

### December 16, 2025 Meeting Minutes Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC)

CPC Chair Chris Foss led this monthly meeting at Caroga Town Hall from 6:02 to 8:00 PM. Committee members present were: Chris Foss, Rachel Simonds, Anita Long, Jim Hale, and Doug Purcell. Committee members Jeremy Manning, Dave Cummings, and Kim Walker were unable to attend. The Committee was joined by EDR Senior Planner/Project Manager Susan Caruvana and EDR Practice leader, Landscape Architecture Jere Tatich, RLA. No zoom was available.

Susan Caruvana facilitated discussion of Smart Growth comprehensive planning principles and how they can be applied in Caroga. She noted EDR's Smart Growth Planning experience in Gloversville, Northville, Glens Falls, and Courtland. She has a lot of experience working with municipalities and NYS DOS on grant-funded projects. She praised Caroga's preliminary work on deliverables, including the *2025 Community Survey* with more than 500 responders. Next, she led an initial Q & A.

**SC:** "Can you bring me up to speed on what you've done, where you are, and what you want to do next?"

**CF:** "We have been meeting a little over a year. The biggest thing we've done is the Survey... We started working on the vision statement and whether where we are now is where the Town wanted to go."

**SC:** "Did the Community, in general, feel that their vision is pretty much the same as the 2011 Plan?"

**RS:** "A lot of focus on outdoor recreation and relaxation does not veer off very far from that."

**CF:** "We pretty much agree that's where we are and what we are, largely a vacation community. The population changes seasonally. There's been more and more construction and new housing since 2011."

**SC:** "Is it the same people who were already coming up here seasonally or for rentals?"

**CF:** "A lot of it is. That's what we did...We tore down and rebuilt a camp from the 50s or 60s. Neighbors have done the same, going top to bottom to rebuild it and modernize it. Family camps are often rebuilt, and some of it is new construction with new people."

**CS:** "Are you attracting young professionals and young families?"

**CF:** "It mostly seems to be older, retired people. Some are here part-time and some year-round."

**CS:** "Are businesses seeing changes?"

**CF:** "We don't have specific numbers. In the past, people often left by Labor Day...Now, more and more it's mid-October and more people around longer and year-round."

**RS:** "I think there's seasonality to businesses. For example, Canada Lake Store was open year-round, and recently they started closing in the winter...Since the pandemic."

**DP:** "Another example is Pine Lake Lodge, that changed during the pandemic from a lodge and restaurant to a short-term rental. You need a draw, such as snowmobile season to keep businesses going."

**AL:** "It feels like some things are growing, but the pandemic was hard... Housing and renovations seem strong. At the school, they've been pleased with steady enrollments and a few new families. We want more young people. Median age is increasing...A strength is that people are engaged. We have about 1,200 year-round residents — plus several thousand more in the summer, and 500 to 600 voters — and so 500 Survey respondents showed great engagement. People have a voice, and the Survey seemed to bring people together, especially when we paint in broad strokes. When we get specific, opinions differ, and there are different views and controversies with the 2011 *Comprehensive Plan*."

# THE CAROGA PROCESS

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

TOWN OF CAROGA  
*Fulton County, New York*

**SC:** "Did you have a sense of how many people were seasonal versus year-round?"

**AL:** "It was ½ and ½. Endnotes give details. People agree about nature and the outdoors. Caroga is a recreational community. For 50 years, planning emphasized our 'recreation community' development patterns. People agree on that...There's growing year-round momentum too, such as with winter sports and the winter carnival. Plus, it's easy to commute to Johnstown or Gloversville for work. Some, like me, commuted to Saratoga or the Capital Region professionally for work. People come for many reasons, but the natural beauty of the lakes and mountains and outdoor quality of life are Caroga's greatest strength."

**SC:** "That fits with Smart Growth principles of preserving open space and natural resources."

**AL:** "Some people say, 'Smart Growth? What's that?' Yet, we've been planning around this for years."

**SC:** "In the prior Plan, you already have a lot of it going with examples of Smart Growth principles."

**JT:** "With the school, is it elementary here? Where's the middle school?"

**AL:** "Wheelerville Union Free School has grades pre-K to 8. After that, students go down the hill to Johnstown High School. Enrollment is lower than in the early 90s, when the school was built, but numbers have been steady recently. I think there are about 110 students enrolled now."

**JH:** "The concerning thing to me is that there are only 2 convenience stores in this town, not counting Dollar General, who came and stole business from both those stores. There's only one restaurant / bar, and that's Vrooman's. [Plus, Nick Stoner Inn, Logged Inn, Canada Lake Store, etc.] We lose traffic for dinner."

**SC:** "What is the status of the Town Profile and Inventories?"

**AL:** "We're still working on that and need more data. We have links to part of the Demographic Profile :

[https://www.townofcaroga.com/comprehensive\\_plan/caroga\\_demographic\\_profile\\_draft\\_09-20-2024.pdf](https://www.townofcaroga.com/comprehensive_plan/caroga_demographic_profile_draft_09-20-2024.pdf) .

Chris' working relationship with Fulton County Planners Aaron Enfield and Scott Henze was helpful."

**SC:** "With EDR, we work with the Department of State (DOS) on most everything these days. We are currently doing 2 Smart Growth Comprehensive Plans, and we're starting a third. It's an evolving program with the DOS... 10 Smart Growth principles need to be followed. So, when you do your Town Profile and Inventories (as a snapshot of 'Where You Are Today' with demographics, zoning, land use, housing, economics, businesses, etc.), DOS will ask you to flip it back and answer, 'What are the key take-aways in terms of Smart Growth?' It's good you've done all the work to date. The next part will ask you to circle back to answer, 'What principles does this advance?' when you look at it through a Smart Growth lens."

**AL:** "One challenge is that the 2002 Plan was a bit of a cookbook list, and the 2011 Plan moved us more into a framework with Town Center. What we seem to be moving toward now is a framework with Smart Growth as a system. So, for example, if this is a big puzzle, how do we start by first finding our 4 corners: (1) community experience, (2) natural environment, (3) built environment, and (4) economy? When we look at the list of 10 key Smart Growth principles, you can break them into those 4 quadrants. We've been trying to think about the Survey and Profile in relation to those 4 quadrants. I think that basic framework seems to resonate with people. The way we approach Smart Growth is like the way that Warren County did their 2040 Plan. In addition, we think of Smart Growth not just as ticking off a list but also about how a comprehensive approach considers all of them together and their interactions in a system as whole. That helps us to get to specific, practical, concrete ways to use the strategic principles to solve real challenges that impact our lives and experiences in our community. I can say that, but the public is not there yet. That's where you all will be incredibly helpful in bringing it together for everyone... We would love the redeveloped Comprehensive Plan to setup for essential streamlined zoning revisions, a focused downtown revitalization initiative proposal, and inclusive Route 10/29A corridor planning."

# THE CAROGA PROCESS

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

TOWN OF CAROGA  
*Fulton County, New York*

Susan Cararuvana introduced a presentation from the NYS DOS with 10 key Smart Growth Principles.

<https://dos.ny.gov/nys-smart-growth-program>

### WHAT IS SMART GROWTH?

Smart Growth promotes livable, sustainable, and equitable communities.



Smart Growth helps enhance what you already have. “Smart Growth communities provide choices for residents — from a variety of housing types to being able to walk or take a bike somewhere they need to go. They prioritize green space and accessible and active public spaces.”

### SMART GROWTH IS RELEVANT EVERYWHERE



DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE 7

Smart Growth can help Caroga to preserve the Town’s unique identity and character.

Best practices are relevant everywhere — not only in urban planning, but in rural areas as well.

It can help to integrate conservation and economic development in a way that inspires and strengthens the Caroga community.

### WHAT SMART GROWTH ISN'T



- × Single use
- × Automobile-centric
- × Difficult to walk or bike
- × Dominated by pavement
- × Lack of greenspace
- × Lack of character



DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE 4

Many common terms — such as “sprawl” and “commercial strip development” — paint a broad picture of what Smart Growth is not. Poorly planned areas look like everything else. They focus on automobile transportation. Large plots are sacrificed to single family or strip development. This can undermine existing neighborhoods, put municipal finances at risk, have environmental and social costs, and be economically underproductive.

### WHAT IS SMART GROWTH?

1. Develop plans and land use regulations that allow for and encourage mixed-use neighborhoods.
2. Enable a diverse mix of housing types that provide for opportunity and choice for all.
3. Prioritize infill and redevelopment of existing buildings to revitalize neighborhoods, and downtowns including areas around public transit.
4. Provide well-planned, equitable, and accessible public spaces.
5. Encourage compact neighborhood design and concentrated development around existing infrastructure.
6. Preserve open space, agricultural resources, and natural resources.
7. Prioritize transportation options such as walking, cycling, and public transportation.
8. Promote climate resiliency and adaptation, preferably through nature-based solutions, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
9. Engage in an inclusive, collaborative public planning process that considers the needs and character of the community.
10. Build on unique traits to create an attractive and welcoming community with a strong sense of place.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE 6

Smart Growth principles can help to advance a community-driven process for creating vibrant, welcoming spaces that attract sustainable investments and growth while honoring the Town’s unique natural character and identity. Caroga’s process will be guided by principles of DOS Smart Growth and the Adirondack Park Agency Act. Caroga’s Agency-Approved Local Land Use Plan (ALLUP) zoning is complex but friendly, including connections with APA Local Planning Assistant Principal Robyn Burgess.



# THE CAROGA PROCESS

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

TOWN OF CAROGA  
*Fulton County, New York*

### Economy & Downtown Revitalization

#### 01 MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOODS

Develop plans and land use regulations that allow for and encourage mixed-use neighborhoods.

- Increases walkability and access to needs
- Reduces environmental impact of travel
- Improves mental and physical health
- Fosters economic development
- Strengthens the local tax base



DOWNTOWN NEW PALTZ, NY  
SOURCE: GLOBALPHILE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE 9

Does Caroga have a mixed-use central area? Historically, Caroga developed in a pattern with mixed-use neighborhoods, with co-located residential, commercial, and community uses providing residents with multi-modal access to necessities. The 2011 Plan and 2018 Zoning Map featured a new vision for “Town Center” that had “mixed-use” features but was not explicitly labeled as a “mixed-use neighborhood.” Questions exist about defining a central district.

#### 01 MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOODS

##### In Comprehensive Plans:

- Identify neighborhoods that could benefit from integration of other uses or are overly restrictive
- Analyze how neighborhoods have changed over time
- Work with community to determine where needs and services are missing or not accessible
- Identify buildings, sites, streets, or neighborhoods that may be ideal locations for new services and uses



KINGSTON FORWARD  
ZONING CODE FLIER (2023)  
SOURCE: CITY OF KINGSTON

DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE 10

Caroga zoning has a complex review / variance process guided by a Use Table (with district uses by right, review, or variance). SC noted Glens Falls’ Smart Growth plan to streamline zoning. Mixed-use downtown revitalization — that build steady streams of people downtown, making it easier to patronize businesses, visit neighbors, walk to work, bike to activities or school, etc. — strengthens residents’ healthy experiences and locally-owned businesses’ economic stability.

### Built Environment

#### 02 DIVERSITY OF HOUSING TYPES

Enable a **diverse mix** of housing types that provide for **opportunity** and **choice** for all.

- Attracts new and retains existing residents
- Makes for more socially and economically vibrant neighborhoods
- Ensures mix of home types and price points
- Improves local housing market



SOURCE: CHARLOTTE 2040

DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE 15

Historically, Caroga’s housing stock has lacked diversity, with a predominance of single-family lake homes. The 2011 Plan makes this point and refers to needs for a variety of housing types, while noting cautions due to exclusive reliance on private septic systems and wells. Caroga did prior sewer planning, including EDP’s 2021 *Preliminary Engineering Report for a Caroga Lake Wastewater Collection and Treatment System*. Thus, housing also has environmental questions.

#### 02 DIVERSITY OF HOUSING TYPES

##### In Comprehensive Plans:

- Assess the local housing inventory, market
- Consider needs of those who are struggling to find housing and may not be able to move to or within the community
- Identify areas that would be most appropriate for new and infill developments, such as lots where buildings have been removed



DIETZ STREET LOFTS,  
A DRI PROJECT IN ONEONTA, NY

DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE 16

In 2025, Caroga is working toward Pro-Housing Certification, with the Supervisor, Code Officer, and Assessor doing housing review paperwork. Caroga has needs for starter homes for young families. Caroga has a classic pattern of “missing middle housing”, in that duplexes, triplexes, townhomes and courtyard apartments are now missing from Caroga’s neighborhoods. In 2024, the Board passed a Short-Term Rental Local Law.



# THE CAROGA PROCESS

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

TOWN OF CAROGA  
*Fulton County, New York*

### Economy & Downtown Revitalization

#### 03 INFILL AND REDEVELOPMENT

Prioritize infill and redevelopment of **existing buildings** to revitalize neighborhoods and downtowns, including areas around **public transit**.

- Makes use of underutilized or abandoned properties in community cores, adding vibrancy
- Spurs investment in nearby properties and improves perception of neighborhood
- Adds density to existing neighborhoods and reduces automobile dependency
- Increases local tax revenue without adding the financial burden of expanded infrastructure



INFILL DEVELOPMENT, MONTGOMERY, NY

DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE 20

For neighborhoods that are already built out, go first to places that are vacant or abandoned to do redevelopment. Considerations include needs, accessibility, and affordability. In Caroga, opportunities exist with renovating and redeveloping “vacant” seasonal homes and buildings for year-round occupancy, including meeting needs for “missing middle housing.” Controversies exist with stand-alone accessory structures (warehouses/garages) with no home.

#### 03 INFILL AND REDEVELOPMENT

##### In Comprehensive Plans:

- Inventory underutilized and vacant lots and buildings conducive to redevelopment
- Match inventory with outreach efforts aimed at identifying missing community needs
- Identify strategies and/or funding sources to overcome barriers to redevelopment
- Create community vision with clear strategies and steps to take toward revitalization



AURORA STREET POCKET NEIGHBORHOOD, ITHACA, NY

DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE 21

During the comprehensive planning process, it is critical to conduct an objective assessment of Caroga’s housing inventory, market, and land use regulations, available land, underutilized sites, or lack thereof. This can help to identify potential programmatic and/or policy-based solutions that are responsive to the specific challenges and opportunities that Caroga faces (e.g., for young people, families, seniors).

### Built Environment

#### 04 PUBLIC SPACES

Provide well-planned, **equitable**, and **accessible** public spaces.

- Provides valuable opportunities for socialization, recreation, and relaxation for all community members
- Increases desirability of neighborhoods
- Provides cleaner air, regulates temperature, and protects water quality
- Ensures all residents live near and have access to quality public spaces
- Contributes to community infrastructure that attracts investment



LENOX SKATE PARK, CANASTOTA, NY

DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE 25

In Caroga, recreational and community spaces are important. JT described a promising example in Woodstock, NY, where a major rec center and youth center project is a way to address aging and declining population. Likewise, Caroga has 2 key public spaces. One is Sherman’s Park (and Myhil) in and near Town Center. The other new set involves essential municipal building projects: Golf Clubhouse/Town Hall and Highway Garage in the Wheelerville neighborhood.

#### 04 PUBLIC SPACES

##### In Comprehensive Plans and Zoning Codes:

- Document public spaces and how they are distributed across the community
- Identify underutilized spaces that could be improved to function as community space (parking lots, “micro parks”)
- Determine strengths and shortcomings of existing public spaces
- Consider current and potential users of public spaces
- Require new development to include public space such as a playground or public plaza



TRAIL STATION PARK CONCEPTUAL DESIGN, DRI ROUND 5, GLOVERSVILLE, NY

DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE 26

Note Gloversville’s DRI park example illustrated. EDR’s work in Gloversville is an inspiration. Mayor Desantis leveraged multiple grant programs with synergistic momentum. Caroga shares 12078 zip code with Gloversville (a NYS disadvantaged community with bonus points on grant reviews). A century ago, Caroga’s Wheelerville Tannery brownfield site became the Caroga Rec Park and Municipal Golf Course. Questions exist about access to lakes/beaches.

# THE CAROGA PROCESS

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

TOWN OF CAROGA  
*Fulton County, New York*

### Economy & Downtown Revitalization

#### 05 COMPACT NEIGHBORHOODS

Encourage **compact neighborhood design** and concentrated development around **existing infrastructure**.

- Maximizes the use of land without expense of new infrastructure
- Increases the local tax base
- Minimizes infrastructure costs
- Boosts walkability and ease of access to key amenities
- Contributes to sense of place and community identity
- Protects agricultural land, natural areas, and open space



SOURCE: RICK POTESTIO

DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE 29

Does Caroga have defined neighborhoods? It's mostly by lakes and associations (Stoner Lakes, Pine Lake, Canada Lakes, West Caroga Lake, East Caroga Lake) plus Wheelerville, Royal Mountain, and North Bush. In addition, East and West Caroga Lake have multiple subareas (Lakeview 37 camps, Freeman's Grove, Kirchen's Grove, Avenues, and so on).

#### 05 COMPACT NEIGHBORHOODS

In Comprehensive Plans and Zoning Codes:

- Encourage neighborhood design consistent with historical development patterns and character
- Identify areas ideal for development and allow more units per acre
- Provide opportunities for increasing number of homes in existing neighborhoods via accessory dwelling units, pocket neighborhoods, etc.
- Establish minimum feasible lot sizes and setbacks



W PARK ROW IN CLINTON, NY  
SOURCE: ALMOST LOCAL

DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE 30

Land divisions and building development often preceded automobiles, yet zoning often creates disincentives for such historic development. Planning opportunities including locating physical improvement in compact areas, fostering a sense of place, protecting natural resources, and utilizing existing infrastructure.

### Natural Environment, Energy, & Climate

#### 06 OPEN SPACE

Preserve open space, agricultural resources, and **natural resources**.

- Ensures agricultural soils are available for future agricultural use
- Protects sensitive natural areas from development
- Ensures community access to open space
- Maintains scenic views
- Protects local agricultural economies



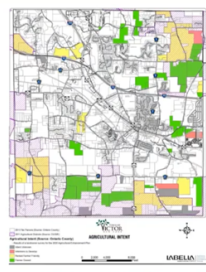
DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE 33

Caroga has 20,404 acres of constitutionally-protected "forever wild" NYS Forest Preserve in the Shaker Mountain Wild Forest and Ferris Lake Wild Forest. This is 62% of the land in the Town. Plus, the Town owns 532 acres of land, including 176 for recycling and waste management and 338 acres designated for outdoor recreation. These numbers /inventories were not previously detailed in comprehensive plans.

#### 06 OPEN SPACE

In Comprehensive Plans:

- Inventory existing open spaces within the community and areas with critical natural and agricultural resources that are need protection.
- Demonstrate and document the importance of these spaces and resources within the comprehensive plan.
- Develop strategies that will encourage the preservation of these resources and deter development, including cooperation with land trusts or state agencies



SOURCE: TOWN OF VICTOR, NY

DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE 34

DOS has very specific guidelines of what must be inventoried and mapped. EDR does maps for land use, zoning, infrastructure, and other points that are on the list for the work program.



# THE CAROGA PROCESS

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

# TOWN OF CAROGA

## Fulton County, New York

### Built Environment

#### 07 ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

Prioritize transportation options such as **walking, cycling, and public transportation**.

- Reduces environmental and financial cost of transportation
- Improves quality of life by providing transportation choice and equity
- Enhances public health by spurring active movement and improving air quality
- Goes hand in hand with compact and mixed-use neighborhoods
- Reduces unproductive space lost to automobile infrastructure



DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE 38

Fulton County Planner Aaron Enfield recently noted that the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) has considered expanding service to Fulton County, and he suggested selecting a stop location (e.g., the Post Office). Plus, there is talk about recreational trails in Caroga connecting to Northville-Placid Trail, Fulton County, and/or Hamilton County (who has a new federal grant for recreation development).

#### 07 ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

##### In Comprehensive Plans:

- Analyze the relationship between transportation systems and surrounding land uses
- Identify gaps in pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and streets in need of redesign
- Develop transportation strategies that provide access to core amenities, services, and employers
- Examine space dedicated to car infrastructure



DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE 39

Opportunities also exist with planning and development with the NY 10/29A corridor. MVREDC has prioritized projects in Cobleskill and Sharon Springs. Both are on NY 10, and Caroga is on NY 10. Yet, NY 10 is not on the major Adirondack scenic driving routes, and Mohawk Valley lacks information about this scenic and historic route that is ripe for connections.

### Natural Environment, Energy, & Climate

#### 08 CLIMATE RESILIENCY AND MITIGATION

Promote **climate resiliency** and adaptation, preferably through **nature-based solutions** and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- Utilize development, infrastructure, and land use strategies to build resilience to extreme weather
- Minimizes property damage and loss, and minimizes recovery time
- Enhances natural environment through nature-based solutions such as riparian buffers, restored floodplains and other green infrastructure
- Reduces emissions and encourages use of renewable energy



DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE 43

Smart Growth features green infrastructure and planning for resiliency. Is flooding an issue? Most developed lakes have dams, and that helps mitigate flood risks. Unlike Sacandaga, Caroga has different FEMA Flood Zones. (Flood Zone maps are reportedly changing in 2026 with Caroga impacts yet to be identified or defined well.) Some people note flooding of Caroga Creek on Cape Horn Road, and the bridge there needs to be replaced.

#### 08 CLIMATE RESILIENCY AND MITIGATION

##### In Comprehensive Plans:

- Inventory existing **natural, social, and built** resources
- Anticipate issues for vulnerable resources, populations, and community assets and develop early action steps
- Interpret risks and consider achievable mitigation and recovery strategies
- Incorporate mitigation strategies throughout plan



DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE 44

EDR can do maps and inventories of environmentally sensitive areas. The NYS Climate Smart program also has grants, programs, and assistance opportunities for participating communities.



# THE CAROGA PROCESS

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

TOWN OF CAROGA  
*Fulton County, New York*

### Community Experience & Equity

#### 09 SENSE OF PLACE

Build on **unique traits** to create an **attractive and welcoming community** with a strong sense of place.

- Creates a unique, memorable local place
- Helps to retain and attract residents
- Draws visitors to your community
- Fosters and sustains local businesses
- Encourages walkability



SOURCE: BLEND-A-RAMA 3 ON 3 TOURNAMENT, ONEONTA, NY

DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE 49

Places are not just physical places, but social and cultural places with deep history. There is some debate about “tourism” and word choice with “recreation.” We want to develop for residents and visitors alike. We have a “recreation community” development character. JT asked about the extent to which local people support “tourism” versus development for quality of life of local people. Caroga has distinctive goals.

#### 09 SENSE OF PLACE

##### In Comprehensive Plans:

- Document existing conditions and include a narrative on the community's history and culture to help identify unique assets
- Clearly identify the unique traits that contribute to the community's character within the plan to signify their importance
- Develop a vision statement that captures the community's local identity
- Include strategies for planning and designing spaces that are visually interesting and help tell the story of the community



MURAL IN GLENS FALLS, NY

DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE 50

A lot of people were concerned about major jumps in Short-Term Rentals. There are issues with STRs having functional septic systems for the demands placed on the properties. The STR Law mostly focuses on registration, safety, and awareness. We have yet to integrate STR into the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

#### 10 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engage in an **inclusive, collaborative** public planning process that considers the **needs and character** of the community.

- Drives an accurate and compelling community vision
- Secures community buy in and overall success of the planning process
- Leads to confident, informed, and cohesive decision making



VILLAGE OF HEMPSTEAD, NY

DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE 54

DOS wants to make sure everyone has a voice and that the process is inclusive. Have in-person community engagement events. Include pop-up events that go to where people are (e.g., popular sites, farmers' markets, and so on). Caroga has not yet done focus groups. Plus, ideally workshops would be done in summer months.

#### 10 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

##### In Comprehensive Plans and Zoning Codes:

- Create a diverse and inclusive steering committee
- Inventory hard-to-reach community groups and plan on how to incorporate their input
- Identify prior public engagement strategies and what made them successful or not
- Provide engagement opportunities that meet people where they are
- Understand barriers, such as contentious issues or lack of trust, and adjust accordingly
- Leverage existing efforts and community events to build engagement
- Consider how to engage and address concerns of future or would-be residents

DEPARTMENT OF STATE | PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE 55

**Once you have a plan that has been approved and signed off by NYS DOS, and you go for Consolidated Funding Application dollars and you want to do a project — a bike trail, or connectivity, or whatever it is — if you say you have a Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan, you'll have a stronger application. That's all really, really good for getting grant resources.**

# THE CAROGA PROCESS

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

TOWN OF CAROGA  
Fulton County, New York

### Caroga Lake Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan Update



Susan Caruvana turned to cautionary remarks as well. “I saw your proposed schedule. Your application did the right thing for getting a grant secured. Now, I’m the voice of gloom and doom. I’m doing this to reset expectations. While the DOS is wonderful, it adds another layer of slowing the process. Say, on December 23, 2025 the State announces Smart Growth awards. Congratulations. Confetti. After that, it’s probably going to take 6 or 7 months to get a contract. Again, they are bringing on more staff, so maybe things will go faster. But think about all of the CFA applications and awards. Every one of those gets a contract that has to go through the legal department. I could be wrong. But I’ll tell you that it will probably take longer than your schedule. You’ll need more time. They write the contract. They will take the different components and timeline to develop the Work Plan—that is still open to input. You will have a manager from DOS, and you will work with them. You have a proposed task for *Strategies for Public Infrastructure, Outdoor Recreation, and Economic Development*. That is something that a lot of communities don’t have. They just have *Vision, Goals, and Recommendations*. Yours is unique. So, if DOS questions it, you can say that this is important and you want to keep it.”

Anita Long noted that *Strategies for Public Infrastructure, Outdoor Recreation, and Economic Development* is meant to be a preparation or setup for the next round of grants (DRI or NY Forward).

Susan Caruvana said, “You will need a Request for Proposals (RFP). You’ll probably have to put that out for bid, do interviews, and that will take time. You will meet with the DOS manager, who will probably walk you through this Smart Growth presentation. You’ll have a meeting with them, before you even start the project. That is to make sure that you understand what is expected of you, what is required, and to answer questions. It’s a good thing to do. I have a table here, and included 12 committee meetings, because that is what Glens Falls did. You’ll also need a Public Participation Plan, with who contacts are.

# THE CAROGA PROCESS

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

TOWN OF CAROGA  
*Fulton County, New York*

**SC** (continued): “You have a head start on that. There are stakeholder interviews. You might have a recreation group, or a housing group, and so on. You decide what topics and focus groups you want. You might tap into the studies that have already been done in Fulton County to inform that. One of the tasks that we did in Glens Falls and Courtland, we had to have a defined Task that looked explicitly at Smart Growth to review the Plan from that perspective. EDR can work with you. You do a Community Profile. I think you have already started with the Demographics. You are ahead of most people. Next, you need to tie it back to Smart Growth and address the ‘So What?’ questions. For example, housing or population has been decreasing. What does that mean? What are the implications? What are the goals? I put in here 2 workshops. If you want 5—and you think people won’t get planning fatigue and stop coming—then stick to your guns and put that in your Public Participation Plan and Work Plan. In terms of the Strategies Task, I see that as Vision, Goals, and Recommendation. In Glens Falls, we did Built Environment, Downtown, Housing, and Policy Areas. The Draft Comprehensive Plan, kicks off from the Profile. It may start in the fall and then go for a full year. For Glens Falls, we had a draft done in September, and I just got comments back this week in mid-December. So, it took DOS 3 months to turn around that one review. Every step needs review and approval from DOS. I don’t want you to have false expectations. People say, ‘I wish we knew that it would take this long.’ Before you do workshops, your press releases and flyers and postcards need to be reviewed and approved by DOS. It’s different from a Waterfront Revitalization Plan—like in Northville—where it took 14 months to get DOS review and approval of a draft of the legal document. There’s a lot of legal statutes in there, and the WRP needs legal review. A DOS lawyer will not be reviewing a Comprehensive Plan. You will have review by the Town Board and Planning Board. Usually, we give the Planning Board 2 weeks. You need a Planning Board liaison. SEQRA. Your consultant can help you with the SEQRA process. You will send it to the Fulton County Planning Board and APA. Final Comprehensive Plan may take 2 months, given DOS input. Then public hearing. The DOS is a very good program, and program managers are helpful. I just want you to know that there is another layer. You do not need to change your paperwork. Wait for the contract.”

**CF:** “What is the Work Plan?”

**SC:** “I think that you nailed it in the CFA application, based on the DOS template.”

**AL:** “The Work Plan has about 15 Tasks. For a NYS contract, you get paid when you turn in the stated ‘Deliverables’ for each task. The contract has to have those specific components. That’s not something made up. It’s from a DOS template, tailored for Caroga. The 15-point work plan is something we have to do, but some of the nuances can still be changed. What DOS sets up will likely follow the proposal.”

**JT:** “If they get notice of award, and it takes 6 months to get a contract, is there anything that may be ‘at risk’ of not being reimbursed?”

**SC:** “Services before the award contract are not reimbursed.”

**SC:** “You as the Committee are the local knowledge. We from EDR can go in and do quantitative data. We can look at census data, flood zones, and all that. You’re the local knowledge. So, population declined, but why? The census can tell us that it did, but you can tell us why that happened. The same with the community engagement. That’s the qualitative data. You can take the numbers, plus what people tell you. That informs your vision and recommendations.”

**CF:** “We can continue to meet and do what we’ve been doing. We’re not spending money.”



# THE CAROGA PROCESS

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

TOWN OF CAROGA  
*Fulton County, New York*

**SC:** "I've never heard of a community moving forward and not getting paid, but they're going to be telling you that you're at risk of that if you move forward."

**AL:** "We're at risk if we pay you before we get a contract. They're not going to pay for that."

**JT:** "Services provided by a consultant before the contract is signed, is not reimbursable."

**AL:** "The Town Board approved up to \$10,000.00 in funding not contingent on the grant. Otherwise, everything is done by volunteer service. The volunteer hours were not the matching funds. The matching was from Town Engineering Planning contracts currently in the budget for the Golf Clubhouse and Highway Garage. A lot of that has already been done or is being done. Part of the challenge is that if we're going to be stepping back a whole year, then some of that Town Engineering money may not match up with this. Are there other things we can or should be doing during the waiting phase?"

**JT:** You could continue to meet and refine concepts, so that piece is ready."

**AL:** "We have push-back about the plan being community driven. People don't want to bring in people to give recommendations that will not work and are not realistic. So, we can work on refining concepts."

**SC:** "Robust public engagement is important. Your consultant can work with you on focus groups. We came up with buckets of concerns about ideas. We go in with a list of questions. We'll throw out a question, and it snowballs What are your issues? Concerns? Vision? Maps help. People love to come in with stickers and post-it notes. They write comments on the post-it notes. We did that with the DRI project in Lake George. We set up 20 board and maps and pictures and questions. People give feedback, and they feel empowered by that."

Chris Foss concluded the meeting, "This has been just what I was hoping for. It was good for us. We covered things that we had not talked about, but that people were thinking about. Thank you."

### Next Meeting:

**The next meeting will be 6:00 PM Thursday, January 29 at Caroga Town Hall.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Anita McMartin Long  
CPC Member and Secretary  
ComprehensivePlan@TownOfCaroga.com