

## **Town of Liberty Comprehensive Plan: Written Responses**

### ***Question #2: Where do you live?***

- Town of Liberty (65)
- Livingston Manor (5)
- Briscoe
- Dahlia Road
- Good-Life park
- Youngsville
- Shandeleer

### ***Question #3: Residency in Liberty – “Other”***

- Business owner (2)
- Planning to leave within next 10 years. (2)
- Undecided about whether to stay in Liberty or Sullivan County (2)
- Will be leaving in future if things don't improve. (2)
- Considering leaving due to taxes (2)
- Will be full time in 2007.

### ***Question #4: Which of the following applies to you? (Other)***

- Landlord (3)
- Caretaker (2)
- Church
- Government employee/Manager
- Family member
- Live with family
- Building owner
- Self employed consultant

### ***Question #5: What is the dominant land use of your neighborhood? (Other)***

- Vacation, leisure and residential
- Government
- Residential and summer camps
- Farmland is in jeopardy because of possible planning board zoning changes.
- Park
- Note – Car repair and service facilities should be located off of Rt. 52. They give Liberty a bad appearance.
- Trailer park
- Wilderness and Critical Environmental Area (CEA) designation

### ***Question #6: Top 5 reasons to live in Liberty (Other)***

- Affordable housing/cost of living at time settled in Liberty (9)
- Work/Business (6)

- Clean air, water, wildlife. (3)
- Peaceful/quiet (3)
- Near my church/place of worship (2)
- Liked the property I purchased (2)
- Lack of development (2)
- 9/11/To get away from the city (2)
- Available land to build on.
- Friendly
- I own my house.
- Low crime rate.
- Hunting and fishing
- Came to teach dance and stayed because of marriage.
- We once had a very superior school.
- Care for elderly mother
- Forced due to court ordered violation with child
- My husband was born here and returned after returning from war.
- Spiritual reasons
- Open space is in jeopardy
- I can't afford to move.
- My husband was looking for a less stressful lifestyle.
- Past hotels and entertainment.
- Widowed
- Diversity
- Family history
- Husband was born here
- Summer residence

***Question #7: Services provided by the Town and/or Village***

- Roads are in poor condition/not maintained/poorly maintained (24)
- Must pay extra for trash pick-up (3)
- Water tastes bad/undrinkable (2)
- Trash pickup is poor quality (2)
- Public sewer and road maintenance is badly needed.
- Road maintenance a must after the 100 year floods.
- Must pay extra for sewer and water
- Roads – Take down wires and cables all over 52 and relocate. Fix side roads in village and private side areas. Remove old vegetation.
- Not much for the taxes we pay
- All covered by rental

***Question #8: Which of the following businesses/services are desirable?***

- Anything that pays taxes/no more tax free land. (4)
- Bring in something that will create jobs/Needed to retain and attract young people (3)

- We need a decent shopping center with clothing and shoes. We need a store like Sullivan's. (2)
- Recreational/Entertainment facilities especially for youth. (2)
- No money for the Village and Town in the Motels/B&Bs/Hotels/Cottages business.
- Nothing is worth giving tax, zoning breaks to unless it brings high paying jobs (\$70,000.00/yr.)
- Not welfare warrens!
- This is not possible until slums are replaced by low income housing and downtown areas are rehabilitated. What are the grant specialists doing? I see no progress.
- Attract retail stores later when we have the base to support them.
- Motels/B&Bs/Hotels/Cottages – Better and cleaner ones!
- No more religious camps!
- In industrial zones only
- More farms
- A healthy mix is desirable – not an over concentration of one type above all others, as is currently the case.

***Question #9: How often do you frequent the following business districts? (Other)***

- Monticello (12)
- Jeffersonville (8)
- Middletown (4)
- Livingston Manor (3)
- Wurtsboro
- Callicoon
- I shop in catalogues
- I avoid Main Street, Rte. 52 and Sullivan Ave. because of road construction.
- Ferndale
- NYC
- Paramus
- Rte. 17 East
- Ontario Street
- Briscoe

***Question #10: What kind of housing should Liberty try to attract?***

- Taxable homes (6)
- Middle income homes (5)
- No more houses (development is cutting into country atmosphere) (4)
- High end housing (4)
- Affordable single family homes. (2)
- Should focus on attracting business (2)
- Refurbish current stock. (2)
- Quality homes (2)

- No more religious camps (2)
- Senior housing for seniors only!
- Anything that brings people here.
- Low income housing and housing affordable to local families are the same.
- Other – Primary homes
- Attempt nothing. If they want to come here let them come and build to applicable codes.
- Upscale second homes.
- Get tax free properties on the tax roles.
- No urban projects
- We need to stop catering to second/seasonal homeowners.
- First time homebuyers.
- Urban/Lofts
- Lower property taxes or provide exemptions based on household expenses and net income.
- In residence homeowners
- Active adult
- Attract upscale professionals
- Rental housing and low income housing will attract folks without money to put back into community. Quality housing will attract upscale people and bring money to community.
- Eliminate welfare giveaways and section 8 housing – send recipients home!
- We have too much low income housing now.
- Cottages and cabins
- Working taxpayer
- Full-time residents, large lots (10 acres+)
- Mixed use development rather than segregating groups

***Question #11: Would you agree or disagree with a tax increase to support the following?***

- Taxes are now way too high/can't afford tax increase/should be sufficient to do what is needed. (24)
- Use the tax money currently available more efficiently.(3)
- Town/village consolidation was supposed to decrease taxes (2)
- Small tax increase. (2)
- I don't mind paying more, but I think the question is where is our money presently going? We already pay so much. (2)
- Sales tax only.
- Can you raise my income?
- I could never agree to a tax increase until all summer camps and land owners are required to pay taxes.
- If everyone paid their fair share we wouldn't need any increase.
- Taxes are already supposed to be allocated for some of these things.
- There are grants available to protect the environment/farmland/open space.

- Preservation of farmland/open space should not require a tax increase.
- Could use some bus service and increase school bus service for fringes.
- Depends on specifics
- Parks and recreation – So non-taxpayers can use and deface our parks, like Walnut? No way!
- Public sewer and water should not need tax increases and should be self supporting
- I don't think we should consolidate the Town and Village.
- Consolidation will lower village taxes and reduce duplication of services.
- Consolidation – We don't need police protection, we already have sheriff and state police.
- Consolidation should save money.
- If the consolidation is going to increase taxes, no consolidation

***Question #12: What is your overall impression of Liberty since 2000 (or since you came to Liberty)?***

- Liberty is in bad shape. (4)
- It will improve when (road) work undertaken is completed. (2)
- It goes up and down. (2)
- Visually it has improved; economically it has declined.
- Some aspects have improved, others have declined.
- In some ways it has improved, like beautification projects, and the events are great. Politically it has not changed.
- It's improving, but it's not there yet. (2)
- Slowly but surely
- Main Street looks better
- Roads are better
- NYS has improved it.
- There is work being done in the Village, but my road needs to be paved (Cold Spring Road, goes out to Rte. 55)
- It has declined since 1924.
- It has not changed and our taxes have still increased.
- Services have declined. Schools have gotten horrible but taxes keep going up. New homes are ruining the environment. Jobs standard of pay is terrible. I'm tired of seeing all of the catering to tourism.
- Taxes are horrific and my next move will likely be out of NYS
- It has declined due to influx of new residents. Homes have been invaded and stuff has been stolen from yards.
- The endless construction is not going to leave many businesses open.
- Our village has become stagnated and is throwing money away on crazy ideas.
- Have you walked down Main Street this year, especially after sunset?
- My youngest son has been mugged twice on his way home from school.

- Too many undesirable people lingering in Village. Sloppy looking, cruddy, creepy, lousy, foul language, selling drugs, keep making babies on welfare and more women getting hysterectomies.
- We need more police patrol all around

***Question #13: Top 5 priorities for Liberty***

*Main Street Revitalization*

- Programs for store owners to have remodeling of store fronts.

*Parks and Recreational Facilities*

- We have them, just fix them.

*Improve municipal services*

- None in White Sulphur
- Improve roads
- Why, to attract more camps?

*Recycling/Solid Waste*

- Cut the fee down.

*Alternative energy*

- To benefit Kennedy?

*Beautification*

- Offer an incentive.
- Camps need to be kept clean!

*Property Tax Reform*

- Don't tax us until we move west. Eastern people who can afford to pay higher prices for houses are coming; we can't afford it.
- Manage tax exempt properties not used.
- Not by consolidation
- On the school end.
- Lower school and property taxes

*Increased shopping opportunities*

- Permanent farmer's market.
- Clothing

*Improve pedestrian safety*

- We have a sidewalk to nowhere (in Swan Lake) – what a waste of money!

*Manage Residential Development*

- Stop approving tax free properties

### Create programs for Liberty Youth

- Good jobs
- Create programs for Liberty singles as well.

### Other

- These are all important. (4)
- Get undesirables off the streets (Main Street) (5)
- Remove criminal elements like crime, gangs, drugs. (4)
- Attract well paying jobs for locals. (3)
- Take tax burden off land owners. (3)
- Consolidation/Dissolution of Village (2)
- Shopping (2)
- Increase sheriff patrol for Town of Liberty (2)
- Abolish village police and costs!
- Keep village police
- There is a real need for healthy recreational activities for youth.
- Improve the schools
- Improve schools and lower cost by cutting out waste and bureaucracy
- Hold more events like street fairs. Very few events to set up as a vendor.
- More accountable to the people
- Jobs and more jobs!
- Attract business, entertainment (movie house, theater, troupe)
- Stop malls so small businesses can survive in the village.
- Encourage industrial growth.
- Access to high speed internet
- Reduce summer bungalow camps
- Increase taxes on summer residents
- How to update facilities once and for all and not keep needing bonds to play catch up.
- Public Transportation
- No low income projects
- Hire more code enforcement officers
- More opportunities for senior citizens
- Assist seniors in tax relief.
- Improve runoff (control?)
- Make area more attractive to new people that might want to live here.
- We should receive trash pick-up for the taxes we pay.
- Cut welfare programs.

### ***Question #15: Additional Comments***

#### Land Use and Zoning

- Don't let this area become Orange County. We live in a country setting, so let's keep it that way. (2)

- I'm very concerned about the proposed subdivisions currently being considered by the Town of Liberty Planning Board. Two of them are very large (Menderis Rd. and RM Farm). Our town is not ready for this kind of development. Issues associated are loss of open space, runoff, flooding, increased traffic on poorly maintained roads and threats to existing wells. The planning board is not listening to local residents who value their privacy and choose to live here because of the rural beauty of the area. We don't need gated communities in our backyards.
- Willow Lane – Is it possible to develop that street? Perhaps an apartment complex.
- Don't want to see Liberty suburbanized.
- No more bungalow colonies or camps or anything of that sort.

### Infrastructure

- We need water and sewer on Townsend Road. The septic system is not maintained and runoff ends up in basements.
- A major hazard in the Village of Liberty is the side street walkways. For example, Chestnut Street's sidewalks are torn up and in the winter not shoveled so they become non-existent, and then I'm walking in the road or I am falling on my way to work.
- Our roads in the back and side roads of Liberty are always patched, never completely fixed although that is improving.
- Traffic circles are a joke
- Sidewalks on Buckley Street (school zone)
- Blacktop Denman Road
- The water and sewer systems have 2 current bonds @ 4% and 6%. There is inadequate capacity and more money will have to be borrowed. This is not good!
- I am displeased with the inappropriate use of contractors for highway projects.

### Open Space

- This is a beautiful area – nature-wise could be a jewel.

### Economic Development

- Main Street businesses should extend the hours that they are open to be more competitive with Wal-Mart. Many people are at work while the businesses are open.
- New people moving to the area will not be able to find a job in Sullivan County. Aside from property taxes, their money is not being kept local. They go elsewhere to find jobs and shopping opportunities.
- Liberty is in the foothills of the Catskills and should have a sporting goods shop to attract hunters and campers.
- I'm still looking for a part-time job, but I can't find anything.
- Liberty needs a department store like Kohl's or Target instead of dollar stores. (3)
- We need good businesses, not empty stores.
- Clothing and shoe stores



- We need a new store, Dollar or More, at the old Woolworth store in Liberty. The help doesn't clean the sidewalk or parking lot, and even the store looks dirty.
- Everyone works hard for improvement, but we need people to support our local economy. They have to buy here.
- There are too many antique and junk stores on Main Street.
- The Town/Village of Liberty is in the sad shape that it is because of years of neglect by doing nothing. Politicians fought every opportunity to bring in any kind of business that would offer solid employment for area residents. They were convinced that the defunct hotel industry would return.
- We need jobs and a stable economy. (2)
- Much of the problem is a result of the low income. I don't view it as government fault or school fault, but the problem exists.
- We need diversified shops with everyday goods, so as not to have to travel miles to buy things like a pair of socks.
- We need to attract firms that will pay above minimum wages (as most businesses in Liberty do). The rich get richer and the poor get poorer.
- We need to get more business, like shopping malls. I'm not just saying this because I'm a woman. In order to go shopping many people go to Middletown or go out of their way for Walmart. It's pathetic that they have to go to Walmart or Middletown. Many people wouldn't even recommend Walmart for their clothing. Me personally, I go to Middletown.
- This county and town missed the boat about 40-50 years ago. When industry tried to come in here, with good paying jobs, the hotel industry kept them out to keep wages low. Now we sit around and dream about casino gambling, etc. What a joke! We should have had casino gambling 30 years ago when the hotels were doing well. Look at them now (i.e.: Grossinger's)
- More shopping by Route 52 West. Route 52 East has plenty of shopping. Route 52 West should be more developed.
- Generally speaking, people relocate to where there are sufficient employment and support services. Research should be done to see what industries could come to Liberty and what incentives could be offered to bring them here. This would increase Liberty's tax base, develop industrial areas, increase job potential in Liberty and encourage secondary businesses and industries. It would also encourage those who work in those industrial parks to reside in Liberty and be close to their jobs. This would develop a second tax base that would in turn support municipal services.
- Liberty should develop an industrial development board that would be responsible for implementing plans for this kind of development (see [www.babylonida.org/welcome.htm](http://www.babylonida.org/welcome.htm) or [www.bida.com](http://www.bida.com) for examples).
- You need to get on owners to upgrade and do what you can to attract retail.
- Get rid of owners of run down store fronts.
- Taxes are a bit high, so I feel positive about an increase in light industry and/or responsible commercial expansion.
- I moved my business out of Liberty for the main reason of people hanging out in the streets – for business it is unattractive to clients. How do you stop it?

### Government Issues

- Need code enforcement. Too many unattractive buildings and shacks with junk in the yards. (5)
- Lots with commercial equipment on them should do a better job with screening by planting trees, shrubs, etc. (3)
- Garbage pickup service is poor. They don't come when they are supposed to and don't come as often.
- There should be grants to assist homeowners with improvements to their property. Why are grants limited to businesses? The grant money is coming from our taxes!
- Some of the bungalows need improvement and upkeep.
- As the village decayed over the years, slumlords bought cheap housing and brought in undesirable elements which made a bad situation worse and continues to do so. Add to this all the properties that have been sold to tax-exempt organizations who use public services but contribute very little, so fewer people are paying more and more taxes.
- Stop allowing tax free exemptions/put property back on tax rolls (9)
- Our taxes are oppressive and make it exceptionally difficult for middle class families to raise their families in Liberty. (6)
- We need lower and stabilized taxes (5)
- The school and property taxes are excessive, especially for the quality of schools and what the town offers. Roads are in terrible condition.
- Something has to be done about the taxes if we want the next generation to stay here in Liberty, or for that matter in New York.
- We moved here in March. It's beautiful, but the taxes are too high!
- Services formerly provided by the town now come with extra fees (garbage, fire districts), but taxes continue to increase.
- I can't stand Sullivan County. I like it because it's less headaches but other than that it's getting worse and worse every year. Many adults who are trying to make it by can't with the school taxes going up, rent for housing going up. Come on now.
- We pay taxes in a high end bracket like that of Westchester County and those closer to NYC area, however we are way out here in Sullivan County. In addition, homes are being sold at a high rate and yet there is no increase in taxes. Something doesn't seem honest and fair to the tax payers. You're receiving more money and seek increases beyond the ability of the average earner.
- For seniors with low income, have a program to reduce village taxes (like star) and reduce heating oil costs.
- Since taxes are so atrocious in Swan Lake and White Sulphur Springs, possibly bus service all year round, if not daily, then at least one day a week. Not a shopping bus, just regular bus service. How about a dial-a-bus in Sullivan County?
- The survey does not address the underlying problem of Liberty and the rest of Sullivan County. Without public transportation to the major areas of the county

- to attract and invite businesses and residency that will create a necessary population density, the item #12 speaks for itself.
- I know you are aware of the problems of public transportation. I have driven people for RSVP out of the Office of the Aging. The older people living in one of several apartment facilities are virtually trapped. Walking to shopping is too difficult for them and I have driven people to a doctor's office only a mile or two away but a \$20 cab fare. They are so hungry for contact with people. There is limited socialization within the apartment community, and they can't get to programs within the community. I know the County has a van that offers transportation, but it is so limited and not meant to take care of the problem of socialization.
  - Some sort of public transportation up Route 52 west to Shop Rite. There are old cars and old people here.
  - Need to consolidate government operations/services. (2)
  - Village and Town highway departments should be merged and placed under a civil department head that is accountable to the Town Board. Other services should remain separate, and services should not be combined without the tax payers' knowledge.
  - The idea to consolidate the Town and Village to supposedly save money is just a scam to pass the tax burden from the Village of Liberty onto the backs of Town tax payers who get very little for their tax dollars as it is.
  - Instead of consolidation, dissolve the Village and make it part of the Town. Police services now provided by the Village could be extended to the Town, or a special police district could be formed and funded with a police tax.
  - Consolidation should not raise taxes.
  - Consolidation would only increase taxes. Only the economy is going to lower taxes.
  - Water is not fit for human consumption.
  - Why does the town code enforcement officer feel as though he has the power of God! As a public official, should he not be a bit more respectful of the residents and not abuse his authority?
  - The planning board needs education. They need to conduct more open reviews. They seem to be winging it!
  - Overnight camps must be forced to recycle!
  - Your department of highways superintendent should be more courteous to the residents and listen to their suggestions. When they live here for 50 years they might know something!
  - We must clean up Main Street. Where's code enforcement and the Mayor? There are drug dealers and drugs – get them out of here. The police don't do anything. We need our main street back.
  - Stop making jobs for municipal employees, and stop paying high salaries to municipal employees and decrease benefits including pension.

*Impact of Development on Youth/Schools*

- Downtown loitering and hanging out by what appears to be young gang-like individuals needs to be corrected. You can't attract shopping when people are scared of what is hanging out on the streets. (5)
- There need to be more controls on the drug sales on the streets. If we were to work towards getting the middle man, then maybe the drugs will disappear. When school lets out the sales are in open view on the streets. (3)
- The junkies and drunks on the streets need to be cleaned up. People from the city are bringing the gang mentality, and many young people are walking around like "gang-bangers". Liberty cops need to step up and do something about this. The number of bars on Main Street within a mile of each other does not help this cause.
- Employment of youth is poor. Young people (high school level) aren't available for minor employment (i.e.: chores, etc.)
- The lack of industrial base for jobs or tax income limits the opportunities for students to obtain work experience. Department of highways or corrections are only options available.
- How many students go to college and graduate?
- I am very disgusted that there is nothing to do in Liberty. This is why so many young children and young adults are hanging out on the streets.
- The youth need discipline.
- The noise that people make while blasting their music is uncalled for. We need to enforce a noise control on this.
- The schools are good but we need some type of school security officer like we used to. Many children as my middle school child don't feel safe at all times, only sometimes.
- Start in our schools. What happened to our "Blue Ribbon" status? Test scores are low, teachers don't care, and then kids don't care. We need new ideas, new blood. Get rid of the "I can't, we can't"
- Standard of education is too low.

### Vision

- It seems that people here don't have a sense of pride in where or how they live.

### Housing

- The condition of the homes in and surrounding the Village is atrocious.
- Reduce Section 8 housing (2)
- We need someplace for seniors to live without income restrictions.
- More senior housing of good quality would be nice as many elderly homeowners cannot keep up maintenance on the homes they own.
- Need affordable housing
- Moratorium on housing to regroup.
- Residential development should be done carefully with minimum 5 acre plots.. Solar heating should be encouraged. Careful surveys of woodlots and their use should be under consideration. Houses should be built individually, not with a developer.

- I would like to see more people who buy houses live in them instead of renting them out. Absentee homeowners just don't put the same energy into the village as those of us who live here.
- Apartments and low income housing in town and close to town.

### Miscellaneous

- We are dissatisfied with the telephone and electric companies changing higher rates for any and all businesses.
- I was born in Liberty 92 years ago and have lived here all my life. I can't believe how badly things have changed, not for the good!
- Sullivan County is in bad shape. Seniors and youth both run away because there is nothing exciting to keep them here.
- The ones that are hurting are the middle class. No matter what happens we are always screwed and can't win. Thanks for hearing me out. Please do something to get Sullivan County back in shape.
- My landlord provides garbage pickup services, and this is done via a dumpster provided by a private contractor. Unfortunately, neither my landlord nor the dumpster contractor has any provision for recycling. I know that recycling is very important, and before I moved to my current situation I had understood that everyone in Liberty was supposed to recycle. Are private contractors required to provide recycling services? If so, could this be better enforced so that they do so? If not, could they be required to do so, so that more people have an opportunity to recycle?
- If you look at the garbage trucks they have a lot of recycling and cardboard.
- If I had known what I know now I would have moved away 39 years ago when my husband passed away.
- Get rid of the riff raff, i.e.: the lazy people that don't want to work, especially the young. They are smart enough to mooch money from government!
- There has been a huge increase in bear sightings, and S.C. residents (especially summer residents) need to deal with the garbage by using the DEC safeguards.
- Clean up the trash on Main Street. You can't walk the sidewalks.
- It has been brought to my attention that the water departments water hundreds of thousands of gallons of water to keep shallow water lines from freezing. In the long run it would be cheaper, wiser and more environmentally friendly to repair or replace these shallow lines and it would add needed water for future growth.
- Religions that sacrifice (torture/kill) animals (dogs, cats, fowl) during the night are becoming commonplace in the area, disturbing many residents and causing untold suffering to animals. Many residents mistake the sound of this activity as coyote behavior but upon prompt investigation, people are observed in these despicable practices.
- Arrest and punish animal killers who catch and poison innocent cats, wildlife.
- Change welfare system
- Once I am home, in my own house, I am OK. However, there is little to keep my family here

- Dog rules need to be enforced. People are using their dogs to harass their neighbors. Also, nonstop barking is making excessive noise.
- The greatest resource of Liberty is the people.
- We need better protection for home buyers (see note attached to survey #10`)
- See survey #132 for attached letter.
- See survey #233 and attached letter
- See survey #405 and attached letter
- See survey #483 and attached note.
- See survey #496 and attached note.