

**Delhi Comprehensive Plan
Community Stakeholder Workshop
March 24, 2011**

Welcome and Introductions by David Truscott.

- **Meeting Purpose:** The purpose of the Stakeholder Meeting was to get input on Delhi...what's great, what needs work, etc. from the following groups - Agriculture, business, industry, tourism; Education and health care; Emergency services and local government; Environment, historic preservation; and Community service organizations.
- **What is a Comprehensive Plan?** Under New York State law, municipalities are granted the authority and responsibility to prepare and adopt comprehensive plans. As defined in the state legislation, a comprehensive plan is a document that presents goals, objectives, guidelines and policies for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and community development. Also known as a master plan or land use plan, a comprehensive plan provides guidance to municipal leaders and helps to ensure that the needs of the community will be met.
- **Reasons for the Joint Comprehensive Plan:** The Village of Delhi and Town of Delhi each have their own individual comprehensive plans. The Village adopted its Comprehensive Plan in 2000, while the Town adopted its Comprehensive Plan in 1999. Neither Comprehensive Plan spoke about the other "Delhi". The Village and Town received a grant three years ago (from the Catskill Watershed Corporation's Local Technical Assistance Program) to prepare a joint comprehensive plan. Each municipality will adopt the plan at the end of the process.
- **Planning process includes:**
 - 10 committee members
 - Regular monthly committee meetings
 - Visioning Workshop was held in November 2010 with 35 attendees
 - Community Survey was distributed with 684 surveys completed
 - Stakeholder Interviews
 - Drafted Community Profile/Existing Conditions Report

Participants in Attendance:

- David Truscott, Chair of the Comprehensive Plan Committee
- Abby Brannen Wilson, Vice Chair of the Comprehensive Plan Committee
- Duane Sturdevant, Comprehensive Plan Committee member
- Kristin Janke-Schneider, Delaware County Planning
- Christina Viafore, Delhi Chamber of Commerce
- Dan Ayres, O'Connor Hospital, Delhi Kiwanis Club and Comprehensive Plan Committee member
- John Nader, SUNY Delhi and Comprehensive Plan Committee member
- Berco Van Pel, Friesland Campina Domo
- Dennis Reinshagen, Friesland Campina Domo
- Greg Kryston, Village Board and Comprehensive Plan Committee member
- Thomas Mills, Delaware County Sheriff and American Legion
- Richard Maxey, Mayor, Village of Delhi
- Dean Fraizer, Delaware County Watershed Affairs

- John Vickers, NYC DEP
- James Bogner, Project Manager, NYC DEP
- Charles Craig, Delhi Fire Department –District Commissioner
- Eric Groh, Delhi Fire Department–District Commissioner
- Gerry Pilgrim, Delhi Village Trustee
- Laura Stewart, Mobility Manager – Delaware County Coordinated Transportation Program and Office for the Aging
- Bill Willis, Delaware County Economic Development
- Robert Henault, Delhi Beautification Committee
- Jacqueline Miskovitz, Delhi Rotary Club
- Nicole Franzese, Delaware County Planning Department
- Liz VanBuren, MorningStar/UltraDairy
- John Taylor, Town Planning Board, Comprehensive Plan Committee member
- Fred Huneke, Watershed Agricultural Council
- Jean Parenteau, Farm Catskills and School Board Member
- Wayne Oliver, Sportsfield Specialties/Clark Companies and School Board Member
- Clara Stewart, Historian, Town of Delhi
- Michele DeFreece, Comprehensive Plan Committee member
- Peter J. Bracci, Town of Delhi Supervisor, Comprehensive Plan Committee member
- Leila Jabour, River Street Planning

What are some of the assets?

- SUNY Delhi
- Village environment, small town in the Catskills
- Delhi is unique, (location of) county seat and college
- Pleased with strong work ethic – it’s a great thing. The downside is Delhi is an expensive area to live, couldn’t recruit people to work here for certain types of businesses
- Things are economically steady here
- Hospital is a plus
- Delhi is the best location within the county – taxes are a big issue – assets in Village and Town, hospital, county seat, college, services available and convenient – encourage the ones here to stay
- Delaware County and Delhi – truly rural – what are the assets? Agriculture, forestry, blue stone mining, college, take all into consideration and how to improve economy without destroying rural aspects.
- Strong work ethic
- Very good high school
- Tractor Supply
- Fabulous job with volunteers
- More people moving here – more people available to volunteer
- Beauty of area and natural resources
- College has amazing community service – students are looking for things to do on the community
- There is a lot of volunteerism in the community
- Great, helpful people

What are some of the issues?

- Expensive place to live and buy real estate
- Transportation is lacking – lot of people cannot get around the county
- Transportation is an issue – Delhi is ½ way between Merridale and Hamden

- Trying to hire here – difficult to find housing for potential employees– they don’t like living here – image/first impression of Delhi – has happened a few times
- Image thing (village may not be attractive to potential employees) and cost of living thing – pay more in taxes
- Concern of Farm Catskill – tax assessments of agricultural land and losing the farmers that are here
- Difficult to find good housing
- Older population in Delhi area has all sorts of impacts. For example it took an ambulance an hour to get to a home (in a neighboring municipality). What’s the impact on the fire and ambulance squad in Delhi?
 - Currently dealing with ambulance services (longer response times and lack of EMTs) and looking at paid ambulance service – break off from fire department – won’t be funded by taxpayers and must support itself
 - There are fewer EMTs and an increasing number of training hours, ambulance people volunteer time – 1200 hours of training – average call lasts about an hour for ambulance call in Delhi
 - Look at each issue carefully, paid ambulance service – different laws come into effect – have all expenses now – except paid employees
 - Do ambulances charge? The city of Oneonta charges for every call
- Steady decline in volunteers to provide daytime services, we have been fortunate in Delhi – don’t want to have residents wait an hour for service
 - People are so busy now – impossible to get volunteers – need to come together to promote volunteers for Town and Village
 - The Caregiver program – only have 20 volunteers – it’s not enough – only couple hours a week is required
 - Need to let people know about the need for volunteers, and about the events and programs available
 - There are a lot of people willing to donate their time –we need to let people be aware of the opportunities and promote what we have. Biggest problem is that some are not aware of what we have – all the beauty is here, promote this image, great school, great hospital, great industries, consolidate efforts in one direction – create market before creating services
 - Volunteerism – difficult to get girl and boy scout leaders and 4H leaders – 4H camp is in Delhi – where are the youth volunteers
 - Is it a lack of interest or fear of volunteering with youth because fear of getting hurt – need CPR training for coaches
- Need a central information source (website/calendar of community events/volunteer opportunities)
- Delhi chamber is working on a website – would like to put a welcome wagon packet in one spot (on website) – hoping chamber will fill that need
- So much goes on around (Delhi)- not an easy way to find information – difficult for businesses to get the word out – communication is a huge issue
- Are there “recruitment” packages in place? Who takes prospective employees around?
- (Need) Jobs for spouses
- Bit remote, facilities, shops, etc. it’s also housing where they would like to move into – looking to fill 15 positions – people prefer to live in Oneonta than Delhi – housing is an important factor
- Difficult to get announcement at Delaware Academy to students – needs to open channel of communication – put something in “bulldog packet”
 - Struggle with the same thing – work under set of rules from state levels – need to “look at the document” is it related to religion or a for-profit entity

What would you like to change?

- Cooperation between county/Town and Village and the college
- Need a general merchandise store in the area
- Communication wise with Delaware Academy– could put out guidelines to help streamline process – promote how to get the word out – school has policy
- Experts on campus with travel and tourism – have we asked for their help? Programs are willing to help. Students are using Delhi as a project. Identifying opportunities – and can do more.
 - SUNY Delhi is building the Chamber website
 - “We (SUNY Delhi) need to do better” John Nader
- Confused on problems, needs or assets – coordinated, consolidated effort – enhance own offerings in Delhi
- Fewer members coming in at American Legion – community asset – bar there allows the legion to have community facilities – costs rising for facilities
- Village mayor – lot of linkage with college – timelines different – trying to get info to complete work is slow – need to work out
- Teens and youth – moved to area 3 years ago – after school program paid specialist that would come in and teach the kids for a few weeks – allows kids to do something – college program kids night out – should be monthly
- Key assumptions to ask ourselves – opportunities to volunteer – business want to grow? Do we want the town and village to grow? Or remain status quo? What do we need to do then? Many employees do not live in Delhi that work here. Physicians can’t find a home (within 20 minutes for on call)
- Residents of NYC purchase property – can afford the prices here
- Now 40 to 50 students in Delaware Academy graduating class – 10 years ago it was double
- Housing Issue – why is recruitment hard? Housing comes into play – at higher income levels – not just placing one person here – spouse is also looking for a job – there weren’t 2 positions here – just 1
- Growth along the Route 10 corridor – used to battle to get trucks here – piece of cake now – came back here for a reason – different lifestyle – do go to Oneonta a lot but would rather stay here – challenge is finding like people – there are things here that people may not be aware of – is it enough for a family of professional to come back here?
- (Business) Needs people who are willing to learn (mechanics)
- How can we collaborate together? Everyone is doing their own thing – what do we want to be? What kind of community?
- Look at survey – have to serve the people and have to understand what’s here. Industry has always been known for farming. Got to get back together addressing those needs
- Such a different environment here – it’s an adjustment to move here. Delhi is a unique place – people are willing to give their time – we’re small and it’s a pro and a con. People are trying
- What are we are going to be? Determined by geography? Take a serious look at where we are – advantages are natural resources – need to take more advantage of tourism – we are within 1 tank of gas from the City – don’t have hotels or beds and breakfasts, need accommodations, serious look at what we have and build on assets.
- What happened with the proposal to build a hotel on Main Street at the corner of Elm and Main Streets (near the eCenter). ?
 - Actually, the Town gave his easements – had fire department involved – town was supportive of the Project – but there were a lot of aspects that weren’t viable – The site would have been a very tight fit for the chain-motel that he proposed. A number of efforts were made by the town and village to accommodate the problems but he also had financing difficulties and the project has gone nowhere.

- A modular home facility is looking to locate here but there are only 2 properties available – NYC and state regulations are difficult
- Mayor – deal with the architecture – construction want in village – address for quaint village not 2011 architecture – design guidelines or standards – construction to fit in with quaintness – lot of people haven't moved after retiring, which impacts available housing, rehab costs – with the antiquated housing in the village only low income funding available – need to serve moderate income housing rehab needs.
 - Need appropriate housing for college students to live – village is trying to address this – task force in place
 - Substandard housing in village and slumlord – mandatory meeting with students to attend – must inform village of housing problems – students are also distraction for village – take up housing – limited to where frats are located (*The Village has amended its zoning law so that fraternities are now prohibited from residential zones. They are allowed in business and commercial zones and on Page Avenue between the Legion and County Highway Department*) - trying to meet the needs of own residents
- Business is here to stay – high interest in what's happening in Delhi, community is important, how can give input and express needs?
- (Need) Good jobs for young people
- (Need) Housing
- We aren't going to grow without concerted effort by the community. If we let nature take its course, we will get smaller. We are competing with other communities in Delaware County (and the rest of rural upstate NY also).
- Have a study done to see the pros and cons for combining governments and/or sharing services
- More parking is needed in the village
- More signage is needed
- Bring more shopping to the area
- Increase activities for our youth
- Better Communication
- Affordable moderate income housing
- Collaborate with O'Connor Hospital
- Kingston Street Bridge

Other Comments:

The President of the Delhi Beautification Corporation/Secretary of Delhi Beautification Committee submitted a letter to the Joint Comprehensive Plan Committee. The Delhi Beautification Committee recently adopted a five-year strategic plan articulating its vision of Delhi in the year 2015. They have identified the following goals:

- Parks:
 - Hoyt Park - The Committee is developing a maintenance plan for the park that will include picnic tables and benches bolted down to avoid being washed away.
 - Bridgeside Park - The Committee is developing a maintenance plan for the park that will include picnic tables and benches bolted down to avoid being washed away, as well as repair of the foot bridge.
 - Memorial Park - The Committee is developing a maintenance plan for the park and is developing plans to have a mural painted alongside the park on the Bishop building.
 - Triangle Park - The Committee is developing a maintenance plan for the park.
 - Reservoir Park – The Committee will pursue development of a park on currently fenced-off land owned by the village at the reservoir.

- Smith Pond Park – The Committee will develop a proposal for the Superintendent of Delaware Academy, which owns the property, involving development and maintenance of the park through educational programs for each grade.
- The Committee will develop a maintenance plan for the Bandstand Plantings alongside the county’s gazebo on Courthouse Square and the planting of annuals in front of the Court House.
- Trails and Walkways: the Committee wants to develop trails and walkways connecting various parks and natural areas within and near the village to expand existing recreational opportunities. Potential connections include:
 - A connection between Riverside Park and Smith Pond Park
 - A walkway along the West Branch of the Delaware River through Hoyt Park from Kingston Street to Page Avenue and possibly beyond
 - Trails in the Reservoir Park area
 - Trail up Round Top Mountain behind Delaware Academy.
- Street Decorations: The Committee plans to undertake the following activities with respect to seasonal and permanent street decorations that enhance the appeal and charm of the village:
 - Barrels – Planting and maintenance during each of the four seasons, with pansies in the spring, annuals in the summer, mums in the fall and Christmas trees with lights in the winter.
 - Lamp posts – Decoration in the fall with corn stalks and ribbons, as well as an evaluation of introducing hanging flower baskets.
 - Benches – Evaluation and maintenance of benches on Main Street.
 - Holiday season – Support for cross-street lighting, snowflakes on the square, outdoor wreaths, bows on lamp posts and candle lights in Court House Square buildings.
- Signage: The Committee intends to investigate, propose and seek approval for the following initiatives to improve the aesthetics and effectiveness of signage within the village:
 - Legal signs – working with the state, county and village on standards for legal signs, to replace and/or improve the current hodge-podge of directional signs within the village.
 - Business signs – working with the Planning Board on standards or regulations for business signs within the village.
 - Informational signs - working with the Planning Board on the introduction of signs indicating the direction to points of interest.
- Building Facades, Sidewalk Design and Snow Storage Standards: The Committee intends to work with the Village Board and Planning Board to develop standards or regulations in these three areas, in order to ensure historical integrity, safety and consistency.
- Community Gardens: The Committee will explore the possibility of creating public community gardens for growing flowers and vegetables, for recreational, educational and health purposes, with excess vegetables being donated to charitable organizations.
- Gateways: The Committee will maintain the four current gateway welcome signs and plantings on Routes 10 and 28. In the future the Committee intends to design, build and plant similar gateways on Franklin Street and Arbor Hill Road.
- Other: In addition, the Committee intends to design and build an informational kiosk for visitors and residents that will describe, promote and provide directions to points of interest and key facilities within the village and town. Currently many residents are unaware that there are four small parks within the village; visitors have no way of knowing about Fitches Bridge or the iconic depiction of Court House Square in the Saturday Evening Post; there are no posted maps showing the location of government buildings; and so forth. Delhi’s assets, whether natural, historical or functional, need to be publicized, not hidden.

Next Steps:

- Encourage all stakeholders to sign up for email list and share with friends and neighbors
- Compile Stakeholder Meeting Notes
- Draft Vision statement
- Goals and actions
- Community Action Planning Workshop
- Prepare comprehensive plan
- Formal public hearing
- Committee meetings – 3rd Monday of each month
- Post PDF of draft documents on website and hard copies in town and village hall and the public library