

# Town of Germantown

## FINDINGS

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)  
Public Visioning Session held on November 19, 2016

For use at the

### FOLLOW-UP PUBLIC VISION MEETING

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 14, 2017  
10 A.M. – NOON**

**Results from January 14<sup>th</sup> Vision Session**

**KELLNER ACTIVITIES BUILDING  
Palatine Park Road  
Germantown, New York**

**Establishing Priorities:** Each person in the group will be given two (2) sticky dots for each of the list of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats identified in the first Vision Session. The participants can choose individual “Issues” (left column) from each SWOT list and place a sticky dot from an Issue they feel strongly about by placing a sticky dot or dots into the boxes labeled “Categories” (right column). A different color dot will be assigned for each Category for a total of eight (8) sticky dots (i.e., 2 blue, 2 green, 2 yellow, 2 red). The Categories that generate the greatest number of dots will help determine the Categories to prioritize in updating the Comprehensive Plan.

## STRENGTHS

### Issues

### Categories

- Rural nature/ Rural character
- Small town character/ advantages
- Authentic and unique
- Traditional character
- Nature of community (small)
- Low density of population (not on top of each other)

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Rural Small Town Character  
of Germantown

- World class scenic view resources
- Historic view-shed
- Views of the landscapes
- Natural beauty and view
- Scenic rural roads

29

Viewshed

- Waterfront access/docks
- Lake in town
- Rural beauty of Hudson
- Water front revitalization

12

Waterfront

- Main street development along w/pass through  
Community center
- Hotel, restaurants and market in town
- Ability to nurture small businesses
- Local biz-non-boxy
- Absence of strip malls
- Transformation of hamlet/locally owned business
- Main St./highway traffic

44

Main Street  
Small Businesses  
Community Center

- Agricultural nature/biz
- Thriving farm community
- Farms

7

Agriculture and Farms

- High environmental condition
- Keep conservation land preserve
- Diverse environments

6

Natural Resources

## Issues

## Categories

- Improved school district
- New school theater
- School located in hamlet

5

School

- Library/programs
- Library

5

Library

- Athletic field/Soccer fields/playground-kids programs
- Park located centrally
  - dog park
  - civil buildings
- Outdoor recreation
- Nature preserve "Keep"
- Parks and open spaces

3

Parks & Recreation

- Central location; small community in the midst of larger ones
- Convenient to regional transportation
- Proximity to City and other/towns and their beauty, character, things to do
- Proximity to tourist attractions

7

Regional Access

- New sidewalks
- Walkability to town services for seniors
- Walking trails
- New sidewalk/walkable community

1

Walkable Community

- Involved community
- Close knit community
- Civil minded, engaged population
- Tolerance/openness
- Diversity of community; skills, education, etc.
- New arrivals/families; core families
- Acceptance of new people/families

8

Sense of Community

- Supportive committees/planning, zoning
- Embrace change-keep up
- Attracting new growth

2

Business Friendly

## Issues

## Categories

- Historic/archeologic area + programs
- History i.e. Parsonage
- History, relevance, uniqueness
- Notable architecture
- Germantown patent 1725>Preservation of public ground

8

Archeologic, Architectural  
and Historic Resources

- Healthy tax base
- Economic diversity
- Diversity of population (economic)

1

Diverse Economy and Tax  
Base

- Agility of small community

0

Agility of small community

- Town and highway services
- Broadband access
- Sewer district
- Volunteer firemen
- First responders

2

Community Facilities and  
Services

- Cost of living
- Safe community
- Family friendly
- Senior citizen support

3

Quality of Life

- Artist concentration
- Building trades

3

Skilled Artists & Building  
Trades

## WEAKNESSES

### Issues

### Categories

- Town infrastructure-sewer/water limited for grant opps, maxed out infrastructure
- Lack of water development (drinking) H2O tower not used
- Water as utility (public H2O)
- Water scarcity/limits
- **Limited village expansion**
- Limited sewer system
- Sewer plant improvement
- Lack of infrastructure

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Water & Sewer  
Infrastructure

- Parking limits
- Lack of convenient parking

5

Parking Availability

- Traffic congestion (perception)
- Speeding in town/safety
- Safety/Sidewalk along 9G
- More signs/awareness for children @ play, speed bumps etc.

1

Traffic Congestion & Safety

- Unattractive entrance to town (@9G)
- Garbage on Rte 9G corridor
- “Known as gas station”
- Attractiveness of public buildings
- Placement of transfer station

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Visually Unappealing  
Gateways and Public Bldgs.

- Ineffective town communication
- Local government transparency
- Community communication notifications

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Town Government – Public  
Communication

- Cultural/economic divide: year round/long term residents v. newcomers/weekenders
- Resistance to change
- Socio-economic split
- Communication gap
- Intolerance
- Lack of true diversity/people

20

Growing Cultural Divide

- Lack of farmers market (access to farms)
- Low market agriculture

6

Access to Local Farm Products

## Issues

## Categories

- Insufficient hospitality services
- 
- Lack of health services
- 
- Perception that schools are not good (strong)
- High-taxes

1

Local Accommodations

1

Health Services

2

Public Schools

3

Taxes

- Affordability pressure on senior citizens
- Affordable-attractive housing

0

Affordable Housing

- Uncertainty of future (current and new businesses)
- No controls in place for business development
- Lack of conservation committee

37

Land Use Regulations

- Car dependence (no public transportation)
- Public transportation access
- Train stop
- 

3

Public Transportation

- Lack of store fronts/empty storefronts
- Commercial isolation
- 

4

Storefronts

- Not enough evening activities
- Third-places\*
- No teen activities/center
- No place to gather (eg., old Grange)
- 

10

Third Places\*

- Limiting commercial growth along view-shed
- Lack of view-shed regulations
- Blockage of mountains
- Railroad blockage of river
- 

20

Protection of Viewshed

- Under-utilized water front
- Lack of development along water front
- Walkability of trails along river,
- Lack of community "swimming hole"

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Under-utilized Waterfront

biking (linear)

\* In community building, the third place (or third space) is the social surroundings separate from the two usual social environments of home ("first place") and the workplace ("second place"). Examples of third places would be environments such as cafes, clubs or parks.

## OPPORTUNITIES

<u>Issues</u>		<u>Categories</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water front development</li> <li>-biz launch sites</li> </ul>	<b>14</b>	<b>Waterfront</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Palatine Park</li> <li>-commercial business development</li> <li>-expand/increase function along Palatine Park Road</li> <li>Re-develop/beautify Palatine Park Road</li> <li>-move the dump</li> </ul>	<b>24</b>	<b>Palatine Park Road Redevelopment</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep downtown vibrant (market)</li> <li>Invest in <u>anchor</u> downtown businesses</li> <li>Trees in hamlet</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<b>21</b>	<b>Downtown Revitalization</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enlightened Comprehensive Plan</li> <li>Develop businesses that are broad based; serving and employing all of Germantown</li> <li>-community supported agriculture</li> <li>Develop business plans-appropriate size and diversity</li> <li>More (locally owned) retail</li> <li>Make all biz reflect specifics of Germantown</li> <li>-biz rural character parameters</li> <li>Landscaping</li> <li>Better connectedness of 9G to town (hamlet&gt;9G)</li> <li>9G into a hamlet street</li> <li>Integration of 9G business and hamlet</li> <li>Building development-size of/location</li> <li>More capacity for commercial development</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<b>40</b>	<b>Manage Growth to Strengthen Community Character</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop alternate energy sources</li> <li>Solar power</li> <li>Green house utilization (school)</li> <li>Community composting</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>	<b>Green Infrastructure</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More local farming</li> <li>Community supported agriculture</li> <li>Communication of farmers with community (farmer's markets)</li> <li>Regional interest into local food</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<b>9</b>	<b>Community Supported Ag.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mine historic preservation; connecting to AVE?</li> <li>Historic preservation, state, national</li> <li>Germantown historical society</li> <li>Utilize our history rich community</li> <li>Interesting to come to/visit in Germantown</li> </ul>	<b>13</b>	<b>Heritage Tourism</b>

## Issues

## Categories

- Environmental conservation
- Environmental assessment + action plan
- Continued open space protection/conservation

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Environmental Conservation

- Build upon strength of library
- School and theater
- Kids in schools
- Community service related to education
- Bard integration
- Re-think civic center (improve building useage/aesthetics)

7

Strengthen Access to Educational Opportunities

- Trails outside of the hamlet
- Bike trails everywhere
- Open lake for swimming

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Expansion of Trails and Public Access to Waterfront

- Tourism
- Take advantage of strong local resources  
-Scenic Hudson, state DEC, SASS, CLC, Greenway
- Festivals/events celebration of strengths, advertisements etc.
- Art gallery
- Better asset advertising  
-broad band, schools, cultural programs, water front etc.
- Take advantage of view-shed
- Parsonage, facilities, etc./marketing/knowledge

9

Marketing of agricultural, cultural, historic, natural and recreational resources.

- Lack of communication w/town board & public
- Recruiting families

5

Town Government – Public Communication

1

Recruiting Families

- Broadband

6

Broadband

- Medical facility (clinic, support services)

3

Medical Facility

- Diversity

1

Diversity



## THREATS

<u>Issues</u>		<u>Categories</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irresponsible, insensitive development</li> <li>• Overdevelopment</li> <li>• Unplanned development, commercial and residential</li> <li>• Rapid growth of development</li> <li>• Housing development-subdivisions, overbuilding</li> </ul>	<b>26</b>	<b>Overdevelopment</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrong type of development</li> <li>• Recognition of the town's identity</li> <li>• Outsized/oversized national franchises</li> <li>• Corporate development (large scale)</li> <li>• Franchise business + out of scale businesses</li> <li>• All business must reflect rural character (also listed as an opportunity)</li> </ul>	<b>58</b>	<b>Character of New Development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability</li> <li>• Big/large solar farming</li> <li>• Noise and light pollution</li> <li>• Un-enforced junk law (unsightly appearances)</li> </ul>	<b>4</b>	<b>Visual, Noise and Light Pollution</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oil traffic-river and rail</li> <li>• Reindustrialization of Hudson -river traffic (tankers) -environmental</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>	<b>Reindustrialization of Hudson River</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impairment of view-shed</li> <li>• River access (blocks it)</li> </ul>	<b>21</b>	<b>Viewshed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decline in open space-uptick in density</li> <li>• Loss of habitat; invasive species; environmental degradation</li> <li>• Polluted site</li> </ul>	<b>7</b>	<b>Habitat and Open Space</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of chemicals in farming "protection of farmers"</li> <li>• Increase of silos</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>	<b>Farming Practices</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of tax base</li> <li>• Continued increase in taxes</li> <li>• Funding cuts</li> </ul>	<b>5</b>	<b>Tax Base</b>

## Issues

## Categories

- Meeting scheduling/deer season.....
- Increased divide rather than decreased from socio-economic classes

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Growing Cultural Divide

- Water resources
- Poor septics, water quality
- Waste management

10

Water and Sewer

- Loss of Otto's
- Potential of losing existing businesses
- Closing of post office

24

Business Retention

- Climate change/Global warming
- Sea-levels rising
- River flooding/rising; waste, H2O Rx
- Refer to H2O study?

4

Climate Change

- Loss of Town land

0

Loss of Town Land

- Apathy

3

Apathy

- Affordability

1

Affordability

- Decrease enrollment in school

3

Decrease School Enrollment

- Drugs

3

Drugs

- Deregulation/privatization –utilities

3

Deregulation Utilities

- Speeding cars

0

Speeding Cars