

#yourcareer **OPEN HOUSE – JULY 18**
Graduate Education
And Business Programs



Manhattanville
COLLEGE

CONTEST [Upload your summer family fun photos from Fourth of July for a chance to win Playland passes.](#)

[Government](#)

Master Plan Talk Highlights Goals for Platinum Mile, Downtown

Representatives from BFJ Planning, the firm hired by the town to work on an updated Master Plan, discussed their goals with a group of residents in West Harrison Tuesday night.

By [Zach Oliva](#) [Email the author](#) June 13, 2012

[Recommend](#) [Tweet](#) 0
[Email](#) [Print](#) [Comment](#)

Related Topics: [Harrison Politics](#) and [Master plan](#)



BFJ Planning provided an update on their work on [Harrison's Master Plan](#) Tuesday, asking for feedback on a few ideas for the downtown business district and Platinum Mile.

The Harrison Town Board has asked BFJ to focus much of their energy on those two areas this summer as they work to complete the town's first updated Master Plan since 1988.

After presenting some preliminary ideas, planners sat with groups of interested residents as part of a public workshop at the [Mintzer Center](#) in West Harrison. The group was hoping to gather feedback before moving forward with outlines for the Master Plan later this summer.

New for the Platinum Mile, Harrison's stretch of office parks along Interstate 287, was the idea of adding some mixed uses including small pockets of residential property as well as some commercial uses. Frank Fish, principal of BFJ Planning, told a group of about 10 residents that mixed use could help revitalize an area where the vacancy rate in some spots is more than twice the county average.

Let Patch save you time. Get great local stories like this delivered right to your inbox or smartphone everyday with our free newsletter. Simple, fast [sign-up here](#).

"It's been an office market that has had a hard time compared to the office parks in, lets say Fairfield County," Fish said. "What we are looking for is can we get a mix of uses that go together, can we get some limited residential use?"

The idea of apartments within the Platinum Mile would have seemed very foreign as recently as the early 2000s, but as the recession has chipped away at the office park market the town has taken a significant hit in its tax base in recent years. Fish said he believes adding some new uses to the area, along with some improved roadways and pedestrian connectivity, could help revitalize the area.

"It appears to us right now that (residential) is the strongest real estate market in Westchester County, the office market throughout the county is fairly weak, so we are looking at if that can be done," Fish said.

Apartments would be limited to one or two bedrooms, likely for empty nesters or young professionals who wouldn't be placing students in the school district.

But the proposal was met with some concern. Anne Gold, president of the Purchase Environmental Protection Agency, said she is worried that over time residential use of the property could cause more harm than good.

"We do not think residential is a good use," Gold said. "We have not come to any conclusion where residential would be right for this."

A possible compromise could be a high-end assisted living facility for seniors. A representative from one such company was at the meeting, and Gold said limiting the use to something like that would be more reasonable than apartments.

"This is a concept we are very interested in hearing more about," she said. "That seems like something that would be a benefit to the community for everybody that has aging parents."

Development in the downtown area was also discussed, focusing on the proposed MTA project and surrounding area. Fish said his team is looking into ways to establish a business center point at the intersection of Harrison and Halstead Avenue while building outward with apartments and businesses.

Part of that plan could allow for some three or four story buildings downtown, with the hopes that they would support the growing business district without losing the feel of the current area.

"We are looking for a plan that will maintain what is great about Harrison," said Fish. "But there are areas where I think most would agree improvements could be made."

Fish said his team plans to draft new chapters in the town's Master Plan for the downtown and Platinum Mile by early August. The group hopes to have a comprehensive draft complete by September with another meeting to update the public by October.

Fish said the current timeline would lead to a completed Master Plan by Thanksgiving.

Harrison's last attempt to complete a Master Plan took place in 2007 under the direction of then-mayor/supervisor and current Councilman Steve Malfitano (R). That draft was never finalized under the leadership of Mayor/Supervisor Joan Walsh (D), who said at the time the document needed more work before being ready for final approval.

Citing her focus on financial issues during her four years in office, Walsh never completed an updated plan that gained any momentum.

Earlier this spring the Harrison Town Board [approved \\$48,000 to revamp work on the plan](#), hiring the same firm used in 2007 with hopes of approving a finalized update this year.

Email me updates about this story.

0

[Follow comments](#)

Leave a comment

Get Patched In

Harrison news, events, and deals sent to you daily and breaking news as it happens. [See more options](#)

[Close](#)

[Terms of Service](#) [Privacy Policy](#)