

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**

**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

- 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)
-
- World class scenic view resources
 - Historic view-shed
 - Views of the landscapes
 - Natural beauty and view
 - Scenic rural roads
-
- Waterfront access/docks
 - Lake in town
 - Rural beauty of Hudson
 - Water front revitalization
-
- 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
-
- Agricultural nature/biz
 - Thriving farm community
 - Farms
-
- High environmental condition
 - Keep conservation land preserve
 - Diverse environments

Categories

Rural Small Town Character
of Germantown

Viewshed

Waterfront

Main Street
Small Businesses
Community Center

Agriculture and Farms

Natural Resources

Issues

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

- Library/programs
- Library

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

- 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

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

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

Categories

School

Library

Parks & Recreation

Regional Access

Walkable Community

Sense of Community

Business Friendly

Issues

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

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

- Agility of small community

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

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

- Artist concentration
- Building trades

Categories

Archeologic, Architectural
and Historic Resources

Diverse Economy and Tax
Base

Agility of small community

Community Facilities and
Services

Quality of Life

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

Water & Sewer
Infrastructure

- Parking limits
- Lack of convenient parking

Parking Availability

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

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

Visually Unappealing
Gateways and Public Bldgs.

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

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

Growing Cultural Divide

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

Access to Local Farm Products

Issues

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

- Affordability pressure on senior citizens
- Affordable-attractive housing

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

- Car dependence (no public transportation)
- Public transportation access
- Train stop
-
- Lack of store fronts/empty storefronts
- Commercial isolation
-
- Not enough evening activities
- Third-places*
- No teen activities/center
- No place to gather (eg:, old Grange)
-
- Limiting commercial growth along view-shed
- Lack of view-shed regulations
- Blockage of mountains
- Railroad blockage of river
-
- Under-utilized water front
- Lack of development along water front
- Walkability of trails along river, biking (linear)
- Lack of community “swimming hole”

Categories

Local Accommodations

Health Services

Public Schools

Taxes

Affordable Housing

Land Use Regulations

Public Transportation

Storefronts

Third Places*

Protection of Viewshed

Under-utilized Waterfront

* 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

Issues

- Water front development
 - biz launch sites
- Palatine Park
 - commercial business development
 - expand/increase function along Palatine Park Road
- Re-develop/beautify Palatine Park Road
 - move the dump
- Keep downtown vibrant and successful (market)
- Invest in anchor downtown businesses
- Trees in hamlet
-
- Enlightened Comprehensive Plan
- Develop businesses that are broad based; serving and employing all of Germantown
 - community supported agriculture
- Develop business plans-appropriate size and diversity
- More (locally owned) retail
- Make all biz reflect specifics of Germantown
 - biz rural character parameters
- Landscaping
- Better connectedness of 9G to town (hamlet>9G)
- 9G into a hamlet street
- Integration of 9G business and hamlet
- Building development-size of/location
- More capacity for commercial development
-
- Develop alternate energy sources
- Solar power
- Green house utilization (school)
- Community composting
-
- More local farming
- Community supported agriculture
- Communication of farmers with community (farmer's markets)
- Regional interest into local food
-
- Mine historic preservation; connecting to AVE?
- Historic preservation, state, national
- Germantown historical society
- Utilize our history rich community
- Interesting to come to/visit in Germantown

Categories

Waterfront

Palatine Park Road
Redevelopment

Downtown Revitalization

Manage Growth to
Strengthen Community
Character

Green Infrastructure

Community Supported Ag.

Heritage Tourism

Issues

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

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

- 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

- Lack of communication w/town board & public

- Recruiting families

- Broadband

- Medical facility (clinic, support services)

- Diversity

Categories

Environmental Conservation

Strengthen Access to Educational Opportunities

Expansion of Trails and Public Access to Waterfront

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

Town Government – Public Communication

Recruiting Families

Broadband

Medical Facility

Diversity

THREATS

Issues

- Irresponsible, insensitive development
- Overdevelopment
- Unplanned development, commercial and residential
- Rapid growth of development
- Housing development-subdivisions, overbuilding

- Wrong type of development
- Recognition of the town's identity
- Outsized/oversized national franchises
- Corporate development (large scale)
- Franchise business + out of scale businesses
- All business must reflect rural character (also listed as an opportunity)

- Sustainability
- Big/large solar farming
- Noise and light pollution
- Un-enforced junk law (unsightly appearances)

- Oil traffic-river and rail
- Reindustrialization of Hudson
 - river traffic (tankers)
 - environmental

- Impairment of view-shed
- River access (blocks it)

- Decline in open space-uptick in density
- Loss of habitat; invasive species; environmental degradation
- Polluted site

- Use of chemicals in farming "protection of farmers"
- Increase of silos

- Lack of tax base
- Continued increase in taxes
- Funding cuts

Categories

Overdevelopment

Character of New
Development

Visual, Noise and Light
Pollution

Reindustrialization of
Hudson River

Viewshed

Habitat and Open Space

Farming Practices

Tax Base

Issues

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

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

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

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

- Loss of Town land

- Apathy

- Affordability

- Decrease enrollment in school

- Drugs

- Deregulation/privatization –utilities

- Speeding cars

Categories

Growing Cultural Divide

Water and Sewer

Business Retention

Climate Change

Loss of Town Land

Apathy

Affordability

Decrease School Enrollment

Drugs

Deregulation Utilities

Speeding Cars