



Village of Homer

Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan

Public Workshop #1 Summary

Monday, June 15th, 2026, 6:00-7:30 pm

Center for the Arts, 72 Main Street, Homer, NY 13077

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1. Overview

The Village of Homer is developing a Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan that will guide development and community-related decisions for the next 20 years. By building on the successes of the existing Comprehensive Plan, the update will help shape a strategic and actionable roadmap for the Village's future.

The Village of Homer held its first public workshop for the Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan on June 15th, 2026, at the Center for the Arts in Homer, NY. The objective of the meeting was to introduce the Plan, discuss the planning process and schedule, and solicit feedback from community members about opportunities for change and their vision for the future of the village.

A total of 25 people attended the public workshop. A list of attendees is included in Appendix A. Photographs are included in Appendix B. All comments from the in-person interactive activities are included in Appendix C. The [presentation slides](#) are available on the project website.

2. Key Themes from Workshop

Current Perception of the Village of Homer

Public workshop attendees described the village of Homer as a close-knit, family-oriented community defined by its historic character, walkability, and strong sense of place. Valued community assets include the Center for the Arts of Homer, the Village Green, Homer Public Library, local parks, community events, historic architecture, established neighborhoods, and small businesses. Attendees emphasized that these features contribute to Homer's welcoming atmosphere, quality of life, and identity as a small village.

Current and Future Priorities for the Village of Homer

Looking ahead, public workshop attendees expressed a desire to preserve Homer's character while supporting thoughtful growth and investment. Key priorities include expanding housing options and affordability for young adults, families, seniors, and those aging in place; improving connectivity and accessibility through sidewalks, pedestrian safety, transportation, access to the Tioughnioga River, and connections across the NY Route 281 corridor. There is a desire to strengthen economic vitality by supporting local businesses, downtown amenities, adaptive reuse of underutilized properties, and small-scale development that fits the Village's character.

Feedback from the group activity expressed the importance of protecting historic resources, community events, arts and cultural assets, and the overall sense of place that defines the Village of Homer. Community members identified opportunities to enhance the Village through cultivating heritage tourism, improving access to the river and recreational amenities such as trails, improving gathering spaces, waterfront access, and revitalization of vacant or underused sites, including former industrial properties.

Public workshop attendees support economic development that strengthens the tax base, expands housing opportunities, supports local businesses, and revitalizes underutilized areas while maintaining Homer's scale, walkability, and historic identity. Additional priorities include addressing sidewalks, parking, traffic, infrastructure capacity, environmental stewardship, and maintaining high-quality public services.

3. Presentation Overview

Village Mayor Patrick Clune opened the workshop by welcoming attendees and explaining the purpose of the meeting. He then introduced Emma Falkenstein, Consultant Team Project Manager from Highland Planning, who led the presentation and reviewed the meeting agenda, which included the following:

- Team Introductions
- About the Comprehensive Plan
- Group Activity
- Next Steps

During the presentation, Emma Falkenstein reviewed the project team, which includes Village Staff, Highland Planning, and the Steering Committee. She explained the role of public engagement in the planning process and noted that community members will have multiple opportunities to provide input through workshops, community events, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, surveys, and the project website.

Emma explained that a Comprehensive Plan is a living, forward-looking policy document that guides land use laws, development decisions, and community investments. The Village's Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan will include an overall vision, core values, planning principles, and priority policy areas and action items to guide development in Homer over the next two decades. Emma noted that the project is funded by the NYS Smart Growth Community Planning Grant Program, which requires the plan to incorporate the following Smart Growth Principles:

- **Encourage Mixed Uses:** Allow for and encourage neighborhoods with a mix of uses, such as residential, commercial, and community spaces.
- **Expand Housing Choices:** Enable a diverse mix of housing types, providing opportunity and choice for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes.
- **Revitalize Existing Urban Centers:** Prioritize infill and redevelopment of existing buildings to revitalize neighborhoods and downtowns, including areas around public transit.
- **Expand Transportation Choices:** Prioritize transportation options that are safe and accessible for everyone, including pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit users.
- **Make Smart Infrastructure Investments:** Encourage compact neighborhood design and concentrated development around existing infrastructure.
- **Preserve Open Space and Farmland:** Preserve open space, agricultural resources, and natural resources.
- **Create Great Spaces:** Provide well-planned, equitable, and accessible public spaces for people of all ages and abilities.
- **Protect the Environment & Address Climate Change:** Promote climate resiliency and adaptation, preferably through nature-based solutions, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Respect Community Character:** Build on unique traits to create an attractive and welcoming community with a strong sense of place.

- **Plan Inclusively & Collaboratively:** Engage in an inclusive, collaborative public planning process that considers the needs and character of the community.

Emma outlined the planning process, which includes the following five phases.

- **Existing Conditions:** began in January 2026 and included developing the community participation plan and community profile.
- **Vision and Strategy Development:** scheduled for June through August 2026, including drafting the vision, policy focus areas, and goals.
- **Action Planning:** scheduled for August through October 2026, includes drafting short- and long-term strategies and actions for the plan.
- **Draft Plan Development:** includes the development of the draft Plan throughout fall of 2026.
- **Final Plan Review and Adoption:** scheduled for December 2026 through Q1 2027, includes review by the Village and County boards, a public hearing, and plan adoption.

Following the presentation, public workshop attendees were invited to ask questions. Below is a summary of the questions asked and the answers provided by the Project Team.

Questions & Answers

What is the budget for this Comprehensive Plan?

- The budget for the Village of Homer Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan is \$83,000.

When was the last time you were impressed by the planning process and outcome of a community's comprehensive plan?

- Highland Planning's work with the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council on its ACHIEVE Competition stands out as a project that demonstrates strong alignment, coordination, and the leveraging of community assets to advance a constellation of projects across the Mohawk Valley Region. We anticipate a similarly coordinated and impactful outcome for Homer's Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan to build on the Village's assets and leverage synergies with the Town, Cortland County, and the region.

Is there anything the Village of Homer can do to align with the Cortland County Strategic Plan?

- The Village of Homer is in contact with Cortland County to support alignment between the plans. The Town of Homer has also received a Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan grant and is in the RFP phase to select a firm. Continued communication among the County, Town, and Village is important for success.

Who are the Steering Committee members?

- All Steering Committee members in attendance at the public workshop were asked to stand and identify themselves. The Steering Committee list will be posted to the project website.

What happens to our feedback after this public workshop?

- A meeting summary will be made available on the website and emailed out to those who have signed up for project updates. Feedback gathered from community engagement will help shape the direction and priorities of the plan.

4. In-Person Group Activity Summary

Following the Q&A, Emma Falkenstein explained that meeting attendees would break into groups to complete the group discussion questions. All public workshop attendees were split into five groups to complete group discussion worksheets. Groups completed discussion questions centered around four themes: Places to Live, Places to Connect, Places to Thrive, and Places to Protect.

After completing the discussion questions, groups were asked to “report out” on their top priority for the Village of Homer. The key takeaways from all groups’ answers to the four themes: Places to Live, Places to Connect, Places to Thrive, and Places to Protect are summarized below. A full list of all comments is included in Appendix C.

At the conclusion of the Group Activity, attendees were encouraged to complete the community survey and visit the project website for updates: <https://www.villageofhomerny.gov/comprehensive-plan/>.

Places to Live

What do you love about living in the Village of Homer?

- **Strong Sense of Community & Small-Town Character:** Meeting participants frequently described Homer as having a close-knit, welcoming atmosphere with a strong sense of community. Words and phrases such as “community vibe,” “community closeness,” “Mayberry quality,” “peaceful,” “relatively quiet,” and “great feel, especially for raising kids” reflect appreciation for the Village’s small-town identity and neighborly character.
- **Arts, Culture & Community Events:** The Center for the Arts of Homer was repeatedly identified as a major asset that contributes to the Village’s identity and quality of life. Meeting participants highlighted the Village Green and all the activities, cultural events, concerts, and community gatherings, including “Music on the Green”, as important places and experiences that bring people together.
- **Walkability & Neighborhood Design:** Walkability was one of the most frequently mentioned strengths. Meeting participants value being able to walk throughout the Village, including to events, parks, services, and neighborhood destinations. Other characteristics praised included Homer’s street pattern and beautiful neighborhoods.
- **Historic Character & Preservation:** Community members expressed strong appreciation for Homer’s historic atmosphere and the preservation of its buildings and landscapes. The Village’s history, architecture, and sense of place were viewed as important qualities that distinguish Homer from other communities.
- **Family-Friendly Quality of Life:** Many meeting participants emphasized Homer as a desirable place to raise children due to its safety, schools, recreation opportunities, and community environment. Meeting participants specifically noted that the Village feels safe for kids and provides a supportive environment for families.
- **Local Services & Civic Assets:** Meeting participants highlighted the availability and quality of local services, including the Department of Public Works, Recreation programs, police, and

fire services. The presence of local institutions such as the newspaper and radio station also contributes to community connection and communication.

- **Recreation, Green Space & Local Amenities:** Community spaces such as the Village Green, farmers market, and Village parks were identified as important assets. Meeting participants value having places to attend events, socialize, and participate in community life without leaving the Village.

Do you have any concerns about being able to live in the Village in the future?

- **Housing Affordability & Limited Housing Options:** Meeting participants expressed concerns about the ability to find appropriate housing options for different stages of life. Specifically, attendees perceive the existence of an availability gap between larger family homes and smaller, higher-quality housing options, particularly for young adults, empty nesters, and seniors. There was concern amongst meeting participants that current residents may have difficulty downsizing while remaining in the Village.
- **Property Taxes & Cost of Living:** Rising property taxes, school taxes, and the overall tax burden were major concerns. Meeting participants noted that increasing costs may make it difficult for many households, particularly seniors on fixed incomes, to remain in the Village. Some questioned how the Village can maintain services while also keeping housing affordable.
- **Maintaining Services & Expanding the Tax Base:** Meeting participants discussed the challenge of maintaining high-quality services with a declining population. Some suggested opportunities, such as service consolidation and strategies to increase the population to stabilize the tax base while protecting Village services.
- **Infrastructure Challenges & Connectivity:** Broken sidewalks and infrastructure concerns were mentioned as barriers to maintaining quality of life. Meeting participants also expressed frustration with the impact of the NY Route 281 corridor, which has historically created a division between the eastern and western portions of the Village. State ownership of some roads was also noted as a challenge for local control and improvements.
- **Aging Population & Support Needs:** Meeting participants raised concerns about the availability of financial and labor assistance for home maintenance, completion of indoor and outdoor chores, and other support services that help people age in place.

How could housing be improved in the Village?

- **More Diverse Housing Choices:** Meeting participants expressed a desire for a broader mix of housing types, including smaller homes, apartments, senior housing, and options for young adults. Attendees specifically mentioned the need for 55+ housing, one-story apartments, and ranch-style homes to allow community members to stay in Homer as their needs change.
- **Rehabilitation & Preservation of Existing Housing Stock:** Many meeting participants emphasized the importance of maintaining and improving existing homes and buildings. Suggestions included rehabilitating vacant or abandoned properties, improving housing maintenance, and preserving the exterior character of historic homes.
- **Historic Preservation & Housing Character:** Meeting participants noted that Homer's historic character is a major asset and suggested protecting the appearance and integrity of

historic buildings. Some attendees discussed the idea of the Village expanding the historic district to support preservation efforts.

- **Affordable & Attainable Housing:** Meeting participants expressed concern that new housing should remain accessible to lower-income community members and not only serve higher-income households. Attendees cautioned against improvements that could lead to displacement or increased rents that push out existing residents and businesses.
- **Adaptive Reuse & Underutilized Properties:** Meeting participants identified opportunities to reuse vacant and underutilized properties, including abandoned buildings such as former industrial/factory sites. Rezoning industrial areas and encouraging redevelopment were mentioned as possible strategies.
- **Housing for All Generations:** Meeting participants discussed the potential for more innovative housing models, including shared or communal living arrangements that could serve both younger and older community members.
- **Information & Support for Homeowners:** Attendees suggested better communication about available housing programs, including continued use of Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) funding, and clearer information about how housing improvements may impact property taxes.
- **Protecting Community Stability:** Meeting participants expressed concern about short-term rentals changing the character of neighborhoods and potentially reducing housing availability for full-time community members.

Places to Connect

What are your favorite gathering or public spaces in the Village? How do you use them?

- **Arts, Culture & Community Gathering:** The Center for the Arts of Homer was one of the most frequently mentioned gathering spaces and is viewed as a key part of Homer's identity. Meeting participants noted the use of the Center for shows, cultural events, meetings, and opportunities to connect. Seasonal events such as Holiday in Homer, Magic on Main, and the 50-Mile Yard Sale were also identified as important community traditions.
- **Village Green, Parks & Outdoor Spaces:** The Village Green was repeatedly identified as a valued gathering place for events, socializing, and community activities. Community members also highlighted parks and recreation areas, including Durkee Park, Vernon Park, the courts behind the American Legion, the Little League fields located at the Griggs Field Complex, Newtown playground, and fishing areas. These spaces support family activities, recreation, and informal gatherings.
- **Community Resources & Meeting Spaces:** The Homer Public Library and Community Building (Pat Hill) were frequently mentioned as important places for programs, classes, meetings, and community activities. Other gathering locations included the Homer Elks Lodge, the pavilion behind the fire station, and the Farmers Market.
- **Local Connections & Everyday Destinations:** Meeting participants also identified local businesses and everyday places as important social spaces, including Dasher's Corner Pub. These destinations help create opportunities for informal connection and strengthen the Village's community feel.

What are the barriers that prevent community members from accessing public spaces in the Village?

- **Transportation, Parking & Connectivity:** Limited transportation options, including reduced public transportation availability on weekends, were identified as barriers. Parking constraints, particularly near the Center for the Arts, were also noted. Meeting participants highlighted challenges with walking and biking connections, including incomplete sidewalks, sidewalk conditions, and difficulty crossing NY Route 281. Increased shuttle options and better connections between destinations were suggested.
- **Cost & Affordability:** Some meeting participants noted that cost can limit access to certain gathering spaces and activities. Examples included ticket costs for Center for the Arts events and higher prices at local restaurants, creating a desire for more and affordable gathering options, such as coffee shops or casual restaurants.
- **Awareness & Accessibility:** Meeting participants noted that some spaces, programs, and events are not widely known. Improved communication about available resources could help increase participation. Personal health and mobility challenges were also identified as barriers for some individuals.
- **River & Trail Access:** Meeting participants expressed interest in improving access to the Tioughnioga River and creating trails that connect waterfront areas with other public spaces and destinations throughout the Village.

What types of gathering spaces and/or community events would you like to see more of in the Village?

- **More Social & Commercial Gathering Spaces:** Meeting participants expressed interest in additional casual gathering places, including coffee shops, restaurants, pubs, and ice cream socials. A sit-down coffee shop and more places to gather informally were frequently mentioned.
- **Year-Round Indoor & Community Facilities:** Meeting participants identified a need for more indoor gathering spaces that support meetings, events, and activities throughout the year. Suggestions included a larger community meeting room with improved capacity and HVAC, rental spaces, event facilities, and winter gathering opportunities.
- **Youth, Family & Recreation Opportunities:** Meeting participants would like to see more places for children and families, including after-school spaces, youth activities, walking opportunities, and recreational amenities such as a dog park.
- **Work & Collaboration Spaces:** Meeting participants identified opportunities for co-working spaces or shared workspaces to support remote workers, entrepreneurs, and community interaction.
- **Waterfront, Historic & Visitor Opportunities:** Meeting participants discussed opportunities to better utilize waterfront areas and strengthen connections to public spaces. The proposed Homer's Lincoln Legacy Monument was identified as a potential gathering area if paired with landscaping and historic interpretation. The proposed Little White Church Community Center was also mentioned as a possible venue for community events.
- **Hospitality & Visitor Amenities:** Some meeting participants identified opportunities for boutique lodging, bed and breakfasts, and short-term rentals to support visitors and events.

Places to Thrive

What do you like about downtown Homer? Where do you go most often?

- **Downtown Character, History & Walkability:** Meeting participants appreciate that Homer has a defined downtown with a strong sense of place, historic character, and a “Lifetime movie” atmosphere. Walkability, safety, Village decorations (flags, flowers, and seasonal displays), and the ability to access many daily needs without leaving the Village were frequently mentioned.
- **Arts, Culture & Community Events:** The Center for the Arts of Homer was repeatedly identified as a major downtown asset. Meeting participants also highlighted events such as Music on the Green, Holiday in Homer, Magic on Main, and Firemen Field Days as important activities that bring people downtown.
- **Local Businesses & Everyday Services:** Meeting participants frequently mentioned local business destinations including Dasher's Corner Pub, The Exchange Bakery, Homer Men and Boys, Super Cream, and Homer IGA. Essential services such as the post office, banks, grocery store, schools, Recreation Department, and library were viewed as important assets that keep downtown active.
- **Library & Community Programs:** The Homer Public Library was one of the most frequently mentioned destinations, valued for programs and services that serve all ages.
- **Community Facilities & Gathering Places:** Meeting participants also identified places such as the Village Green, Fire Department facilities, and other public spaces as important gathering destinations.

What could be improved to help increase downtown vibrancy?

- **More Businesses & Downtown Amenities:** Meeting participants expressed interest in additional destinations such as a coffee shop, brewery, pharmacy, more restaurants, and more casual gathering spaces. A year-round farmers' market was also suggested to create more consistent activity.
- **Housing & Downtown Activity:** Meeting participants noted that adding apartments above businesses could increase foot traffic and support a more active downtown environment. Additional lodging options, such as Airbnbs and Bed and Breakfasts, were also mentioned as potential opportunities.
- **Infrastructure, Safety & Streetscape Improvements:** Meeting participants identified sidewalk repairs, improved signage, more benches, and pedestrian safety improvements as priorities. Concerns included traffic speed, speed limits, crosswalks, and pedestrian crossings along Main Street.
- **Existing Business Improvements:** Meeting participants noted that some existing downtown businesses and facilities could benefit from updates, including improvements to the Village Market and grocery store conditions.
- **New Community Destinations:** Projects such as Homer's Lincoln Legacy Monument and the desire to build a corner store in the Village were identified as opportunities to create additional gathering places and strengthen downtown identity.

Are there underutilized spaces within the Village that could be better used?

- **Vacant & Industrial Properties:** Meeting participants highlighted underused industrial sites and buildings, including the former soap factory, the old Center Street Sealtest Dairy plant, the R.T. Miller building, James Street/Elm Street industrial areas, the peanut factory area, and silo along the railroad tracks. Some suggested redevelopment, reuse, or removal of deteriorated structures to improve the appearance and function of these areas.
- **Waterfront & Recreation Opportunities:** The waterfront was frequently mentioned as an opportunity for redevelopment, including ideas such as trails, public access, fishing areas, and an edible park. Meeting participants referenced areas such as Durkee Park, Casterline Pond, and Casey Fields as potential opportunities to better connect people with natural resources.
- **Historic & Gateway Improvements:** Meeting participants identified historically significant structures, including the Circus House and the old train station on James Street, as opportunities for preservation and reuse. Improving these areas could create a more attractive village gateway and strengthen Homer's historic identity.
- **Public Spaces & Community Assets:** Meeting participants also mentioned opportunities to better utilize existing spaces such as the pavilion behind the fire station, bridges, waterfront areas, and other public properties.

Places to Protect

What major weather events have affected the Village?

- **Flooding & Severe Storm Events:** Meeting participants referenced a historic flood event on March 17, 1865, when a major thaw caused dams to break and flood Main Street. More recently, severe storms, including the "2024 microburst", caused significant tree damage. Windstorms and severe thunderstorms were also identified as recurring concerns.
- **Trees, Utilities & Infrastructure Impacts:** Strong winds and storms have resulted in downed trees, creating concerns about tree maintenance, electrical grid reliability, and emergency response. Meeting participants noted the importance of replacing aging shade trees while maintaining Village character.
- **Winter Weather & Snow Management:** Snowstorms and winter conditions were frequently mentioned. Meeting participants discussed concerns related to snow removal, salt availability, and maintaining safe roads and sidewalks during winter weather.
- **Environmental Sustainability & Resilience:** Meeting participants identified opportunities to strengthen environmental practices, including expanded recycling, composting, waste prevention, and bringing back EV charging stations. Protecting the Village's public water supply and natural environment were also noted as priorities.

How would new development impact the Village?

- **Economic Growth & Revitalization Opportunities:** Meeting participants noted that thoughtful development could broaden the tax base, revitalize underused or rundown spaces, create jobs, increase foot traffic, and support more businesses. Additional housing and tourism opportunities were viewed as potential benefits.

- **Need for Thoughtful, Context-Sensitive Development:** Meeting participants emphasized that development should be based on market demand and community needs rather than occurring without a clear purpose. Concerns were raised about protecting Homer's historic atmosphere and discouraging development that does not fit the Village's character.
- **Housing & Business Growth:** Meeting participants supported additional housing and businesses but emphasized the need to maintain the Village's scale and identity. Some expressed concerns about large apartment developments that may not align with Homer's character and stressed the importance of preserving traditional neighborhoods.
- **Infrastructure, Traffic & Capacity Concerns:** Potential impacts on sewer, water, schools, parking, traffic, and the electric grid were identified as important considerations. Meeting participants noted that increased development should be matched with infrastructure capacity and transportation planning.
- **Tourism & Visitor Opportunities:** Meeting participants discussed opportunities to build on Homer's historic assets, including heritage tourism connected to Abraham Lincoln and the Village's historic architecture. Increased lodging options, such as Airbnbs and small hotels, were viewed as opportunities, but should be balanced through appropriate zoning.
- **Development Preferences:** Meeting participants expressed support for local businesses and small-scale development while opposing big-box stores, chain businesses, and development that could overwhelm the Village's character.

What is one thing about the Village of Homer that you would like to preserve over the next 20 years?

- **Historic Character & Architecture:** Historic preservation was the most common theme. Community members emphasized protecting historic buildings, downtown character, street patterns, signage standards, streetlights, and architectural features that make Homer unique. The Village's connection to Abraham Lincoln through its three native sons was also identified as an important part of local history.
- **Village Character & Scale:** Meeting participants wanted to preserve Homer's walkability, family-oriented atmosphere, small-town feel, and residential character. Many emphasized maintaining housing density without becoming a city, limiting building heights, and avoiding development that changes the Village's identity.
- **Community Spaces, Events & Traditions:** Meeting participants highlighted the importance of the Village Green, Center for the Arts of Homer, concerts, parades, festivals, farmers market, and CSA activities as important traditions that create community connection.
- **Historic & Cultural Landmarks:** Meeting participants identified landmarks and features worth preserving, including the three historic lenticular bridges, the Little White Church, railroad tracks, historic streetscapes, and other structures that reflect Homer's history.
- **Natural Environment & Recreation:** Meeting participants emphasized preserving trees, wildlife, bird habitat, and natural areas. Replacing aging shade trees and maintaining green spaces were viewed as important for the Village's future.
- **Local Institutions & Small Businesses:** Meeting participants valued Homer's active fire department, local businesses, ice cream shops, recreational facilities, and other longstanding community institutions as essential parts of Village identity.

Report Out from Group Activity

At the conclusion of the group activity, each group was asked to report their top priority for the Village of Homer. Each group's answer is stated below:

- **Group 1:** Preserve and protect the Village's historic character and community events. Identify additional opportunities for housing expansion and ways to support the arts.
- **Group 2:** Maintain a strong sense of community through walkability, restaurants, and pedestrian safety. Continue to find ways to highlight the Village's fresh water and clean air, which contribute to the clean, welcoming feel of why people want to be here.
- **Group 3:** Highlight the Village's architecture and history as community assets. The Abraham Lincoln monument could support heritage tourism, bring more people to the Village, and enhance the local and regional economy. The potential addition of a walking trail near the monument could encourage further exploration.
- **Group 4:** Repurpose underutilized land and address areas that need remediation. Continue to celebrate and protect the many positive qualities of the Village.
- **Group 5:** Maintain the Village's character throughout downtown and surrounding areas. Address sidewalks, parking expansions, and traffic concerns while preserving downtown character and considering opportunities along the Route 281 corridor.

5. “Greetings From Future Homer” Activity

Attendees were encouraged to write a postcard to a friend about the most incredible thing that they love or that has changed in Homer in the year 2046. The responses are summarized by theme below, and a list of full responses is included in the Appendix.

- **Small-Town Character & Sense of Community:** Meeting participants repeatedly described Homer as a place with a strong sense of belonging, friendliness, and connection. Many compared the Village to “Mayberry” and emphasized that its welcoming atmosphere, neighborly relationships, and family-oriented environment are among its greatest strengths.
- **Historic Character & Unique Identity:** Meeting participants highlighted Homer’s historic architecture, tree-lined streets, parks, and preserved character as defining features. Many expressed appreciation that the Village has maintained its identity while avoiding the impacts of suburban sprawl and overdevelopment.
- **Family-Friendly Quality of Life:** Homer was frequently described as a wonderful place to raise a family. Meeting participants valued the safety, schools, community events, and overall environment that allow generations of families to grow and remain connected to the Village.
- **Walkability, Recreation & Natural Assets:** Meeting participants highlighted Homer’s walkability, sidewalks, parks, river access, and outdoor amenities. The Village Green, river corridor, and opportunities for activities such as kayaking on the Tioughnioga River were identified as important assets.
- **Arts, Culture & Local Businesses:** Meeting participants noted that residents and visitors appreciate Homer’s cultural offerings, including the Center for the Arts of Homer, music events, local restaurants, shops, and farmers’ market. These amenities were viewed as important contributors to Homer’s vibrancy and visitor appeal.
- **Housing & Aging in Place:** Meeting participants noted the importance of maintaining housing options that allow people to remain in Homer throughout different stages of life. Smaller homes and housing options for older adults were viewed positively as a way to support aging in place while preserving the Village’s character.

Appendix A: Attendees

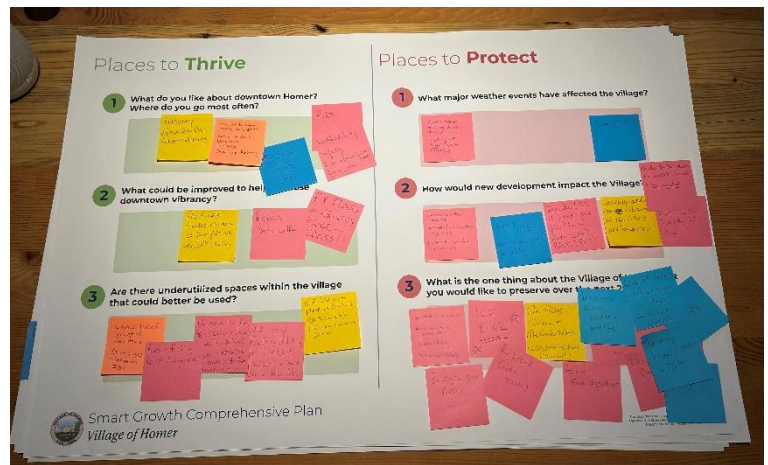
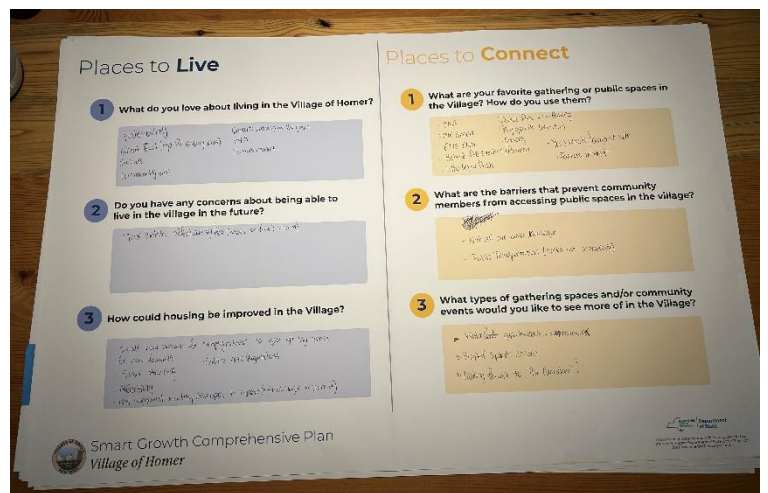
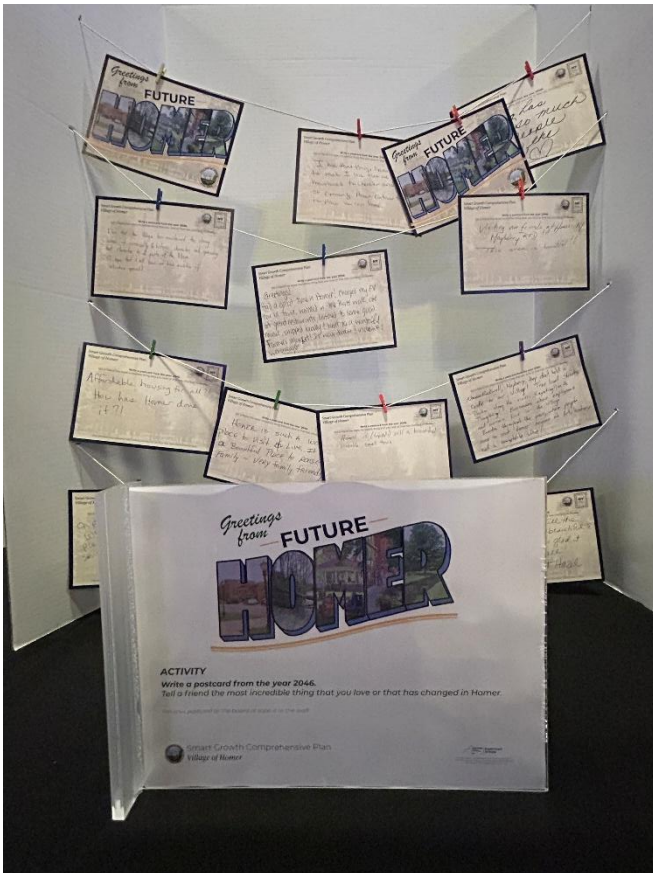
Project Team

Patrick Clune, Village of Homer Mayor
Dan Egnor, Village of Homer Clerk
Emma Falkenstein, Highland Planning
Stephanie Hyde, Highland Planning

Attendees (25)

Liz Arnold
Katheleen Beardsley
Michelle Brooker
Bryan Carr
Matthew Fagerheim
Donald Ferris
Hannah Gibbons-Arthur
Jenel Hall
Katie Kerr
Susan Kerr
Audrey Lewis
Randell Lewis
Sarah McCalloch
Elizabeth McGrath
Nikki McRae
Jason McRae
Marianne Odell
Mike Opsteegh
Megan Peroli
Ed Ravs
Leo Riley
Stephanie Spina
Charlie Spina
Martin Sweeney

Appendix B: Photos



Appendix C: Interactive Activity Comments

Greetings from Future Homer Postcard Activity

- Homer is such a wonderful place to visit and live. It is a beautiful place to raise a family. Very family friendly
- Visiting our friends at Homer NY Mayberry RFD! This area is beautiful.
- I love that the Village has maintained the strong sense of community and historic character and spreading that character to all parts of the village. I hope that it will have not been a victim of suburban sprawl
- Affordable housing for all? How has Homer done it?!
- Greetings! Had a great time in Homer! Charged my EV car in town. Walked on the River walk, ate at great restaurants, listened to some good music, shopped locally and went a wonderful farmers market. It was diverse, inclusive and welcoming.
- Homer is hopefully still a beautiful livable small town
- Oh Homer! What a lovely, historic place with a wonderful sense of community. You should visit.
- Thank you for maintaining the family friendly community of our village. It is a wonderful place to raise a family.
- I love that I was raised in Homer and also raised my children in the village
- The Village green is still the crown jewel of this beautiful and historic village! I am glad it hasn't changed at all!
- Norman Rockwell, Mayberry they don't hold a candle to our Village! Tree lined streets, parks, along the river. Kayaking on the Tioughnioga! Businesses where employees and owners live in the Village. Events throughout the year, where people come to visit Homer because of Art, history and a comfortable vibe!
- I loved returning to Homer to see a concert at the Center for the Arts. It was incredible to see how walkable Homer remains. All the sidewalks look brand new, and I noticed how lovely all the new smaller houses are. They look like a lovely community for our elders aging in place.
- I love that things haven't changed too much. I love that we have maintained the character and sense of community. Homer continues to be the place we call home.
- Housing has grown so much and the people remain the nicest!

Group Activity Comments

Places to Live

What do you love about living in the Village of Homer?

- Center for the Arts -the Village Green and all the activities
- Cultural events
- Walkability
- Music on the Green
- Peaceful atmosphere
- Walkable community
- Culture and the Center for the Arts
- Safety
- Walkability
- Relatively quiet
- Historical atmosphere and appreciation of it
- Great feel, especially for raising kids
- Schools
- Community vibe
- Concerts
- Events on the Village Green
- Center for the Arts
- Farmers Market
- Great neighborhoods and street pattern
- "Mayberry" quality
- Beautifully preserved history
- Wonderful services (DPW, Recreation, and other Village services)
- Sense of community
- Local newspaper and radio station
- Police force
- Fire Department
- Safe for kids
- Community closeness
- Beautiful place to walk around

Do you have any concerns about being able to live in the Village in the future?

- More workforce housing
- Consolidation of services to help with taxes
- Rising property and school taxes
- Availability of helpers for indoor and outdoor chores, maintenance, and daily needs
- Tax burden
- Broken sidewalks
- Need to consolidate services
- How to increase the tax base
- Tax rates and affordability for seniors on fixed incomes
- Limited ability to downsize into high-quality housing

- Gap between family-sized homes and smaller housing options; limited options for young adults
- NY Route 281 corridor separates the East and West sides of the Village, a challenge that has existed for 40–50 years
- Maintaining services with population loss
- State ownership of roads that divide the Village
- Taxes, housing, and affordability concerns

How could housing be improved in the Village?

- More variety of housing options
- Rehabilitate empty buildings and houses
- Build more new housing of different sizes
- Better maintenance of existing housing stock
- Improve and expand housing options
- Preserve exterior character of homes
- Entire Village could qualify as a historic district
- Build smaller homes for empty nesters to open larger homes for families
- Senior housing options
- Affordable housing
- Avoid improvements that increase costs and displace current residents
- High-quality senior housing
- Reuse abandoned buildings and former industrial properties
- Redevelop vacant lots and underutilized properties
- Consider rezoning industrial districts
- Avoid uncontrolled development
- Prevent short-term rentals from displacing Village residents
- “Welcome to Homer” information basket/signage for newcomers
- Explain how housing improvements may impact property taxes
- Continue CDBG grants
- Expand 55+ housing options
- Retirement housing, including one-story apartments and ranch-style homes
- Consider communal living options for young and older adults

Places to Connect

What are your favorite gathering or public spaces in the Village? How do you use them?

- Center for the Arts
- Homer Public Library
- Summer events (Holiday in Homer, Magic on Main, and the 50 Mile Yard Sale)
- Cultural events and shows
- Meetings and community gatherings
- Dasher’s
- Meeting people and connecting with others
- Library programs and classes
- Community Building (Pat Hill)
- Village green

- Parks — Durkee Park, Vernon Park, and courts behind the American Legion
- Elks Club
- Pavilion behind the Fire Department
- Little League fields
- Durkee Park for fishing
- Newtown playgrounds
- Yard waste/compost site
- Farmers Market
- Bridge behind Town Hall

What barriers prevent community members from accessing public spaces?

- Limited library hours
- Cost of events, including Center for the Arts shows
- Dasher's can be expensive
- Limited access to the river
- Need for more casual restaurants and a coffee shop
- Transportation challenges
- Personal health and mobility challenges
- Lack of awareness about available options
- Limited parking availability
- Limited public transportation options in the County
- Need for a river trail connecting multiple public spaces
- Some spaces and programs are not widely known
- Public transportation limitations, including no weekend Centro service
- Parking challenges, especially near the Center for the Arts
- Better connectivity between spaces for walking, biking, and parking
- Sidewalk gaps, including near Super Cream
- Overall sidewalk improvements needed
- Difficulty crossing NY Route 281
- Need for additional shuttle options

What types of gathering spaces or community events would you like to see more of?

- More pubs
- Ice cream socials
- Community meeting room with more capacity and HVAC
- Co-working space
- Coffee shop
- Gym
- More restaurants and coffee shops
- Proposed Homer's Lincoln Legacy Monument as a gathering space with landscaping and historic interpretation
- Restore the "Little White Church" as a community gathering venue
- Waterfront revitalization opportunities
- Indoor rental spaces
- Looking forward to "The Corner Store"
- Sit-down coffee shop
- Places for kids to go after school

- Wintertime gathering spaces
- More walking destinations and evening activities
- Event center
- Dog park
- Community center
- Boutique hotels
- Airbnbs
- Bed and breakfasts

Places to Thrive

What do you like about downtown Homer? Where do you go most often?

- Homer Public Library
- Homer Men and Boys
- Outdoor dining
- "Lifetime movie" atmosphere
- Center for the Arts
- Dasher's
- Exchange Bakery
- Village green
- Walkability
- Safety
- Post office (essential service)
- Grocery store (essential service)
- Centralized access to banks, grocery store, and post office
- History Center at Key Bank
- Super Cream
- Events on the Village green
- Magic on Main
- Holiday in Homer
- Firemen Field Days
- Brockway
- Schools
- Banks
- Restaurants
- Grocery store
- Everything you need in one place
- Homer Fire Department for yoga and activities
- Library programs for all ages
- Recreation Department
- Music on the Green
- Downtown historic character
- Homer IGA
- Village decorations (flags, flowers, seasonal displays)

What could be improved to increase downtown vibrancy?

- Update and modernize the Village Market
- Repair sidewalks

- Improve grocery store conditions
- Add a pharmacy
- Continue development around the Lincoln monument concept
- More lodging options, including Airbnbs and bed and breakfasts
- Brewery
- The Corner Store
- More restaurants
- Address traffic speeds, speed limits, and crosswalk safety
- Coffee shop
- More gathering places
- Year-round farmers market
- More benches
- Apartments above businesses to increase foot traffic
- Improved signage

Are there underutilized spaces in the Village that could be better used?

- Remove or reuse abandoned industrial facilities
- Redevelop the unused gas station on NY Route 281
- Public fishing opportunities (Casterline Pond area)
- Vacant and underused buildings
- Restore the Circus House as a historic gateway feature
- Reuse or remove the old soap factory site/R.T. Miller building
- Old Sealtest plant on Center Street
- Old train station on James Street
- Former soap factory on James Street
- Pavilion behind the Fire Department
- Durkee Park
- Casterline Pond
- Riverfront and edible park opportunities (Casey Fields area)
- NY Route 281 corridor improvements
- Bridges and waterfront connections
- Community Building
- James Street/Elm Street industrial areas
- Peanut factory area
- Railroad silo
- Contento's area
- Waterfront redevelopment

Places to Protect

What major weather events have affected the Village?

- Severe winds causing downed trees
- History of significant flooding
- Historic flood event
- March 17, 1865 -major thaw broke dams and flooded Main Street
- Snowstorms and concerns about salt availability
- Lake-effect winter weather

- 2024 microburst causing tree damage
- Windstorms and severe thunderstorms
- Snowstorms
- Electrical grid concerns
- Need for traffic control during severe weather events
- Protect public water supply
- Increase recycling, composting, and waste prevention
- Bring back EV charging stations

How would new development impact the Village?

- Broaden the tax base
- Revitalize rundown spaces
- Remove and remediate contaminated sites
- Add more housing
- More businesses would be welcome
- Depends on the type of development. Will it provide good jobs? Create pollution? Be successful?
- Add vibrancy and increase the tax base
- Could overwhelm sewer and water capacity
- Development should be based on market research and community needs
- Could threaten historic character
- Homer may miss regional growth opportunities if development occurs elsewhere
- Heritage tourism could attract visitors and families
- Increased traffic concerns
- Protect the historic nature of downtown
- Avoid large developments that do not fit Homer's character
- Increased foot traffic and tourism opportunities
- Parking, schools, housing, and infrastructure capacity must be considered
- Roundabouts may help, but should be carefully located
- No big-box stores or chain businesses
- Balance Airbnbs and lodging with appropriate zoning
- Consider the electric grid capacity

What is one thing about the Village of Homer you would like to preserve over the next 20 years?

- Historic character
- Architectural character
- Walkability
- Ice cream shops
- Ice rink
- Historic bridges
- Active railroad tracks
- Village green
- Center for the Arts
- Restore the Little White Church
- Diverse wildlife and bird habitat
- Active Fire Department

- Housing with character-avoid trailers and modular homes
- Thriving Farmers Market and CSA
- Parades
- Dog-friendly community
- Fire Department siren
- Village concerts
- Shade trees -replace aging trees now
- Historic architecture, streetlights, and signage restrictions
- Community festivals
- Homer's connection to Abraham Lincoln through its three native sons
- Three historic lenticular bridges
- Homer's character as a future asset
- Family-oriented atmosphere
- Preserve housing density -do not become a city
- Limit building heights and avoid skyscrapers
- Small business history
- Historic downtown buildings
- Community events