

Public Information Meeting #2 Summary Notes

Date & Time: April 8, 2026 6:00 pm

Location: Van Buren Municipal Building, 7575 Van Buren Road, Baldwinsville, NY 13027

Attendees:

Comprehensive Plan Committee

Robert Grover, Committee Chair

Jennifer Sullivan

Wendy Van Der Water

Janet Rasbeck

Chaz Gambino

Consultant

Dan Theobald, AICP

Megan Costa, Onondaga County Planning

Members of the Public

11+ members of the public

Introduction

The Town of Van Buren held its second public workshop as part of the Comprehensive Plan update process to present draft goals, objectives, and recommended actions/projects and gather feedback from the community. Building on input received through the community survey and prior outreach efforts, this workshop focused on confirming priorities and refining proposed strategies to guide the Town's growth and development over the next 10–15 years.

Participants had the opportunity to review workshop boards organized by goal area, provide input through dot voting exercises, and share comments on specific actions as well as broader ideas that may not yet be captured in the plan. Feedback received during this workshop will help inform the final recommendations and ensure the plan reflects community priorities.

The workshop included the following agenda:

1. Project Overview: Team, Scope, Schedule
2. What is a Comprehensive Plan?
3. Previous Planning Efforts
4. Demographic Trends
5. Community Survey Summary
6. Workshop
7. Next Steps

Presentation

Mr. Theobald delivered the presentation, guiding attendees through the project background, planning process, and draft recommendations. During the presentation, he directed participants to the project website by displaying a QR code on the screen, allowing attendees to easily access materials.

Public Workshop

Following the presentation, the workshop was opened up. Attendees were invited to circulate around the room to review nine workshop boards organized by goal area. Each board presented draft objectives and associated actions/projects. Participants were encouraged to place dots on the actions they supported and provide additional written comments. This format allowed attendees to engage directly with the material, identify priorities, and share feedback in a hands-on setting.

Based on dot voting, participants identified actions as top priorities.

The highest-ranked action was:

- **2.1.3** – Require new residential projects to include sidewalks or trail links that connect to existing neighborhoods, parks, or commercial nodes, where feasible.
(5 dots)

This was followed closely by three additional high-priority actions:

- **1.1.4** – Evaluate and update the Town’s solar energy regulations to protect prime agricultural soils and rural character, including directing solar development to more appropriate locations and establishing clear siting and design standards.
(4 dots)
- **2.3.2** – Identify targeted infill or mixed-use residential locations near amenities that support walkability, reduce reliance on cars, and provide a range of housing options.
(4 dots)
- **3.2.6** – Prioritize reinvestment and redevelopment of existing and underutilized industrial areas before designating new industrial land, particularly where expansion could encroach into agricultural areas. This includes preparing targeted marketing materials to promote redevelopment-ready sites and support strategic infill and economic growth.
(4 dots)

These results indicate strong community support for improving connectivity and walkability, protecting agricultural land, and encouraging thoughtful, well-located residential development.



The following are summaries of comments by participants, organized by goal category.

Goal 1: Agriculture

Comments reflected a strong interest in protecting farmland and supporting local agricultural activities. One participant expressed concern about the placement of solar development on farmland, suggesting it be directed toward existing structures such as rooftops. Another comment highlighted an opportunity to expand agricultural visibility and engagement by utilizing Town Park for agricultural events.

Goal 2: Neighborhoods

Feedback emphasized the importance of thoughtful and high-quality community design. A participant encouraged the Town to promote best practices in site and neighborhood design, reinforcing the need for well-planned development patterns.

Goal 3: Economic Development

Feedback in this section highlighted the importance of balancing economic growth with protection of existing community assets, particularly agricultural land. Participants showed strong support for prioritizing reinvestment in existing and underutilized industrial areas rather than expanding into new greenfield sites. This approach was seen as a way to strengthen the local economy while preserving farmland and making efficient use of existing infrastructure.

A comment also noted the need to consider seasonal conditions in site design, specifically highlighting how winter maintenance, such as snow plowing, can impact the usability of sidewalks along corridors like Downer Street.

Goal 4: Transportation and Mobility

Participants suggested replacing traffic signals near the I-690 bridge on Downer Street with roundabouts to improve traffic flow. Others recommended installing flashing pedestrian signals at high-traffic crosswalks, such as Syracuse Street and Marble Street, to enhance safety. Transit service was also identified as a concern, with a comment noting the lack of Centro service during evenings and weekends.

Additional feedback highlighted a strong desire for improved connectivity, particularly through enhanced pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, with multiple participants reinforcing the importance of safety for non-motorized users.

Goal 5: Parks and Recreation

Participants expressed interest in expanding recreational amenities and programming. One comment proposed the development of a skate plaza designed to attract users from a wider region. Additional feedback emphasized the importance of maximizing greenway opportunities in new developments, increasing events at Town Park, and improving access and connectivity to Van Buren Central Park and other recreational areas through walking and biking infrastructure.

Goal 6: Infrastructure

A comment under this goal focused on public health and infrastructure maintenance, recommending that the Town survey water lines for lead.



Goal 7: Community Character and Quality of Life

Environmental stewardship was a key theme in this section. Participants suggested creating programs to identify and manage invasive species, particularly knotweed, and noted how such species can spread through construction activities. Another comment emphasized the importance of thoughtful tree planting, including selecting appropriate species and prioritizing native plantings.

Goal 8: Natural Resources

Comments in this section highlighted the connection between environmental practices and agriculture. One participant encouraged the use of best management practices to prevent soil erosion. Another suggested better coordination between agricultural and environmental goals, particularly in addressing invasive species.

The workshop adjourned at 7:45pm.

Next Steps

- Draft Comprehensive Plan
- Committee Meeting #6
 - Draft Plan Review
 - Recommendation to Town Board
- Town Board
 - Begin SEQR Process