



PO Box 163
Ravena, NY 12143
RCSBizAssoc@gmail.com

October 22, 2019

Town of Coeymans Board
Town of Coeymans
18 Russell Ave
Ravena, NY 12143

RE: Joint Comprehensive Planning

Dear Supervisor Crandall and Board Members Baker, Burns, Dolan and Youmans:

Several times this year I have stood before you at Town Board meetings and requested your consideration of joint comprehensive planning with the Village of Ravena. The last Town comprehensive plan was adopted in 2006. Much has changed in the past 13 years and that's why I have been so passionate with my request for joint planning. I write to formally outline our specific plan and request \$15,625 be earmarked for the project in the Town's 2020 budget.

Why is joint comprehensive planning necessary?

Great communities are not created by accident. A joint comprehensive plan will examine the Town and Village's strengths and weaknesses and how best to utilize them to improve our community. By working together, the Town and Village alleviate the burden of time, human resources, money and effort falling solely on one entity. Also, combining the forces of both entities and establishing common goals will give the taxpayers and citizens of Coeymans a comprehensive plan that protects their government assets and helps build a stronger economy. RCS CBA's Board of Directors and Economic Development Advisory Committee believe the taxpayers and citizens of Coeymans deserve to have their local governments collaborate for the betterment of our community.

Joint planning is absolutely possible and there are examples of other New York State towns and villages that have successfully gone through the process. The Town of Richfield and Village of Richfield Springs created a joint plan, which they adopted in January 2018 and December 2017 respectively. We would be happy to share a copy of their final plan with you.

Comprehensive Plans are expensive to create. How can the Town and Village afford this?

RCS CBA recommends the Town and Village apply for a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) grant through New York State next year. We have learned through our research that this is the only state grant available for comprehensive planning. Additional monies may be available to help the Town and Village implement components of the final plan.

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An LWRP grant would give the Town and Village most of the money it needs for comprehensive planning. The municipalities would hire a professional to walk the community through the planning process that includes the formation of a joint planning committee and collecting community input.

You can learn more about LWRP grants at <https://www.dos.ny.gov/opd/programs/lwrp.html>

How much of the expense will an LWRP grant cover?

Comprehensive plans can cost up to \$125,000. An LWRP grant will cover up to 75% of the cost, but the remaining 25% must be paid for by the municipalities, hence why we are asking for the collaboration of both entities. In this case RCS CBA suggests the Town and Village split that expense 50/50. The Town and Village would each need to make an estimated \$15,625 available for the project.

If we create a comprehensive plan, who will implement it?

A comprehensive plan will give our community a roadmap for success, but plans are useless if they aren't acted upon. Other communities surrounding Coeymans are seeing transformation because there are professionals helping them implement their comprehensive plans. It is simply not possible or fair to ask part-time board members or volunteer committees to put these plans to work (although they can certainly help).

RCS CBA is recommending the Town and Village ultimately hire an economic development planner and coordinator to bring our community's comprehensive plan to life. This is a topic for future discussion and future budgets. Our goal at this time is to gain cooperation in the creation of the plan that would be the road map for such a professional to implement in an estimated 2.5 years.

RCS CBA would like to discuss the LWRP grant and comprehensive planning in more detail and will meet at your convenience. However, we are requesting the addition of at least \$15,625 in the 2020 Town of Coeymans budget.

We look forward to hearing from you on this matter. RCS CBA can envision a future for Coeymans with a stronger economy thanks to this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aaron Flach', written in a cursive style.

Aaron Flach
Acting Chair