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Introduction

Background

The Town of Halfmoon is initiating an update to its 2003 Comprehensive Plan and 2013-2015 Zoning Review Committee findings to reflect the needs of today and identify a vision for the future. A Comprehensive Plan provides a future framework for a range of topics such as land use, economic development, infrastructure, transportation, neighborhoods, the environment, and housing.

The planning process will be a consensus-driven effort and includes public engagement to gather input about the future of Halfmoon from residents, business owners, property owners, and other stakeholders in the community.

Project Team

The process is being led by a 13-member Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) with a broad range of Town representatives and facilitated by Town staff and a consultant team lead by MJ Engineering and Land Surveying, P.C. The Consultant Team will assist the Town and the CPUC throughout the planning process through the facilitation of meetings, preparation of materials, publicity, and public engagement.

Comprehensive Plan Update Committee Members

Chair: Richard M. Harris, AICP

- Jeremy Connors
- Paul Hotaling
- Steven Kucskar
- Joseph Landy
- Michael D. Morand
- Lyn Murphy
- J. Daniel Wojcik
- William Herman
- Peter Bardunias
- Nancy Morris
- Deborah Curto
- Donald Roberts

Scope of Work

This effort involves the following work tasks:

Task 1: Project Initiation & Management

Task 2: Public Participation

Task 3: Preparation of Plan Update

- Task 3A: Prepare Community Profile & Inventory
- Task 3B: Articulate Goals
- Task 3C: Identify Strategies

Task 4: Prepare Draft Plan Update

Task 5: Prepare Final Plan Update & Support Plan Adoption Process

Public Engagement Plan and Planning Process Overview

This Public Engagement Plan for the project outlines opportunities to gather information from members of the public and stakeholders about the study. Input is critical to making informed decisions that are supported by the Town residents.

This plan has been developed to define a communication channel between the public, the Town, applicable regulatory agencies, and the Project Team throughout the duration of the study. This plan aims to achieve this communication by sharing information with the public regarding the planning process, and by providing a variety of occasions for the public to provide input at key milestones throughout the process.

The Public Engagement Plan includes a range of outreach activities designed to inform the public and gather input through multiple platforms. An emphasis will be made to reach traditionally under-engaged groups. The following community participation activities are anticipated in this effort:

- Website
- Key Stakeholder Meetings
- Public Workshops (6), including a CPUC Public Hearing
- Community Survey
- Student Engagement
- Pop-Up Activities (up to 2)
- Social Media Outreach
- Promotional Video

- Additional Promotional Platforms
- Marketing & Branding
- Town Board Public Hearing

Outreach Activity	Date
Project Website / Social Media Outreach	ongoing
Key Stakeholder Group Meetings	Winter 2023
Public Engagement #1	March 23, 2023
Public Engagement #2	Spring 2023 - TBD
Public Engagement #3	Summer 2023 - TBD
Public Engagement #4	Fall 2023 - TBD
Public Engagement #5	Winter 2024
Public Engagement #6	Spring 2024
Community Survey	TBD
Pop-Up Activities	Ongoing - TBD

A preliminary schedule for each of these outreach activities is outlined below.

Opportunities for Public Participation

A variety of methods will be utilized to inform the public about the process and gather input. Opportunities for public participation include:

- Website
- Social Media
- Email Communication
- Community Survey
- Key Stakeholder Group Meetings
- Public Workshops (6)
- Pop-Up Activities

Website

MJ will develop and manage a project website throughout the duration of the project. The website will include project updates, materials, as well as a feedback form to keep the public engaged and informed. A link to the project website will be placed on the Town’s website (www.townofhalfmoon-ny.gov). The project website and social media will be used to provide updates throughout the process and share materials. The website will also include a comments form to allow the public to share their thoughts throughout the project. This is just one of several ways of gathering community input throughout the process. The intent is to reach all interested stakeholders using a variety of outreach methods. Digital media is a preferred method of sharing and gathering information by many. Materials available on the website may include, but not be limited to the following:

- Upcoming Engagement Opportunities
- Surveys
- Meeting materials
- Comment Form

The project website is located at the following link: www.planhalfmoon.com

In addition to the project website, announcements of public engagement opportunities will also be posted through the Town website at: www.townofhalfmoon-ny.gov/planning-department

Social Media

The Town will utilize its social media outlets, such as Facebook, to advertise public engagement activities.

Email Communication

To keep the public informed of upcoming engagement opportunities, community members may sign up to receive emails through the project website.

Community Survey

Date: TBD

Purpose: The purpose of the Online Community Survey is to identify the community's needs, vision and priorities for the future of the Town of Halfmoon. The information gathered will help shape the vision and goals for the Halfmoon Comprehensive Plan Update. It is anticipated that the launch of this survey will likely coincide with the timing of Public Workshop #1. The MJ team will prepare a summary of survey highlights and post to the project website.

Platform: This will primarily be an online survey developed through SurveyMonkey and will be shared on the project website and the Town of Halfmoon website. In addition, hard copy survey cards will be available at key locations throughout the Town to raise awareness of the survey. Hardcopies of the survey may also be made available if necessary.

Publicity:

- Posting to project website
- Posting to Town website
- Flyer for Town and Committee to distribute and post to social media
- Survey Cards available at key locations throughout the Town

Key Stakeholder Group Meetings

Date: Winter 2023

Purpose: The Project Team will organize meetings (virtual or in person as appropriate) and or telephone interviews with key stakeholders and partners. To the extent possible, stakeholder meetings will be coordinated with other scheduled public engagement. After these meetings and interviews are conducted, findings will be summarized, reviewed, and discussed with the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee. These conversations will be helpful in understanding the needs, opportunities and vision of the broader community.

Platform: (TBD) Stakeholder Group Meetings proposed to be web-based to more easily accommodate stakeholder schedules.

Publicity: Invitations will be made to those whose experience with a specific issue warrants a targeted discussion. Invitees will be determined in consultation with the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee and may include Town Staff, landowners, school district representatives, citizen groups, state, and regional agencies, etc.

Pop-Up Events

Up to two (2) pop-up events will occur at popular locations in the community during the project. A pop-up event is typically facilitated by the project team and/or Comprehensive Plan Update Committee ambassadors. Pop-up events are quick, easy, unannounced ways to capture input from people where they live, conduct business, and recreate. Pop-ups are situated at key locations such as community events, local markets, coffee shops, gas stations, or public parks. At these events, the project team would provide an overview of the Comprehensive Plan Update project, promote any ongoing community surveys, while creating another opportunity to capture input from pedestrians passing through the area. A pop-up event may also piggy-back on an existing community event or public engagement event that is already scheduled.

Public Open House & Visioning Workshop #1

Date: March 23, 2023 – 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Purpose: The purpose of the first Public Workshop will be to introduce the project to the public. The workshop will include a brief presentation and an overview of the purpose, scope, and schedule of the project. This workshop will also provide an opportunity to gather input from the community on the needs and opportunities for the Town of Halfmoon. Input will be gathered at hand-on activity stations, as well as via comment cards (with QR codes on them linking to website) and interactions with project team members and Town staff.

Platform: The public Workshop and open house will be in person.

Publicity:

- Posting of materials as outlined in the Publicity Distribution Table including:

- Press release to local media outlets including print media, and cable
- Posting of flyers to social media outlets, local community organizations
- Posting to Town and project website
- Tabling at farmers market
- Flyer distributed to Town
- Announcement at Town Board meeting

Public Workshop #2 – Understanding Key Topics

Date: TBD

Purpose: The second workshop will include facilitated, in-person, topic-based speed round table discussions. Each table will represent a different topic area and will be facilitated by a member of the project team. Each group will then answer a series of questions based on the table topic. After ten (10) minutes, each group will switch tables to engage with a series of topics such as transportation/mobility, economic growth, neighborhoods/housing, recreation, natural resources, agriculture, infrastructure and governance. The workshop will also include a presentation from the project team explaining what has already been completed in the comprehensive planning process and the next steps.

Platform: The public workshop will be in-person.

Publicity:

- Posting of materials as outlined in the Publicity Distribution Table including:
 - Press release to local media outlets including print media, and cable
 - Posting of flyers to social media outlets, local community organizations
 - Posting to Town and project website
 - Flyer distributed to Town
 - Announcement at Town Board meeting

Public Workshop #3 – Vision, Goals & Preliminary Recommendations

Date: TBD

Purpose: The third workshop will include a presentation of the vision, goals, strategies and preliminary recommendations to the public. The intent will be to gather feedback from the community at this stage prior to development the Draft Comprehensive Plan document.

Platform: The public workshop may be in-person, web-based or hybrid.

Publicity:

- Posting of materials as outlined in the Publicity Distribution Table including:
 - Press release to local media outlets including print media, and cable
 - Posting of flyers to social media outlets, local community organizations
 - Posting to Town and project website
 - Flyer distributed to Town

- Announcement at Town Board meeting

Public Workshop #4 – Highlights of Draft Comprehensive Plan

Date: TBD

Purpose: The fourth workshop will include an overview of the Draft Comprehensive Plan (including process and plan highlights) and provide the community with an opportunity to provide feedback on the draft plan. The workshop will also include a presentation from the project team explaining what has already been completed in the comprehensive planning process and the next steps.

Platform: The public workshop will be in person.

Publicity:

- Posting of materials as outlined in the Publicity Distribution Table including:
 - Press release to local media outlets including print media, and cable
 - Posting of flyers to social media outlets, local community organizations
 - Posting to Town and project website
 - Flyer distributed to Town
 - Announcement at Town Board meeting

Public Workshop #5 - Highlights of Draft Comprehensive Plan

Date: TBD

Purpose: The fifth workshop will include an overview of the Draft Comprehensive Plan (including process and plan highlights) and provide the community with another opportunity to provide feedback on the draft plan. This will be identical to Workshop #4. The workshop will also include a presentation from the project team explaining what has already been completed in the comprehensive planning process and the next steps.

Platform: The public workshop will be web-based to allow an opportunity for the public not able to attend Workshop #4 in-person.

Publicity:

- Posting of materials as outlined in the Publicity Distribution Table including:
 - Press release to local media outlets including print media, and cable
 - Posting of flyers to social media outlets, local community organizations
 - Posting to Town and project website
 - Flyer distributed to Town

Public Workshop #6

Date: TBD

Purpose: The final public engagement activity for this effort will be combined with a Town Board Committee Public Hearing to present the Draft Comprehensive Plan Update to the public. The workshop will include an overview of the Draft Comprehensive Plan, including process and plan highlights.

Platform: The public workshop may be in-person or hybrid.

Publicity:

- Posting of materials as outlined in the Publicity Distribution Table including:
 - Press release to local media outlets including print media, and cable
 - Posting of flyers to social media outlets, local community organizations
 - Posting to Town and project website
 - Flyer distributed to Town
 - Public Hearing noticing as required
 - Announcement at Town Board meeting

Town Board Public Hearing

Date: TBD

Purpose: Following the Committee preparation of a Draft Comprehensive Plan Update, the Committee will advance the Draft Plan to the Town Board for their consideration for adoption. The Town Board is required under Town Law 272-a to hold a public hearing.

Platform: The public hearing would likely occur during a regularly scheduled Town Board meeting.

Publicity:

- Public hearing noticing as required