

Caroline and the Comprehensive Plan

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

Comprehensive plans are developed by the residents of a town working together to describe a town's goals, aspirations, values, and visions. Once this official statement by the community is developed, it is adopted by a town board resolution. A comprehensive plan guides official decision making and provides a statement of values and priorities for potential grantors and persons pursuing development.

Comprehensive plans are not zoning! A comprehensive plan is a guide to what a community aspires to be; in contrast, zoning is a regulatory law that enforces allowed land uses.

Does Caroline have a Comprehensive Plan?

Yes! Caroline adopted a comprehensive plan in 2006; copies are available on-line at the Planning Board page of the Town of Caroline website. (Go to www.townofcaroline.org, choose Offices→Committees→Planning.) Printed versions of Caroline's Comprehensive Plan are available for viewing at the Town Offices, Town Library, Brookton's Market, Dandy Mart, and Speedsville General Store. In 2015, the town Planning Board began reviewing and updating Caroline's Comprehensive Plan; as part of that review, town residents completed a survey in 2016.

Do Comprehensive Plans mean anything?

Yes! Comprehensive plans are an important and powerful tool that towns can use to guide changes in a community. Comprehensive plans are guides that give direction and legislative priorities to a town board. If an action taken by a town board is not consistent with the town's comprehensive plan, that decision can be challenged. Town development guidance laws (for example, the Site Plan Review and Subdivision Review laws) and land disturbance regulations (such as stormwater or erosion control laws) must not run counter to the comprehensive plan.

What is happening now with Caroline's Comprehensive Plan review?

Outreach sessions to gather public input were held in 2015 and 2016 and a survey of residents was conducted in 2016. The survey showed widespread support for the goals and visions as put forth in the 2006 Comprehensive Plan. Because of this support, the Caroline Planning Board is currently focusing on updating and improving strategies for implementing the Comprehensive Plan. A big part of that effort is gathering ideas from town residents.

How can I contribute ideas?

This fall, the Caroline Planning Board will hold three community workshops to generate and develop strategies for implementing the Comprehensive Plan. Please come to any or all of the workshops! Ideas can also be emailed at any time to Planning_Board@townofcaroline.org.

First Workshop: Making Caroline a More Livable Community
Tuesday, November 13, 7-9 PM
Brooktondale Community Center

Second Workshop: Protecting Caroline's Environment and Natural Resources
Thursday, December 13, 7-9 PM
Brooktondale Fire Hall

Third Workshop: Preserving Caroline's Rural Character
Saturday, January 12th, 5-8 PM (includes potluck dinner)
Speedsville Community Center