

Online Community Workshop: Catalysts & Priority Projects, February 13, 2021, 10:00-12:00PM

Summary: The second community engagement event was held as an online zoom workshop on February 13, 2021, following an extensive community outreach effort; the workshop was attended by close to 80 people. The workshop agenda was:

- Welcome and introductions
- Progress update: How did we get here?
- Best odds projects in our “new normal”
- Opportunities and challenges
- Community profile
- Copake Waterfront Revitalization Vision, Goals & Priority Projects
- **Catalyst Projects:** Roeliff Jansen Community Library Waterfront Park; Accessible Community Fishing; Environmental Education & Climate Stewardship; Wayfinding & Interpretive Signage; Copake’s Family-Friendly Bicycling Brand; Town of Copake Trails, Paths & Parks Plan

Key takeaways from public discussion about projects: Presentation of the draft vision, goals and priority and catalyst projects was followed by public discussion, as summarized below:

- There is strong support for the Library Waterfront Park, but handicapped accessibility and floodplain issues need to be explored in the design phase. Ideas for the library park included trails, picnic area, non-secret fishing access, performance venue/natural amphitheater. Consider crossing the Roe Jan Kill to connect with the Rail Trail when the Orphan Farm-Hillsdale connection is finished.
- The overuse and bad behavior of visitors to Bash Bish Falls during the summer of 2020 was heartbreaking for residents. Selected projects must be designed with security, operations and management budgets.
- There was broad support for a Copake Master Trails Plan. Community members identified additional possible sites for public fishing access and trails and clarified potential access points. Development of a trails plan would consider technical aspects and issues. Small, local trails are beneficial as well as connections to Rail Trail and existing trails.
- Consider planning for projects with COVID-19 restrictions and distancing in mind for short and long term.
- Property owners report flooding in backyards along Main Street. Local, anecdotal data from residents is needed to understand what is happening. Accessing user-friendly programs such as Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRICK) may be a next step.

Post-meeting broadcast and surveys: Workshop participants and the rest of the community were able to watch the rebroadcast of the zoom meeting on the project website at www.copakewaterfronts.com/upcoming-events. The community was encouraged to take a set of follow up surveys to share additional feedback and comments on the draft vision, goals and proposed projects. Fifteen surveys have been submitted to date. Preliminary key takeaways from survey responses include:

- Complete the local rail trail and spurs to create connections with the hamlet and library.
- Develop the Library Park.
- Create educational programs to promote and protect natural resources and recreation, including interpretive signage.
- Promote local businesses and provide entrepreneurial support for youth.
- Develop public waterway access points near the library to the Roe Jan Kill, as well as the center of the Town of Copake and a Depot Deli access point to Bash Bish Brook.
- Improve and maintain quality of local waterways.
- Prohibit large solar installation.
- Develop walkways on other areas of the Roe Jan Kill such as in hamlet of Copake.
- People indicated they use current trails including the Harlem Valley Rail Trail, Bash Bish Trail and other Taconic State Park trails for walking, biking, hiking, riding and snowshoeing year round.
- Consider proactive solutions to local flooding issues.