

## November 20, 2025 Meeting Minutes Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC)

*Minutes summarize details of the meeting, and endnotes cite source links for readers' reference.*

CPC Chair Chris Foss led this monthly meeting at Caroga Town Hall from 6:00 to 7:00 PM.

Committee members present were: Chris Foss, Anita Long, Jim Hale, and Doug Purcell. Rachel Simonds arrived after voting to approve the 10/30/2025 meeting minutes. Committee members Jeremy Manning, Dave Cummings, and Kim Walker were unable to attend. Town Clerk Linda Gilbert also attended.

### 1. Prior Meeting Minutes

- The Committee voted to approve 10/30/2025 meeting minutes with 4 votes. [Rachel Simonds asked to amend the record to show that she was not present for the vote. Note that 10/30/2025 minutes include endnotes to cite sources for readers' reference (e.g., links, citations, map, resources).]  
see <https://carogacomprehensiveplan.wordpress.com/meeting-minutes/>

### 2. Town Board Actions

- On 4/9/2025, the Board passed the NYS Pro-Housing Communities Pledge as required for grants ([https://townofcaroga.com/news flashes/flash\\_2025-04-09.pdf](https://townofcaroga.com/news flashes/flash_2025-04-09.pdf)). [In April, the Supervisor submitted the letter of intent. On 11/21/2025, he submitted additional pro-housing data points needed for certification.]
- On 11/12/2025, the Town Board approved the EDR pre-grant contract for hourly consultation.

### 3. 2025 NYS DOS Smart Growth Community Planning Grant Application

- Word is expected about the awards for NYS DOS Community Planning Grants by the end of the year.
- Anita Long & Chris Foss will work with Aaron Enfield on the Request for Proposals required for bids.

### 4. EDR Hourly Consultation Contract

- On 11/18/2025 Chris Foss had a zoom call with Lisa Nagle and Susan Caruvana of EDR.
- Lisa Nagle and Susan Caruvana will review documents on the Comprehensive Plan Committee website and will arrange to meet with Chris and/or the Committee after that review.

### 5. Draft Vision and Table of Contents

- Chris Foss advanced to discussion about drafts of a redeveloped *Table of Contents* and *Vision*.
- Committee members agreed that the following are preliminary working ideas in progress.
- The draft "Table of Contents" aims to move toward a readable and strategic Smart Growth Plan.
- The draft "Where We Want to Be in 2025" aims to edit details but keep the prior basic structure.
- Doug Purcell suggested wording changes by email, including "downtown", "Town Center", and "arts."
- Committee members agreed to the edits. Rachel Simonds framed it as a "narrative" for Chapters 2-3.
- Rachel noted needs to acknowledge what worked and did not from the prior Comprehensive Plan.
- Rachel Simonds also suggested another option for a broader revised vision statement, including cohesive Smart Growth themes and 2025 Community Survey findings (see p. 4).
- In addition, Chris Foss came up with a bridge from "where we are" to "where we want to be" (p. 4). He emphasized needs for the Background section to note the prior Town Center vision (after Sherman's Park closed to the public) and how far our community has come with Sherman's now.

(DRAFT) Table of  
**CONTENTS**



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*Attributions & Foreword*

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- Chapter 1: Introduction**
- Chapter 2: Where We Are**
- Chapter 3: Where We Want To Be**

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

- Chapter 4: The Caroga Experience**
- Chapter 5: Our Natural Environment**
- Chapter 6: Our Built Environment**
- Chapter 7: Our Economy**

**TARGETED IMPACTS**

- Chapter 8: Vision & Priorities**
- Chapter 9: Strategic Plans**
- Chapter 10: Implementation**

**APPENDICES**

- Exhibit A. Summary of Goals, Objectives, & Priorities*
- Exhibit B. Town of Caroga History*
- Exhibit C. Demographic Profile*
- Exhibit D. Municipal Properties*
- Exhibit E. Natural Assets*
- Exhibit F. Local Businesses & Rental Properties*
- Exhibit G. Points of Interest*
- Exhibit H. Land Use Maps*

***(draft) WHERE WE WANT TO BE IN 2050***



In 2050, the Town of Caroga will continue to be a friendly rural town where people have strong connections to each other and the region. In the years ahead, residents and visitors will have available various year-round arts and outdoor recreational opportunities, community buildings, housing options, visitor accommodations, diverse restaurants, and other locally-owned businesses. Caroga's downtown will feature a strong commercial hub, located near and around Sherman's Park, with walkable, integrated, open-air, multiuse development, which integrates streetscapes and landscapes to enhance local experiences and uses. Caroga's Route 10 / 29A downtown corridor will be the most diverse land use area of the Town. The Town will be recognized as an attractive place to work, learn, and raise a family, surrounded by natural beauty, abundant lakes, rich history, vibrant music, and year-round outdoor recreation opportunities.



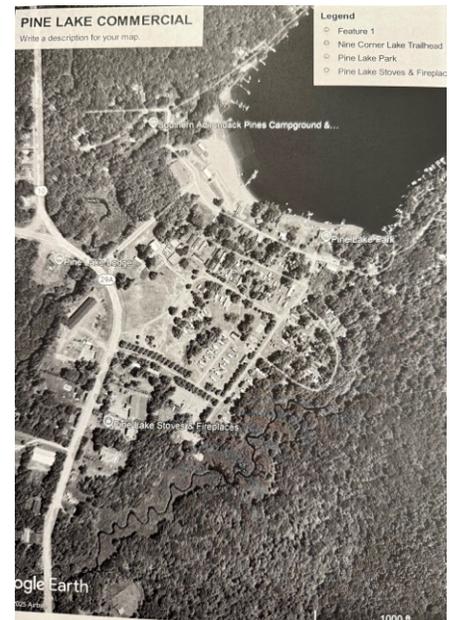
The Town of Caroga envisions our community as a place where the natural environment is protected, celebrated, and accessible to all. The Town strives to be and to build a place of connection and recreation, where residents and visitors alike can slow down and enjoy shared spaces. The Town of Caroga will address the changing needs of our full-time and seasonal populations while investing in services and infrastructure to support the future of the Town. The Town will work to create equitable opportunities and a strong local economy to lead the Town to a vibrant, sustainable future. (Rachel Simonds)



Since the last update of the Comprehensive Plan in 2011, much has changed in the Town of Caroga, but much remains the same. It still is and will remain a tourist town with many part time residents and seasonal visitors. However, there has been a great deal of new construction, mostly re-building or renovating older summer homes as year-round homes. The previous plan envisioned a commercial area anchored by the Sherman's Amusement Park being turned into shops and retail and commercial establishments. That is happening with the Caroga Arts Council turning it into a music and arts destination. The Caroga Arts Council will continue to bring hundreds of people into the Town Center every year with their concerts and events. This is something no one could have seen coming in 2011. We hope to see this area continue to grow with restaurants and commercial properties. (Chris Foss)

### 6. Town Center and Other Areas

- Chris Foss pointed out that we almost have another Town Center at Pine Lake, with valuable commercial development (see map).
- Others agreed that Caroga has multiple valuable commercial and residential development areas (Royal Mountain / North Bush, Caroga Lake Central Business District / Town Center, Wheelerville, Canada Lakes, Pine Lake, and Stoner Lakes) as well as Forest Preserve lands.
- The current zoning map includes commercial zoning along Route 10 near Royal Mountain, along the Route 10 / 29 A Central Business District, and in the northern area near Pine Lake (see [https://townofcaroga.com/comprehensive\\_plan/zoning\\_map.pdf](https://townofcaroga.com/comprehensive_plan/zoning_map.pdf)).
- Pine Lake Park and other businesses are important parts of Town.
- Chris Foss also pointed out an old barn, with questions about the potential of that area to be a place for additional development.
- Rachel Simonds noted that if we want to support economic growth, then we want to make sure we have the physical space for that. The old plan was hyper-focused. If we want to be about building opportunities, then we need to care about more than the Center.
- Anita Long agreed about broader planning, but also noted needs to align planned development uses with the zoning map. We still need someone from APA to come to help clarify what can and cannot be done with zoning districts, given that Caroga is has an Agency-Approved Local Land Use Plan (ALLUP). Ideally, we could do both, and find a way to plan, feature, and promote all parts of our Town.
- Chris Foss told a story of doing survey and planning work in the Adirondack Park. A client wanted to do a new project, but Chris had to say, “Well, no you can’t do that. We have the APA here.” The client questioned that saying, “Well, it must be grandfathered, right? My grandfather owned this property!”
- Chris Foss noted the value of the APA, consultants, residents, and local businesses in this process.



### 7. Draft Documents

- Chris Foss said, “None of this is carved in stone at this point. We need drafts to keep us looking and know what we’re talking about as we go forward. Maybe at the end of this, we go back, go through the plan, and talk about how things fit into chapters as we laid them out.”
- Rachel Simonds suggested that Committee members work on pulling together what we’ve already done to draft the initial Background section (Intro, Where We Are, Where We Want To Be).
- Anita Long added that Background also ties together with the Demographic Profile in the Appendix, and we can work on completing that draft and getting data we need to do that (e.g., housing info). (see [https://www.townofcaroga.com/comprehensive\\_plan/caroga\\_demographic\\_profile\\_draft\\_09-20-2024.pdf](https://www.townofcaroga.com/comprehensive_plan/caroga_demographic_profile_draft_09-20-2024.pdf))
- Chris Foss said that he asked Code Officer Anthony Fancher for data, with no reply, and will try again.

- Chris Foss set a goal to revise the Introduction. He read from page 2 of the 2011 Plan’s Introduction: (see [https://townofcaroga.com/comprehensive\\_plan/town%20of%20caroga%20adopted%20comprehensive%20plan.pdf](https://townofcaroga.com/comprehensive_plan/town%20of%20caroga%20adopted%20comprehensive%20plan.pdf)).
- People noted it captures themes but feels “old.” Some parts are too specific, too vague, or outdated.
- Conceptually, questions exist about “Caroga as a Gateway Town” and the “Town Center as the hub.”
- Anita Long pointed out that several towns call themselves the “Gateway to the Adirondacks,” so what distinguishes Caroga? At public meetings for the Mohawk Regional Economic Development Council, a reference was made to Old Forge as the gateway to the Adirondacks, and someone asked, “Where is Caroga? Is that part of Northville?” In many ways, Caroga is a “Hidden Gateway to be discovered.”
- Chris Foss asked, “Are we really a gateway? It’s not like people come and drive on through. We are the Adirondacks. The Adirondacks start here.” Plus, in Northville, they feature the entrance to the Northville-Lake Placid Trail. They have a park downtown with an archway and Adirondack thing. They improved the trail and it draws people to the Village of Northville in the Town of Northampton.
- Rachel Simonds suggested exploring ways to be more welcoming to share all the things you can do here. “We don’t have a visitor center, or a public place or site to get information for things to do. If we are going to welcome tourists, then how do we do that? Maybe that could be a priority?”
- Maybe another important introductory point in the redeveloped plan is that we are part of the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council (MVREDC), and we are only 1 of 6 entirely within the Adirondack Park, and of those 1 in 4 in Fulton County. [Webb & Ohio in Herkimer County—including the Hamlet of Old Forge; Caroga, Stratford, Bleecker, and Northampton in Fulton County.]
- Jim Hale said, “This is the first I heard that Caroga is part of the Mohawk Valley. I thought that was Amsterdam to the other side at Utica and Rome, just right along the Mohawk River.”
- The point here is the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council (REDC)<sup>1</sup>. If Caroga wants grants to fund local projects, then we must build capacity to deliver and get them funded. To do that, we need to incorporate Smart Growth principles and align with regional priorities.

### **8. Public Comments**

- Linda Gilbert noted, “When you say ‘Gateway’, I think of ‘Archway.’ I think of something physical and obvious that maybe could be done that sets us apart as “The Gateway.” Like at Daytona Beach, there’s the Daytona Beach Walkway that’s all lit up. Something like that.”
- The September/October issues of the New York Association of Towns “Talk of the Towns” features “Planning for Growth: From Bricks and Mortar to Broadband—What It Takes to Prepare for Lasting Growth” (see [https://labellapc.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/New-York-Association-of-Towns-Talk-of-the-Towns\\_Sept-Oct-2025.pdf](https://labellapc.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/New-York-Association-of-Towns-Talk-of-the-Towns_Sept-Oct-2025.pdf))<sup>2</sup>. Clerk Gilbert suggested reading this. She asked, “How is our Comprehensive Plan going to address such issues? Are we fitting together with adjacent municipalities to work toward common purposes?”
- The Committee responded by noting the value of both staying locally rooted and aligning Caroga’s goals with our county and region (e.g., on recreation, tourism, & trails). For example, how will the Town of Caroga secure much needed grant funding for locally-driven projects — such as municipal buildings — when grants require aligning local priorities with regional strategies?<sup>3</sup>

### 9. Action Items

#### A. Hourly Consultant Services

- Chris Foss will follow up with Lisa Nagle and Susan Caruvana from EDR.

#### B. Smart Growth Community Planning Grant

- Anita Long and Chris Foss will work with Aaron Enfield on the required grant RFP for bids.

#### C. Ongoing Plan Review

- Chris Foss asked Anthony Fancher about housing data, with no reply, and will ask again.
- Committee members will review and share input for the *Background & Demographic Profile*.

### 10. Next Meeting

**Due to upcoming holidays, the next meeting will be Thursday December 18 at Caroga Town Hall.**

<https://carogacomprehensiveplan.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/comprehensive-plan-estimated-project-timeline.pdf>

Respectfully submitted,

Anita McMartin Long

CPC Member and Secretary

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### Endnotes

The following source citations and links are for readers' reference about points made in the meeting.

<sup>1</sup> Regarding the Mohawk Valley REDC, according to <https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/about> ,

*"The Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs) support New York State's innovative approach that empowers regional stakeholders to establish pathways to prosperity, mapped out in regional strategic plans. Through the REDCs, community, business, academic leaders, and members of the public in each region of the State put to work their unique knowledge and understanding of local priorities and assets to help direct State investment in support of job creation and economic growth...Each Regional Council has become the voice of the region. What started as an initiative focused on economic investments has blossomed into a program that invests in people and communities."*

The REDCs are the grants investment hub, overseeing the Consolidated Funding Application (where Caroga's 2025 Community Planning Grant application was sent and scored before going to DOS). The 10 regions are: Capital Region, Central New York, Finger Lakes, Long Island, Mid-Hudson, Mohawk Valley, New York City, North Country, Southern Tier, and Western New York. The Mohawk Valley REDC includes 6 counties: Fulton, Montgomery, Herkimer, Oneida, Otsego, and Schoharie.

<sup>2</sup> Town Clerk Lina Gilbert suggested the Committee read the September/October issue of the NYAOT magazine "Talk of the Towns" featuring "Planning for Growth: From Bricks and Mortar to Broadband—What It Takes to Prepare for Lasting Growth" (see [https://labellapc.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/New-York-Association-of-Towns-Talk-of-the-Towns\\_Sept-Oct-2025.pdf](https://labellapc.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/New-York-Association-of-Towns-Talk-of-the-Towns_Sept-Oct-2025.pdf) ).

While not read aloud, it provides,

*"Comprehensive master planning should be an intensive, collaborative process that includes consultations with municipal officials and local stakeholders along with significant community outreach through public hearings and surveys. The goal of public outreach is both to inform the community and to gather feedback, capturing valuable insights into local strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities to create a stronger comprehensive master plan rooted in the context of the community it serves...[Such] an approach...results in a smoother process and a stronger final plan."*

The magazine also details the rapid-growth from Micron Technology's investment of over \$100 billion to build a semiconductor manufacturing facility in Central New York. In the Mohawk Valley, Wolfspeed is investing and leading the silicon carbide tech manufacturing. In addition, Chobani's founder Hamdi Ulukaya (also the owner of Euphrates in Johnstown) is investing \$1.2 billion in a new state-of-the-art Mohawk Valley Dairy in Rome. Chobani's plant will be the largest in the world and create a massive natural food ecosystem, changing the supply chains, work force, and quality of life in our region.

*"Locales without a growth strategy are at risk of missing out on a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to leverage growth—a chance to bring in tax revenue, boost economically disadvantaged areas, and build community identity. Get ready."*

Finally, the NYAOT magazine featured "Planning for the Power Shift...Solar Growth". Towns need to proactively understand the surge and be ready to address opportunities as well as challenges. Readiness hinges on each municipality's local solar law, which establishes standards for development.

*"By proactively updating local laws, aligning solar policy with planning documents, and approaching development with a structured, informed mindset, communities can ensure that solar growth reflects their values, protects their resources, and contributes meaningfully to a more sustainable future."*

<sup>3</sup> The 2025 Community Survey Report concluded,

*"As we look ahead together, we are committed to redeveloping the Town of Caroga Comprehensive Plan — grounded in community input and Smart Growth strategic principles — to help revitalize the heart of Caroga. Our shared goal is to create vibrant, welcoming spaces that attract sustainable investments and growth while honoring the Town's unique natural character and identity" (see <https://carogacomprehensiveplan.wordpress.com/survey/> ).*