

**“A Vision for Sustainability and Growth
in Savona, New York”**

**Dr. Irby Sullivan, President
Alfred State
10 Upper College Drive
Alfred, New York 14802
607-587-4211**

February 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015

May 28, 2015

**Craig R Clark, PE
Dean, School of Applied Technology
Alfred State College
Alfred New York 1482
607-587-3102
clarkcr@alfredtstate.edu**

Title of Project: Community Visualization Study – Savona, New York

Grant Period: February 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015

Grantee Name: Alfred State College

Project Director: Dr. Craig Clark

Description of Project:

In Fall 2014, Professor William Dean, instructor in the Architecture and Design Department's senior Urban Design Studio selected the Steuben County Village of Savona, New York, as the subject for a semester-long community visualization study. Working individually and in groups of two, ten students researched and documented the subject area and completed a site analysis which included a visual survey of the defined physical characteristics that represent Urban Design Excellence and Design Linkages within the community. The reports also took into consideration conversations with area residents and local officials that outlined the municipality's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

The information generated during these initial efforts was used as a point of departure to illustrate and explain a positive vision for sustainability and growth of Savona through community engagement. Students attended public meetings intended to identify sites within the community which are underutilized, have future development potential, or are being promoted for future development by local officials. The studio then completed a study focused on visualizing suggestions for appropriate development three, five and ten years in the future. The community visualization study included action items for implementation and was presented publicly by the students to community residents.

Activities:

1. Students were assigned a project to document and research aspects of the village in preparation for completing the community visualization study. This phase included the documentation (places), research (sources), and presentation (ideas) of the assigned *project* as part of a coordinated studio effort.
2. Students visited Savona on August 29 and had the opportunity to interview Mayor Gregge Harrian during a guided tour of the village. Also present to offer her expertise was Nicolette Barber, Planner at Hunt Architects, Engineers, and Land Surveyors who prepared the town's comprehensive plan. The students walked/drove around the villages commercial districts, residential neighborhoods, and public parks, and toured several sites key to the revitalization effort.

3. Following the site visit, the studio group worked together to refine and coordinate the collected information into a seamless Site Analysis of Savona. Students shared this information to the faculty and each other on September 12 in a presentation which included additional research of the site and the project that graphically addressed the following questions:
- What districts or neighborhoods exist within the community and what positive neighborhood context (or other man-made features) can be drawn upon for inspiration in the future design development of the area? Is there neighborhood context that should not be taken into consideration?
 - What are the most compelling aspects of the community location, demographics and history (up to present day) that might influence future design decisions? Are there any social, economic and/or cultural factors that should be taken into consideration?
 - What is the development density of the community, the mix of building/land uses, and the relationship of both to surrounding municipalities in the area?
 - How would you describe the community connectivity relative to residences, basic commercial services, and vehicular/pedestrian access between the two?
 - What natural, physical features in the community, including quality open space, should be taken into consideration?
 - How do the sun patterns, wind direction and overall climate affect the community at different times of day and at different times of year? Does this differ from the nearest large city?
 - How do vehicles (public and private) and pedestrians circulate around, on and through the community? What options exist for public transportation and parking? What is the condition of the existing infrastructure in support of walking, cycling, public transportation, social interaction and recreation? How accessible is the community in terms of universal design?
 - What sensory experiences (sights, sounds, smells, tastes and textures) are unique to the community and might be drawn upon for inspiration during design? What is the perception of the community in terms of safety and security?
 - How might local municipal regulations (i.e. planning, zoning, etc.) affect the physical characteristics of future municipal/district/neighborhood development? Is the information available in a user-friendly format?
 - Are there any locally, nationally or internationally recognized precedents or similar interventions that can be studied as examples of urban design excellence at a similar scale?
4. The students held an in-studio design charrette on September 15 to generate ideas for future development. The studio was divided into groups based on areas of focus to review the village's comprehensive plan, brainstorm ideas, and begin the visualization process. At the end of the day each group presented their work for discussion.



5. Based on a review of the site analysis information and ideas generated during the design charrette, the initial community visualization study concepts were presented in Alfred State's Student Leadership Center on October 3. The audience included students and faculty along with Mayor Gregge Harrian, Nicolette Barber, Planner at Hunt Architects, Engineers, and Land Surveyors, and members of Savona's Comprehensive Plan Committee who provided feedback to the students.



6. On October 28, Professor William Dean accompanied 10 fourth-year architecture students to the Campbell-Savona Elementary School for a public presentation of their Community Visualization Study of the Village of Savona. Participating from Alfred State were Kathryn Dussing, Douglas Duzant, Nicholas Galatioto, Joshua Greenaker, Cady Joy, Nicholas Peraino, Nicholas Scalise, Ethan Smith, Brittany Varengo, and Taylor Woolf. Students presented their designs, which were based on the village's newly-adopted comprehensive plan, to an audience of village officials and interested residents. The event was sponsored by the Village of Savona.



7. At the conclusion of the project, student work was placed on display at the Community Design Center of Rochester gallery where it opened as part of the center's "First Friday" open house in December. The work was on display through January 2015.



8. The presentation in Washington DC, in December 2014, was a highlight of this community based project.

Project Outcomes:

A successful community partnership was developed with the Village of Savona through the development of the community visualization study.

1. This project developed a partnership between the Steuben County Village of Savona, and Alfred State in serving the Appalachian area of New York State. The project was presented to the elected officials and residents in October 2014.
2. This project served as a model for creating sustainable communities in Steuben County by capitalizing and highlighting their assets through the community visualization study.
3. This project is consistent with the goals of the ARC strategic plan developing a plan for the sustainability of Savona.
4. This project developed a network of students and faculty across the region who may continue research and service partnerships beyond the current project – expanding this project to include grant-based funding for future classes using the study that was developed.
5. This project developed leadership and civic engagement opportunities among students involved in the project by working with the local and rural communities.
6. Working through the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and being allowed to present at the conference in Washington DC, exposed the students to other communities and how the ARC integrates in other communities.
7. The project enhanced the ability for the Savona community to further develop avenues to obtain funding for improvement to the community using the master plan.

Problems Encountered:

Participation by the public officials in Savona was excellent, but village business owner and resident participation was relatively weak.

Program Continuation and Sustainability:

This specific project in Savona is complete. However, the Mayor of Savona has indicated the desire to carry some of the student ideas forward in the near future.

Next year the Urban Design Studio will select another municipality in an adjacent county to assist with a community visualization study.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

The project has been a success for both Alfred State students and the residents of Savona. The public officials involved with the Savona plan have expressed that they will be using the student work as a stepping stone to more detailed project exploration, and for pursuing grants to achieve some of the objectives set forth in the project. We expect that architecturally-related student engagement activities in New York's Southern Tier will be ongoing for the near future. Professor William Dean committed 50% of his time in the fall semester design studio class for this project which is well in excess of the of the required total match of \$1,500, which fulfills the committed cost share for Alfred State College

The LEADER

By The Leader staff

Print Page

November 02, 2014 3:35PM

Alfred State students unveil plans for Savona

SAVONA | When village leaders wanted help planning the future of Savona for the next 15-20 years, they turned to an unlikely source – a group of college students.

Students from Alfred State's architecture and design program presented their vision for the village at a meeting last week at Campbell-Savona Elementary School.

The project began after village officials finished the comprehensive plan they'd been working on for the past four years. They had heard that both Campbell and Bath had enlisted students from Alfred State to help bring their comprehensive plans to life, so they reached out to Bill Dean, chair for the department of architecture and design, to see if they could also avail themselves of the students' assistance.

Dean said the students had been working on the Savona project for approximately nine weeks, including three weeks of site analysis.

"About three weeks ago the mayor and the comprehensive planning committee came down to Alfred to meet with the students," Dean said. "The students had a much more raw presentation at that point. They took the feedback they received during that meeting into the studio for the final three weeks of the project." The final product was a three-phase plan meant to revitalize the village. The students had proposals for the "Four Corners" area of the village at the intersection of Main Street and Lamoka Avenue, a Main Street residential area, the Cohocton River Trail and the western section of town.

The students charged with revitalizing the Four Corners section of the village said they wanted to preserve the historic look and feel of the existing buildings. This included replacing the existing street lighting with street lamps with a more antique look. They also wanted the Dollar General store that is already planned to the village to adopt a look that matched the surrounding buildings.

This included a brick facade, an entrance that is set back from the street and parking behind the store.

The students proposed a green space across from the Dollar General.

"This gives residents a place to sit and relax," said Alfred State student Katie Dussing. "It creates a comfortable location where people want to be outside."

More long-range goals for the Four Corners area included a possible ice cream parlor and a boutique hotel.

Preserving the small-town charm and promoting a sense of community were two themes that ran throughout the project. The residential development proposed for the area around Main Street that is currently zoned for agriculture would include affordable single-family housing, a bike path and a community building.

The students envisioned a senior living community further down Main Street in the area that is zoned for mixed use. The area would include 15 town houses and a rec center complete with a game room, a meeting room and a kitchen.

One of the challenges facing the students was the geography of the village. Savona is bisected by both Interstate 86 and the Cohocton River. The students proposed a walking/biking trail that would run along the river and under the highway.

Savona Mayor Gregge Harrian said the next step in the process would be to unite members of the comprehensive planning committee, the village board and the community to prioritize the renovations and changes proposed by the students. He said that meeting is scheduled to take place the second week in December.

Once the committee has identified its priorities, village officials will seek funding through grants. Harrian said that the pieces pertaining to development of the river area and the preservation of historic buildings were the most likely to get funding.

He said the students' entire plan will be on display in the village hall and on the village website by the middle of November.

<http://www.the-leader.com/article/20141102/NEWS/141109961>

Print Page