



## City of New Rochelle Comprehensive Plan Update

September 28, 2015  
7:00 – 9:00 pm  
Montefiore Hospital, Auditorium, 29 Glover Place

### BREAKOUT SESSION NOTES

*Compiled by the Land Use Law Center*

#### CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION & VISION

*This chapter was not covered during a breakout session but we received written comments on our handout.*

##### Write-in Comments:

- “Why is there no Spanish “outreach” material? Thirty Percent of the population is Spanish speaking! Ten percent focus seems to have greatest impact! Why? Are the big box high rises part of the GreenNR?”



## CHAPTER 2: REGIONAL CONTEXT & HISTORY

*This chapter was not covered during a breakout session but we received written comments on our handout.*

### **Write-in Comments:**

- Invest/improve/enhance existing architecture and open spaces throughout the city i.e. train station
- It would be useful if train platforms had arched canopies like they have in Europe to protect the platforms as well as the passengers from the elements. The present train station should also be moved somewhere else, like Ward Acres for example.
- The old train station at Ward Acres can be repurposed into something like a coffee shop or a museum.
- Is “moving back to cities close to NYC a real, well defined trend? I Envision empty “high-rises”
- Concerned about doing both. Less interested in growth than in investing in/improving/enhancing what we have. I love repurposing existing spaces over building new. Many loyal community members have worked hard to keep the city alive. Not thrilled about big money parachuting in to explain how becoming a different, ‘more attractive’ city for other people is the answer.
- There must be sensitivity to how development and zoning have negatively impacted communities of color throughout the United States. To not address that history is to replicate it. Federal and State policies are often worked to reinforce and formalize racial and class-based segregation. IF that is not addressed, it will happen in NR on a wider scale and it will kill the diversity that makes this city special. Tread carefully because the fact it has taken this long to get a commitment for Spanish language material indicates that the process has been segregated/exclusive from the beginning.
- The present train station needs to be jacked up. Placed on a flatbed truck and moved somewhere else, ward acres, for example. It should be replaced by a Stamford Style train station to make better access to downtown development. This will create more room for commuters indoors during bad weather and room for more amenities. There should be a central “village green” Where city employees congregate to celebrate and enjoy performances. The center should have a performance space built into it. You should build incentive zoning codes to create rooftop parks where practical – extend of roof more enjoyable for those who use buildings. Incentivize establishments that stay open late at every intersection like Huguenot and North and Main.

## CHAPTER 3: POPULATION & HOUSING

*Facilitator: Simon Kates (BFJ)*

*Recorder: Marisa Michaelsen (LULC)*

### Comments from Facilitation:

- Most Important:
  - Affordability
  - Single Family Homes
- Statistics renters pay of their income (60%)
- Concerned about 90/10 ratio and who it will benefit
- Any development in low income/minority neighborhoods, conduct environmental studies to track negative impacts
- Add language to plan for diversity and racial/economic equality (support)
- Distinguish between low income, median income, high income for affordable housing for all
- Should be broader than physical planning
  - Ex. Community well-being/health/education/Quality of Life
- Neighborhoods are very diverse – have neighborhood meetings for planning
- Heritage homes – Hartley – New developments should not discriminate against criminal records/undocumented people
- Revitalize the town in a way that will not displace current residents
- Clean up storefronts
- Lincoln Ave Corridor/West End – fix streets, clean streets
- Track city services by neighborhood & monitor
  - Ex. GPS on plows for frequency
- How can we incorporate these concerns into comprehensive plan directly
- Up the affordable housing requirement from 10% to 20%
- In Seattle Plan = practices to involve under represented communities in decision making
  - G.S. 1.4 / G.S. 1.6 – Growth Strategy
- Latino community never at any meetings
- How can city attract new people?
- Right now, we are not preparing for growth for the people who are actually coming
- Converting young professionals (college students) to become N.R. residents
- Converting renters to home buyers
  - Assistance for the transition
- Housing opportunities for homeless
  - Tear down Oasis, it is in shambles. Build new one.

### Write-in Comments:

- What housing issues are most important to you in New Rochelle (e.g., preservation, affordability, supply, etc.)?
  - Need new and more lofts to entice younger people to move into the city.
  - Preservation

- There are many apartments but all in one area of the city. The apartments have very little value & haven't bounced back. Many are not owner occupied & therefore people can't get mortgages. No one can buy in.
- Affordability, diversity, reduce segregation, ensure minimal displacement of current residents and ensure that those displaced are provided new housing.
- Avoid increased density.
- What characteristics of New Rochelle's housing stock do you most want to see preserved? What most needs to be changed?
  - No big box buildings and no buildings over 10 floors
  - City needs housing that promotes family life and needs
- What, if anything, should the City do to continue to attract new demographics to New Rochelle, including younger residents?
  - Young residents: 'cooler' vibe, affordable housing, Parking for apartments which is where housing is affordable.
  - Increase affordable housing.
  - Add a theatre space.
  - Have good restaurants and places to 'hang out'. Affordable district (maybe the old existing refurbished) housing.
- Other comments, thoughts, feedback:
  - Why should you be reminded of the large Hispanic population in order to do presentation in Spanish? Are you not aware of or sensitive to this population?
  - Wish the waterfront were more available/promoted.

## CHAPTER 4: LAND USE & ZONING

*Facilitator: Frank Fish (BFJ)*  
*Recorder: Kirsten Yerger (LULC)*

### Comments from Facilitation:

- The entire downtown is historic. Beyond residential areas, better define historic areas or buildings.
  - Emphasis on preserving historic buildings
- Consider re-development as a whole for entire city.
  - Not Downtown alone
- Focus on displacement of residents in Downtown.
- Translate everything into Spanish.
- How is profit from increase value in land distributed? Is it equitably distributed, and what is public benefit?
- Spot zoning doesn't take into account New Rochelle as a whole.
- Keep historic district – upgraded to current standards & amenities and have new development around it.
- Integrated thought – not individual areas.
- Affordable housing in new development
  - Don't have to get rid of cultural neighborhoods and communities
- Details of affordable housing. What is the formula? Income level?
  - Model Ordinance of Westchester County may not be the best. Doesn't mandate a percentage.
- Housing Trust Fund
- Housing needs analysis.
- Income distribution map in Downtown

### Write-in Comments:

- If you were showing a visitor around the City and wanted to tell them the story of New Rochelle, where would you take them and why?
  - Chase Building, Presbyterian Church, Trinity St. Paul's because these are the most historically and architecturally significant buildings
- What places tell a store of New Rochelle's history?
  - Main Street
  - Huguenot Street
  - Churches
  - Post office
  - Tome Paine Cottage
  - Library lawn
  - Division restaurants
  - North Ave. restaurants
- What places show its future?
  - Trump Towers
  - Loft apartments
  - Residential neighborhoods
  - Art galleries

- What parts of New Rochelle do you love the most?
  - Library lawn
  - Local shops on main historic neighborhoods like Rochelle Park/Heights
  - Ward Acres
  - Downtown restaurants
  - Parks
  - Beach
  - Pelham Road neighborhood
  - Lakes, many need attention to trees, water quality / library
- What areas show a part of New Rochelle you would change if you could?
  - North Avenue
  - Main train station
  - Avalon towers
  - Cheap stores downtown
  - Mitigate stark dividing zone between downtown and Iona/Beechmont which was core of Black Community and enhance it, promote it, don't neglect it.
- Name an area, block or street in New Rochelle that should be different ten years from now than it is today. How should it change and why?
  - North Ave. train station to Iona
  - Lincoln Ave axis near City Hall-enhance it, promote it, and do not neglect it
  - North Ave and Main Street: no empty storefronts, no dollar stores, bike lanes.
  - Memorial Drive & Lincoln. Community Center has bars on windows gives a feeling of crime in the area.
- Name one physical thing in New Rochelle that should never change. What does it say about the City's past and its future?
  - Historic Buildings
    - Chase Bank of Main Street
    - Trinity St. Paul's
    - K Building
- Other comments, thoughts, feedback;
  - Pelham Road CNR Monroe are in this area!

## CHAPTER 5: ECONOMY

*Facilitator: Jennie Nolon Blanchard (LULC)*

*Resource Expert: Regina Armstrong (BFJ)*

*Recorder: Justin Grant (LULC)*

### Comments from Facilitation:

- Economic Assets:
  - Bus system
  - Ethnic restaurants (i.e. Mexican restaurant across from CVS)
  - The neighborhood commercial corridors
- Library is very valuable
  - RD wants to give 100k - The Library need to hire a consultant
- We dislike all the car dealerships; they take up too much property
  - e.g. #1 & #6 on map for Economy Group
- WE DON'T LIKE ALL THE CAR DEALERSHIPS!
- New Rochelle needs:
  - A Whole Foods, Trader Joe's, or a fairway (especially where Quaker Ridge is now located)
  - We need to figure out how to better utilize the commercial area.
  - We need more retail stores
  - New Rochelle residents need: Livable wages, more local hires, more minority businesses, protection of Latino business.
    - Most New Rochelle residents do not actually work in New Rochelle
    - \*Adhere to hiring local labor! (The City did not do this with the Lincoln Ave Apartments – “Heritage Homes”)
    - Offer a program of jobs for the formerly incarcerated; this will allow for tax kickbacks from the state/federal government.
    - We have concerns about gentrification & displacement
  - We need a Big Anchor store. We have nowhere to do clothes shopping
  - We need a solid gay community to revitalize downtown. Strengthen this community.
  - New Rochelle needs more schools; 150+ students above projections
- City Hall & Board of Ed should be moved to the middle of downtown – show commitment to the downtown, then repurpose existing city hall space (more shopping)
- City Hall & Board of Ed should *not* be relocated
- The new development plan is scary because of the consequences of the MOU between the developers and City Hall.
- We should stabilize the North Avenue eateries. They are constantly turning over.
- We don't like the questionable zoning with Iona College
- Iona meal plans, are not well regulated enough; the deals the stores have to accept in order to have student meal plans work at their facilities is most likely unfair.
- Parking:
  - Better Parking on North Avenue. The meters are outdated and a waste of City Revenue. Use the Munimeters. Offer free parking after 6pm so people can

- have a nice dinner without having to run out to feed the meter (like every other town in America).
- Our current parking system is antiquated. The use of Meters creates several issues: e.g. maintenance, more meter attendants, etc.
- New Rochelle should follow the rest of Westchester and allow for free parking after 6pm
- Free parking after 6 p.m. so that more people will want to shop and eat in the area which will help the economy
- We don't like the fact that you have to put personal information into the new machines to park

**Write-in Comments:**

- Describe how you utilize the commercial areas of New Rochelle (Downtown as well as neighborhood commercial corridors). What do you like most about these places? What do you think might be improved?
  - Utilize
    - Shop in Main
    - Dine at restaurants
    - Downtown Library
    - Division
    - North Ave.
    - Downtown
    - Wykagyl area
  - What do you think might be improved:
    - More parking
    - Presentation of building structures
    - Make more things worth walking to.
    - Parking is sometimes difficult.
    - Support small business in area, ensuring that they are not displaced by near development.
    - Promote programs such as the BID façade program.
  - Generally more walkable space.
- How does employment in the City impact your life? What would be some strategies to expand employment opportunities for City residents as well as commuters from other areas?
  - More affordable office space
  - More, larger professional firms.
  - Better parking on Division Street.
- What types of economic assets do you use the most in the City? Do neighborhood commercial corridors provide adequate services? What would you change about local retail or commercial districts?
  - Use Most:
    - Restaurants and Stores
  - What would you change:
    - Provide more support for the vendors downtown
    - Add more stores and restaurants downtown

- Provide a supermarket in a better, centralized location
- Other comments: “Small Stores. I Shop at the dollar stores, vegetable market, curtain shop, and restaurants. NR should “establish really small, ethnic restaurant. We have some of the most authentic Peruvian Mexican, Caribbean food in this area, with NO chain restaurants, except Texas Roadhouse.”

## CHAPTER 7: PUBLIC FACILITIES & UTILITIES

## CHAPTER 10: CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES

*Facilitator: Sarah Yackel (BFJ)*

*Recorder: Lenny Cohen (LULC)*

### **Comments from Facilitation:**

- Support and promote public housing facilities
  - Publicly managed
- Why colleges included?
  - Iona is not paying taxes
  - How much do they cost the city?
  - Cost/benefit analysis of public cost vs. public good
  - Can Iona do more to benefit the community?
- Historic churches and cemetery need protection
  - Churches need landmark designation?
  - Role of institutions communicating an agenda
- Library Needs Support
  - Epicenter of community
- Homeless population
- Hope and Oasis
- Diversity of services
- Maps showing city data
  - Clarity of maps and information
  - Easier access
- Water Quality and Sewage
  - Sewers being upgraded in accordance with growth?
  - Sewage backups
  - Eliminate illegal connections
- Cable and Utilities/ Internet Grid
  - Problems with service
- Need a clear determination of what costs and expenses are
  - City budget?
  - City capacity
  - Growth?
  - Impact on police, fire, and hospitals
  - Staffing issues
- Senior facilities
- Boys and Girls Club
- Handicap facilities
- Schools=Vital
  - Taxes
  - Teachers were not included
- Transparency
  - Services for Hispanic population
  - Undocumented immigrants
  - Lack of leadership in school system

- Hispanic community needs to be included
- City website in Spanish
- Process needs to slowdown so the residents can better understand it and have a say
- Free parking?
- Waterfront
- Beach clubs

**Write-in Comments:**

- What role do New Rochelle’s public facilities and large-scale institutions play in the City’s daily life (including city buildings, Montefiore hospital, higher education, and public and private schools)?
  - I think Iona, Monroe, CNR, Montefiore have more impact than we acknowledge. I don’t feel integrated with them. Have them be visible in the city AND encourage us to come there (i.e. gym facilities, cultural programs, open spaces.)
  - The schools, Church, and library are vital to the community.
- Do you ever experience any deficiencies in the City’s utilities network? Is your home protected from stormwater flooding and power outages?
  - Power Outages
  - Fire & Police services are “strained”
  - Have rainwater collection barrels.
  - Pretty good. Con Ed is not responsive. Two garbage pick ups/week is a luxury. We have drainage problems.
- What are the City’s most valuable historic resources? How well are they protected from outsized development or neglect?
  - Perhaps a closer study needs to be done
  - Hudson/Davenport Parks. Residential Parks, Trinity St. Paul’s Church Most seem safe, through some larger homes squeeze Davenport Park and Hudson. Wyldcliff should be saved and developed. Highway, train, and Avalon parking have already queens Trinity St. Paul’s and there is potential RDRXR building immediately adjacent on Huguenot – At least be sensitive.
- Other Comments, thoughts, feedback:
  - Fire and police serves are already “strained”.
  - “Schools - conflict of interest?”

## CHAPTER 8: TRANSPORTATION

*Facilitator: John Nolon (LULC)*  
*Resource Expert: Nina Arron (NR)*  
*Recorder: Alyse Velger (LULC)*

### Comments from Facilitation:

- Bike Lanes
- Parking for businesses
- Concern for Main St becoming 2 way
- Webster Ave – being able to leave driveway
- Like – Metro North Access  
Dislike – Accommodation for people to be inside waiting for train (i.e. Stamford station)
- Train station small, seating only on one side
- Bus network not integrated w/ bee line
- Pinebrook - open lane, good for bikes, helps elderly
- North Ave – dangerous for bikes
- Defined lanes – complete streets
- Lincoln, Webster, Rt. 1 dangerous for bikes
- Bike lanes could cause congestion & hazard
- Like size of city, don't want to rebuild for 11,000 people
- Concern for people influx
- Dangerous to have dark, enclosed parking
- Keep historic feel of train station
- Effort in streets, but not a lot to work with
- Traffic backs up 3-4 blocks on Webster, morning & evening
- Incorporate bikes like Manhattan & Europe – A lot of bike riders
- Cross walk on Lincoln in front of Church
- Move kids walking & biking to school if safe
- Bike lanes protect more than bikers – safe for pedestrians, less traffic, safer
- Main intersection at Huguenot & North very dangerous, traffic fast, hard to park
- Policy for complete streets, not just parts
- Street parking is dangerous & there are lots of empty lots
- Realistic parking spaces for new structures
  - Can't displace people who live here, new places need self-sufficient parking
- Short-term meter parking w/ high turn over is beneficial
- Want more people & business in NR but #1 reason for business closing is lack of parking
- Anti-displacement & growth of businesses
- Walk ability & mixed use areas
- Jobs & money stay in city, local employees, local businesses

### Write-in Comments:

- Does the City's existing transportation system meet your needs (roads, buses, sidewalks, bikeways, etc.)? What parts of the system work best? What parts don't

work so well for you? What improvements, if any, would you make to New Rochelle's transportation network?

- Yes. Good bus and MTA service.
- Need a dedicated bike lanes on major roads to make it safer for bicyclists. Bee Line Bus doesn't connect North End and South – Only 2 busses a day. Would take bus downtown if it was available and convenient. Or a NR shuttle/trolley.
- Yes they meet needs
- There are many gaps in the sidewalks. For example, Shore Rd going to Pelham does not have a sidewalk. It is the only way to get to really nice running/walking paths (East Coast Greenaway). It is VERY dangerous.
- No charge for the parking after 6:00pm (daily). Free parking at trains station to encourage use of mass transit.
- Do you use mass transit (bus or train) in New Rochelle or the surrounding region? What do you think works well with the mass transit system? What might make the experience better?
  - Do you use mass transit?
    - Doesn't use the bus, but uses train if going to NYC.
  - What might make the experience better?
    - BeeLine does not connect North & South ends
    - More busses could be provided for BeeLine (particularly North end)
    - Centralize all mass transit. The bus (Trailways/Adirondack) is not in the same location as the Beeline.
    - Train station is small and inadequate
    - Metro North trains are good. Some areas are well served by Bee-Line Bus – my neighborhood in the North End is not.
    - MTA daily. Good frequent trains and buses, thought Nos. 45 and 60 could run more often and longer hours. Need frequent buses to the Bronx.
- What do you think can be done to improve pedestrian connections in your neighborhood or between the New Rochelle Transit Center and downtown?
  - Create walkways around memorial highway circle
  - Create bike lanes
  - I can walk to any bus or MTA.
- Other comments, thoughts, feedback:
  - It is difficult to commute by bike. Very dangerous roads because there is no room.
  - Bicycle lanes on North and on Huguenot
  - All transit isn't connected. Regional bus (Trailways, Adirondack?) isn't in same place as Bee Line bus terminal. Train station is small & inadequate.

## CHAPTER 9: PARKS, OPEN SPACE & NATURAL RESOURCES

*Facilitator: Gary Sorge (BFJ)*

*Recorder: Rachel Partington (LULC)*

### Comments from Facilitation:

- Sustainability
  - Implement and utilize renewable energy sources
  - Implement water conservation and harvesting practices
  - Not letting increase in population and demand for resources outpace our capacity
  - Implement and maintain strict water quality standards
    - Quality control and inspection of backflow water (eg. explore the banning of toxic products, such as pesticides and fertilizers)
- Public lands
  - Waterfront
    - Use Leif Erickson as a connection to the waterfront
    - Implement an inland waters management enhancement strategy program
    - Restrict waterfront area access to recreational, non-motorized boats only
    - Future of David's Island (David and Goliath)
  - Parks
    - Improve the connectivity between the parks in the area (eg. East Coast Greenway → make improvements to Egg Shore Road, such as make it safer, etc.)
    - Increase programming in the parks themselves for greater utilization of the neighborhood parks (eg. designate and mark off certain areas throughout the parks for recreational activities, dog parks, etc.)
  - Implement a fee structure to access public lands (eg. different fees for resident and non-residents)
  - Incorporate tactical urbanism into planning goals (the community should try to capture underutilized public spaces and transform them into usable spaces)
- Produce and distribute a best practices guide for homeowners

### Write-in Comments:

- Do you utilize the City's open space and recreation assets (parks, playgrounds, etc.)? Are they easy for you to get to? Do they meet your needs?
  - Parks are used and easy to access
  - Parks that are utilized:
    - Hudson Park
    - Library Lawn
    - Pine Brook Parkway
    - Rose Hill
    - Walking areas

- Yes! I love Ward Acres but it is only accessible by car. There are a few parks near apartments on Pelham Road but they are VERY underutilized. There are no dog hours for example. They are beautiful but they don't bring or create community.
  - Yes, walking areas
  - Yes, I use them. Could be a nice big playground downtown.
- Are there any existing open spaces that should be improved? If so, what improvements do you think should be made?
  - A big playground downtown
  - Hudson & Davenport should have dog friendly hours. They should have community gardens to bring people together. They should be free to residents!
  - Hudson Park could be much nicer; a lot of the waterfront is a parking lot & could be made into a nice walkway around the perimeter as part of a bigger shoreline redevelopment plan.
  - Waterfront should be more accessible and natural (vs. concrete slab).
- What do you think are the most significant environmental issues facing New Rochelle today?
  - Aging utilities (i.e. sewers)
  - Power Sources
  - Water quality
  - Water discharge from storm and flooding
  - Developmental issues
- Other comments, thoughts, feedback:
  - Unnecessary structures like brick walls and metal bars in library green should be avoided in favor of plantings, open space, and naturalizing.