

Masterplan 2025: Keeping Clarence-like Clarence!

Over the next six months members of the Town Board, Zoning Department and the Planning Board will be gathering at Town Hall to work on Master Plan 2025. Master plan 2025 will replace Masterplan 2015, which is the guiding document that governs all building and zoning changes in the Town of Clarence. The public will be invited into Town Hall on several occasions over the next several months for their input on the changes as well. According to Planning Board Chairman Robert Sackett, “ Master plan **2025**, when completed, will be a document that will determine community goals and aspirations for the town of Clarence in terms of community development. In particular, the outcome of our current comprehensive planning process will be a document which will dictate public policy in terms of transportation, utilities, land use, recreation, and housing.”

After reading the surveys that you all so kindly sent in last April, May and June I realize that the **majority of people in Clarence want Clarence to stay just the way it is**. Not to become another Amherst, but to keep that rural, farm based, county feel that so defines Clarence and separates us from our more urban neighbors. With that in mind, let's take a look at an amended version of the current draft of Masterplan 2025 and see what goals your elected officials and planners have in mind...

1. The most important goal is to preserve and protect the rural character of the Town.

After Master Plan 2015 was officially adopted, work began on updates which were consistent with Master Plan 2025 goals. These code updates included comprehensive Zoning Laws that preserved protected agricultural zoning classifications as well as the density flood zone to minimize the risk to property from flood damage. The comprehensive Subdivision Law was amended to protect the open spaces of the community by not allowing for unregulated growth without public sewer access. The focus of both pieces of legislation put a high priority on open space and natural feature preservation. The Town will continue the Greenprint Program, which is funded by the Open Space Bond Act, to acquire valuable lands for long term preservation. Actions to preserve and protect open space and natural areas should continue as the community grows. In reviewing new projects that induce growth, the Town should always have an eye to overall Master Plan 2025 goals, primarily open space preservation as well as recreation amenities and neighborhood connectivity.

There are currently 9 major goals of Masterplan 2025, and I will detail each one of them in the coming weeks. My thanks to the staff of the Zoning Department-especially **Jim Callahan, Jonathan Bleuer and Planning Board Chairman Robert Sackett** - for their help with this article.

Should you have any questions or positive comments, feel free to call, email dhartzell@clarence.ny.us or stop by my office at Town Hall. My door is always open!