

SPRING 2018



Village of Menands, New York

REPORT ON PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

MRP Studio



UNIVERSITY^{AT}ALBANY
State University of New York

University at Albany, Master in Regional and Urban Program, Planning Studio

The 48-credit, two-year Master in Urban and Regional Planning (MRP) degree program at the University at Albany was established in 1982 and is fully accredited by the Planning Accreditation Board, the sole national accrediting body for planning. The MRP program is interdisciplinary, student-centered and participative, emphasizing the importance of creativity, public involvement, social justice, professional ethics, and environmental sustainability. With a strong orientation towards professional practice, an MRP provides a thorough foundation in land use planning, a range of technical skills and internship opportunities, and the opportunity to specialize in one of three alternative fields:

- Environmental and Land Use Planning
- Community Planning
- Transportation Planning

Alumni of the MRP program include university faculty, professional consultants, PhD students, and planners practicing in several regions of the United States and many foreign countries. Near the end of the degree program, students participate in the MRP Planning Studio, which provides them with an opportunity, working as a collaborative team, to apply the skills and knowledge obtained during their degree program to a real-world project.

The fall 2017 and the spring 2018 MRP Planning Studios supported the development of a comprehensive plan for the Village of Menands, NY. The fall Studio conducted initial public engagement and background research on the community. The spring 2018 Studio worked closely with Village of Menands officials and other stakeholders to complete a public engagement process and opportunity analysis, which can be used for the development of the future comprehensive plan. The spring 2018 MRP Planning Studio included:

Students: Linda Allen, Nasibah Elmi, Bradley Hershenson, Daniel Johnson, Timothy Kennedy, Tanya McGee, Samuel Morreale, Michelle Rogat, Jon Thompson
Instructor: Marcia Kees

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This plan was funded in part by a grant from the Hudson River Valley Greenway.

Introduction

Public engagement is an important part of any comprehensive planning process and entails a two-way conversation between the public and officials responsible for developing the plan in order to understand the need for the plan and the community values that should guide its development. The public engagement process ensures that community values are taken into consideration during plan development and underscores the importance of the public's involvement and contribution in the planning process. To support the development of a comprehensive plan for the Village of Menands, a public engagement process was conducted and is documented in this report.

Several strategies used for the public engagement were successful in large part due to the support of Village officials, existing outreach capabilities, and the small-town culture within the Village of Menands. The University at Albany Planning Studio coordinated with the Village administration to reach several hundred people through different media platforms such as the Village's Facebook page, website, newsletter, and local newspaper. It should be noted that the initial public engagement strategies merely laid the foundation for the development of the comprehensive plan. The challenge that remains is to promote broad participation efforts during the planning process. As such, to successfully rollout this comprehensive plan, the Village will need to continue community involvement and political will to drive this project by identifying goals, recommendations, and short- and long-term priorities.

Methodologies

Several methodologies for public engagement were used for the Village of Menands comprehensive planning process to obtain meaningful community input on existing issues, resident values, and community aspirations. The public engagement efforts ranged from stakeholder interviews, to visioning exercises to a community-wide survey. These public engagement methods are described in this report.

- Involvement of Community Leaders. Gathering representation of engaged individuals from the public and private sectors as well as businesses and residents is an important aspect of the comprehensive planning process. Community leaders were able to provide insights into key

issues via interviews, attendance at public engagement events, and feedback on public engagement techniques and results.

- Established an Internet Presence. In order to diversify and expand public engagement strategies, planning studio members communicated with the general public via a universally accessible medium: the internet. Establishing an internet presence involved the creation of dedicated webpages on the Village’s website, which encouraged people to take the community survey, attend events, and provide comments.
- Community Presentations. As part of the on-going public engagement efforts of the comprehensive planning process, Planning Studio members from the fall and spring semesters presented their findings and analysis to village residents in open forums. The community presentations included topics that addressed existing conditions in the village, results of the community survey, and an opportunity analysis.
- Open Houses. In order to capture the voice of community members in person, Planning Studio members from the spring semester facilitated two open houses events for residents and the general public. The purpose of the open houses was to enable people to participate in discussions and visioning and mapping exercises which would be taken into consideration during the recommendation process of the spring studio. The open house events were held at Village Hall and in a community room in the new apartment complex, The Lofts at One Broadway. The locations and dates of these events were strategically chosen in order to maximize public participation.
- Publicity. During each phase of the public engagement process, public service announcements were distributed through a variety of communication mediums. These announcements ranged from contacting local news outlets to strategically placed flyers, to the Village’s electronic notification alert systems and Village website. Reaching community members across a diverse range of mediums sought to maximize engagement with the community.
- Community Survey. Planning Studio members created a 14-question survey distributed via print and electronic means. The electronic version was available online through a user-friendly web and mobile application known as “Survey Monkey.” The electronic survey was listed on the website, posted on Facebook, and distributed through the Menands Activities report mailing and e-mail list serve. The survey asked participants about their opinions and priorities on community issues, as well as opened-ended, short-answer questions to define the

significance of each issue. Planning Studio members distributed hard-copies of the survey to local businesses, government institutions, the Menands Village Library and at Village sponsored community events, with a deadline date to submit a completed survey.

Public Engagement Outcomes in the Village of Menands

The Planning Studio methodology was a collective program of public engagement activities. Extensive outreach with local government officials, planning agencies, business owners, and the general public resulted in over 400 contacts participating in the public engagement process. Based on the results of each activity, the Studio extracted common themes to compare and analyze the feedback provided to gauge public sentiment.

Stakeholder Interviews – September 2017 – October 2017

For the fall 2017 semester, the University at Albany Planning Studio established a partnership with the Village of Menands to begin the process of gathering information and conducting outreach to stakeholders and community members in the village. The goal of the semester-long process was to gather and use the information to provide the Village with baseline data regarding existing demographics, transportation, environmental planning, zoning and land use. Mayor Grenier nominated twenty-five residents or business owners in the village, who volunteered to participate in informational stakeholder interviews. The Studio members designed eight open-ended interview questions to cover the variety of happenings in the Village. The interview topics ranged from stakeholder vision for the Village to strategies on how to encourage sustainable growth and development. The Stakeholder Interviews are included in Appendix B.

Stakeholder Meeting – October 24, 2017

Based on the responses generated through the Stakeholder interviews process, Studio Members were able to extract common themes regarding successes, challenges, waterfront development, and overall Village character. On October 24, 2017, Studio Members presented and discussed their results at a meeting with the Mayor and Stakeholders. Studio members reviewed each interview question and provided analysis on what the results indicated, including the topics that

stakeholders agreed and disagreed with. The Studio also reviewed past plans and studies conducted in the Village, which aimed at recommending levels of relevance and priority.

Community Analysis Presentation – December 5, 2017

After the Studio Members fully assessed the stakeholder interviews and feedback, they held a Community Analysis presentation on December 5, 2017. The presentation was open to the public and provided residents and visitors a snapshot of the Planning Studio project and how their research can be used in a comprehensive plan. Studio members presented their preliminary findings of community issues and possibilities for the future of the Village. There is an Albany *Times Union* newspaper article about the public presentation event, which helped further describe the overarching goals of the Planning Studio. Mikati, Massarah. “UAlbany Students, Menands combine on blueprint.” *Times Union*, 16 December 2017, p. D3. (See Appendix A for full text of the article.) <https://www.timesunion.com/7dayarchive/article/UAlbany-students-collaborate-with-Menands-for-12434193.php>. (See Appendix A for full text of the article.)

Village of Menands Community Survey

Planning Studio members created a community survey seeking the opinions of Village residents and business on important issues that affect the future of Menands. The goal of the community survey was to find insightful information that would provide enough data for an extensive analysis to lay a strong foundation for the future Comprehensive Plan. A total of 330 people responded to the survey, signifying that a comprehensive plan is a high-interest topic in the Village. Planning Studio members devised a 14-question survey with input from the Mayor and Stakeholders, which expanded on common themes discovered in the stakeholder interviews. The questions contained in the survey centered on topics such as housing, transportation, the waterfront and economic development. Planning Studio members considered the distribution and analysis of the survey a main priority of the public engagement strategy as one of the best methods to reach residents and businesses. See “Report on Community Survey Analysis” UAlbany, Spring 2018 for detailed results of the survey responses.

Village of Menands Fish Fry Table – March 23, 2018

Prior to the first open house event hosted by the Planning Studio and Village of Menands, Planning Studio members wanted to a chance to provide information and interact with the public to promote participation in the community survey and the Menands Comprehensive Plan. The first opportunity to have face-to-face interaction was for Studio members to attend an existing community event – one of the popular Menands Fire Company fish fry dinners. Studio members staffed information tables in the Village Hall on March 23, 2018. The information tables had flyers, maps of the Village, and surveys for attendees to complete as they waited for, or while they ate, their dinner. By going to a community event, Studio members had a chance to speak with village residents and this provided a venue for the public to voice their questions or concerns about the comprehensive plan.

Open Houses – April 2 and April 11, 2018

Another key aspect of the public engagement strategy for the Village of Menands Comprehensive Plan involved conducting two open house events. Attendees were given visioning exercises, which included a mapping exercise. Studio members created base maps with questions on specific topics. Other exercises included word cloud inquiries, one-on-one discussions, and anonymous written comments. Planning Studio members conducted the first open house on April 2, 2018 at Village Hall. A total of twenty-one (21) people attended the Open House at the Village Hall. On April 11, 2018 the second Open House was held at the Albany Lofts at One Broadway, a recent development project that now houses over 142 apartment units. A total of twenty-five (25) persons attended the second Open House. The same activities that were available at the first Open House were well-received by the public and were therefore used again at the second Open House. There is opportunity to collect more information at future Open House events or workshops in other strategic locations in the village. See “Report on Open House Public Input,” UAlbany, Spring 2018 for more information on the open houses.

Final Presentation – April 30, 2018

The last piece of the public engagement strategy for the spring Studio involved a final presentation to village members and the general public regarding the findings of Studio Members research efforts. On April 30, 2018 over 50 people from the community attended the presentation. The topics that were discussed at the final presentation addressed the community survey administered by the spring Studio, public engagement activities held across the fall and spring semesters, and an opportunity analysis for the Village of Menands. After the presentation ended, the 2018 spring Planning Studio hosted a question and answer segment that gave the audience a chance to further voice their concerns and ask questions relating to the presentation. A list of the questions asked by the audience is listed below.

Questions Asked by the Audience/General comments:

- Can you tell us more about the plans for the waterfront development?
- Where will the new access to the Mohawk-Hudson Hike-Bike Trail be? What is it going to be like?
- Is there anything planned to plant more trees for both environmental and beautification reasons and perhaps for storm water management?
- How long will the comprehensive plan take to complete and adopt?
- Is there a community standard for the mix of housing types in a community of this size?
- A member from the North Albany Neighborhood Association made a comment about how they managed to get a Capital Roots community garden in their neighborhood
 - o Ed. Note: this is the closest garden to Menands organized and managed by
 - o Capital Roots

An article appeared in the Times Union on April 29, 2018 prior to the presentation. “Menands plan on agenda.” *Times Union*, 29 April 2018, p. C3.

<https://www.timesunion.com/local/article/What-growth-is-in-Menands-future-UAlbany-12871773.php>. An article after the presentation appeared in the online and print editions of the

Albany Times Union on May 2, 2018 and May 4, 2018, respectively. Mikati, Massarah. “UAlbany students analyze Menands.” *Times Union*, 4 May 2018, p. C1.

<https://www.timesunion.com/local/article/UAlbany-students-lay-groundwork-for-Menands-12881352.php>. (See Appendix A for full text of these news articles.)

Appendix A – Times Union Articles

Article 1: UAlbany Students, Menands Combine on Blueprint

UAlbany students, Menands combine on blueprint

By Massarah Mikati

Published 3:29 pm, Friday, December 15, 2017

MENANDS — The village is partnering with University at Albany to create a preliminary comprehensive plan for the community.

The project was first presented as a local waterfront revitalization strategy to students enrolled in the UAlbany Graduate Planning Studio Course, as part of the department of geography and planning master's degree in regional planning program.

The village borders the Hudson River, but due to a historic railroad and today's Interstate-787, has never had access to use the waterfront, which tends to help promote redevelopment.

But because the village does not have a comprehensive plan, students ended up starting from square one.

"As we got further into the process, it became very apparent we're the first consultants Menands has worked with on this," said Ketura Vics, one of the graduate students. "We wound up setting the stage for the future prospect of a comprehensive plan for Menands."

Students spent the past semester doing research to lay out a foundational plan that would set the stage for future development in Menands. That included looking at plans that had been drawn up for the village dating to the 1970s, interviewing a group of stakeholders, like merchants and residents, identified by Mayor Meg Grenier, and putting together census data. Now they are in the final stages of putting together a document they're dubbing a "community profile."

"It's a very extensive, community-involved process," Vics said. "We really are in the preliminary stages — if it were a ruler, we're at about an eighth of an inch right now."

Students presented their research to the stakeholders and general Menands community several times throughout the course of the semester. Marcia Kees, course instructor and adjunct professor at UAlbany, said the extensive surveying of the community is critical to the success of the project.

"You have to know your community before you can say anything about it," she said. "This is information to be aware of as you move forward and look at how people in Menands want to structure their community."

New students in next semester's studio course will pick up where this semester's students left off.

"They'll take more of a focused dive on some key concerns and issues in the village," said Sean Maguire, director of economic development at the Capital District Regional Planning Commission and adjunct professor at UAlbany.

Those issues include economic development in and vacant buildings on the Broadway Corridor, and how to better connect the village to the Hudson River. The students' role, though, is to give suggestions based off their research, not "be prescriptive to the village," Vics said.

Kees emphasized that this project is "broader than economic development."

"It sets the tone for everything in the village, for future grants, future investments and businesses," she said. "And it's looking at connections to surrounding communities and regions, and how Menands fits in that regional context."

"There's a lot of great potential in Menands when you look at the number of people who pass through or by the village," Maguire said. "It's a matter of taking a first step to get a vision in place, and communicating the vision outwards."

[Article 2: What growth is in Menands' future? UAlbany students have ideas](#)

What growth is in Menands' future? UAlbany students have ideas

Published 1:42 pm, Saturday, April 28, 2018

COLONIE — The Village of Menands is hosting a public presentation about its review of the comprehensive plan at the Village Hall at 5:30 p.m. Monday.

The presentation will be conducted by students from the University at Albany Master of Regional Planning Program, who have spent months surveying residents and businesses as well as researching historical planning documents.

Through their research, the students have analyzed potential growth and development opportunities for the village to pursue.

[Article 3: UAlbany students lay groundwork for Menands comprehensive plan](#)

UAlbany students lay groundwork for Menands comprehensive plan

By [Massarah Mikati](#) Published 10:54 am, Wednesday, May 2, 2018

COLONIE — University at Albany students have nearly completed laying the groundwork for a comprehensive plan for the Village of Menands.

Students in the UAlbany Graduate Planning Studio course, which is part of the department of geography and planning master's degree in regional planning program, spent the fall semester researching a foundational plan to set the stage for future development in Menands. That included looking at plans that had been drawn up for the village dating to the 1970s, interviewing a group of stakeholders, like merchants and residents identified by Mayor Meg Grenier, and putting together census data.

This past semester, a new group of students picked up where the first group left off, working on a public engagement process to identify the priorities and opportunities within the village. This will be used to move forward with a comprehensive plan.

"The students developed a survey with basic demographic information like, 'How long have you lived in Menands?' and age range," said Marcia Kees, course instructor and adjunct professor at UAlbany." But the main questions were things like, 'Rate the reasons you chose to live in Menands,' 'What types of businesses would you like to see more in Menands?'"

The survey elicited 330 responses expressing desires that ranged from a grocery store (Menands used to have a Price Chopper that closed in January 2017) to a more bike- and pedestrian-friendly village layout.

In addition to the survey, the students held two open house events in April that consisted of mapping exercises during which residents placed dots on a large map of Menands in response to questions like where they thought the center of the village should be. (Most residents chose the current Village Hall location on Broadway, but some also dotted parks and areas near Menands School.)

"This community is rather disjointed because of the transportation network," Kees said. "So the thought was how can it be more connected?"

On Monday, students presented residents with four opportunities the village should focus on when developing its comprehensive plan: connecting the assets and businesses on Broadway, developing a parks and trails network, attracting food and hospitality businesses, and enhancing public amenities with things like sidewalks, bike trails and general landscape beautification.

"I thought the presentation was great," Grenier said. "We were very fortunate to have this project with UAlbany and it's going to put us on good footing to put together our comprehensive plan — we're so far ahead of where we would've been without the students."

Grenier and Kees will meet in June to go over the students' finalized goals and objectives for the plan and go over steps moving forward. The village plans to put out a Request for Proposals for consultants at that time, too, which it will fund through a \$9,900 Hudson River Valley Greenway Grant and \$2,500 match with village funds.

"This is a good foundation for the village to jump from and bring a professional consulting team on board," Kees said. "They should be in a good position to get the plan done in the next year and a half or two years."

Appendix B – Stakeholder Interviews



Stakeholder Interviews

THE VILLAGE OF MENANDS, NEW YORK

FALL 2017- MRP STUDIO





UNIVERSITY
AT ALBANY

State University of New York

Master in Regional Planning at the University at Albany

The Master's Program (MRP) in Urban and Regional Planning at the University at Albany provides a solid foundation for studio members to enter professional planning practice and research. Hailing from many states and countries across the globe, the graduate studio members learn and apply planning methods to improve the quality of life in communities and regions.

The University at Albany's 48-credit two-year Master of Regional Planning Program in Urban and Regional Planning was established in 1982 and is fully accredited by the Planning Accreditation Board, the sole national accrediting body for planning. The MRP program is interdisciplinary, student-centered and participative, emphasizing the importance of creativity, public involvement, social justice, professional ethics, and environmental sustainability. The program is strongly oriented towards professional practice and provides a thorough foundation in land use planning, a range of technical skills and internship opportunities, and the opportunity to specialize in one of three alternative fields:

- Environmental and Land Use Planning
- Community Planning
- Transportation Planning

MRP graduates are well poised to enter the professional planning arena. MRP alumni include university faculty, professional consultants, PhD students, and planners practicing in several regions of the United States and many foreign countries. The MRP Planning Studio provides collaborative team planning exercises to design, evaluate, plan, and manage projects and programs. The Fall 2017 Planning Studio is worked with the Village of Menands to start a comprehensive plan.

Introduction

Beginning in the fall semester of 2017, University at Albany Planning Studio Members began the process of gathering information and conducting outreach to stakeholders and community members in the Village of Menands. The goal of the semester-long process was to gather and use the information to provide the Village with baseline data regarding existing demographics, transportation, environmental planning, zoning and land use.

The information presented in this document, is the culmination of findings from stakeholder interviews. Planning Studio Members began their process by reviewing historic data and previous plans. This provided studio members with the opportunity to understand the underlying conditions in the Village and to get a better understanding of the community character.

Studio Members conducted twenty-five informational stakeholder interviews with residents and/or business owners/operators in the village. The list of names was provided by Mayor Megan Grenier and provides a sampling of key stakeholders in the community.

The Fall 2017 Graduate Planning Studio members were:

Dhaval Dhamelia

Eric Stotsky

Ketura Vics

Jad Edlebi

Zeynep Tas

Instructor:

Aneisha Samuels

Sean Taylor

Marcia Kees

Methodology

In September 2017 a list of approximately thirty stakeholder names and contact information was given to the University at Albany Planning Studio. The stakeholders represented residents and private business owners or operators. Each student in the planning studio class was assigned at least four stakeholders to interview. Studio members compiled an email and eight interview questions that were emailed to the stakeholders.

The stakeholders were contacted by Studio Members to arrange interviews. When possible, in-person interviews were scheduled, but some interviews were conducted by telephone when distance, location, or availability precluded direct meetings. Other stakeholders chose to submit their responses by email. The circumstances of each interview are given in the individual reports. This document also provides a summary of common themes based on the responses given by the Stakeholders.

Studio Members designed eight open-ended questions. Each stakeholder was asked the same questions regardless of location or affiliation. The questions were as follows:

- 1. Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?**
- 2. How long have you been a resident or business owner in Menands?**
- 3. How would you describe Menands?**
- 4. What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?**
- 5. What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?**
- 6. What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?**
- 7. What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?**
- 8. What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the village?**

Stakeholder Common Themes

Amongst the 26 responding community stakeholders, there was consensus regarding Menands' successes, challenges, waterfront, and overall character.

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

Of those interviewed, 15 people were homeowners, nine people were business managers or business owners, one person was a renter, and one person was both a business and a homeowner.

How long have you been a homeowner, renter, or business owner in Menands?

The sample population answers ranged from one year, to a 79-year long family history in Menands. The median time spent living in Menands was 19 years.

How would you describe Menands?

The most common response from stakeholders when asked to describe Menands was that the village was a very strong and supportive community. Small, quiet, and diverse were the second most common responses, followed by unique, safe, and family oriented, with a good public school system.

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

When asked to identify three recent successes in the Village, 14 stakeholders said the development of new apartment complexes such as The Lofts at One Broadway have been successful, eight said that new businesses such as RAD Soap Co., Sky Zone Trampoline Park, and Il Faro contributed to the recent success of Menands, and there was a tie between the improvements in the Broadway Corridor and public infrastructure and the road diet implemented on Van Rensselaer Boulevard, with five stakeholders mentioning either or both of these things.

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

The most common response regarding recent challenges facing Menands was the closing of important businesses such as Price Chopper. Fourteen stakeholders included this in their response. The second most common response was split between lack of investment in the Village (by both the Village of Menands and outside businesses) and the unsightliness of abandoned buildings with unkempt facades. Seven stakeholders accounted for each of these. The third most common response was provided by five stakeholders and relates to accessibility via alternative transportation modes, such as walking, biking, and public transit. The lack of sidewalks and street lighting hinders pedestrian access to certain areas of the village. Menands stakeholders expressed that the village is poorly suited for these modes of transportation.

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

The most common vision for Menands was specific to the Broadway Corridor -- seven residents answered that they hope to see businesses growing on Broadway extending from North Albany. Similarly, but without specific reference to the Broadway Corridor, four stakeholders responded that their vision for Menands includes more restaurants, bars, and locally owned retailers. Together, there were 11 responses that included desire for more businesses in Menands. With four stakeholders, the second most common response sought better access to the waterfront. Three stakeholders responded that they would like to see the previously industrialized areas of Menands revitalized.

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

Over half of the stakeholders interviewed (14) responded that there was no accessible waterfront in Menands. Three interviewees specifically said, “what waterfront”? Another three stakeholders expressed an explicit desire for a bike/pedestrian connection to the waterfront in order to allow regular use. One interviewee said they use the waterfront frequently and enjoy it, one interviewee expressed that the waterfront was a bio-diverse ecosystem that should be integrated into the school’s curriculum, and another saw potential for it to thrive in a manner similar to the Canalside in Buffalo, New York.

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

There were 13 stakeholders who suggested attracting new development from businesses such as restaurants and cafes, three who explicitly mentioned improve or renew access to community resources such as a public pool, and two incorporated the idea of using green spaces to beautify Menands where possible.

Individual Stakeholders

In order to respect the privacy of the stakeholders interviewed, the names of the stakeholders are not provided in this report.

Stakeholder #1

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

Homeowner: two homes in Menands

How long have you been a resident or business owner in Menands?

Since 1992, late wife grew up in Menands

How would you describe Menands?

Close knit community, some disconnect, good community

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

New developments

Businesses are moving into Menands all the time

Road diets on Broadway and Van Rensselaer Boulevard

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

High business turnover

Loss of grocery store

Loss of tax revenue in Menands due to lack of economic development

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

Boathouses on the waterfront, access would be awesome; a few more restaurants down Broadway all supported by new residences

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

Inaccessible, "What Waterfront?"

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

Education to investors and developers, use proximity to other cities as a way to promote the village.

Stakeholder #2

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

Homeowner.

How long have you been a resident or business owner in Menands?

20 years.

How would you describe Menands?

Small town feel just outside of Albany without being suburbia. Menands epitomizes community while offering pedestrian friendly access to the library, park, and community resources.

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Improvements in the façade of the Riverview Center and the Broadway Corridor in general. They have repaved roads and sidewalks, planted trees, added decorative lighting and decorate for the seasons.

Improvements in drainage and sewer infrastructure. A lot of older houses have been subject to basement flooding when it rains.

Businesses and investments coming to the community such as RAD Soap, the Albany International lofts, Sky Zone, and the parks have been updated with a pavilion, gazebo, and the concession stand by the baseball field.

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Businesses are hard to maintain and are not lent to immediate community. It is hard to bring a small café or restaurant to Menands, but it's what the community could benefit from the most. It would be hard to bring business to the Village and still maintain the small town feel without "selling out".

There is a major imbalance between the number of apartments and available homes in Menands that makes it difficult to raise a family here, even though it's a great place to raise a family.

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

To continue building Menands by coordinating efforts by the Village, school district, and local businesses to grow as a community.

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

What waterfront?

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

Menands could be a "hidden gem" for small businesses in the Capital District such as Trader Joes. The Village should convey that it's a good place to raise a family.

Stakeholder #3

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

Business Manager

How long have you been a resident or business owner in Menands?

Business manager since 1995

How would you describe Menands?

Industrial town

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Riverview center, which was built in 1929.

Menands Lofts --for example they converted textile mill into apartments.

Simmons: High-level robotic functioning rail line manufacturing and it is multinational company.

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Sidewalks and lighting.
Bike lanes.

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

Village should take time to meet business owners.

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

Tremendous amount of sewage flow in river.

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

Menands can build some weekend attraction like nightlife, brewpub, small concert venue and they should take time to meet business owners in Menands.

Stakeholder #4

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

Homeowner

How long have you been a resident or business owner in Menands?

36 Years

How would you describe Menands?

It is a nice area to live in. The taxes are fair and reasonable and the support system in the village is in good shape.

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Employment of NYS workers
Northern Boulevard redevelopment was great for the village
Village Park for summer activities and youth programs

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Menands Rd. congested because of Schuyler Place Apartments and Schuyler Heights Garden Apartments
Owners of buildings don't live there and leave them vacant.
Loss of grocery store

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

There is no clear vision. There is some uncertainty in the coming years because business is dwindling in the village. The population triples during the day because of state workers but by the afternoon no one is around, which is bad for local business

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

The waterfront should be developed for the leisure and recreation of the residents. The waterfront also needs to be accessible to public use.

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

Menands should advertise to attract people to the area. There should be more focus on creating appealing aesthetic areas for people to enjoy in village.

Stakeholder #5

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

He owns two properties

How long have you been a resident or business owner in Menands?

Since 1976

How would you describe Menands?

Basically, it is part of the Town of Colonie, but it is a special place because it has its own police department, fire station, local government, and other municipal services. It has a border with the Hudson River as well.

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

The expansion of several new apartment buildings constructed by the Dutch Village Apartment complex on Wards Lane.

The development of the area between the bottom of Simmons Lane and I-787, including a new building housing a trampoline complex.

Construction of Jones Drive off Menands Road including several new one family homes on property once belonging to the old Menands School.

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

The Broadway corridor is in need of repairs. It does not flow nicely into Watervliet or Albany. It used to all be farm properties, which were developed into industry and it has become run-down and not maintained well.

The I-787 road cut off the waterfront, completely. Somehow this needs to be changed to allow for waterfront access.

Street lighting is crucial to safety in this town. It has a long-standing police department and the village works hard to maintain safety. With all the vacant warehouses and factories, the lighting along Broadway needs to be better to allow for people to feel safe at night.

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

Menands should maintain its incorporated village status, with all the municipal services that offers. It should attempt to rebuild or renovate existing vacant buildings along Broadway. Smart development can be used to develop vacated shopping centers. The village needs a supermarket or some kind of large store to be an anchor for other businesses to enter the village again.

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

I-787 effectively cut off 100% of the waterfront access.

Farther north near the Route 378 cloverleaf, there is Cloverleaf Nurseries, which was originally supposed to be a parking lot for people to cross over a pedestrian bridge and enjoy the waterfront. Aside from the bicycle path, none of the original plans for the waterfront in the 1970 plan ever materialized.

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

Continue the “Stakeholder” concept. Hold some public forums on development ideas. Cherry pick those ideas that are feasible and would be of a long-term benefit to the village as a whole.

Stakeholder #6

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

Homeowner.

How long have you been a resident or business owner in Menands?

47 years.

How would you describe Menands?

Peaceful and charming.

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Improvement in jobs.

Police Department and community relation became stronger.

Infrastructure.

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Cleaning up trouble spots like Peter Young and Williams printing press buildings.

Not to be a parking neighborhood for commuters.

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

Village has to be classier than now.

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

The plan done 50 years ago should be implemented. It would be a positive step to go after that now.

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

Brownfield study should be held.

Stakeholder #7

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

Homeowner and mayor

How long have you been a resident or business owner in Menands?

Born and raised in Menands, left temporarily and then came back 26 years ago

How would you describe Menands?

Awesome, unique, and historic. The mayor's family has lived here for over 100 years throughout different segments of the Village

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Public safety emphasis -- New fire truck, police cars, and garbage truck
The Lofts apartments and park gazebo
Nature trails

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Loss of the grocery store
Closing of Key Bank
Decaying properties

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

Developments for Williams Press building and others, more economic development, especially in the Broadway Corridor.

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

Restricted, but there is a proposed bike lane on the I-787 ramp next to the Riverview Center building.

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

LWRS project carried out by SUNY, reach out to developers, and promote Menands.

Stakeholder #8

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

Currently a business owner.

How long have you been a resident or business owner in Menands?

Owned a business for three years but is the 3rd generation in her family to take over the business. She lived in Menands for about 15 years in a home her parents built in 1991. Her parents sold the [REDACTED] in 2015 and are now renting an apartment.

How would you describe Menands?

Industrial.

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Improvements in the roads.

Stewarts on Broadway.

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Businesses leaving Menands such as Price Chopper.

A lot of rental properties make it hard to own a home.

Access to resources is poor – people have to go to Latham for food and when you're going to Latham, the traffic is terrible.

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

Better access to resources like the farmer's market and more resources to access. It would be beneficial to have diverse businesses that would attract more people, so businesses were able to stay for more than five years.

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

Difficult to access.

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

Capitalize on the bike path and plan more events and opportunities for people who are not from Menands to participate in the community.

Stakeholder #9

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

██████ is a 16-year-old resident who lives with her parents who own a home in Menands.

How long have you been a resident in Menands?

16 years, all her life

How would you describe Menands?

██████ describes Menands as being, "very diverse, close-knit"; she said she makes friends from people of different cultures even in school. She attends Tech Valley High School.

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Fixing the infrastructure, like roads

The Humane Society has a nice new building

Park events and fundraisers

Baseball field, Ganser - Smith Memorial Park

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Stores closing like Price Chopper

Not many recreational spaces for leisure

Abandoned buildings such as the paper mill

No café; needs things to promote walkability because Menands is small and would be good

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

vision for Menands is that there will be more shops, café and restaurants, more places for young people to go and hang out.

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

“What waterfront?” Corning Preserve is nice but it’s not Menands.

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

said, “Menands needs an identity so people from other places can become aware of Menands.”

Stakeholder #10

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

Business Owner and Developer

How long have you been a resident or business owner in Menands?

Business Owner since 2012

How would you describe Menands?

Picturesque, beautiful little town

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Multi-family residences

Strong market for high-quality apartments (143/145 currently leased in the lofts)

Lofts designed for empty nesters, single folks, not age-specific and pet friendly

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Upstate has its own uniqueness as a whole, but nothing specific to the village

High property taxes

Crazy laws that don’t exist elsewhere

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

Get the Warehouse District to convert vacant buildings into lofts and restaurants in North Albany; revitalization will improve economic development in Menands

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

Does not have an opinion on Menands waterfront, not much to do with it

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

Be more generous on payment in lieu of taxes

Stakeholder #11

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

Business Owner

How long have you been a resident or business owner in Menands?

Business owner in Menands for a 1 year

How would you describe Menands?

You go through Menands in a blink of an eye, without noticing what it has to offer. It has no true core.

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Rad Soap moving in
Newly renovated apartments at The Loft on Broadway

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Lack of different, unique businesses
Lack of versatility, and vibrant store fronts
Lack of fresh foods

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

There should be a Healthy Living café similar to the one in Saratoga to encourage cleaner eating habits for the village. Better communication within the community, with education being key. Menands should be the healthiest village in the area, opening quainter, more vibrant restaurants, bars and local businesses.

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

There is no perception. There needs to be an accessible walking or bicycling path. Restaurants near the waterfront area should be encouraged, so residents and visitors can enjoy outdoor scenery and food.

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

There needs to be an incentive program established to encourage more bars, wineries, breweries for after work and weekend recreation

Stakeholder #12

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

Homeowner

How long have you been a resident or business owner in Menands?

Bought a house in Menands in February 2017, has lived in Albany since 2006. He has also been a homeowner in Albany since 2011.

How would you describe Menands?

Socially and economically mixed, diverse community, good public school district

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Very good village-style community
A lot of events in the main park
Very family-oriented
He likes historic preservation
Successful school

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Broadway Corridor is “dumpy”
More social interactions between ethnicities are needed
More cultural events
Access to river trail as a cyclist

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

Preserve historic roots of Menands while modernizing the outlook on certain things. “Freshening-up” Broadway and making it more attractive

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

Bike path is a very nice feature, but not a fan of it being non-accessible in Menands

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

More retail-style development, more restaurants/cafes. Give a reason for any crowd to visit Menands.

Stakeholder #13

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

Business and building owner

How long have you been a resident or business owner in Menands?

2.5 years

How would you describe Menands?

Quiet, small community

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

I have only lived in the capital region for 2.5 years so in the last 2.5 years, the apartment building, One Broadway, has been a success.

They did have RAD Soap move in but only have a factory there – they were originally going to do a store there that I think could have greatly increased traffic but sadly lost that to Stuyvesant Plaza, Expansion of Dutch Village apartments.

I did not mention our business because I consider us exempt from this answer although we are succeeding in trying to pull the community back together and bring in outside traffic.

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Again, in only 2.5 years: I have seen a lack of renovation to existing buildings, which can help make the community more attractive to businesses – so many empty buildings and shopping centers. We have seen two grocery stores close since we opened. I believe the real problem was in the stores themselves. They were outdated and did not stock most items. It is a very outdated, depressed looking area to drive through.

There seems to be a general unease in the village of outsiders. Many families have lived here in the same house or neighborhood with their families, very close, for years and are very tightly knit. Someone coming in and changing things, doing something different, updating businesses is received with almost surprise or shock. Many lifelong residents are surprised by our success; the success of the Lofts and the closure of the grocery stores, when to an outsider and according to what has happened it is not at all surprising. People want better, nicer, newer things.

I think the stigma that Menands has in the capital region makes it challenging for them to attract new businesses, it is kind of a catch 22 – need the businesses to change the stigma but can't get the businesses without investing in the village and its appearance. Gardening is not enough. Attracting an anchor store like a Whole Foods or Wegmans would be ideal.

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

My hope is that Menands grows, that many new businesses come in, that the village gets more restaurants and bars, retail, reasons for people to move here, stay here at night, travel here and spend money in Menands.

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

Like most of the waterfront in the capital region it is underutilized. I realize investment is necessary but isn't that what this waterfront redevelopment project is all about?

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

I don't know what they are doing now so it hardly seems fair to say what they could be doing. But if they are not currently courting an anchor store, talking about either knocking down or renovating the vacant storefronts, contracting with restaurants, bars, retail stores and anything other than just office buildings or factories it may be helpful. I think being more open in general instead of insulating and defending about downfalls may help these business relationships.

Stakeholder #14

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

“Business Manager” – Superintendent of School District.

How long have you been a resident or business owner in Menands?

5 years.

How would you describe Menands?

Small, yet very diverse tight-knit community committed to the well-being of the Village, specifically, the students. The entire village is very supportive – there is a strong recreation program that serves students when school ends that offers sports activities and holiday celebrations.

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Improvements in the Broadway Corridor. The aesthetic has improved and there have been new businesses such as Sky Zone Trampoline Park, RAD Soap, a chiropractor and the painters union that have been able to generate more tax revenue. The increase in tax revenue has been beneficial for the school building as well as the students benefiting from changes.

The voters recently approved a \$10 million capital project for the school building that will bring major upgrades to the facilities for the students' wellbeing.

One Broadway Lofts have helped improve the appearance of the Corridor.

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

The impact of the size of the Schuyler Inn homeless shelter on the school and the community has been difficult. It is the largest shelter in Albany County and it is in the “wealthiest school district” (due to the outliers at Sage Estates). It creates uncertainty and perceived risk when considering development in Menands. It can also be very difficult to explain to students why their new friend is suddenly gone. It is in an isolated part of town without pedestrian access to anything and most families have no means of transportation, so it can be difficult to shop and participate in the community.

The number of apartments with respect to single-family homes that are available also creates risk for investing in the community. The short-term commitment to apartments creates uncertainty when considering the future needs of the community.

The loss of Price Chopper is detrimental to the health of the entire town. Also, now, the Schuyler Inn residents only have access to Rite-Aid for groceries and necessities.

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

A thriving community grown from resources within the village itself to establish a tax base from businesses that will reduce the tax burden on residents in order to continue existing as a Village committed to the wellbeing of school-aged children.

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

My perception is that Menands does not have a waterfront. I see potential for the brownfields along 787 to resemble “Canalside” in Buffalo, NY.

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

Continue to improve school and existing perception of the school. We need amenities for the community in Menands, so to continue to work on improving the aesthetic and tax base that the Broadway Corridor has to offer.

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

Business Owner [REDACTED]

How long have you been a business owner in Menands?

2.5 years

How would you describe Menands?

Sleepy and in need of updating, but ripe for development.

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Increase in residential
Development of office spaces
My building purchase

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Drainage in front of my office on Broadway needs improvements
Lack of commercial store success
Lack of infrastructure (sidewalks, State road, etc.)

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

Would love to see commercial spaces develop to serve the growing population and workforce, walkable waterfront or downtown area with restaurants, stores, etc.

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

I don't even know how to get to it even though my office backs up to "Canal Street" but I'd love to see it developed.

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

Menands should be promoted as the Midway between Albany and Troy" and Broadway should be spruced up (State can be leaned on to do it), cleanup of derelict properties on Broadway should be mandated.

Stakeholder #16

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

Renter

How long have you been a resident or business owner in Menands?

2 years – working for 20 years in the village
Used to live in Castleton
Paid \$9000 in taxes there
Half that amount in Menands

How would you describe Menands?

Good taxes, quaint and quiet, small town

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Top schools in the Albany area, just came out in magazine or newspaper

One of the lowest taxes

Very low crime

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Losing grocery stores, businesses: that's a challenge to get things back in here.

"That's a tough one. I really can't think of anything else."

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

To keep building apartment complexes, bring business back and keep taxes low

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

"I use the waterfront a lot."

What do you think of Route 787?

I like it for accessibility – quick access to Saratoga or Albany

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

"I don't know."

Further Questions

Interviewer Question – Do you have any other thoughts about Menands?

"I moved from Castleton for convenience and lower taxes."

Interview Question – Do you ever use the public transit?

I actually used the bus this year. I use the bus during the summer, to Lark Street.

Interview Question – There is a bus to Lark Street in the summer?

Yes, it provides easy access to bars and restaurants, if people want to go out for a drink and not drive.

Stakeholder #17

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

Homeowner.

How long have you been a resident or business owner in Menands?

19 years.

How would you describe Menands?

Nice, quiet and boring.

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Lofts

Dutch Village

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Infrastructure problem like water and sewer lines are very old.

Groceries stores closing up.

Nature is covered up.

There should be less pavement in village.

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

There should be more apartments. Park for children behind bowling alley.

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

What waterfront? We cannot see waterfront from Broadway.

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

Bring back village pool; Ice skating rink and more parks like community garden or children garden.

Stakeholder #18

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

Homeowner

How long have you been a resident or business owner in Menands?

I am a 12-year resident, but I think my family has owned the home since 1938.

How would you describe Menands?

“Safe, quiet; a priority for my family”

One of the perks of village residence

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Redoing of Route 378 – restructured, dropped speed limit

Businesses opening

Interviewer - “What kinds of businesses have opened?”

Grocery stores

A wine store that I don’t like, but still a store

Department of public works deals with flooding issues

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Closing of businesses

Price Chopper

Ideal food market – corporate motto is “inner city and low income”

No economic plan for village markets

No development plan

No access to the waterfront area

Highway is bad

787 has to go, it was built before waterfront property became valuable

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

My vision is that we have to bring business into the village. “Eliminate that freaking old press building. Put a hydroelectric plant in its place.” Menands could use some clean energy. Then, the village could have free electricity.

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

“Poor, non-existent.” People don’t even know they’re in Menands. “Too many levels of government.”

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

There is a big need for homes. We’re house owners though. The younger generation is minimalistic. You guys like to live in apartments because it is easier than caring for a house. In my generation, we owned homes.

Broadway could be leveled.

Abandoned

Pavement everywhere

“Level the whole thing and start from scratch.”

Stakeholder #19

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

Homeowner

How long have you been a resident in Menands?

A little over 30 years

How would you describe Menands?

Menands is a small village where mostly everyone knows each other. We are a very unique community in that way.

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Businesses have come in

Improvements to infrastructure and parks have been made
The Lofts at One Broadway were built.

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Retaining businesses has become difficult (we have no grocery store), properties have been abandoned

Enrollment has gone up at the school (one of the main challenges in that regard is having one of the largest homeless shelters in the area fall in the smallest district in the area)

An increase in the amount of people that work in Menands and the decrease in businesses/eateries for them to visit.

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

I envision a growth in business and recreation in our Village with access to our waterfront.

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

The Waterfront? Yes, we have one. Is it easily accessible or aesthetically pleasing? No. Having safe access to and beautifying the waterfront that we have would be big for the Village.

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

We could be more active in promoting our Village and the vacant properties/land we have available (including community involvement and connections).

Stakeholder #20

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

He is a Business owner for an eatery in Menands. He previously lived in Menands for 10 years but moved and bought a home in Latham.

How long have you been a business owner in Menands?

25 years

How would you describe Menands?

He describes Menands as being “Just good”

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

The Riverview Center

The Albany International Apartment or Lofts

“Nothing else has really changed in Menands”

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Needs more business

Albany International closed

Workers Comp moved out

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

His vision for Menands is that “More businesses need to move in, that’s the main goal, simple”.

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

“We don’t have any waterfront in that way.

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

He felt that more could be done in the village and not enough is being done. The village, it’s just a small town. I am not a politician, so I don’t really know”.

Stakeholder #21

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

Homeowner

How long have you been a resident in Menands?

45 years

How would you describe Menands?

Urban-suburban village bounded in between Cohoes, Albany and Loudonville.

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Conversion of One Broadway Building

Riverfront Center

New businesses came in such as 590 Broadway (FedEx)

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Economic development tools do not exist for the Village (no Empire Zones)

I-787 is not directly accessible for the businesses on the east side of the Broadway

Village needs attraction and attention of businesses

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

Keeping the businesses alive and attract more businesses, enhance quality of life.

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

It is inaccessible because of I-787.

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

Road diet on Van Rensselaer Boulevard, BRT, transformation of building facades and revitalization of vacant properties on Broadway, create a high standard quality of life.

Stakeholder #22 and Stakeholder #23

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

Homeowner

How long have you been a resident or business owner in Menands?

15 years

How would you describe Menands?

The village is safe, friendly, and diverse. We see a sense of community, but a lack of awareness. There could be more resources allocated to the village

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Fixed sewer and water lines for health and safety reasons
Improved Van Rensselaer Blvd from a four-lane to a two-lane going in opposite direction with designated bike path
Launch of Village wide newsletter and alert system

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Loss of grocery store
Loss of post office
Not enough local shops such as delis, butchers, breakfast & lunch eateries

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

There should be the creation of village center connected with green spaces. Bicycle and walking paths should be connected to throughout the community. Rethink parking spaces and come up with alternative uses for them. Incorporating a smaller but efficient grocery store would be ideal for the village. Broadway should be revitalized to inspire people to live and spend time and money in Menands. More funds and resources allocated to police and fire department

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

The accessibility is difficult. There should be a docking area for boats to encourage versatile recreation. There should be an enhancement of the area to attract tourists. There is a need for alternate routes leading to waterfront from Menands.

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

Creating more green spaces. More outreach to millennials to come and live in Menands because of safe living and convenience to the highway. Figuring out ways to tackle facilities that are underutilized and or vacant, creating eyesores in the communities.

Stakeholder #24

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

Business manager, school principal.

How long have you been a resident or business owner in Menands?

10 years.

How would you describe Menands?

The Village of Menands welcomes diversity and looks for opportunities to work with the school as much as possible. Menands School is truly a community school.

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Working relationship between the school and the Village that continues to grow.

The increases in communication have led to increased awareness within the community that is making Menands a better place to live.

The housing projects, like the lofts at One Broadway have been successful.

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

The transience of students has been difficult for the school district to handle.

Price Chopper closing.

Need more businesses.

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

To continue offering our best practices in the school district so Menands School can continue to grow with the community.

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

None. Doesn't apply to school but would like to see the biodiversity of the wetlands used as an educational opportunity in future waterfront development.

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

Bring more businesses and make it more accessible for them.

Stakeholder #25

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

Homeowner

How long have you been a resident in Menands?

30 years

How would you describe Menands?

She describes Menands as being, "a small community, where we all look out for each other, there is a mix of business and residential and there are activities for different age groups"

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

The Riverview Center revitalization

The Lofts

The beautification of Menands including banners and flowers

And the Village Breakfast, held four times per year

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

The abandoned buildings

Lack of places to eat, including dinner and lunch

“Menands has a high working population of 50% working to 50% residents, and these numbers must be considered when providing facilities”

The lack of businesses

Glenwood Road Park is underutilized because there are no activities there

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

Her vision for Menands is that there will be more places to eat both for lunch and dinner and a supermarket, even a small one like Trader Joes, she would also like to see some single-family homes to encourage long term residential and she hopes for pedestrian and bicycle access to the “Menands” waterfront.

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

“It feels like Menands does not have a waterfront.” She believes this is because there is no access directly from Menands, “the only ways to access the waterfront are from Albany or Watervliet, we ride our bikes a lot and when we visit the waterfront we use Watervliet”, she chuckled and said that she preferred Watervliet, even though there is limited parking, because she gets good ice cream there.

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

“There are 3 streets above the cemetery that are cut off from the village and the only way to access the village from those areas is to get on the highway, these communities need better access to Menands.

Stakeholder #26

Are you a homeowner, renter, or business owner/manager?

Homeowner

How long have you been a resident in Menands?

16 years

How would you describe Menands?

Nice semi-urban suburb of Albany.

What are the three main successes you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

Il Faro, Italian Restaurant & Bar

Gazebo at the Ganser-Smith Park

Bike lane along Broadway.

What are the three main challenges you have seen in Menands in the last ten years?

The village had trouble keeping the grocery store and the diner, they went out of business

Railroad tracks are hard for the emergency service to get the other side

It is hard to collect property taxes for the Village due to low property taxes.

What is your vision for the Village of Menands for the next ten years?

New grocery store, connect the bike path to the village, clean up the old industrial areas and convert them into useful businesses.

What is your perception of the waterfront in Menands?

Beautiful but underdeveloped, it would be nice if there is bike and pedestrian connection.

What else could Menands be doing to continue encouraging development in the Village?

Expand partnerships with the Town of Colonie and the City of Albany to access more funding opportunities for the Village