



VILLAGE OF
PORT CHESTER
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

MEETING MINUTES

Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) Meeting
April 23, 2026, 7:00PM
Meeting #1

Attendees

- CPAC Members Present
 - Sylvia Dundon, Trustee
 - Juliana Alzate
 - Jessica Berkowitz
 - Jake Borden
 - Joseph DeVita
 - Monica Fonseca
 - Gustavo Passarelli
 - Michael Scarola
 - Brian Sullivan
 - Kieran Tobias
- CPAC Members Not Present
 - Philip Dorazio, Deputy Mayor
- Village Planning Department
 - Greg Cutler, AICP, Director
 - Curt Lavalla, AICP, Assistant Director
- BFJ Planning
 - Sarah Yackel, AICP, Principal-In-Charge
 - Emily Tolbert, AICP, Project Manager
 - Nick Cerdera, AICP, Project Planner

BFJ Planning facilitated the meeting with a presentation that can be viewed on the project website here: [View CPAC Meeting Presentation](#).

I. Introductions

Village Planning Department Staff and the BFJ Team introduced themselves.

- CPAC Members were asked to introduce themselves by answering the following questions:
 - Name?
 - What part of the Port Chester community do you represent?
 - What does your ideal Port Chester look like in 10 years?



- CPAC Member responses:
 - Joseph DeVita, CPAC Member
 - Role/Representation: Member of the Zoning Board of Appeals.
 - Key Issues/Vision: A more vibrant and better organized downtown, including improved parking, less traffic, more restaurants, and a downtown library that serves the broader community.
 - Michael Scarola, CPAC Member
 - Role/Representation: Planning Commission Chair; served on the 2012 Comprehensive Plan Committee; Port Chester resident since 2001.
 - Key Issues/Vision: A comprehensive approach to revitalization that strengthens Downtown while also investing in other Village neighborhoods.
 - Gustavo Passarelli, CPAC Member
 - Role/Representation: Lifelong Port Chester; represents waterfront and marina/business interests.
 - Key Issues/Vision: A walkable, connected Village center that embraces the waterfront as a major community and economic asset while protecting local businesses.
 - Sylvia Dundon, Trustee, CPAC Member
 - Role/Representation: Village Trustee, IDA member, former Chamber of Commerce Director, and downtown resident.
 - Key Issues/Vision: Balancing downtown growth with quality of life, including parking, construction impacts, traffic, business support, and creating a “15-minute city” where residents can meet daily needs without relying on a car.
 - Jake Borden, CPAC Member
 - Role/Representation: Real estate developer with projects in Downtown Port Chester; resident for two years.
 - Key Issues/Vision: Continued downtown momentum that expands vibrancy, investment, and opportunity into adjacent neighborhoods.
 - Brian Sullivan, CPAC Member
 - Role/Representation: Chair of the Beautification Commission.
 - Key Issues/Vision: Creating a more beautiful Port Chester and fostering a stronger sense of community throughout the Village.
 - Jessica Berkowitz, CPAC Member
 - Role/Representation: 30+ year Port Chester resident; kayaker.
 - Key Issues/Vision: Strengthening downtown through businesses and cultural institutions, better utilizing the waterfront, and expanding green space and recreational opportunities as the Village grows.
 - Juliana Alzate, CPAC Member



- Role/Representation: Has lived in Port Chester since early childhood; has served on the Planning Board and Zoning Board; and is a former Trustee.
- Key Issues/Vision: Positioning Port Chester as a destination, taking better advantage of the waterfront, and ensuring the Hispanic community is meaningfully included in the planning process.
- Kieran Tobias, CPAC Member
 - Role/Representation: Lifelong Port Chester resident.
 - Key Issues/Vision: Preserving Port Chester's sense of community and protecting green spaces as the Village continues to grow and evolve beyond its historic small-town feel.
- Monica Fonseca
 - Role/Representation: 10-year Port Chester resident; involved with the Housing Task Force.
 - Key Issues/Vision: Housing affordability, displacement, and gentrification. Emphasized the need to protect existing working-class and immigrant residents, address rising rents, and incorporate Housing Task Force recommendations into the Comprehensive Plan.

Sarah Yackel of BFJ Planning reviewed the Roles and Responsibilities of the CPAC as summarized in the [presentation slides](#) and in more detail in a handout distributed to the CPAC members. The key points:

- The CPAC is a critical component of the Port Chester Comprehensive Plan process. It ensures that the policy outcomes of the plan are driven by the priorities of our community.
- The CPAC will be asked to take part in the following activities:
 - Participate in regular CPAC meetings (~7)
 - Review and comment on draft content of the plan (homework)
 - Spread the word about opportunities for community engagement
 - Attend and assist at public workshops and pop-up events
 - Hold a public hearing
- A CPAC member asked: are the committee meetings open to the public?
 - Yes. The meetings are not being recorded, but the public is welcome to attend. Meeting notes and presentations will be posted online.
 - The committee meetings are working group meetings, so the public will not participate during the meeting; however, 5-10 minutes may be reserved at the end for public questions.

II. Comprehensive Plan Process

Sarah Yackel, BFJ Planning, provided an overview of the Comprehensive Plan

- What is a Comprehensive Plan?
 - Long-range strategy that offers policy guidance for the Village's future growth, land use and development issues, infrastructure, transportation, open space, community facilities, and more.
 - Sets goals and recommended actions to achieve community priorities.



- Foundation for future decisions on development and zoning, capital spending, and general Village-wide policy decisions.
- What isn't a Comprehensive plan?
 - Zoning or any other kind of regulation.
 - Development approval for any specific property.
 - A revision to tax assessments or processes.
 - A change to environmental regulations. Instead, it should align with environmental conservation goals and sustainable practices.
 - A requirement that the Village take specific spending actions.
- Why Plan?
 - Acknowledge change is inevitable
 - Cannot plan in a vacuum
 - Equity Planning – legacy of land use planning documents
 - Density, housing, job access, spatial mismatch...
 - Codify community vision
 - Shape v. “protect” the future
 - Who does the community want to be?
 - Who is the “community?”
- Project Schedule
 - CPAC members were given an abbreviated schedule (included in the presentation and Port Chester Today document on the project website) and a task-by-task schedule (provided on the agenda)
 - Sarah Yackel explained that there would be three phases:
 - Phase I Review and Analysis Phase that has been ongoing as the BFJ Team reviewed past and ongoing projects, sociodemographic trends, and existing land use and zoning patterns.
 - Phase II Comprehensive Plan Draft that commences with our CPAC kick-off meeting and will involve regular CPAC meetings, public engagement activities, and drafting of plan contents, which will last through the end of the year.
 - Phase III Final Plan will begin with the transition of the draft plan to the Board of Trustees and conclude with plan adoption – about one year from now.

III. Public Engagement

Nick Cerdera of BFJ Planning presented on the Public Engagement Strategy and a Public Engagement Strategy Document distributed to the CPAC provides more details.

- Public Engagement Strategy
 - Public input is critical to the development of the Vision and Comprehensive Plan. The following types of engagement and activities will be part of this planning process:



- Spanish Language and Targeted Community Outreach (Nick Cerdera is a Spanish-speaker and other Spanish-speaking members of the BFJ team will be able to assist at live events and document translations)
- Project Website: Compplan.portchesterny.gov
- Online Engagement – Visioning Survey
- Stakeholder Outreach
- Pop-Up Events (3)
- Public Workshops (3)
- Public Hearings (2)
- Visioning Survey
- The Visioning Survey can be found at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PortChesterVision> and in Spanish at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PortChesterVision?lang=es>
 - The Visioning survey is open now through May 31.
 - It asks three questions:
 - What does your ideal Port Chester look like in ten years? Please provide three aspirational words to describe your vision.
 - What makes you feel connected to your neighborhood and the Village?
 - In which areas do you think Port Chester has the greatest opportunity to improve? Please select up to three.
 - Infrastructure (e.g., roads, water, sewer)
 - Housing (e.g., affordability, types of housing)
 - Economic development (e.g., local businesses)
 - Parks and recreation
 - Public Safety
 - Open space preservation
 - Sustainability and resiliency (e.g., renewable energy, hazard mitigation)
- Discussion:
 - The CPAC asked whether the survey could remain open longer.
 - Yes, the survey deadline can be extended.
 - Greg Cutler confirmed that the press release for the Comprehensive Plan launch, including the Visioning Survey, will be released tomorrow (April 24, 2026).
 - CPAC suggested that the survey flyer be shared with the school district.
 - CPAC noted that it is hard to get the Port Chester community to respond to these things, so we need to be vigilant in outreach.
 - CPAC suggested posting flyers and large posters at the library, churches, train station, and distribution on foot in the downtown to local businesses and others and asking businesses to hang them in storefront windows.
- Stakeholder Outreach



- Stakeholders include subject-matter experts, such as department heads, board and committee representatives, and community / local organization representatives. The purpose of stakeholder outreach is to hear directly from departments, boards, committees, commissions, and organizations about their priorities for the Village and gather input for the Comprehensive Plan. Stakeholders may also be asked to help spread the word about the Comprehensive Plan and public outreach opportunities.
- The Village Planning staff and BFJ Planning have begun a list of organizations to reach out to by calls, questionnaires, and focus group meetings.
 - Calls
 - Planning Board
 - Zoning Board of Appeals
 - Building Department
 - Code Enforcement Department
 - Fire Department
 - Police Department
 - Public Works Department
 - Parks and Facilities Department
 - Recreation Department
 - Senior Community Center
 - Youth Bureau
 - School District
 - Housing Authority
 - Industrial Development Agency
 - Local Development Corporation
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Waterfront Commission
 - Questionnaires
 - Beautification Commission
 - Don Bosco
 - Historical Society
 - Library Committee
 - Library
 - Meals on Main
 - Park Commission
 - Recreation Committee
 - Sustainability Committee
 - Traffic Commission
 - Focus Groups
 - Business Owners
 - Development Community
- The CPAC provided a list of additional groups to reach out to and offered to provide contacts:
 - The Clay Arts Center
 - Capital Theater
 - Carver Center
 - High School Students
 - Human Development Services of Westchester
- A CPAC member asked Who is the “development community” for the stakeholder meetings? Who are the “business owners”?
 - The development community refers to those involved in new and redevelopment projects in Port Chester.



- Business owners refer to small businesses and other local businesses in the downtown and other commercial areas of Port Chester.
- A focus group for non-profit organizations, arts and cultural organizations, could also be included.
- Pop-Up Events
 - Pop-up events are pre-existing community events, such as:
 - Port Chester Day
 - Meal distribution event
 - Other festivals, gatherings, fairs
 - The CPAC suggested additional ideas for pop-up events:
 - Unity Day – August
 - Friday night concert series in Lyon Park
 - 4th of July celebration at Port Chester High School

IV. Comprehensive Plan Contents

Emily Tolbert of BFJ Planning presented a brief overview of the 2012 Comprehensive Plan, the planned contents of the 2027 Comprehensive Plan update, and Port Chester Today, a baseline document completed by the BFJ team during Phase I Review and Analysis.

- 2012 Comprehensive Plan
 - Vision (paraphrased)
 - Retain qualities of Port Chester: a diverse cultural population, quality homes at relatively affordable prices, a vibrant downtown, and its proximity to key employment centers.
 - Address challenges: changing socio-economic conditions, unpredictable growth and development patterns, physical constraints limiting waterfront access, and underutilized non-residential properties.
 - Focus
 - Maintenance and enhancement of residential neighborhoods
 - Revitalization of commercial areas and the waterfront
 - Strengthening of industrial areas
 - Improvement of transportation and infrastructure facilities
 - Identifying opportunities for new development.
 - Accomplishments (How the 2012 Comprehensive Plan has been implemented and additional planning initiatives and capital improvements since it's adoption)
 - Land Use and Zoning
 - Form-Based Zoning Code adopted (2020)
 - Transportation
 - Parking Assessment (2022) and new parking regulations adopted
 - Master Transportation Plan completed (2024)



- The Loop project – pedestrian path connecting downtown and the waterfront
- Housing
 - Housing Needs Assessment completed (2022)
 - Encourage residential development in appropriate areas (e.g. downtown, near train station, and United Hospital site)
 - Strengthen environmental standards for development and encourage green building
- Parks and Open Space
 - Village Marina Bulkhead Revitalization Project
 - Master Planning for Abendroth Park - ongoing
 - Increased park security measures
 - Implemented kayak launch
- Community Resources
 - Bush Lyon Homestead restoration
 - Village hall renovations
 - Police Headquarters Study - ongoing
 - Indoor Village gym renovations - ongoing
- Downtown and Commercial Development
 - Mitigation of commercial displacement
 - Downtown Sanitary Sewer Revitalization Project
 - Downtown Revitalization Initiative application
 - Branding and marketing strategy - ongoing
- A CPAC member asked if there was any follow up on the 2012 Comprehensive Plan.
 - Greg Cutler answered that his Planning Staff reviewed all of the goals and recommendations from the 2012 Comprehensive Plan to note which have been implemented, which are ongoing, which are still relevant for the update, and which are no longer relevant.
 - Emily Tolbert added that the above listed accomplishments are just a selected list of examples of how the Comprehensive Plan has been implemented and evolved over time with subsequent initiatives and planning processes.
- 2027 Comprehensive Plan Contents
 - The 2027 Plan will not follow the 14-chapter organization of the 2012 plan, but will instead consolidate sections into three parts, the second part containing plan elements (theme chapters)
 - The elements would each have relevant existing conditions information, analysis, goals and recommendations.
 - The third part, the Implementation Plan, will include a matrix that will identify responsible parties, order of magnitude costs, and or difficulty level, and timeline, to provide the Village with a “check list” to help implement the plan.
 - Outline:



- I. Plan Vision and Background
 - Vision
 - Regional and Historic Context
 - Village Population
 - Land Use and Zoning
- II. Plan Elements
 - Economic Development
 - Housing
 - Transportation
 - Community Resources
 - Environment
- III. Implementation Plan
- The Plan Elements will cover some of the example topics listed below:
 - Economic Development (Note: Urbanomics, an affiliate firm of BFJ will contribute to the development of this element)
 - Major Employers
 - Small Businesses
 - Active Downtown
 - Workforce Development
 - Housing (Note: Urbanomics, an affiliate firm of BFJ will contribute to the development of this element)
 - Market Dynamics
 - Neighborhoods
 - Affordable Housing
 - Housing Options
 - Transportation
 - Roads
 - Public Transportation
 - Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure and Safety
 - Complete Streets
 - Environment (Note: Ramboll, an engineering firm, will contribute to the development of this element)
 - Natural Resources
 - Sustainability and Resilience
 - Infrastructure
 - Community Resources
 - Public Facilities



- Parks and Recreation
- Historic Resources
- A CPAC member asked how educational resources will get addressed in the Plan.
 - Schools would be discussed in the Community Resources chapter. However, the Village has no authority over the School District, so while the Comprehensive Plan can include recommendations for collaboration between the Village and School District, the Comprehensive Plan cannot make recommendations directly that would be under the School District's authority.
- Port Chester Today
 - BFJ Planning presented the CPAC members with print copies of the Port Chester Today document. The document is also provided to the public in digital format on the project website.
 - The document provides an overview of what a Comprehensive Plan is, Port Chester's planning and historic context, socio-demographic trends, and existing land use and zoning patterns.

Discussion:

- The CPAC asked if additional print copies of Port Chester Today document could be made available in the library and Village Hall.
 - Yes, additional copies were provided to Greg Cutler for his team to share with the library and Village Hall.
- Will plan chapters be developed one chapter at a time or concurrently?
 - Typically, one chapter (i.e. element) will be presented and discussed at each CPAC meeting.
- Does the CPAC need to take meeting minutes?
 - The BFJ Planning team will take notes and share minutes with the Village.
 - BFJ's role is to set the agenda for each CPAC meeting, facilitate the meetings, take minutes, and so forth. The CPAC's role is to react and help the planning team understand the Port Chester community, issues and opportunities, goals, and which recommendations are supported.
- Can the CPAC all edit in one document, such as in a google doc?
 - The Village will look into potential sharing platforms but acknowledged technical restrictions.
- Can a banner be added to the Village website that directs people to the Comprehensive Plan website and survey?
 - Village to coordinate.
- If a CPAC member misses a meeting, can they send out comments separately?
 - Yes, comments can be sent directly to Greg Cutler, who will ensure that they are shared with the Committee and the consultants.

V. Next Steps

- Next Advisory Committee Meeting: May 28, 2026 7:00 pm
 - Subsequent meetings to be held on the fourth Thursday of each month, with adjustments for any holidays.



- The next committee meeting will likely focus on some of the introductory chapters and preparation for the workshop.
- First Public Workshop: June 17, 2026, 6:30-8:30 PM, Port Chester Senior Center (222 Grace Church St, Port Chester, NY 10573)
 - Can workshops be televised?
 - To be confirmed with the Village.
 - Will a Spanish translator be provided?
 - Yes
 - Are there other languages that are prominent in the community that need to be accommodated?
 - CPAC did not think of any other languages that need accommodation.
- Over the next month, BFJ Planning and Village Planning Staff will be
 - Arranging Stakeholder Meetings and Questionnaires
 - Drafting Chapters