

Who Was There?

Anthony J. Picente, Jr. - County Executive, Oneida County
Caitlin McCann - VP Marketing and Communications, MVHS
Steven DiMeo - President, Mohawk Valley EDGE
Paul Miscione - Supervisor, Town of New Hartford

Advisory Committee Members:

Amy Bowerman – Vice President of Post-Acute/Rehab Services, MVHS
Laura Cohen – Vice President, Mohawk Valley EDGE
Dana Crisino – Deputy Commissioner, Oneida County Department of Planning
Geno DeCondo – Executive Director, Upstate Caring Partners
Gerald Fiorini – Chairman, Oneida County Board of Legislators
James Genovese – Commissioner, Oneida County Department of Planning
Shaun Kaleta – Director of Economic Development, Oneida County
Elizabeth Gilroy Kearns – Chair, Notre Dame Schools
Michele LaGase – Superintendent, New York Mills Union Free School District
John Latini – Councilperson, Town of New Hartford
Christopher Lawrence – Vice President, Mohawk Valley EDGE
Brian McKee – Chief Executive Officer, House of the Good Shepherd

Planning Consultant Team

Christian Mercurio – Vice President, Mohawk Valley EDGE
Bobbi Peckham – Resident
Chris Peckham – Resident
Dr. Todd Pfannestiel – President, Utica University
Kari Puleo – Executive Director, Greater Utica Chamber of Commerce
Dawn Roller – Associate Vice President of HR, Indium Corporation
Ann Rushlo – Executive Director, Mohawk Valley Association of Realtors
Bob Scholefield – Executive Vice President of Facilities & Real Estate – MVHS
Karen Stanislaus – Mary, Mother of Our Savior Parish, representing Father Jason Hage
Dan Swider – Resident
Ernie Talerico – Mayor, Village of New York Mills
Mark Turnbull – President, New Hartford Chamber of Commerce

What We Did

The meeting was held on Jan. 29th, 6–7:30 pm
at the Oneida County Office Building

- Background introduction by County Executive Anthony Picente
- Advisory Group Introduction
- Consultant Team introduction
- Project intent, process and schedule debrief
- A brainstorming session followed where the Advisory Group shared their thoughts on questions such as:

What comes to mind when you think of St. Luke's site?

What makes this place special?

Are there community needs that could be addressed through reuse?

How can redevelopment contribute to regional growth?

What mix of uses are appropriate?

What Was Said

During the Brainstorming session, people shared their questions, concerns, ideas, and thoughts with the team:

- Want a process that really seeks input, not just putting something on boards.
- Be really conscious of being good neighbors to existing/remaining facilities and business on and around the site.
- MVHS is staying and committed. MVHS's CRCCS Building serves 160 patients/day, with capacity for 226 total. It is not just a nursing home, it has 7 streams of services: home care, seniors network, transportation, adult health care, dialysis, rehab, nursing centre.
- First place for treatment when there is a need.
- "Caregiving place"
- So many things intersect here: health, sports, shopping, schools.
- It's accessible, so many businesses are located here, the site is at the center of a tight-knit community.
- It is a healthcare village.
- People were born at St. Luke's, and have strong feelings of care/safety related to the site. There are nice pedestrian routes through the site to the university.
- The Boilermaker Road Race, Heart Run & Walk and other activities happens on the surrounding roads.
- Place for recreation - walk and run through the grounds, connecting trails, feels like the countryside.
- Wetlands should be protected/enlarged. Neighbors bought property because of access, it is a great amenity.
- So many things happen at this intersection.
- Central location. Central location. Central location.
- Centrally located in a group of smaller villages.
- This project is an opportunity to honor the past and look into the future.
- The site is a "cool puzzle piece" It's an important puzzle piece that connects Utica, New Hartford, the campus, makes us more walkable.
- Champlin Ave. is a barrier.
- House of Good Shepherd owns 27 acres just north and has a good relationship with the community. Champlin Ave. cuts it off.
- Many surrounding schools - School system is a big draw.
- Liked intersection of 4 quadrants - "we can make the quants whole".
- Love the 4 quadrant idea. Keep green buffers around each quadrant that provide tranquil walking corridors between them.
- We don't have a Town Center and are lacking one. We need a place for newcomers to meet and socialize, with places to gather and hang out like restaurants. We lack a place to go after hours until 10 pm.
- It's hard to meet people here because there are not any central places to gather. We could build a large-scale 'place to be'".
- Even if it's not housing, an amenity rich community is very important to transplants.
- Business Park has 400 first shifts, no place to have lunch. They have to cross busy roads. It's dangerous. How can we "cross the street"?
- Day traffic is terrible at the intersection. Cars are too fast on Champlin Ave.
- We need housing for young professionals, families, temporary for people just coming to town, attracting university employees, recruiting medical students and residents, affordable housing, condos.
- Institution can't retain talents because of no place to live and no place to go. We also need family oriented activities.
- Don't forget public safety as we think about new housing and increased population.
- Knocked on 1,500 doors during campaign, people are concerned about the impact to real estate value with low income housing.
- Prosperity is important.
- Need to be a revenue-generating, different type of development from Sangertown.
- Cogen assessment shows profitability.
- Casino is successful.
- Through Covid, we lost a lot of stores, Macy's and Penny's closed. Need more commercial.
- Precedents for town center: Gaslight, San Diego, walkability with something for everyone.
- Burlington, VT – cobbled streets, good transition between daytime and nighttime activities, you can stay all day, 4-season attractions and activities, Valley Forge, King of Prussia, are others, 4-seasons, quaintness, holiday feel.
- Celebrate our history and Indian heritage.
- We can do something great, while honoring our past.
- Newcomers are mostly from the mid-west, are used to the cold weather. They are family-oriented – come for the excellent school system, but don't stay.
- We need to appeal to people looking for nightlife.
- We are losing physicians to other parts of the country, need housing and restaurants to keep them here and keep them coming.
- How can we impact our youth?
- Should be a place to care for people of all ages. We can use a childcare center/day care center, and elder-care. We need something magnificent, like Jane's Carousel in DUMBO, warmth of the streets with lights.
- Small things work too, like heated streets, lighting, and warmed outdoor spaces for winter.
- Something for the young people, but also for the elderly.
- Utica University is just across the street but feels separate. Champlin Ave. is a barrier. How can we connect them across the road? Take the opportunity to break down barriers.
- Make opportunities for students and faculty to live and shop.
- Difficult to attract employees when there is dearth of different housing in the area.
- We have history and Indian heritage.
- Hard to see a place deteriorating. What would fill that gap?
- Be mindful of obsolescence, be flexible for change over time.
- A tax revenue base would be desirable.
- What will happen to the site in the meantime? Be transparent with staging.
- We deserve something bigger. "Think Big". The assets will be worth it as everyone benefits.
- "Make it right. Make it Big. Bring people in. It's a blank canvas."

What We Heard

In the process of reviewing the notes, the consultant team noticed some common themes within the comments about what people wanted for their neighborhood and the St. Luke's site. The following categories were created from those themes:

VISION AND GOALS

- We deserve something bigger. "Think Big". Make it right. Bring people in.
- Prosperity is important.
- Make the 4 quadrants of the intersection whole.
- Want a process that really seeks input, not just putting something on boards

DESTINATION/TOWN CENTER

- It's hard to meet people if there's nowhere to go.
- Residents program at MVHS has over 200 interns. They need a town center.
- We need a place for newcomers, to gather and socialize.
- Should be a 'Town Center', with housing, and places to gather and hang out like restaurants.
- We lack a place to go after hours until 10 pm.
- We could build a large-scale 'place to be' that answers the questions; Where do I go? Where can we meet?
- Need a magnificent draw, like Jane's Carousel in DUMBO.
- Casino is successful.
- Business Park has 400 first shifts, no place to have lunch.

- The site is a "cool puzzle piece".
- It's an important puzzle piece that connects Utica, New Hartford, the campus, makes us more walkable.
- It's an important site because it's centrally located in a group of smaller villages.
- It's accessible, so many businesses are located here, the site is at the center of a tight-knit community.
- So many things intersect here, health, sports, shopping, schools
- Love the 4-quadrant idea. Keep green buffers around each quadrant that provide tranquil walking corridors between them.

A PLACE FOR ALL SEASONS AND AGES

- Small things work too, like warm streets and lighting.
- Need 4-season attractions and activities
- We need to appeal to people looking for nightlife.
- Something for the young people, but also for the elderly
- We can use a childcare center/day care center.
- How can we impact our youth?

LANDSCAPE AND ECOSYSTEMS

- Wetlands should be /enlarged.
- Feels like the countryside.
- Protect the wetland – residential neighbors bought property because of access, it is a great amenity.
- Maximize the conservation area to support development
- Landscape corridors with recreation trails
- The walking trail around the ball field to the north is nice and peaceful, lends a nice county feel and continuity.

WALKABILITY VS TRAFFIC

- Day traffic is terrible at the intersection. Cars are too fast on Champlin.
- So many things happen at this intersection.
- There are nice pedestrian routes through the site, you can cut across the site to the university. Champlin is a barrier.
- Business Park workers have to cross busy roads for lunch. It's dangerous. How can we "cross the street"?
- Walkability is something for everyone
- Don't forget public safety as we think about new housing and increased population
- The Boilermaker Road Race, Heart Run & Walk, and other activities happen on the surrounding roads.

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

- Be really conscious of being good neighbors to existing/remaining facilities and business on and around the site.
- Many surrounding schools.
- House of the Good Shephard owns 23 acres, and has a good relationship with the community. Champlin Ave cuts it off.
- MVHS is staying and committed. MVHS's CRCCS Building serves 160 patients/day, with capacity for 220 total, and has 7 streams of services.
- Utica University is just across the street but feels separate.
- First place for treatment when there is a need
- "Caregiving place"
- "Healthcare Village"
- People were born at St. Luke's, and have strong feelings of care/safety related to the site.

HISTORY AND CULTURE

- We have history and Indian heritage.
- Newcomers are mostly from the mid-west. Family-oriented people who are acclimated to cold seasons.
- This is an opportunity to honor the past and look into the future.

REVENUE GENERATION

- Need to be a different type of development from SangertownCogen assessment shows profitability
- A tax revenue base would be desirable
- Need more commercial. Lost a ton of stores to COVID - Macy's and Penny's closed.
- Prosperity is important.

HOUSING AND LIFESTYLE

- We are losing physicians to other parts of the country. We need housing with restaurants and other amenities to attract them keep them here. We also need family-oriented activities close by.
- People are concerned about the impact to real estate value with low income housing.
- Excellent school system is a big draw, but they don't stay.

NEED FOR FLEXIBILITY

- Hard to see a place deteriorating. What will happen to the site in the meantime?
- Be clear and transparent about staging.
- Be mindful of becoming obsolete, allow for change over time.