

Town of Red Hook Comprehensive Plan - Steering Committee
Meeting Minutes
July 22, 2025 7:30-9:00pm
Red Hook Town Hall

In Attendance

Committee: Agatha Bacelar, Dennis Kanuk, Jennifer Mañon, Hart Migdal, Ben Shute, Julia Solomon (Chair), Doug Strawinski

Liaisons: Christine Kane (Liaison, Red Hook Town Board), Melkorka Kjarval (Liaison, Village of Red Hook)

Guests: Eric Pierson (Pattern for Progress), Amanda Wild (NYS Department of State)

Regrets

Laurie Husted, Chuck Mead, Sam Phelan, Tricia Reed, Taun Toay (Liaison, Bard College)

Updates

The community engagement plan has been finalized and will be distributed to the committee. The consultants have begun interviews with key community stakeholders and will continue these throughout the summer. A protocol is being developed for Kitchen Table Conversations. A description for the Community Engagement Subcommittee has been developed and will be circulated to the committee. Thanks to steering committee members who shared ideas of individuals and groups to engage.

Preliminary Presentation – Existing Conditions Data

Eric from Pattern for Progress presented preliminary data about the characteristics of the Town of Red Hook. Topics included:

- Demographics
- School Enrollment
- Income & Housing
- Agriculture & Open Space

Smart Growth Activity

Amanda Wild from the New York State Department of State (project funder) led a discussion activity around the core Smart Growth principles, which are:

- Develop plans and land use regulations that allow for and encourage mixed-use neighborhoods.
- Enable a diverse mix of housing types, providing opportunity and choice for all.
- Encourage compact neighborhood design and concentrated development around existing infrastructure.
- Prioritize infill and redevelopment of existing buildings to revitalize neighborhoods and downtowns, including areas around public transit.

- Preserve open space, agricultural resources, and natural resources.
- Promote climate resiliency and adaptation, preferably through nature-based solutions, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Prioritize transportation options such as walking, cycling, and public transportation.
- Provide well-planned, equitable, and accessible public spaces.
- Build on unique traits to create an attractive and welcoming community with a strong sense of place.
- Engage in an inclusive, collaborative public planning process that considers the needs and character of the community.

Committee members considered the following questions:

- *Describe your community and how it has or has not changed in the past 30 years.*
- *Are there areas in your community that support a mixture of uses within walking distance in the same neighborhood or within buildings, such as residential and commercial uses together?*
- *Are there neighborhoods where it's difficult to access day-to-day necessities?*
- *What neighborhoods in your community support different housing types, such as apartments, townhomes, and single-family homes?*
- *Does the community allow for and support a range of housing that is accessible, affordable, and available for people at different income levels and ages?*
- *What are the most compact areas in your community?*
- *Where is new development happening in your community?*
- *Are there underutilized or abandoned spaces within developed areas of your community that could better be used? For instance, are there vacant lots where buildings used to stand, buildings that have sat vacant, or underutilized parking lots?*
- *How would new development impact open spaces, agricultural lands, and natural resources in your community?*
- *What are the areas that are most important to protect?*
- *What major weather events, such as heavy snow, flooding, tornadoes, extreme heat, drought, etc. have affected your community and how?*
- *Are there areas in your community that are particularly susceptible to damage from a major weather event?*
- *How do people without cars get places safely within your community?*
- *What would encourage you to walk, bike, and use public transit more within your community?*
- *What kinds of community gathering spaces or public spaces exist in your community? How are those spaces used and by whom?*
- *Do these spaces serve all members of your community?*
- *What are the strongest characteristics about your community? What makes your community unique?*

- *Are there public artworks, gathering spaces, views, or landmarks that are particularly treasured by community members and visitors?*
- *What community engagement activities have been successful in your community?*
- *What community members or groups have been historically difficult to reach or otherwise absent from community planning discussions?*

Next Steps

Prior to the next meeting, the final community engagement plan and community engagement subcommittee description will be circulated to the steering committee.

The August meeting will focus on community engagement plans.