

# Village of Williamsville

*Local Waterfront Revitalization Program*



## Community Outreach Plan

### Primary Contacts

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## Project Background

The Village of Williamsville received a grant from the NYS Department of State to prepare a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) for Ellicott Creek. The intent of the program is to identify and address current issues and opportunities along the creek corridor, as identified by the Steering Committee and the community-at-large. The LWRP will establish foundational policy direction and set forth land, project and regulatory recommendations for the Village's waterfront revitalization area (WRA). The LWRP is being prepared for the New York State Department of State (NYS DOS) with funds provided under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund.

## Purpose of the Outreach Plan

To effectively plan for the Ellicott Creek waterfront corridor, it is important to include meaningful public participation. This Community Outreach Plan provides a blueprint for the methods and general approach for effectively engaging interested individuals, organizations, and agency representatives in the planning process for the LWRP. The input that is gathered as part of this process will be used to determine an overall vision for the Village of Williamsville WRA, help identify and confirm issues and opportunities and confirm land use and project recommendations and implementation strategies for the Ellicott Creek corridor.

While various means for community outreach have been identified below, there is always the possibility of a weak turnout or uneven groups / areas being represented. The plan should be considered a living document in which outreach elements or activities may require modification(s) to seize on opportunities as they arise during the planning process.

## Engaging the Public

### ***Waterfront Advisory Committee (WAC)***

The Village of Williamsville waterfront is an asset for area residents and visitors to the community who are provided access to Ellicott Creek at Glen Park and Island Park. There are several residents and business/property owners who are interested in the quality, character, environmental integrity and accessibility of the waterfront. Certain of these individuals volunteered or were requested to be a part of the Waterfront Advisory Committee (WAC) that is overseeing this project, with intention of ensuring that this committee included a representative selection of individuals with a stake in the community. The waterfront advisory committee, also referred to as the steering committee, is made up of representatives of the Village of Williamsville, both paid and elected individuals, as well as residents, business owners and other community stakeholders, as noted below. The committee is the primary entity for guiding the development of the LWRP, who will work directly with the consultant team throughout the project, providing local information and helping to evaluate community-supported recommendations for the waterfront. The members who have either been appointed or requested to be a part of the WAC include:

Dan Delano, Village Mayor  
Ben Vilonen, Village DPW Crew Chief  
Judy Kindron, Village Clerk/Treasurer  
Noel Barto  
Sheryl Davies  
Wes Stone

Deborah Rogers, Village Trustee and Liaison to  
Planning Board Maggie Winship, Director of  
Strategic Planning  
Keaton DePriest, Village Director of Community  
Development  
Peter Warn  
Tim Boyle

As follows, the WAC assisted with the identification of various agencies and organizations that should be included in the outreach efforts for the development of the LWRP. This list is by no means comprehensive; general advertisement and word-of-mouth may help to identify other representative individuals or groups during the planning process. An effort will be made to invite these groups to any public workshops or events.

***Municipal Officials***

- Village Board of Trustees
- Planning and Zoning Board members
- County Officials (Erie County Department of Environment and Planning)
- Municipal representatives from the Town of Amherst for cooperative/regional efforts
- Town of Amherst Sewer Maintenance Division
- ?

***State and Federal Agencies***

- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)
- US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- US Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE)
- NYS Department of State (NYSDOS)
- ?

***Local Agencies and Committees***

- Parks Committee
- Glen Park Joint Board
- Historic Preservation Committee
- Beautification Committee
- Environmental Advisory Committee
- ?

***Local Business Owners*** (those owning land within waterfront boundary area)

- Village Glen Tennis Center
- Sweet Jenny's

- Creekview Restaurant
- ?

### ***Neighborhoods/Residents***

- General residents
- Mill Street?
- ?

### ***Recreational Groups and Individuals***

- ?

## **Outreach Components**

Various methods have been identified by the WAC and consultant team for gathering input from the community about issues and opportunities along the waterfront. Following NYSDOS guidelines, there will be three public meetings during program development, as well as other outreach methods in order to reach a diverse audience. Public comments will be reviewed by the WAC and consultant team.

The methods that will be used for the waterfront planning process include:

### **1. Public Meetings/Workshops:**

- Public Informational Meeting*** - With a kickoff meeting likely to occur in **DATE??**, this meeting will be the community's first opportunity for learning about what the project entails, the process, and to provide their initial input. The intent is to identify issues and opportunities to be addressed in the policies and through specific projects and initiatives recommended in the LWRP. Some background on existing waterfront issues and opportunities and maps of the Town with key assets ("*What we have to work with?*") will be provided to give the community a better view of the waterfront area.
- Second Public Meeting*** – A second meeting in **DATE??** will be a public focus meeting centered around potential projects and other recommendations - geared towards the question "*Are we on the right track?*" in terms of issues and opportunities that we've heard from the community, WAC and other waterfront stakeholders. This meeting will provide an opportunity to vet and refine ideas and to offer additional ideas may be important for the future of the waterfront. This meeting will be conducted in an open house format where the priority areas will be summarized on larger boards and the community is invited to browse and offer comments at their leisure. The meeting could also be styled as an interactive design charrette by engaging the public review and mark up maps as a way of confirming and/or improving upon project recommendations.
- Public Hearing*** – Toward the end of the planning process, the draft LWRP will be formally presented to the community, with a question and answer format, as part of

- a public hearing held by the Village Board of Trustees prior to consideration for adoption and submittal to NYSDOS for final approval.
2. **Site tours** – A local tour of specific areas within the waterfront revitalization area boundary will provide the consultant team and WAC the opportunity to further engage the public and provide necessary reconnaissance as part of the inventory and analysis for the LWRP. The site tour will likely include walking and driving in order to fully assess the condition and character of the waterfront area. WAC members and others will be invited to provide local knowledge and integrate their comments and ideas into the inventory and planning process.
  3. **Waterfront Stakeholder's** – Those who have a direct stake in the waterfront, whether they are residents, business owners, or groups/organizations that are dependent on the water typically have the most knowledge of issues and opportunities. A dedicated stakeholder's meeting can provide vital background information to the planning process. The consultant team will work with the WAC to identify appropriate stakeholders from the lists noted above for up to two meetings aimed at gathering additional information pertinent to waterfront planning.
  4. **Surveys** – Using digital or paper surveys can help to gather input from the community. We may choose to use paper copy or digital platforms as a means of gathering targeted information about the waterfront, how it is used, what issues or opportunities exist, etc. Surveys can be employed at any public meeting, posted on the Town website, or passed around via postcards at events and functions.
  5. **Community Events** – Representatives from the WAC and consultant team will attend local events to promote the LWRP project and gather public input helpful to the project. Specific events will be determined based on discussions with the WAC.
  6. **Communication** – Always a difficult topic unless a community newspaper is present, getting the word out will rely on various methods, including:
    - i. **Village website** - Maintaining a webpage on the Town's website to post draft documents, advertise public meetings, and other project related items.
    - ii. **Local papers** – The Amherst Bee, Buffalo News, The Villager Newsletter
    - iii. **Facebook** – The Village has an existing Facebook page that is actively utilized. This platform provides a means for reaching out to the community, including younger residents and others who may not wish to partake in larger community events. A community page could be setup specifically for the LWRP project to communicate special events, activities and stages of the planning process to the public. Commenting could be limited initially but be made available as time goes on with moderation done by the consultant team.

- iv. **School district** – Email blasts or the school newsletter could be used to promote special events for the LWRP project, in coordination with the Williamsville School District.
- v. **Mass mailings** – A good way to canvas the entire Village and ensure that all residents receive notice of an event. However, this is a costly option that should be used strategically.
- vi. **Local flyers** – A tried and true method, flyers for events can be made and provided for distribution to local businesses, post office, school, churches, etc. Waterfront Advisory Committee members can be “hired” to provide the needed legwork distributing these.

## Roles and Responsibilities

In addition to the WAC, there are other players involved in the planning process for the LWRP. These include:

### ***Department of State (DOS)***

The DOS Office of Planning and Development is the primary sponsor of the LWRP update, providing funding for the plan through Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) as well as any technical assistance throughout the project. Quarterly updates and key task milestones will be reviewed by DOS as well, providing overall project oversight. The contact for DOS is:

Valeria Ivan  
valeria.ivan@dos.ny.us  
518-474-4516

### ***Village of Williamsville***

As the recipient of the LWRP funding, the City is responsible for the day to day administration and management of the project. Representatives of the City will be included in the waterfront advisory committee (WAC) and will provide input to the committee as well as the selected consultant(s). The City also acts as grant administrator for the project, providing DOS with quarterly updates and key deliverables corresponding with the tasks outlined in the scope of work. The contact for the City is:

Maggie Hamilton Winship, Director of Strategic Planning  
mwinship@amherst.ny.us  
716-631-7035

### ***The WWS Planning Team***

The consultant team provides the technical expertise and works closely with the WAC on the development of the LWRP, providing guidance and facilitating all community outreach activities. WWS Planning, as the primary consultant, has enlisted other subconsultants as part

of the project team to provide additional technical assistance on specific program components; this includes C&S Companies and the Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper. WWS Planning will also work closely with the Village on the necessary background information for the quarterly updates and Semi-Annual Status reports for the NYSDOS. The contacts for the consultant team are:

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