

# CITY OF SARATOGA SPRINGS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

## MEETING SUMMARY

**Purpose:** Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC) Meeting #15  
**Date and Time:** June 2, 2014  
**Location:** City Recreation Center Community Room, 15 Vanderbilt Avenue  
**Attendees:** See attached Sign-In

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action
<p><b>Item #1</b> <b>Welcome</b></p>	<p>The Committee Chair welcomed everyone. No comments have been received from non-present Committee members.</p>	
<p><b>Item #2</b> <b>Public Comment on Agenda</b></p>	<p>Comment #1: The proposed RN-1 land use designation would allow small neighborhood scale commercial. This would devalue numerous properties around City. Do not want noise, traffic. Don't ignore City's wishes. A lot of residential areas in neighborhood and existing businesses are grandfathered in. Leave well enough alone.</p> <p>Comment #2: Greenbelt has many benefits as is, attracts tourists, environmental protections, wildlife habitat, natural rural beauty. It is a conservation development area, not meant for tourism, commercial. Development should work <i>with</i> conservation. Ecosystem is important, easy to forget because it is silent. Forest, meadows, wetlands. Maintain hydrologic cycles, carbon sequestration, waste processing. Ecosystems fragile, susceptible to even passive recreation. But provide real benefits. Provides valuable services for free, that we can't provide ourselves. Don't dismiss these services because we don't understand them.</p> <p>Comment #3: Urge not to adopt policy and not to allow greater density in greenbelt. City policy directs denser development in core, works well. Guardians of City in the Country</p>	<p>Keep in mind when discussing and revising land uses and draft Comp Plan</p>

	<p><b>Comment #4:</b> Lives in friendly safe quiet neighborhood, Beekman Street revitalization a bonus. Likes being close to action, but not in it. Beekman St. has not gone as planned. Vacant places in Beekman, downtown, Route 9. So why is there a need to convert residential to commercial? Keep neighborhoods quiet and safe. Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell.</p> <p><b>Comment #5:</b> Bought residential to be surrounded by residential, do not want houses converted to commercial uses. Against more density. Has been interviewing neighbors, no one wants to change from residential.</p> <p><b>Comment #6:</b> Beekman St. was rundown and vacant in the past. It was mixed use with 49 mom and pop services. Rezoning to residential didn't make any sense. Commercial turned it into run down multi-family housing. Commercial uses are the eyes and ears of the neighborhood. Police calls went from 800 calls a year to 80. Young people want to live in mixed use area, want to walk to shops, restaurants. Beekman St hasn't had a meeting in 8 years.</p> <p><b>Comment #7:</b> Appreciates what we're doing with the Plan. Keep neighborhoods residential. Loves things that have happened to improve Beekman area. Make the land use designation "Historic Residential Neighborhood." Take "Core" out of it. Don't want mixed use in neighborhood.</p> <p><b>Comment #8:</b> Last week, CPC allowed Beekman to keep residential status, but didn't mean anything. "Core" means downtown, commercial. Name "Historic Residential Neighborhoods 1 &amp; 2". Includes 1200 properties. Remove "Commercial uses may exist"; it is not in current Comp Plan. Do not approve density bonuses. These things eliminate neighborhood.</p> <p><b>Comment #9:</b> Concern about greenbelt; it is still a belt, please do not change language. Thinks most businesses in the Chamber would support keeping it. Keep "belt" both physically and as the name.</p>	
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	<p><b>Comment #10:</b> Owns Saratoga National. Wants to keep it green. Density doesn't have as much to do with environmentally sensitive things. Currently PUD not allowed in zone, but this is the mechanism to come up with a creative way to handle environmental details. Greenbelt isn't land use. It needs to be clear what property owner can do with property. It is confusing now with overlays and terminology. Difficult for average person to understand. Wants to advance projects AND be sustainable.</p> <p><b>Comment #11:</b> Requested new language for Parks &amp; Recreation designation in May; believes new category is appropriate. Proposed project includes spa, golf course, recreation trails. Has proposal for zoning amendment before council. PUD's are MORE strict than current standards (would only develop 20%, 80% open space). PUD provides flexibility for City, economic development, and sustainability.</p> <p><b>Comment #12:</b> Westside neighborhoods, nervous because of Beekman St. proposal. If had been approved, would be commercialized area. Wording says all the right things, but devil lies in detail. Term "may exist" opens up possibility of commercial, potential threat. Could be misinterpreting but onerous. Does not want to see repeat of Beekman St.</p> <p><b>Comment #13:</b> Chose to live here for walkability, restaurants, grocery stores and invested in Beekman St. area. If was looking for something strictly residential, would have looked at suburbia. Has seen Beekman St. flourish, very much in support of Core Neighborhoods concept.</p> <p><b>Comment #14:</b> Beekman St. association president. Lots of CPC meetings and activity in the past month and half, but hasn't been able to be here since March. Used to be thriving, mixed use, mom and pops, and Stewart's ice cream started on that street. Some flourish, some move out. Want to be arts based home, first and foremost: "Arts, Food, Culture." Grassroots effort. Unfortunately a lot of comments seem to be from people who moved there in the past year and are very nervous. Supports the Core</p>	
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	<p>Neighborhood concept, and supports activity node concept. This area has been mixed use for a century. Efforts made over last decade have rejuvenated it.</p> <p>Comment #15: Requesting proposed land use designation change for 166 acres on plateau at 460 Crescent Avenue. It was rezoned in 2001 and 2003 from MDR-1 to RR-1. This change reduced density, asking to please rezone portion of it back to MDR-1. Would donate 83 acres to City which would provide access to Saratoga Lake, Lake Lonely. Just asking for interior portion to be changed.</p> <p>Comment #16: The whole plateau where the farm is has changed; it's right next to quarter acre lots. There are million dollar homes on these lots. Plateau and Lake Lonely form natural boundary.</p> <p>Comment #17: In favor of mixed use zoning, four letters of support from neighbors.</p>	
<p><b>Item #3 Administrative Items</b></p>	<p>Disclosures were made from:</p> <p>Devin – member on the Saratoga County Trails Committee</p> <p>Charles – member of Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce and Saratoga Economic Development Corporation (SEDC)</p>	<p>None</p>
<p><b>Item #4 Future Land Use – Geographic Focus Areas Discussion</b></p>	<p>MJ went through each proposed land use designation and definitions and solicited feedback from the Committee. It was noted the proposed land use names were created to be more descriptive of the allowed uses and character (as opposed to “residential-1”).</p> <p>The Committee decided to begin with the geographic focus areas discussion.</p> <p><b><u>SARATOGA NATIONAL</u></b></p> <p>Currently, the Saratoga National area is shown as CDD.</p> <p>A CPC member expressed concern that a change in designation would open the greenbelt to weakening.</p> <p>The CDD language from the zoning ordinance was read, which mentions recreation although it was probably meant in the context of Open Space. Consider adding modifier, “outdoor” open space?</p>	<p>Consultants to make changes as discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rename CN-1, CN-2 and CN-3 from “Core Neighborhood” to “<b>Core Residential Neighborhood</b>” (CRN)</li> <li>• Show additional Yaddo area, east of Northway, as <i>Intuition</i> (currently CDD)</li> <li>• Show Yaddo area, north of Union, as <i>Equine</i>, (currently</li> </ul>

	<p>The request from public was to change the CDD designation to “Recreational Tourism” which they provided language for. This would align most with the proposed “Parks and Recreation” (PR) designation.</p> <p>A member noted that the proposal is more like the current State Park which includes spa little theater, golf course, SPAC, tennis courts, trails, hospitality. Can’t even see those uses from the road. State Park provides and is important to community. Saratoga National is also proposing a good and it won’t detract from downtown.</p> <p>Majority of offerings at spa are free, and have been there since 1930. Historic use versus new use. Grounds are essentially completely wide open and for public use. Doubt Saratoga National will be free for all to use. The proposal before the CPC isn’t to <i>do</i> the project, it’s to allow for PUD’s in greenbelt. We can’t review here whether we like they’re project or whether they’re allowed to do it. If we allow PUD’s, we open ourselves to anyone in the greenbelt over 100 acres.</p> <p>A member suggested designating it PR instead.</p> <p>If you look at a map, you can see there are pre-existing uses. Could we place activity node there because it’s an existing resource. Need to provide something that gives them more flexibility.</p> <p>Look at how land is being used, and how we want it to be used. Let zoning decide what can actually be done.</p> <p>Creates sustainability for City’s tax base. Spa State Park is free but doesn’t pay taxes. Saratoga National pays taxes. Racino and other businesses could leave, this is an opportunity to offset and plan for.</p> <p>It was noted the Committee is not discussing specific projects, but changes in land use which will perhaps guide zoning change (or not). There are multiple steps involved in a zoning change.</p> <p>Area has evolved tremendously last 10-15 years, need to give future direction.</p> <p>SPAC is not free. If someone proposed what is there today, they’d get laughed at. Most institutional uses don’t pay taxes and 80-85% of taxes fund schools. It is very important to allow the tax base to grow. When the land originally sold at auction, the use was likely going to be high density residential. We are <i>lucky</i> it turned into a golf course. It is crucial for businesses to reinvest in their business for it to grow, and increase tax base. We need</p>	<p>Intuitional)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a new designation, <i>Core Residential Neighborhood-3</i>, for the pocket of HDR-3 (near High Rock)</li> <li>• Change waterfront area near the 9P bridge and entrance to the City to <i>Specialty Gateway</i> (currently CMU).</li> <li>• Change the thin strip behind the Route 50 Price Chopper Plaza to <i>Core Residential Neighborhood-1</i> (previously IND)</li> <li>• Change the small pocket near Cherry Street and Division Street to <i>Core Residential Neighborhood-1</i> (previously CC)</li> <li>• Change the area south of the High School, on either side of Congress Street, to <i>Core Residential Neighborhood-1</i> (previously INST)</li> <li>• City Attorney looking into if East and West Side Recreation parks are designated park land. If they are, change to <i>Parks and Recreation</i>.</li> </ul>
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	<p>to accommodate to preserve greenbelt, but also expand tax base. We can't not allow for expansion at all.</p> <p>They said 6,000 people have left golfing in past year. Let them diversify.</p> <p>In the PR designation, don't know what "recreational tourism" is. Means, hotel, meeting space, retail restaurant? If we allow their proposal, we will allow for commercial uses that are in direct competition with downtown. Very dangerous precedent; starts walking down the road of how to help businesses make money. It's not our responsibility to make sure that they make profit. In every other land use designation, we listened to the people (Beekman St., Route 50). What about all the people who spoke about this area?</p> <p>For 40 years citizens have fought to keep City in Country and received awards. Could have had 5 hotels, opened flood gates and lost it all. There are sensitive wetlands, this is a major gateway.</p> <p><b>Todd made a motion for a "Parks and Recreation" designation for the Saratoga National area. Jim seconded it.</b></p> <p>But what does that designation mean?</p> <p>Agrees, we need to look at definition. But we also need discussion on allowance of PUDs and what that means. That is probably a better way to handle this [as opposed to changing to P&amp;R designation]. Maintain City in Country. No one would say State Park is bad place, even as it has grown and expanded; it is high intensity.</p> <p>Spa Park, does <i>not</i> compete; brings in business. Competition is an unfounded fear.</p> <p>From working on PUDs, knows it is such a transparent process. Everyone is involved: councils, land use boards. It is actually the most restrictive review/process.</p> <p>PUDs are negotiated land use. PUDs are dangerous, developer thinks "can't touch me" because of investments made. This doesn't happen in form based code. Allows mixed use.</p> <p>But that's <i>if</i> they get the approval. Can be voted down.</p> <p>Goes through public process, ultimately gets decided by elected officials.</p> <p>The hospital PUD is an example of a successful PUD.</p> <p>PUDs allowed, but not encouraged. Zoning does not</p>	
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	<p>allow in CDD because of environmentally sensitive areas. Many PUD's are approved long before they're actually built. Then its build and costs a lot for City to put in infrastructure.</p> <p>We need definitions; need level of comfort.</p> <p>Allow PUD in CDD, so it still has to go through rigorous approval process. Help to get all the protection people want.</p> <p>A lot of communities use PDD (Saratoga is PUD). Allows for a mix of uses that other districts don't allow for, usually large parcels.</p> <p>Creating custom zone for area, must be looked at in entirety. All aspects have to be studied and signed off on. Substantial amount of control. Best protection for concerns out there.</p> <p>Isn't allowing PUD's in all of CDD the antithesis of "comprehensive planning"?</p> <p>Increases intensity of uses.</p> <p>Average PUD costs \$300,000-\$400,000.</p> <p>[The definition of a PUD was read aloud.]</p> <p>Is that inclusive enough to apply to what's at the State Park? Do we need examples?</p> <p>Expand on definition to say existing uses in State Park allowed. Include golf courses, outdoor ice rinks, dance academy, police department, Spa Little theater.</p> <p>Nervous about using Spa State Park as model/example since we don't have control over it.</p> <p>Whatever we show on map gets translated into zoning and is an act of the City Council.</p> <p><i>If</i> Future Land Use Map gets translated to zoning, specific uses will be allowed.</p> <p>PUDs, regardless of underlying zoning, requires additional act by legislature.</p> <p>Most communities don't have a prohibition of PUD's in a specific zone.</p> <p>It was clarified the discussion of the Saratoga National area includes 560 acres.</p> <p><b>Back to Todd's motion that is currently on the table to designate the Saratoga National area as "Parks and Recreation":</b></p>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>5 in favor</b></li> <li>• <b>7 not in favor</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Motion does <i>not</i> pass</b></p> <p><b>Sonny move to allow for PUDs in all of the CDD, with extensive environmental review.</b></p> <p>Should we amend motion to change Saratoga National area to CDD-1 and allow PUDs only in CDD-1?</p> <p>Could that spark a legal dispute?</p> <p>Why are we spending all this time on one proposal?</p> <p>This area is not the last beacon of hope, tons of places to develop. We are not listening to all the folks who have come out and voiced opinions and concerns.</p> <p>Tony noted that a PUD is an amendment to the zoning ordinance and a legislative act for the City Council. Amendments are legislative acts, not committee acts.</p> <p>Do we need a definition of CDD-1?</p> <p>CDD-1 is CDD without the prohibition of PUDs</p> <p>Suggests leaving all CDD, make an Action Item in the Comp Plan to have the City Council consider removing prohibition of PUDs.</p> <p>Wants to strengthen CDD definition.</p> <p><b>Devin seconded Sonny’s motion on the table to allow for PUDs in all of the CDD, with extensive environmental review.</b></p> <p><b>Sonny revised motion to remove prohibition of PUDs from CDD area, in form of Action in Community Character section of Comp Plan</b></p> <p><b>Devin seconded Sonny’s revised motion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>5 in favor</b></li> <li>• <b>7 not in favor</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Motion does <i>not</i> pass</b></p> <p><b>Theresa made a motion that the 560 acres and other parcels remain designated as CDD in Future Land Use map.</b></p> <p>Tom handed out his suggested, revised definition of CDD.</p> <p>Let’s table until next time, give us time to digest everything. This is pretty heavy duty.</p> <p>Committee still wants to discuss now.</p> <p>For tonight’s discussion, disregard all figures [density</p>	
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numbers].

**Jamin motioned to table definition discussion.**

**The Committee all agreed and moved on.**

**Lake Avenue Area (between East Ave and downtown)**

No change

**Crescent and Jefferson Area**

There is a DEC mapped wetland there.

Should we make CMU? CDD? EQ?

Leave as is for now.

**HDR-3 pocket near High Rock**

Suggested adding a Core Residential-3 (CR-3) designation. This would have the same definition as CN-1 and CN-2, but a higher density.

**Waterfront area near 9P Bridge/Saratoga Lake**

Suggested changing from Core Mixed Use (CMU) to Specialty Gateway (SG) The Committee agreed to this.

**Northern tip of Yaddo, north of Union Ave**

Change to Equine, has historically been used for horse shows, track uses, etc.

**YMCA**

Keep YMCA as Core Mixed Use (CMU)? The Committee said yes.

**Industrial area at Aletta St. (behind Rt 50 Price Chopper Plaza)**

Change entire area to CN-1.

**Area near Cherry St. and Division Street (old Allerdice)**

Currently Commercial Core. Change to Core Neighborhood-1 (CN-1) to reflect current and future use better.

**East Side and West Side Recreation areas**

Keep Institutional, as is, or change to Parks and Recreation?

If dedicated park lands, change to PR. (City Attorney will look into)

<p><b>Item #5</b> <b>Next Steps</b></p>	<p>Next Meeting will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of definitions</li> <li>• New map that reflects changes discussed today</li> <li>• Country overlay discussion</li> </ul> <p>CPC will work through the next few weeks. A public hearing will be held early September.</p> <p>We will continue using the Meeting Wizard to set up CPC meetings and ensure at least nine members can be present.</p>	<p>Consultant to make revisions to Future Land Use Map</p>
<p><b>Item #6</b> <b>Public Comments</b></p>	<p>Comment #1: Hopes to add request to agenda, regarding parcel on plateau. Oksana hit the nail on the head when she asked, “So what are we going to do, rezone without asking property owner?” This is what happened to this property. Asking to correct a mistake; can’t find anything in records of why changes were made during last Comp Plan creation. Property owner will give 83 acres. A rezone would make area consistent with surrounding MDR-1 area.</p> <p>Comment #2: Very concerned with commercial areas allowed in residential areas. What is your thinking? Do you want to live next door to a “mom and pop” store? That is a pipe dream; they can’t compete with big box. Commercial is an eyesore.</p> <p>Comment #3: [Regarding area on plateau] Donation will give almost 1 mile of waterfront to City. There is a need for affordable housing in Saratoga. Don’t know where you’re going to put it in the City.</p> <p>Comment #4: First time mentioning complimentary commercial use neighborhoods. It is farfetched to say it would be illegal not to allow. How many lawsuits have there been in past 15 years? Grandfather in any existing commercial and proposed commercial must be special use permit, as it is now. Signed petition a petition that aims to maintain neighborhood, which current zoning protects. The Chair’s vision is different than the residents.</p> <p>Comment #5: Confused about process; didn’t know Beekman St. would be discussed at the last meeting.</p>	<p>None</p>

	<p>Comment #6: Strongly supports mixed use in Beekman St. area and other similar neighborhoods. Currently works there and will soon be living there. Wants to walk places. It is creatively and uniquely mixed use. Continue to develop sensibly in that manner.</p> <p>Comment #7: Thanked CPC for services, and thanked City staff. Didn't know what Beekman St. proposal meant and doesn't understand why renaming with "Core." Ambiguity about complimentary commercial uses. House next to me is a Laundromat; don't think Beekman St. proposal had that in mind. Going to have hundreds of people upset. May not happen, but did happen on Beekman St. and people are nervous it will happen again.</p> <p>Comment #8: Six to seven neighbors [of Saratoga National area] on Lake Lonely did all their development under PUD. Any restriction placed on Saratoga National's land imposes a taking.</p>	
<p><b>Additional CPC Discussion</b></p>	<p>Can we get the original contract with MJ from the City? Feels like they have been asked to do way more than ever anticipated. And they are a member of Saratoga Chamber of Commerce.</p> <p>All for doing it up front. If scope changed, they should be entitled to more compensation. If City isn't going to do it, we should step up and do something about it.</p>	

This meeting summary conveys our understanding of the items discussed and agreements reached at this meeting. Please forward any additions, corrections and/or questions to my attention.

Submitted by:

Jaclyn Hakes / Sarah Quandt  
 MJ Engineering and Land Surveying, P.C.  
 cc: City Planning Staff, CPC, File





**City of Saratoga Springs  
Comprehensive Plan Update**

**Meeting #15  
June 2, 2014, 6:00 - 8:30 pm  
City Recreation Center Community Room**

*Please Sign In*

Name	Affiliation	Address	Email
John Ellis	Resident	2 Callaghan Dr Ss	
Suzanne Krasniowski	Resident	126 White St.	