



**VILLAGE + TOWN OF PALMYRA
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
STEERING COMMITTEE
KICK-OFF MEETING
October 23, 2023; 6p
MEETING NOTES**

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Matt from MRB Group welcomed the steering committee and thanked them for participating in the comprehensive planning effort, noting that the Village and Town of Palmyra are in a prime position to invest in their future.

Matt facilitated a round of introductions where those present provided a brief overview of their background with the Village/Town of Palmyra and any goals they hoped to achieve with the planning effort. Major themes amongst the steering committee centered on preserving the architectural character of the Village, helping to promote downtown revitalization and economic development, protecting the Town's rural landscape, and creating a thriving community for future generations.

II. PROJECT OVERVIEW/TIMELINE

Matt Horn

Matt provided a brief overview of the purpose of a comprehensive plan and how this joint Village/ Town plan will help to guide the future of Palmyra for the next 15-20 years.

Matt overviewed MRB Group's approach to comprehensive planning noting the following three foundational elements:

- *Data-Oriented: The planning process will be heavily influenced by demographic and market data.*
- *Community-Driven: A robust, authentic, and meaningful public engagement strategy will be employed to ensure that we are hearing from all members of the community.*
- *Implementation Focused: Plan recommendations will be action-oriented and provide Palmyra with a clear map toward realizing the community's vision.*

Matt overviewed the key project elements and timeline:

- *Project Kick-Off (Oct. 2023): Steering committee finalized and commencement of the comprehensive planning process.*
- *Inventory & Analysis (Nov. 2023 – Jan. 2024): Committee members will be provided with robust market and demographic data and will identify community perspectives that should be captured as part of establishing existing conditions in Palmyra.*
- *Vision and Values Identification (Dec. 2023 – Feb. 2024): The steering committee will leverage data and other information, as well as their collective understanding of Palmyra to develop a vision statement and set of community values, which will be used as mileposts to measure progress and alignment of future projects with plan principles. This phase will culminate with a public forum to hear feedback from the community on data discovery, vision, and values.*
- *Key Initiatives and Plan Strategies (Mar. 2024 -Jun. 2024): The committee will identify overarching strategies and initiatives that will have the largest impact on achieving the community's vision.*
- *Implementation Strategy (May 2024 – Aug. 2024): Implementation approach for plan elements, including actions, action lead, timing, and relative cost will be developed.*

- *Draft Plan Release (Sept. 2024):* Committee members will review and approve the initial draft, which will be released to the public for comment. A public forum will be held to gather deeper feedback on plan elements.
- *Plan Refinement and Adoption (Nov. 2024):* Feedback from the committee and public forum will be incorporated into the final draft. A public hearing will be held. Plan revisions will be considered and approved by the committee before forwarding the final plan to the Village/Town Board for consideration. The environmental review process will be completed. The final plan will be adopted.

IV. STEERING COMMITTEE OPERATIONS

Committee members were polled as to their preferences on operational considerations, which included:

- *Regular Meetings:* 2nd Monday of the month, unless otherwise specified. MRB Group will keep and distribute meeting notes for each meeting.
- *Agenda:* MRB Group will prepare an agenda, and work to distribute it a week prior to each meeting.
- *Project Management Meetings:* MRB Group will meet with the Village and Town Clerks, as well as the Board liaisons, to ensure the planning process runs smoothly.
- *Internal Communication:* Communication between MRB Group and the steering committee will take place via email.
- *External Communications:* Meeting agendas and meeting notes will be posted to the Village/Town websites.

V. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Matt led the steering committee in a discussion of initial ideas for the public engagement strategy. The steering committee discussed a range of strategies to determine the best way to communicate with the public. The discussion illuminated suggestions such as a community survey, social media posts, press releases, pop-up and community events, and public forums, among other ideas to ensure the Palmyra comprehensive plan

has an authentic and robust public engagement process.

Matt informed the steering committee that MRB Group will put together a draft public engagement strategy for the steering committee to review at the November meeting.

VI. CASCADING EXERCISE

Matt guided the committee through an exercise to demonstrate how vision translates to action during the planning process.

He asked the steering committee two questions to gauge how aligned they were regarding their priorities and vision for Palmyra.

1. *What is the one thing in Palmyra that you want to preserve at all costs?*

Key Themes:

- Historic downtown*
- Historic features*
- Four churches*
- Neighborhoods*
- Historic Palmyra – 5 museums*
- Safety & community*
- Small town feel*
- Sense of unity*
- Library*
- Locks/Aqueduct*

2. *What is the one thing in Palmyra that must change for the community to be better than it currently is?*

Key Themes:

- Communication*
- Village Board - proactive*
- Upgrade Main Street*
- New/updated businesses*
- Entrenched attitudes*
- Be open to responsible development*
- Enforce laws (traffic/zoning/codes)*

- *Downtown vacancies/zoning/1st floor apartments*
- *Industrial development*
- *Employment opportunities*
- *Update zoning/ development*
- *Art installations*

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

No additional business was identified for the evening.

VI. ACTIVITY PRIOR TO NEXT MEETING

MRB Group will draft meeting notes from the kick-off meeting. MRB Group will prepare a draft public engagement strategy based on feedback provided from the kick-off meeting. Additionally, MRB Group will gather the initial data for the inventory and analysis of Palmyra for the steering committee to review at the November meeting.

VI. NEXT MEETING

November 13th at 6:00 at the Town Hall building