

**Pittsford Neighbors** – “From the Supervisor” column – March, 2019 issue  
**Submitted by Pittsford Town Supervisor Bill Smith**

## **Town Comprehensive Plan Nearing Completion**

On January 28 we held a public workshop for the Town’s Comprehensive Plan update. In addition to publicizing the workshop in our eNews, on our Town website and social media sites and on the Comprehensive Plan website, we took the extra step of sending a notice by first class mail to every household in Pittsford. I’m pleased to say our outreach plan succeeded, yielding a good turnout and very engaged participation. So many participants complimented the Town and our consultants for the format of the meeting, which gave every participant an equal voice in providing their view on each aspect of the draft Comprehensive Plan.

The advice and recommendations of Pittsford residents at our previous public workshops was central to the work of our Citizens Steering Committee for the Comprehensive Plan and to our consultants for this project, Bergmann Associates, in framing and working out a draft Plan for public review. It provided the basis for everything to follow. The January 28 workshop provided the benefit of your views, in detail, on the specific goals and actions stated in the draft Plan.

In order to employ every means reasonably possible to encourage public participation, in July 2015 the Town set up a separate website dedicated exclusively to the Comprehensive Plan. Since then this website has enabled residents to submit information and ideas online, providing us with the recommendations and insights of those who couldn’t attend the public workshops. This website remains in place – you can find the draft Comprehensive Plan and other information there at [www.pittsfordplan.com](http://www.pittsfordplan.com). The draft plan can be found under the "News" or "Project Resources" links.

The Comprehensive Plan website also has a place where you can provide comments online about the plan. If you couldn’t make it the recent public workshop, please look over the draft plan online and send us your comments.

A comprehensive plan provides a vision for the future development of a community. New York State Town Law provides that a comprehensive plan shall “...serve as a basis for land use regulation, infrastructure development and public and private investment, and any plans which may detail one or more topics of a comprehensive plan.”

Consequently, a comprehensive plan includes statements of policies and goals whose purpose is to shape future growth in the Town and describes the steps to accomplish the goals. It constitutes the legal basis for a municipality’s zoning laws, their revision and application. With a focus on land-use planning, it inevitably touches on related matters. For example, the draft comprehensive plan for Pittsford contains a future land use plan, and sections on community character, including residential development, mixed-use and commercial development, design standards, streetscapes, scenic corridors and areas in the Town, historic resources, the canal front, agriculture, natural resources and environmentally-conscious infrastructure. It considers open-space management, managing traffic, pedestrian safety, promoting healthy living through recreational opportunities and environmentally-friendly practices.

It’s important to understand the difference between a comprehensive plan and the zoning laws. The two are conceptually related, but separate. A comprehensive plan provides broad guidance and recommendations on how land-use planning can address the needs and goals of the community. Zoning ordinances regulate land uses as recommended by the plan.

The Town's consultants for the project, Bergmann Associates, have told us that it's very unusual in their experience for a municipality to do direct mailings to every household in order to encourage public participation in comprehensive planning. We've done it for every public workshop.

Together with our other efforts to engage our residents for this purpose -- the dedicated Plan website, our eNews, Town social media and the Town website, Supervisor's columns and more -- the direct mailings underscore the importance to the Town of obtaining the views of as broad a representation of our community as possible.

The importance of this should be self-evident. It's important as well because, for a comprehensive plan to be truly comprehensive, we need to hear not just from those with passion for a single issue or narrow agenda, however valid and important the subject of either may be. We need to include views broadly representative of the community, including views of residents who have more general interest in the variety of topics involved in a comprehensive plan.

If you haven't already done so, please do share your thoughts with us about the future development of our community.

Once Bergmann Associates tabulates the results from the January 28 Public Workshop, the Citizens Committee will reconvene, to complete the final draft for submission to the Town Board for approval. The Town Board then will hold two public hearings on the Plan before voting on it. Dates and times for the hearings will be announced in the months ahead.

Should you have any comments about our Comprehensive Plan, or any other topic, as always you may reach me directly by phone at 248-6220 or by email at [bsmith@townofpittsford.org](mailto:bsmith@townofpittsford.org). As ever, my door is open and I answer my own phone. Let me know what *you* think!