

# Some in Fairport seek focus on climate

## Residents want rezoning linked to sustainability

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Zoning shapes communities, guiding development and influencing how and where people live.

The village of Fairport is in the middle of an update to its zoning code following adoption of a comprehensive plan update in 2021. And while there are a lot of priorities for different shareholders in the village, Color Fairport Green doesn't want sustainability to be lost in the shuffle.

Ahead of the release of the draft zoning code and map for the village, Color Fairport Green hosted a discussion on zoning and sustainability at the Fairport Public Library on Tuesday. Attendees ranged from involved citizens to elected officials and local Realtors.

The discussion revolved around how the principles of smart growth could be applied to decisions made about zoning for the village. There are 10 principles including mixed land use, various housing options, transportation choices and walkable neighborhoods.

The aim is to reduce greenhouse gases and other pollutants, preserve green space and improve community health, said Natasha Besch-Turner, one of the group's founders, at the Tuesday meeting.

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# Rezoning

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## Multifamily housing

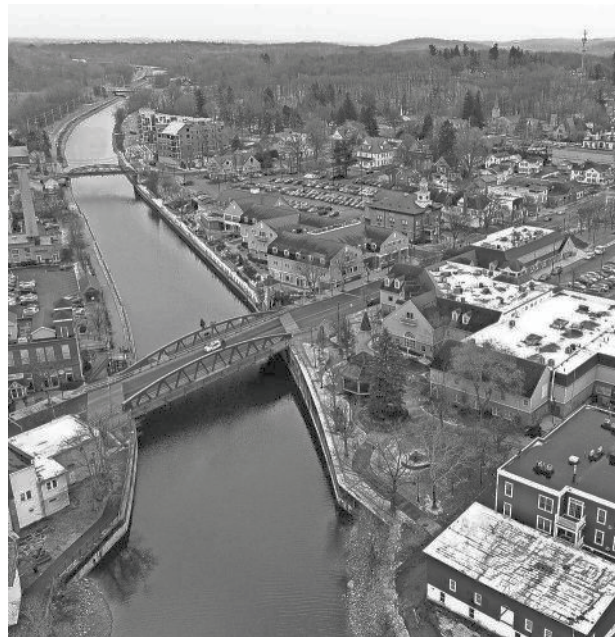
While the draft zoning code and map aren't available yet, the village has gathered public outreach on types of multifamily structures that could be placed into village districts like downtown and the general neighborhood district.

The feedback on larger-scale multiuse buildings in the village was largely the same: too tall, too generic, bringing too many people or too much congestion. Fears of losing parking or eroding the historic character of the village.

Multifamily housing is a tough sell in most environments smaller than a mid-size city, though the need for transitional housing for young professionals or for seniors to downsize does create a market for them. During the Dec. 7 discussion, one speaker discussed the fact that many of the employees working in village businesses live in other communities due to cost or lack of options. Another said older residents are unable or unwilling to downsize due to a lack of affordable, low-maintenance options such as townhomes or condos.

## The intersection of climate and housing

Residential and com-



**The Village of Fairport and the lift bridge.** TINA MACINTYRE-YEE/SHAWN DOWD/ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

mercial buildings are the biggest producers of greenhouse gas emissions when considering indirect emissions from energy creation, making up 31% of all emissions. About 75% of the electricity generated in the U.S. is used for buildings and the majority is still produced via coal or natural gas.

Households in apartment buildings with five or more units use about half as much energy as other home types. Apartments are generally smaller in size, have fewer windows and are protected from the elements on at least one side by adjacent units.

The climate connection is more than just at-home emissions, howev-

er. Placing people in greater density and closer to the places they eat, work and play can also decrease their carbon footprint. Walkability and access to public transportation indicate places like downtown would be the best places for higher density in Fairport.

The early outreach by the village found respondents were most interested in preserving the community's charm, opposition to multifamily housing and concerns about decreased density.

*— Steve Howe has covered myriad topics, including public safety, local government, national politics and economic development in New York and Utah.*