

**CLYDE, GALEN AND SAVANNAH  
JOINT COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN**

**COMMUNITY INPUT RECEIVED  
AT PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS  
ON NOVEMBER 17, 19 & 22, 2008**

Public Information Meetings on the Joint Comprehensive Master Plan being prepared for the Village of Clyde and the Towns of Galen and Savannah were held on November 17, 19 and 22, 2008. During the course of each meeting, a Community Visioning Session was conducted to help bring residents together to develop a shared image of “where” they want their community to be in the future.

A series of questions were asked by the facilitator at each meeting to help participants in the process determine the community’s vision of the future. Answers were recorded and will be used to develop goals, objectives and action strategies for the Comprehensive Master Plan. While the Plan is intended to have a regional focus, each public information meeting was somewhat focused on the needs of a specific participating community. The November 17 meeting focused on Clyde, the November 19<sup>th</sup> meeting was oriented to Galen and the November 22 meeting was focused on Savannah.

This report provides a summary of the responses to each question asked during the visioning sessions and is organized by meeting date.

**Question 1: How do you think the community should grow or change?**

November 17

- Growth should be properly managed.
- Increase in tax base is highly desirable.
- Efforts must be made to sustain communities in the area.
- Rehabilitation of homes is highly desirable.

November 19

- Public involvement and motivation are critical
- Do we have to change to grow?
- Preserve the integrity of the community
- Stress jobs, particularly those relating to agriculture

- Businesses and communities have to be more efficient. Changes in business practices are necessary

November 22

- Good comprehensive plan will be a key
- Preservation of farming has to be a priority
- Political change is necessary, particularly in light of shrinking tax base
- Generous Payment-In-Lieu-of-Taxes should be required of other levels of government that take land off local tax roles
- Should pursue the special niches that the local area holds relative to other communities.
- Don't ruin core values of the community
- Implement Downtown Vision study
- Enhance the quality of rural living and other assets such as recreational opportunities (i.e. the "tram" or bus tour of Savannah's unique natural resources)
- Make negatives into positives
- Capitalize on the good qualities of the community
- Promote the area
- Improve the interface between the school and the Audubon Center

## **Question 2: Where should growth occur?**

November 17

- There should be a larger focus than downtown
- Keep farmland intact/ focus growth in Village of Clyde and the hamlet of Savanna
- Keep countryside undeveloped
- Find ways to keep people in the Village
- Privacy and lower taxes are the attractions for rural dwellers
- Tax exemptions and devalued properties are challenges in sustaining the Village
- Average income of the area is low
- The financial cost of high need students is a challenge

November 19

- Growth should occur where investors want it to occur
- Don't dictate location for people or companies who want to come into the community
- A rail site could be most advantageous

November 22

- Growth should occur in and around Savannah and Clyde – where infrastructure exists

- State acquisitions hurt the growth potential of the community particularly in “upland” areas
- State acquisitions in the area increase pressures on other landowners who are subject to increased scrutiny and State initiatives to restore land to its natural state
- Should examine Federal/State plans that set forth a blueprint for future acquisitions for wetland and natural preserves
- Need to stress the quality of life in the community as a means of attracting new growth
- Encouraging the retention, expansion and creation of small businesses is vital for the community
- Concentrate on the niches that can be filled locally as a location for living and for business

### **Question 3: What types of housing are needed?**

November 17

- Rehabilitation programs are needed to increase the value of housing
- Elderly housing may be a need as there are waiting lists
- The elderly population is finding it expensive to stay in their homes but face a poor selling environment
- There is a lack of developable property in the Village and Town (Galen)
- Absentee owners of housing in the area are often a problem as properties are not maintained

November 19

- Affordable housing is costly to the community
- There has to be a return on investment for the housing market to improve

November 22

- Need for quality homes that are affordable
- Taxes are too high in relation to property values
- Identify ways to convert substandard homes into desirable and affordable residences
- Need for property maintenance standards
- Find ways to relate housing resources in the area to the needs of workers and managers of local industries

### **Question 4: What are your transportation, street, and road needs?**

November 17

- Train station in area is desirable

- Commercial bus service would be desirable – had such service at one time
- Wayne County’s WATS service is adequate for area
- Sidewalk improvements are needed in Village
- There is a need to link trails in the area
- Need for bicycle and pedestrian facility improvements
- Better access to the outside would help, i.e. improvements to Rt. 31

November 19

- No transportation issues identified

November 22

- Need enhanced public transportation/ Rt. 31 should be better served, i.e. increased frequency of WATS service
- Towns and Village should lobby County for increased WATS service
- A stop in the area for passenger trains would give a good boost to tourism
- The area needs improved access to other areas

**Question 5: What are the needs for parks, open space and recreational facilities or programs?**

November 17

- Community Center is needed but funding is a major issue
- The community should work closer with the school system to find opportunities for sharing of resources to address recreational needs/Red Creek cited as example
- There is a need for recreational programs but financing is a critical challenge

November 19

- Area well served
- The community is working on programs
- There could be more interaction between programs serving different populations, i.e. swim programs for children and the elderly
- Lack of resources for facilities and programs/ How do you pay for them?

November 22

- Programs needs for children and the elderly
- Facilities and programs are needed, i.e. community center, senior complex, ice rink
- Recreation opportunities in area need to be developed, i.e. canoeing, kayaking, walking trails, bike trails
- Need to improve relationships with NYSDEC on use of State-owned recreational land
- Need to enhance the recreational assets of the area/expand access to State land
- Continue work on 15 mile trail

## **Question 6: How much farmland should be preserved and where? Should there be right-to-farm provisions in land use ordinances?**

November 17

- If you want to control farmland, you should own it
- Should be a prohibition on factory farms

November 19

- There will be fewer operators and larger farms in future
- Amish and Mennonite farmers will have larger presence in the future
- Right-to-Farm provisions are already in place with Agricultural Districts and State legislation
- Agriculture should be promoted as a highly desirable activity in area but the environment must be protected at same time

November 22

- Continue Agricultural exemptions
- Support right-to-farm laws
- State aid formulas should be changed to reflect the needs of rural areas
- State agencies have to be more responsive to local agricultural needs

## **Question 7: What are the community's urgent facility needs, i.e. community centers or expansion of public water systems?**

November 17

- Community infrastructure is aged
- Alternative energy needs – go green
- Solar Roofs, i.e. school
- Consolidation of programs and services

November 19

- Public water expansions
- When surveyed on need for and cost of public water expansions, resident responses are negative

November 22

- Extend public water to unnerved areas
- Combined facilities for young and old, i.e. day care and medical care
- Community/Senior Center
- Public rest rooms/ tie into trails, open-space facilities, Audubon Center, perhaps part of community center
- Farmers Market/Welcome Center – Perhaps tie-in to Potato Festival facilities/Tie in rest rooms
- School for younger students in community (Savannah)

**Question 8: How does community view its need for “downtown” revitalization? What do you want to see in downtown Clyde and/or Savannah?**

November 17

- SPAN is a starting place
- Need more view points
- Be realistic about what can be attracted to area
- Look to the future/ try something different
- Find ways to keep people from shopping elsewhere/stop leakage of local dollars
- There is a poor first impression being made on visitors

November 19

- Few more stores/ small boutiques
- Need commitments for change
- Small market
- Trends working against revitalization
- Research businesses that can survive and grow in the area
- Cost of gas (until recently) may keep shoppers from going outside the community
- Assessment versus value of buildings is a disincentive to redevelopment
- Property improvements result in higher assessments / not an incentive to invest
- Local Development Corporations can be of help / offer incentives to invest

November 22

- Implement plans
- Address challenges of downtown Savannah, i.e. fertilizer factory, Savannah Hotel, etc.
- Need property maintenance standards
- Private Investment Groups may be of use, maybe not
- Work on one building at a time/ create models for other revitalization efforts
- Raise people’s consciousness about the opportunities for improving the community

**Question 9: How does the community view its need for economic development? What types of economic activity would be desirable?**

November 17

- Understand how to make things happen
- Draw upon experience of existing firms and the quality of the work force
- Invest in infrastructure

November 19

- Alternative energy
- Promote the area

- Use Parker Hannifin as example of a company that stayed in the area because of the quality and dedicated workforce / very positive development/ need to spread the word
- Weak infrastructure works against economic development
- Concentrate on what we have / make it better
- Need to promote the area better
- Turn negatives into positives
- Master plan should stress economic development

November 22

- Need for quality work force
- Support local funds
- BOCES and other training programs should mirror employment opportunities
- Taxes, utilities and regulations are challenges to economic development
- A municipally-owned utility may reduce energy costs and would be a draw for new industry
- Alternative Energy

**Question 10: How does the community view protection of sensitive environmental areas such as wetlands? Should such areas be expanded?**

November 17

- Environmental assets of area are a draw for tourists
- Wetlands are important assets
- The canal is a draw to the area / rewatering and clean-up of the prism is happening in various areas
- The area's environmental resources are being protected but have to watch for threats

November 19

- Environmental resources are vital to the area's future/need to capitalize on these resources
- Protection of environmental resources does have some negative impacts on the area's tax base
- Accidental creation of wetlands is a concern

November 22

- Area's resources being adequately protected

**Question 11: What land use or zoning issues are of current concern in the community?**

November 17

- Abandoned homes are an issue / legal challenges
- There should be no reopening of a dump in Galen
- Wetlands and DEC are an issue

- Floodplains / inconsistent delineation and interpretation of boundaries by the Corp of Engineers is a problem
- Wetland rules are an issue

November 19

- Lack of zoning ordinance leaves Savannah with no leverage in addressing potential problems with land use

November 22

- Moratorium on development in effect in Savannah/ draft of law establishing zoning board has been drafted
- Need orderly procedures to address land use compatibility concerns
- Savannah currently has minimal or no protections
- Community should be protected against excessive wildlife restoration programs and wetlands expansion
- In some cases, there is too much wildlife in the area
- Private hunting/fishing clubs are welcome
- Continues State acquisition of land is a major concern

## **Question 12: Are there special concerns about property taxes and community finances?**

November 17

- Taxpayer base shrinking while service demands grow
- Need more efficiencies or less services
- Need to find ways to create revenues

November 19

- Work on plan/work with media on understanding tax situation/insist that media be responsible in reporting on tax issues
- Galen/Clyde need to meet
- Sharing of resources and service delivery should be pursued
- Studies of taxes and local finances are needed/there are very limited resources available to do such studies
- Limited capability to expand water system in Clyde

November 22

- Need less property taxes and more revenues
- Find opportunities for revenues that do not drive additional services
- Property values in area are not high

- The system of assessments and taxation punishes improvements
- There have been major increases in taxes over past 20 years
- Value of property has not kept pace with cost of services
- Greater accountability is needed
- More public scrutiny is needed

**Question 13: Are there any other land use or development issues emerging in the community?**

November 17

- None identified

November 19

- None identified

November 22

- None identified

**Question 14: Realistically, what are the most important community characteristics that should be preserved or developed in the years ahead?**

November 17

- Maintain downtown parks
- Maintain access to river and canal
- Find a niche for the area relative to Wayne County and upstate New York
- Target the direction that the area should be moving in
- Rural / small town character
- Celebrate the rural and small town characteristics in the area

November 19

- Maintain rural lifestyle
- Bedroom community
- Kindness of people living in the area
- Small town values
- Celebrate the rural and small town characteristics in the area

November 22

- More good/less bad
- Less taxes
- More services for tourists
- Have visitors use resources and services
- Improve quality of life / keep rural nature
- Need a Welcome Center
- Be ready to take advantage of opportunities coming to area
- Remove obstacles to private investment

- Create a better quality of life