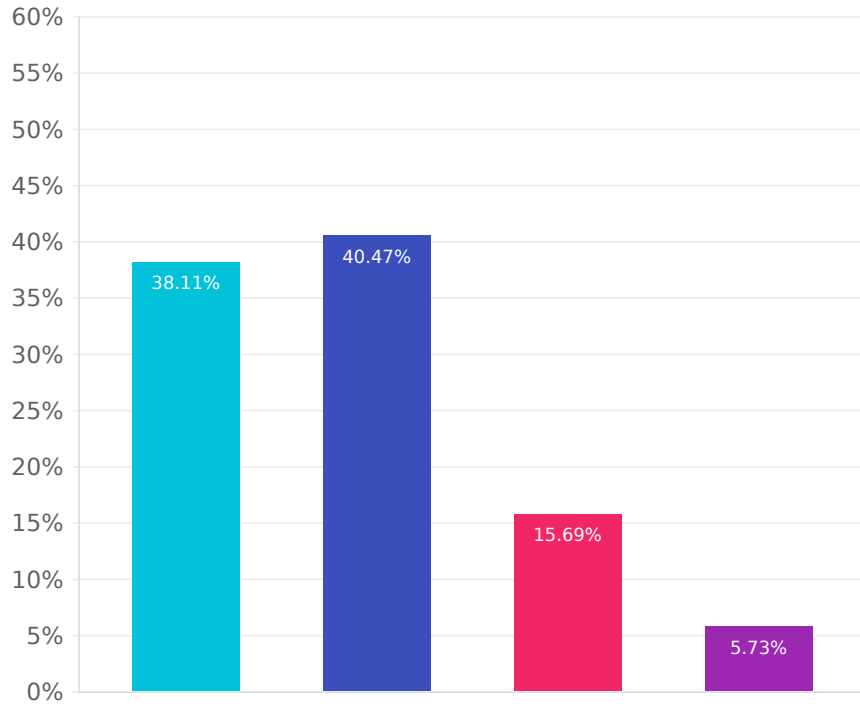
Row	1 (Least important)	2	3	4	5 (Most important)	Average rating	Response count
Drinking Water	3.11% (25)	2.86% (23)	13.42% (108)	19.88% (160)	60.75% (489)	4.32	805
Sewers	2.49% (20)	5.85% (47)	22.76% (183)	33.33% (268)	35.57% (286)	3.94	804
Roads	1.87% (15)	6.61% (53)	21.57% (173)	37.28% (299)	32.67% (262)	3.92	802
Sidewalks	4.49% (36)	6.49% (52)	21.10% (169)	30.34% (243)	37.58% (301)	3.90	801
Storm Drains	4.36% (35)	7.11% (57)	26.18% (210)	32.54% (261)	29.80% (239)	3.76	802

Average rating: 3.97

Q18

How important is it for the Village of Ballston Spa to take steps to actively promote or encourage the use of alternative energy sources for its municipal and community use?

Answered: 803 Skipped: 5



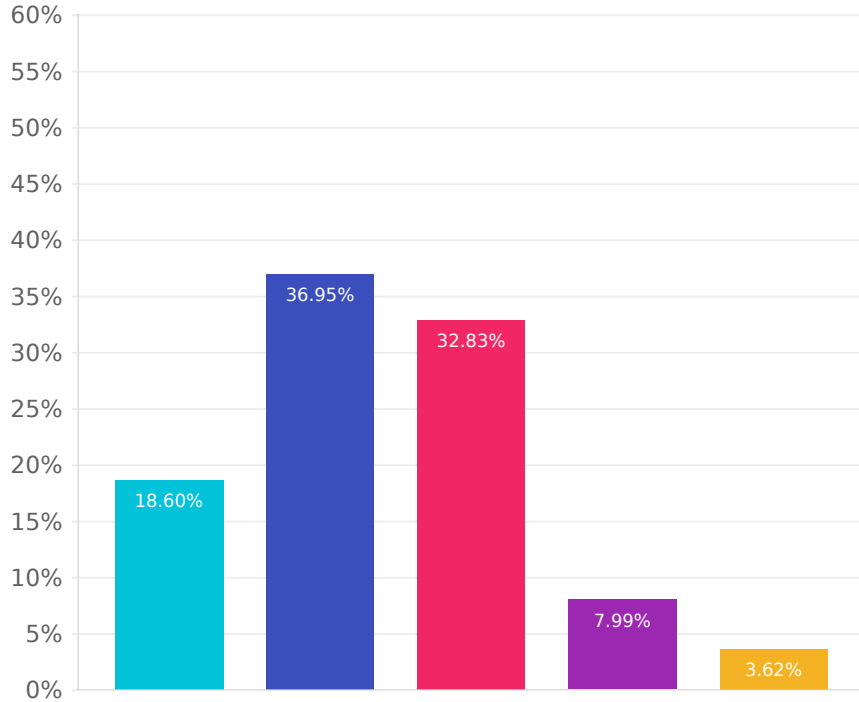
- Very important
- Moderately important
- Of low importance
- Not important at all

Choices	Response percent	Response count
Very important	38.11%	306
Moderately important	40.47%	325
Of low importance	15.69%	126
Not important at all	5.73%	46

Economic Considerations

Do you agree that having a dedicated village resource/position to assist with communication between businesses, residents, and the village administration would foster growth in the Central Business District and further improve overall communication with residents?

Answered: 801 Skipped: 7



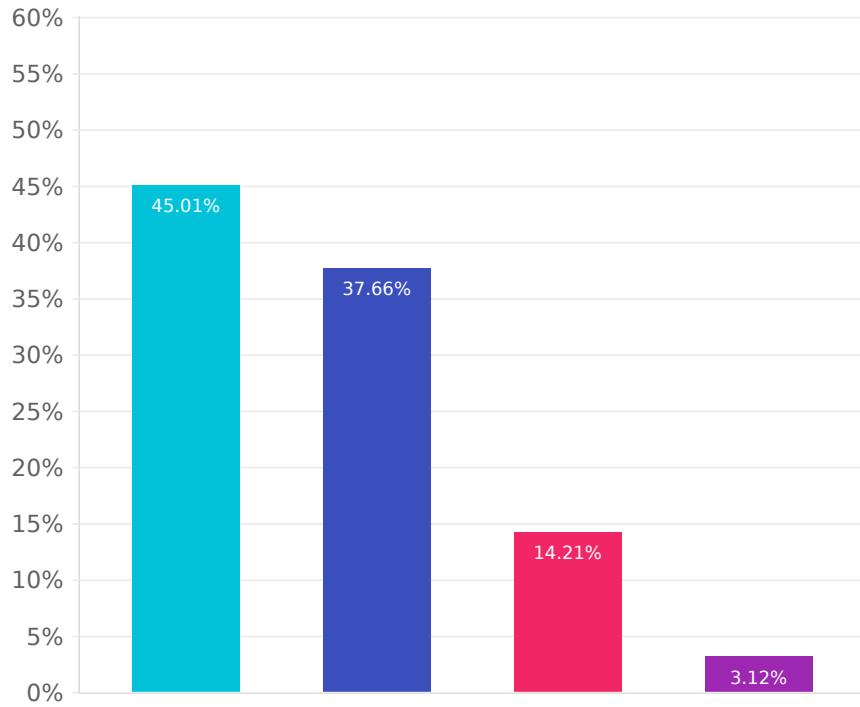
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Choices	Response percent	Response count
Strongly agree	18.60%	149
Agree	36.95%	296
Neutral	32.83%	263
Disagree	7.99%	64
Strongly disagree	3.62%	29

Q20

How important is it to enhance broadband internet access/options in the village?

Answered: 802 Skipped: 6



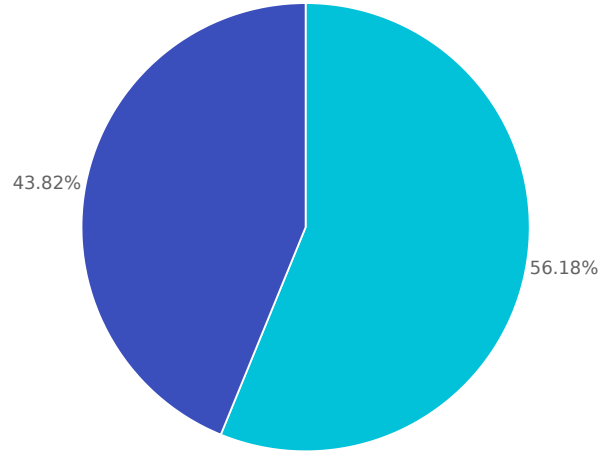
- Very important
- Moderately important
- Of low importance
- Not important at all

Choices	Response percent	Response count
Very important	45.01%	361
Moderately important	37.66%	302
Of low importance	14.21%	114
Not important at all	3.12%	25

Q21

Should efforts by the village government be made to encourage rapid redevelopment of vacant or underutilized sites, or should the government wait until entrepreneurs come by with ideas compatible with the village master plan?

Answered: 785 Skipped: 23



● The village should encourage rapid redevelopment

● The village should wait for proposals are put forth by private entrepreneurs

Choices	Response percent	Response count
The village should encourage rapid redevelopment	56.18%	441
The village should wait for proposals are put forth by private entrepreneurs	43.82%	344

Any Others?

Please tell us if there are any topics not covered by this survey which you think are important for community discussion.

Answered: 282 Skipped: 526

1. The added cost to taxpayers for adding positions to village government Land use planning
2. Communication is KEY!!! There needs to be consistent messaging from the Village of Ballston Spa to its community and residents. I believe there should be a non-partisan spokesperson for the village who can work as a liaison between the Mayor and Trustees to communicate with the community.
3. Water lines in the village need massive repair NOW. Walk down Van Buren and you can see every house has dug up their line because it froze in the middle of the road. This should not be the homeowners responsibility that the village lines are so low they're above the frost line. Unbelievable this hasn't been addressed. Cost me \$15K last year!!!!!!!
4. It is important to keep Ballston Spa accessible to young families. Affordable housing, walkability, and access to public transportation are important. As people get priced out of Saratoga and Clifton Park, B Spa could be the perfect place for families to settle to experience a wonderful community, great schools, and a beautiful setting. Don't rush the economic development.
5. the village should do a better job with snow/ice removal on sidewalks along the Milton ave. portion of the business district for the accessibility and safety of patrons and residents.
6. I would like to understand the need for a village police dept. I don't see a cost benefit.
7. Diverse businesses would be nice vs what is there. Encouraging different businesses. Encouraging upkeep of homes and businesses in the village. Better parking vs on street which fills.
8. This survey is incredibly poorly devised. There is clearly an agenda, as almost every question is leading. If you are going to create this kind of (very important) survey, you should have a professional at least consult on it. This one would not pass muster in a basic research class, and any study that used such a poorly worded questionnaire would never be considered as having merit. Please retool it!
9. I think updates to Kelly park would be greatly appreciated by the residents. Basketball court, roller hockey rink, tennis court. Maybe utilize that empty fenced in area of the park between the pavilion and playground.
10. The survey skirted around a building moratorium. Strong retail attracts strong retail. Good residential planning will attract all of the residential type owners you mentioned and when done correctly will benefit all. It really is simple, we need people in the Village Government (Trustee's) to really understand what is needed to successfully move this Village forward. We have so many wasted parcels that could be devolved. Work with the retailers, investors and property owners not against them. If our trustees put forth the same effort to work together as they do fighting each other and blocking ideas that our best for our community because someone else suggested it we would have a very healthy, vibrant Village with a successful downtown that attracts residents.
11. The issue of speeding on many of Ballston Spa's streets needs to be addressed in a comprehensive manner.
12. In response to question 21 - I don't agree with either answer. Anything done rapidly just to get something in is a recipe for disaster. On the other hand - put your hand on your ass and wait doesn't solve problems either. Recognizing what is needed and wanted and making that known will encourage the right fit to come. It's a balance - this isn't a race - to just get something - it's a plan to get the right thing that will last.
13. Fix the traffic light at East High Street and Church Avenue. Even staggering the light to allow people to turn onto Church from High Street. The backup, especially in busy times of the day, is outrageous.
14. Better upkeep and plowing of village roadway's in the winter
15. Encourage more mainstream business development in downtown corridor and discourage the multitude of junk dealers that blanket the available spaces.
16. Proper crosswalks/sidewalks for kids walking/biking to school.

17. Care needs to be taken for the connection to the bike path on Oak St. lots of talk around how that will be done but zero communication has happened with those of us who reside there. The bike path has brought crime, excessive traffic, damage to our properties and caused us to lose enjoyment of living on a once quiet dead end street. Please remember us!
18. Change the zoning to allow for common sense development. The zoning in the village does not make any sense and is outdated. The sooner the zoning changes the faster new/improved development will occur.
19. All in all, the village is partially developed but also very visibly run down (a lot of Malta Ave has dilapidated buildings and undesirable infrastructure (a lot of antique places, a few tattoo shops). I think the village needs to focus more on updating infrastructure and bringing in places (restaurants, breweries, etc) that foster community get-togethers. I think a lot of us go to Saratoga to find a good place to spend time and it's a shame that Saratoga gets that revenue when Ballston Spa could have more options and look less run down (the half of Malta Ave from Aldi's to the Cumberland Farms gas station is very sad looking and doesn't make me want to buy food or other items from stores there). It's a shame that places like the big property on Bath Street are just run down since everyone is too busy arguing over what to do with it instead of actually doing anything with the space. That could drive a lot of great business and traffic to the area. Lastly, I think renewable energy should be on the forefront of Ballston Spa's agenda for long term sustainability. We have plenty of farmland, etc to add solar (our location probably isn't suitable for wind).
20. Question 21 only gave extremes for options for responses. Maybe there is a middle ground where the Village can utilize feedback from the community on what type of development would be most beneficial and conduct outreach to developers who can make that type of development happen. Does not need to be rapid, needs to be the right projects, but maybe the Village can still facilitate, we don't need to just wait passively.
21. Ballston Spa needs to be careful NOT to become a crotchedy old town that is afraid of young people and change.
22. I think the intersection at church ave and east high is terrible. Cars ALWAYS go around those waiting to turn onto 50 and i almost get in an accident 50% of the time that i try to turn left onto church ave to go to hannafor. If you made the left lane turn only and the right lane turn right as well as straight it would avoid this.
23. Quit wasting money on the bike path nonsense, get the DPW some new equipment and a new Building Government officials need to stop bickering and do what's best for the Village
24. The village should work on accessibility and ease of getting around town by bicycle and foot. As well as focus on outdoor recreational opportunities for the villagers and visitors.
25. Love waiting for non-chain businesses that will help to make BSpa more attractive to local tourists IE restaurants and shops - Sidewalks very important, some residential neighborhoods they are in total disarray and it limits Real Estate values and growth in general - great questions above thank you
26. Teaching 3 of the board members how to respect the public and the Mayor when they are talking to them. As well as start looking to help solve problems instead of creating them. I know not a topic but how they act is just as important as the topics above.
27. Replace the village DPW building that's been outgrown and has been falling apart. Get the mold and asbestos out of the village office.
28. Intersection of 50/67 by the laundromat is dangerous. My child gets on the bus in front of the daycare at that corner, and cars/trucks speed past the stopped school buses daily. Somebody is going to get injured or killed.
29. The Village should focus on building up it's Fund Balance while paying for the things that are needed not necessarily wanted. Wants are for when we are fiscally sound, not when we are still recovering from past fiscal mismanagement.
30. Question 21 was skewed. Rapid development is not needed but much more progress and openness than what our current trustees are doing. The village has 'waited' too long to take initiative. As is evident by this survey. Haven't we already gathered this info once a couple years ago and it was never acted on.
31. PARKING PARKING PARKING!!!!!! Our village could be so much more with better parking. And since the parking so so bad. It's terrible that you brought back the beat cop to give out parking tickets!!
32. although the historic homes are wonderful adding 2 family with village look remaining the same. village needs to balance the future generations and the past - younger people are living "smaller" and are looking to decrease "foot print" walking , biking, shopping, eating very close to home

33. The return of civility and respect at village board meetings for all---the public, elected/appointed officials and employees.
34. - Would love to see more updates done to Kelley Park, rip down the chain link fence and put in a basketball court for kids to actually use that space. -Would love to see the old warehouse on Bath street turn into mixed use with some type of open air market. -Ensure infrastructure is being updated to avoid major outages to the village residents. - Review and update village code to ensure residents are keeping their property tidy and not an eyesore. Too many properties with junk in them!! - Look to host more events/festivals in the village to draw more people into the village.
35. Parking, maintenance of parks,
36. Cleaning up the lot on Milton Ave across from the Whitehouse Restaurant. Provide more public parking. The meter man should be including Washington Street as the business district .
37. 1. Large trucks regularly driving on Hyde Blvd. and Columbia Ave. 2. Lots of cars and trucks speeding on Hyde Blvd. and surrounding residential streets. 3. An increase over the past 2 years of people not picking up after their dogs during walks. I'm sick and tired of doing it for them; sometimes up to 10 times in one day. 4. Lots of coyote sightings during the day over the past month near Columbia Ave. Ext., Columbia Ave., Hyde Blvd., and Heritage. Residents should be informed in order to keep their pets and small children safe. This is also another reason why people should pick up after their dogs or be fined. Coyotes eat dog poop that's left behind and will not move on if they have food sources. 5. Lack of maintenance of trees near sidewalks despite numerous calls to please do so over the past 6 years. Unacceptable.
38. The Village is not taking advantage of all of the economic opportunities that exist being so close to Saratoga. The Village has not been maintained, buildings are in disrepair, sidewalks are dangerous. The Village should be walkable and welcoming to further economic development.
39. We need recognition of our Historic District in the Village through better signage, development of guidelines for historic buildings and education of elected officials and local residents about the historic district. We also need to ensure that our Comprehensive Plan addresses LED signage which is a blight in the Village.
40. Ballston Spa should support trap, neuter, release of any feral cats or dogs in the area if there are people or organizations that will conduct the TNR. Feral cats keep rodents at bay. If they are neutered their numbers will be kept to a minimum.
41. We moved back to the area from Cleveland, Ohio. We lived in a small town called Chagrin Falls. My wife and I really loved the walk ability of that town and access to amenities. During the 7-year period that we were gone, we saw a lot of great features added in Ballston Spa. Keep up the great work. I do feel like you should have much more enforcement on architectural standards, smart zoning, and to help find/fund ways for properties to be maintained and improved. Especially right downtown.
42. Saratoga Ave is the most dangerous street in the village and you people are worried about Malta and Hyde .. Hyde is one of the widest streets in the entire village with sidewalks almost the entire length of the street. It's a safe street. Saratoga ave has seen a person KILLED and recently a car flipped over in an accident. Because of speeding and the narrow street. Help Saratoga Ave please!!!!!!!
43. law enforcement is needed for traffic laws not just on hyde blvd. we need to enforce the laws we have before we make new ones
44. I would like to know why there isn't financial assistance available to defray the cost of water pipe replacements from the road to my home/property.
45. Central business and northern village areas seem to be overlooked vs. areas to the east of Milton Ave. (Hyde Blvd, Columbia area) Working with Town of Milton Rt. Z50 plan would make sense
46. Camera surveillance around the village to hopefully prevent vandalism around personal and business properties. Old buildings not being used can be revitalized so new businesses can make use of it. Better compensation for people working in the BSBpa who efforts themselves to make this village beautiful and a place that the community can enjoy and live a peaceful/happy life! Remove fees for food trucks or vendors but allow permits to do business in the area like farmers market or special events like first Fridays and so on...
47. The failure of the Village Board in accomplishing anything other than talk, hire consultants, and refuse to compromise. Partisan politics hinders growth, development, and threatens our small town long term survival.

48. I feel parking is an issue within the business district, it is often hard to find a place to park on the weekends. I also feel that within the business district upgrades are needed to lighting and signage standards to make our shop/restaurant areas more enticing to explore...and more current while maintaining character. I often ask friends and relatives who visit when driving through Ballston Spa - could you imagine yourself stopping to eat or shop here if you were on your way through? Their answer is always a resounding "shop and eat where??" what businesses do we have on rte 50 where you can see people through the windows inside enjoying themselves? Barely a peak into coffee planet? There are so many businesses in prime locations in the business district that do not necessarily entice people to stop... real estate agencies, insurance... etc. Is there anything that could be done to help bring in more food businesses or help current food businesses gain more exposure? What if there was aide to improve signage/storefronts to certain business types every few years on rotation? I also feel we do not capitalize on the fact that we have one of the highest concentrations of antique stores around. Ballston Spa used to have Trolley's, could we experiment with bringing one back? Maybe a Trolley trail from near stone soup antiques on the weekends that could take shoppers to each location so they dont have to re park their car 8 times, and continue trolley for restaurant hoping at night? People might pay for that, just brainstorming! I live Ballston Spa and feel it has so much potential, I much prefer it to Saratoga - I just wish we could find ways to bring people in and modernize. Thank you for your hard work!
49. Village Speed Limit / Truck Travel on Side Streets
50. I would love to see something happen with the brick factory that's sitting vacant. I think apartments there could really boost the towns economy, it's a fantastic location and walkable to all of Ballston Spas businesses
51. Smart growth is not a bad idea. But you really need to consider how it all impacts traffic and the village now. Traffic is already crazy in the Village, from Prospect all the way down Milton to the Northway.
52. The village is failing it's low income residents. There should be more emphasis and care put around food pantries and other resources for the members of the community who need them the most (many of whom were born here).
53. More affordable housing for young families!
54. Connecting to the Zim Smith bike path safely is very important to me.
55. Need to encourage redevelopment of existing non-utilized spaces like Angelica, Maplewood, etc.
56. These surveys should be easy to find and well advertised to get a true sampling from the residents.. For example, an email blast to village residents; as a banner across the top of the village website; social media, etc.
57. Pressure landlords to maintain and/or improve the appearance of their property. Find ways to reduce the cost of operating the village.
58. Appreciate you taking the time to get input from residents! Thank you!
59. Don't waste our money on BS like "global warming" (aka climate change) or "alternative energy". Keep that crap downstate.
60. Question 21 is lacking. I don't think that a third option is in place. I think the village can take an active role but I think that we should be actively and judiciously steering towards redevelopment with the master plan in mind. I also don't think a just wait for someone to have a good idea approach is great because it positions the village as a passive roadblock.
61. High rise and multi story buildings should not be allowed if rezoning is done in the village.
62. Please fix the sidewalks- it has been studied for over 2 years at this point. It's time for action.
63. This survey is misleading in its questioning. I also think if you want well-informed responses, you should have provided examples and additional information in your questions. Also, question #3 makes no sense at all. If you are a frequent visitor of village businesses (of which I am), my spending varies greatly and to assign one value is completely invalid.
64. Environmental conservation is very important. Native plants that support pollinators and wildlife should be used over non-natives.
65. The end of the Front St business district between the old Monaco's and the Old Iron Spring should be a focus for sidewalks, walkability and redevelopment to encourage businesses.
66. Having more open space (parks) could be beneficial along with advertising it more. I also think there should be a better link between the Zim Smith trail and the Saratoga State Park.

67. I think leaves should be put into bags and left on the street side. Right now leaves are being left out the wind blows them all over the place and then the snow comes and they're still on the ground. No reason this should not be a law for everybody. Also as far as snow shoveling goes especially on public sidewalks, The homeowner should be responsible and if they don't do it, then the village should charge the homeowner to do it. It's unsafe a hazard. Also all these thrift shops that put items out on the sidewalk and all over the place, it makes our Village look like a dump. Sidewalks are for walking, not putting items out to sell. On another note, when I first moved here in 2002 the Christmas lights were all strung across the street and look very nice. They stop doing that a few years later. You should really bring them back and make our town look very festive for the holiday season. That will attract others to come here and visit and shop
68. Some of the questions could be better answered if there was a comment area to clarify the answer. With respect to the housing question (15) condominiums or apartments over commercial, similar to small European cities would be worth looking at.
69. A sidewalk on the south side of prospect street from the factory to the fairgrounds with adequate lighting and trash receptacles is needed to provide a safe walking path to events at the fairgrounds. It is a major safety issue and an accident waiting to happen!
70. I live in Colonial Hills and I think with the amount that we pay for taxes it is ridiculous that the village doesn't take better care of the neighborhood. We have never been treated like we are "apart of the village". There has never been a safe way to walk into the village. Maple Ave, Greenfield Ave and Northline Road are all major roads with no sidewalks. Our options are to drive into the village or walk and risk getting hit by a car. DPW never cleans our roads in a timely manner when it snows. Last year there were multiple occasions the neighborhood was not cleared until after work hours while the roads in the rest of the village had been cleared and salted for hours. In general the neighborhood isn't taken care of. Most of the roads in the neighborhood need to be repaved instead of constantly re-patched for a cheap quick fix. We have had no sign in the Maple Ave entrance for a few years and need an updated sign that isn't falling apart on Greenfield Ave. It also wouldn't hurt to have the Greenfield Ave entrance taken care of. It would be a great service project for any National Honor Society student to keep the area weeded and maintained...meaning no cost at all to the village.
71. Need street signs
72. Be careful about "rapid development"! If encouraging it means looking for small shop owners and entrepreneurs, that would be great! Please be careful not to encourage corporate fast-food joints or large corporate development.
73. There is a need to develop the sidewalk system and crosswalks so that people trying to get into the village do not have to take their life in their hands every time they cross the street. The crosswalks also need to be repainted soon
74. Fix existing sidewalks (Do not add more). It is obvious the residents will not do it. Put the village in a good financial position to address infrastructure failures when they arise. Add a street lamp or two at the intersection area of Hyde Blvd. and East High St. This area is dangerous for pedestrians at low light. Add seats back to swings at BARC, or remove them entirely to make room for more sports to be played. Not very pleasing to see an abandoned looking playground when entering the the village. Lastly, a reminder the charm that attracts people to the village is us, the inhabitants ... the community. For this, I feel any village wide rapid redevelopment should be a ballot proposal, not an anonymous survey. Residents should decide which path, if any, we choose. An online survey or hand raising at board meetings might give an idea of willingness, it does not show consensus. - Thank you for listening

75. Many of the questions put forth here seem essentially leading and several of them lump together unrelated issues or poorly describe the issue in question. Question 21 has a glaring grammatical error in option 2. As far as "walkability", the village is mostly good, especially the business portion; there are only a few sidewalk slabs upheaved due to tree roots, this could easily be remedied by jacking up the slabs, cutting and removing the offending tree roots and leveling the slabs, I'm surprised this hasn't been done; I've seen several of these trip hazards remain for three decades, instead of "upgrading" the overall "walkability", the village might start by addressing the most glaring of problems with the sidewalks on main streets. I suspect even the horrible condition of the south side of mcmaster could be largely remedied in a similar manner (jacking the slate, cutting and removing the tree roots then leveling the slate on packed crushed stone) thus preserving much of the historical slate, and obviating the need for complete replacement. It would be nice to see some dark sky compliant walkway lighting installed and street lights in the village removed entirely, if I'm not mistaken, automobiles of all types are equipped with their own lighting are they not, so what is the point exactly of the street lights that shine in my window all night and that are probably bright enough to grow a garden? Speaking of pointless, there is a street sweeper that operates in the early morning on Route 50 in the village that stirs up a cloud of debris noxious enough to cause anyone that happens to be along Rt. 50 at that time (say waiting for the NX bus...) to cough, and which coats the houses with a thick black oily dust of questionable composition that will not wash or scrub off with soap or by pressure washing? Stirring massive quantities of automotive debris up into the village air should not be considered a viable option for "cleaning" the highway; it is a health hazard and a property damage issue. The street sweeper should be required to employ a dust management system of some type. Please confer with the highway authority about this issue. Additionally, the village water is unacceptable, I have at times tested my water with pool test strips when the chlorine read higher than the allowable level in a swimming pool(no exaggeration)! I must regularly replace a sediment filter as it becomes clogged with rust at least every time a nearby hydrant is flushed. I have given up drinking the village water as myself and my family members complain of intestinal and other inflammatory symptoms upon drinking it. Thank you for your time :)
76. I'd like to see an effort made to increase safety for on foot and bicycle pedestrians throughout the village.
77. Re-stress the importance of allowing internet such as FIOS to come into the area. Work from home and with each house in the area slowly becoming 'Smart' homes, the access to even faster internet speeds, and another option, would be greatly beneficial.
78. Question 21 should include an additional answer option. Neither response allows for many considerations. Overall, the village would greatly benefit from our leaders working together towards common goals in a respectful, inclusive manner rather than in the divisive and disrespectful way it appears to be working now. It's sad to see a place with such potential be stymied by personal agenda and ego.
79. Increase of safety for a crosswalk between county buildings on West High St. it's a high traffic area that county workers and elementary school "walkers" use. Cars rarely stop for pedestrians there and our kids would appreciate a little more safety.
80. Making the village more accessible via sidewalk and encouraging more work force housing or starter houses may encourage young people priced out of the saratoga area who are currently settling for more rural affordable properties. While the roads, sewers, and storm are vital infrastructure the sidewalks and drinking water need far more improvement. In particular accessible sidewalks in business district and in school areas considered to be walkers (not bused). Waiting around for the perfect solution to vacant properties leads to situations like monument square in Troy.
81. I am in support of updating village zoning to current standards. It is my feeling as someone who professionally deals with planning boards that developers will take advantage of every weak rule in your zoning code to get more out of the parcel they're developing. Zoning Board of Appeals Chairperson Anna Stanko made a comment in the TU that doing this makes it seem like there is no trust in the village boards. It means the opposite. Village boards will have more solid legal ground to deny developers the ability to take advantage of us. If a planning or zoning board acts without any legal back up, guess what happens? The village gets sued by the developer. The mayor ought to know this .. maybe he does and that's why he is opposed to updating the zoning code so that someone like himself can run rampant and turn the village into one big strip mall? Too many zones will potentially lead to residential areas abutting non Residential areas more frequently. If the zones are thoughtfully considered to avoid too many zones then additional zones could be ok. If a child lives in the designated walking zone of school a SAFE route should be available. This includes crosswalks and sidewalks. The section of Malta Avenue between 194 and 200 is unsafe for children. Every summer the BARC walks to the pool daily as cars speed by. Young teenagers have to judge crossing the street with packs of small kids in the day program.

82. I'm new to the village but moved from another local village in Albany County. I'm a little disappointed about what this village offers for our tax dollars. My last residence has garbage pickup, waste removal, etc that was paid for from our village taxes. It's not readily apparent what the extra \$2,000 I pay in taxes gets me here. I hope that changes soon.
83. We resurface the roads and they only last 3-4 years, can we use better quality materials like on the state roads and then less time on repaving?
84. I believe the history of Ballston Spa should be brought back to life. The village movie theater should be reopened, the springs should be re- tapped, there's so much more life in it, that used to attract people from all over the world - to Ballston Spa. It has so much more potential!!!
85. The intersection at Route 50 & Northline (where the new Stewart's is) is incredibly dangerous when trying to turn left onto 50 (towards Saratoga) from Northline. You can't see cars coming up the hill from under the train passage. This intersection needs to be addressed with either a left turn arrow or by converting it to a circle.
86. Consider not requiring clippings and yard waste to be bagged during the spring/summer. It's a waste of a paper bag and time. Find ways to promote more outdoor events that attract young adults and people looking to have a beverage and eat outdoors.
87. I think there's a lot of potential in Ballston Spa to be more of a destination village. Some areas need some refurbishment so maybe incentives for homeowners and businesses to fix up their buildings, especially on the main strip would do wonders. I think seeking out a mix of businesses would make the village more vibrant. There are plenty of restaurants and antique shops. But more variety in other sectors could see more growth. Also, the history of Ballston Spa and its historic buildings and features should be front and center. Saratoga Springs did the same thing and now it's booming. Perhaps BSpa needs a Historic Preservation Foundation if there isn't one. And if there is, they need more money for marketing.
88. Although we would like to see developments in the village, facelifts to existing structures encouraged and supported. We do not want to see the charm of the village lost in a series of strip malls, Walmarts or multiplex housing developments. Plenty of opportunities for those in the perimeters of the village.
89. Unfortunately, this survey is poorly constructed and may not yield accurate results. I hope it does and wish the Village good luck in moving forward.
90. Allowing access to alternative modes of transportation in and around the village. Bike lanes, walking paths, etc.
91. my computer does not read QR codes. Maybe next time add the website info to go to,
92. Given the benefits of technology, should the village incorporate into the Town of Milton for financial advantages and reduce duplication of services. More efforts to promote local history
93. I would love to see more of an effort to maintain the aesthetics/beauty of downtown. For example, perhaps thru a partnership with Noah's attic. The garbage cans and tent could be moved to a more discreet location. I love all the volunteer work that is being done in Wiswall Park. Not a fan of the library's electronic sign.
94. The sidewalks on the north side of town (south street) are in severe disrepair and the storm drain system is causing damage to the already damaged pulpmill street. The village needs to improve its streets, storm drains and sidewalks.
95. Always think ahead to 20+ years down the road - and support mixed economic levels / diversity of people. Mix housing and retail. Don't become Saratoga. Make things easy to walk or bike to.
96. Already touched on briefly but all roads that "walkers" walk to school on should have sidewalks and all major walking routes to schools should have crosswalks. Additionally, there should be access to the village police department beyond a land line phone at the office and a non emergency number leading to voicemail that doesn't even garner a return phone call.
97. Police communication/ presence with community when dealing with non-emergency issues within the village.
98. please move develop and implement a feasible plan to address the water issues with the Rowland street well and water tower to ensure safe and potable water for all village residents.
99. Clean up the weeds that cover all the sidewalks.. it looks disgusting on front street
100. Consider letting community members invest alongside wealthy real estate developers in redevelopment projects by having them partner with an organization like smallchange.co where small investors can invest as little as \$500 in development projects. Also, turn the old movie theater into a community space.