



**Division of Local  
Government Services**

# **Comprehensive Planning**

**A Division of New York Department of State**

Comprehensive plans tell the story of where you are, where you want to go, and how to get there

When created in partnership, it can be an important, living document

**Comprehensive Plan Update  
Public Meeting**

**November 18th at 6:00 PM**

Join us in discussing Plan recommendations on housing, transportation, the environment, and more!!

**Your town!  
your voice!!**

**Bethlehem Town Hall**

**www.BethlehemForward.com**

**Town Law §272-a**  
**Village Law §7-722**  
**City Law §28-a**

“Materials, written and/or graphic, including but not limited to maps, charts, studies, resolutions, reports and other descriptive material that identify the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices and instruments for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the town located outside the limits of any incorporated village or city.”

# Your comprehensive plan is important!

- Zoning and land use regulations must be in accordance with plan
- Use plan's goals to review applications and land use decisions
- Defense against spot zoning challenges
- Relationship between annual budget and capital plan
- Goals support grant applications
- Gov't. agencies shall consider plan while proposing capital projects
- Growth management and prioritization (NYS Public Infrastructure Policy Act "Smart Growth Act")

# Moratorium

Temporary “freeze” on development until satisfactory plan or regulations adopted

Adoption avoids:

- Rushed development; inefficient and ill-conceived growth
- Hasty decisions that might result in disadvantages to landowner and public
- Immediate construction inconsistent with comprehensive plan

# When should you update your plan?

**MYTH:** *“We are a sleepy little town where nothing happens. Updates are only for bigger communities...”*

## Some indicators:

- Too many variance requests
- Unachieved goals in last plan
- New conditions, trends, priorities
- Periodic review in current plan



# Periodic review built into plan

**General City Law §28-a (11)**  
**Town Law §272-a (10)**  
**Village Law §7-722 (10)**

Set maximum review intervals:

- Updates reflect community's changes to policies and physical characteristics
- Encourage review across administrations
- Allow time for budgeting

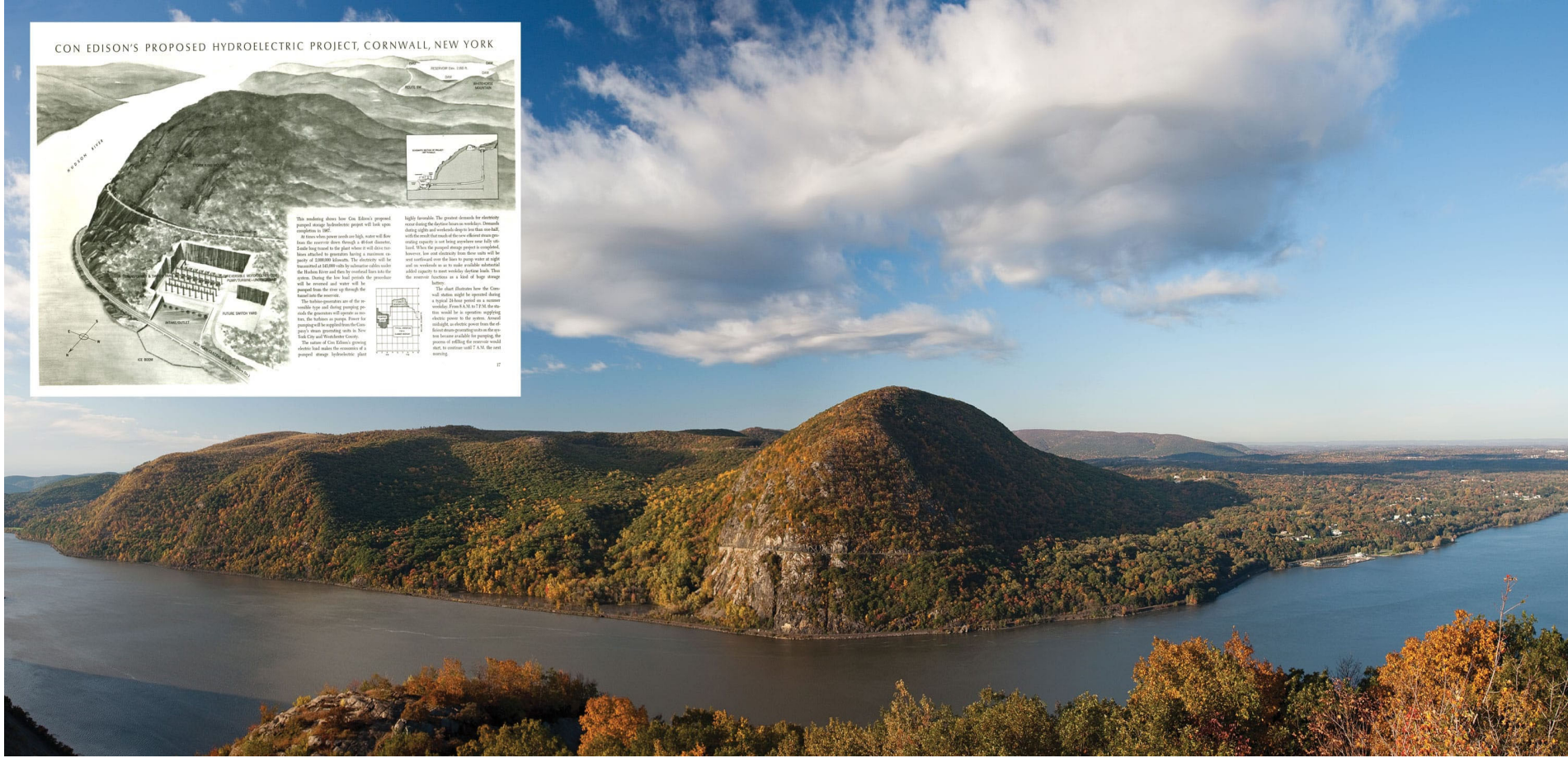
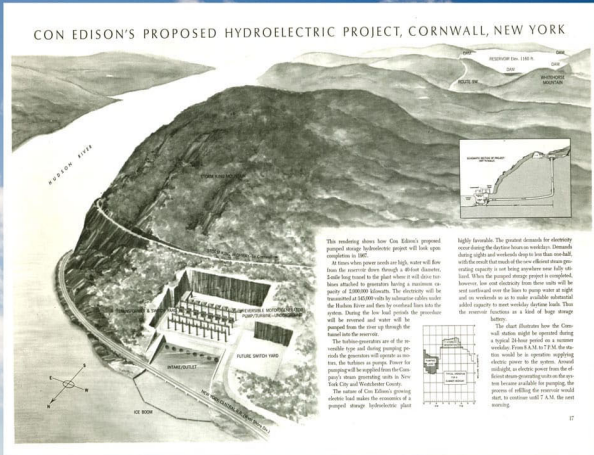


## Rapid growth or decline





## New infrastructure needed



# Special places are disappearing



## Renewable energy demand



## Economic changes



## Inconsistent development

# Community resilience

“The ability of a system to withstand shocks and stresses while still maintaining its essential functions.”

## Resilient Communities:

- Are familiar with their natural hazards
- Are prepared for them
- Recover quickly when they occur



# Resilience planning

## Multiple systems create vital communities:

- Holistic approach
- New neighborhoods and relocations
- Infrastructure modification and backup

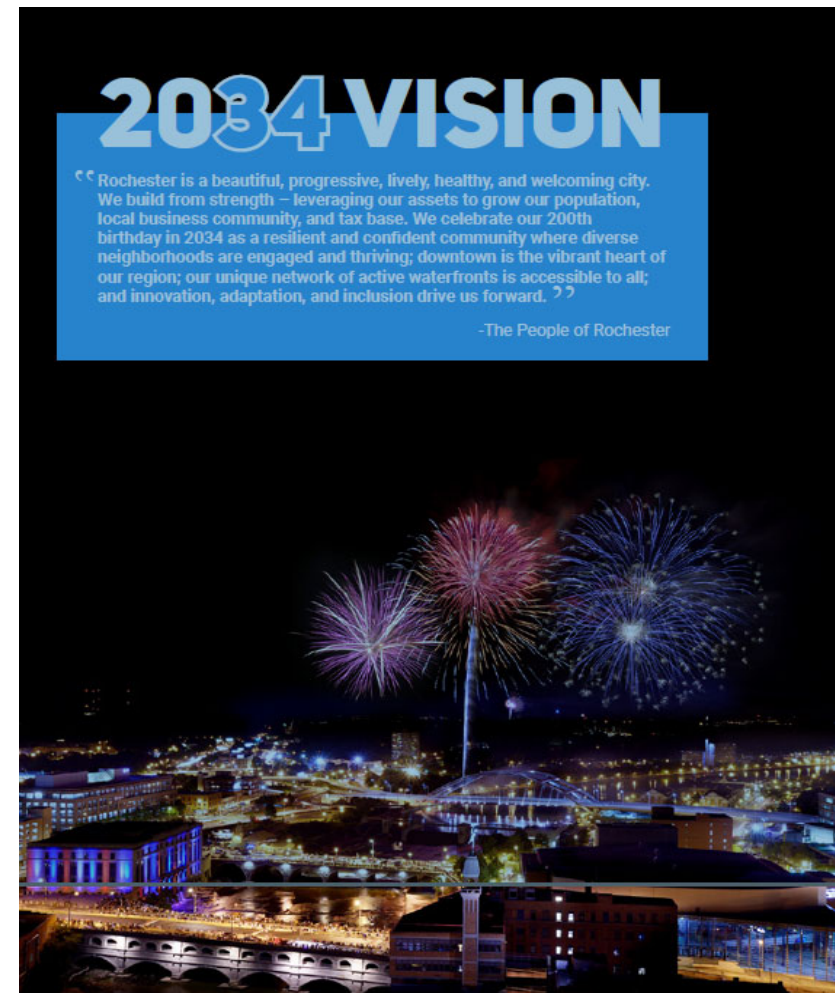
## Expand, conserve or revitalize natural protective features:

- Protection from storm damage
- Environmental benefits
- Quality of life benefits for residents and visitors



# Timelines

- Identify how long plan will take to create (weeks, months, years?)
- Identify future time period plan will address (5-10-15 years?)





# Budget

Costs vary widely depending upon circumstances:

- Initial plan or amendment?
- Community size
- Complexity of issues
- Consultant's scope of services
- Budget line item; grants



## Governing board has 3 options to prepare plan

1. Prepare plan itself; or
2. Delegate that function to planning board; or
3. Delegate “special board”  
(must include at least 1 planning board member).

# Public hearing notice

If Planning Board or Special Board prepares Plan, hold at least 1 public hearing to assure public participation.


Governing Board must hold additional hearing within 90 days of receipt of plan from Planning Board or Special Board.

- Publish in newspaper of general circulation (paid subscription) at least 10 days before hearing.
- Make available for public review with municipal clerk, and on municipal website.

# Using a consultant

- Unbiased community view
- Role in plan preparation varies
- Consider relevance of their experience
- Interview and check references
  - Identify staff assigned to plan
  - Identify any subcontractors

*"A Village of Friends"*



Village of Ballston Spa

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) SOLICITED BY

THE VILLAGE OF BALLSTON SPA, NEW YORK

FOR

VILLAGE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

RESPONDER DUE DATE: February 2, 2022 @ 4:00 P.M

ISSUE DATE: DECEMBER 13, 2021

Designated Contact: Karen Martell, Chair Comprehensive Plan Steering  
Committee [karenmartell27@gmail.com](mailto:karenmartell27@gmail.com)

Submissions to Liz Kormos, Trustee  
66 Front Street, Ballston Spa, NY 12020  
[TrusteeKormos@villageofballstonspa.org](mailto:TrusteeKormos@villageofballstonspa.org)

# Community stakeholders

- Business owners
- Civic leaders
- Elected officials
- Environmental experts
- Planning Board and ZBA



# Public participation

- Open Meetings Law: notice and access
- Public Hearing: at least 2 (draft and final)
- Community stakeholders
- Community engagement

# Community Engagement Tools

- Survey
- Workshops/Charrettes
- Focus Group
- Storytelling Circles
- Key Interviews
- Community Asset mapping
- Chalkboards
- Mind Mapping/Community Visioning
- Community Forums/Social Media



# Process at a glance

1. Identify issues
2. Survey
3. List goals
4. Consider alternatives
5. Prepare plan
6. Adopt plan
7. Implement plan
8. Evaluate plan





# Existing conditions

## Accurate description of community's status, including:

- demographics,
- economy,
- housing,
- transportation,
- public services,
- environmental conditions,
- existing land uses



# Demographics

- **Age;** gender; racial characteristics
- Household size; total number of households
- Migration rates; birth and death rates

Town of Niagara Falls

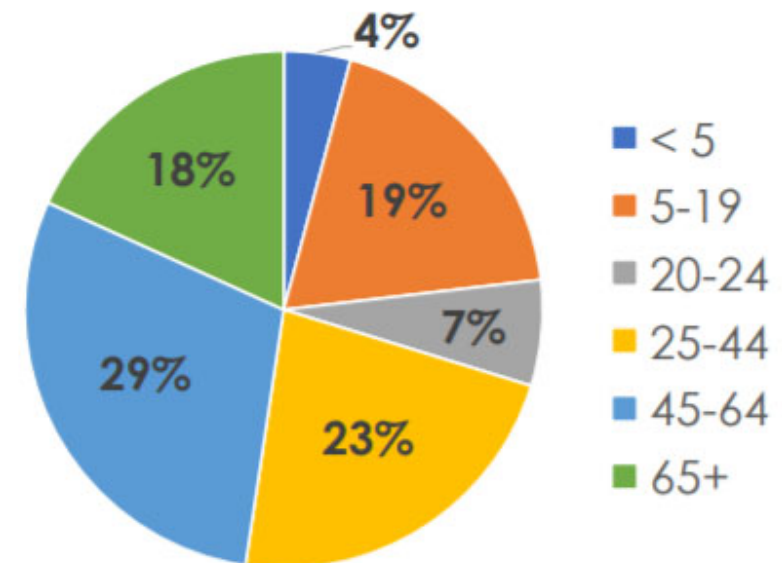


Figure 3: Town Population by Age

Source: 2010 US Census

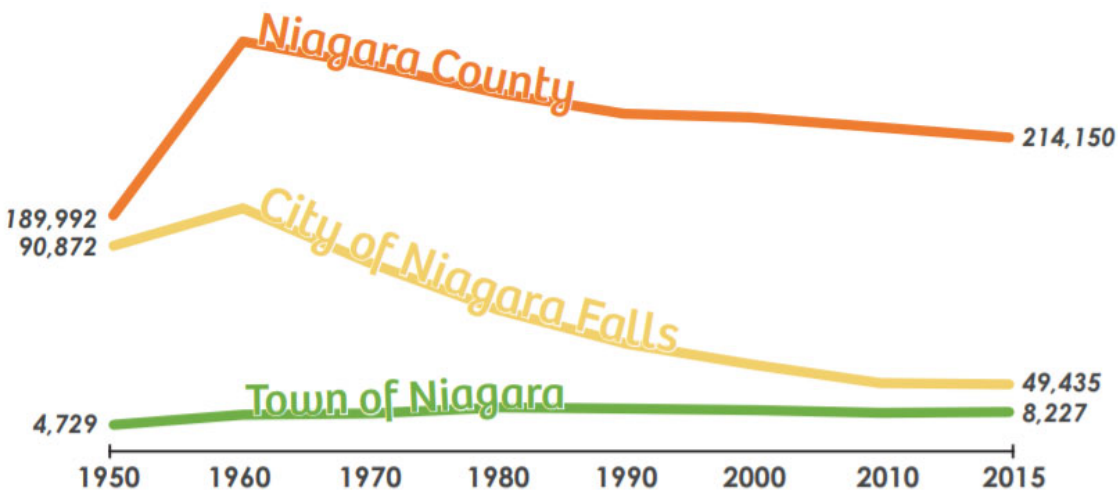


Figure 2: Historical Population Trend Lines

Source: US Decennial Census, 2015 ACS

# Economy

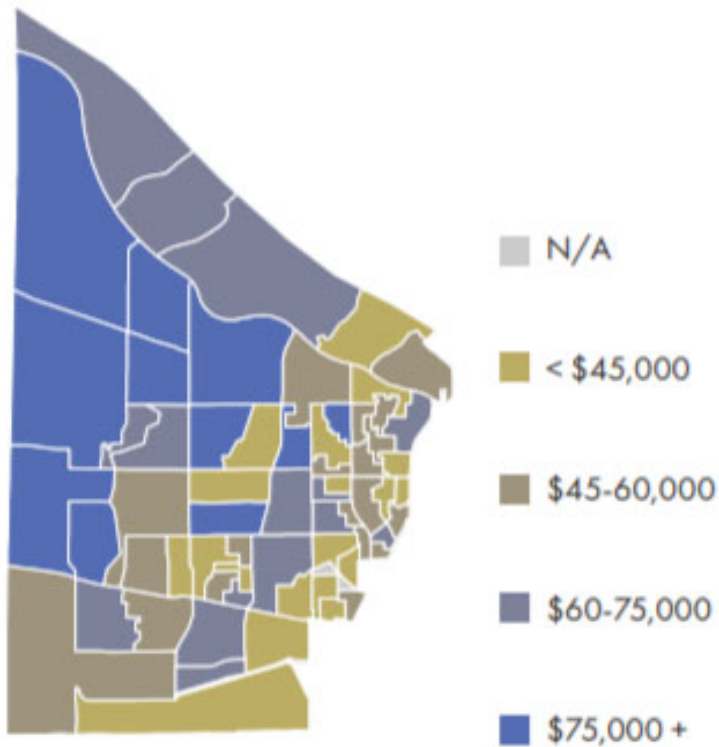


Figure 7: Household Income by Census Block

- **Workforce characteristics**
- Unemployment rates
- Places of employment
- Per capita income
- Tax rates/tax base
- Community debts

## Town of Greece Educational Attainment

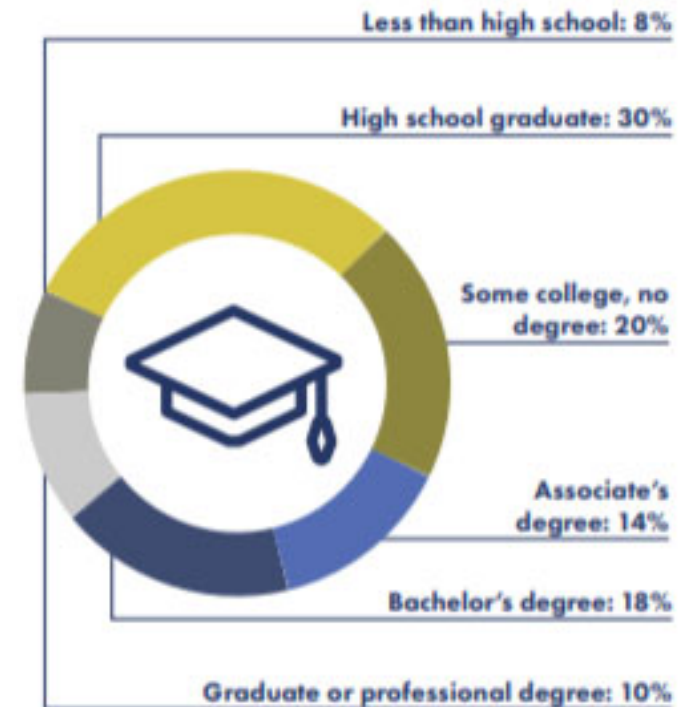


Figure 5: Educational Attainment of Residents

# Mobility and transportation

City of Troy

- Volume and usage of existing roadways
- **Transit services**
- Airports
- Rail lines
- Trails
- Sidewalks



City of Troy residents use of public transportation as their primary mode of transportation to work



Overall U.S.A rate of public transportation use



Rensselaer County rate of public transportation use

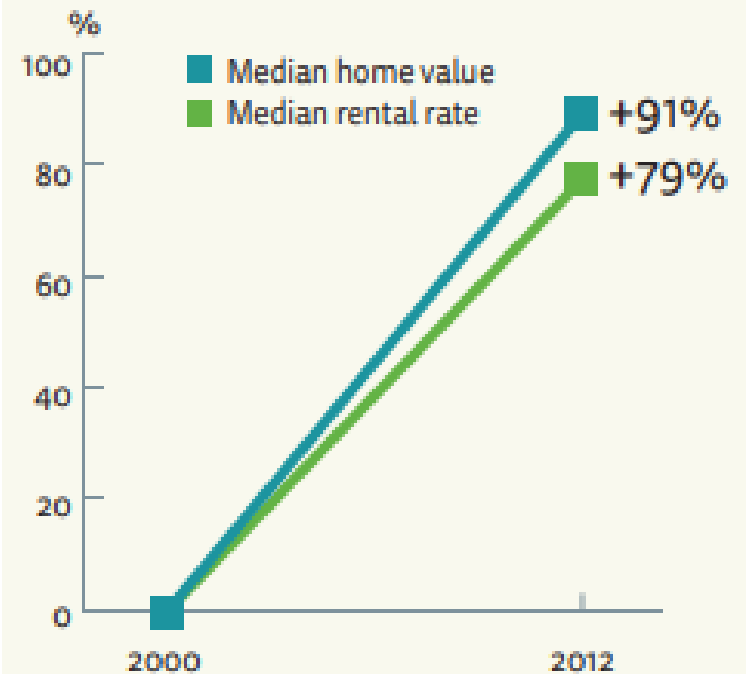
# Housing

- Diversity
- Number/condition of housing stock
- Future needs
- Building permit data
- **Home prices** and vacancy rates
- Owner occupied vs renter occupied as % of total housing stock



City of Ithaca

## Increase in median home value vs. median rental rate



# Public facilities



Sewer and water



Schools and  
libraries



Police, fire,  
emergency



Social services,  
hospitals



Parks, recreation,  
and culture



Gov't land and  
buildings

# Environment: renewable energies



## Conditions:

- Soil types
- Minerals
- Sunlight
- Wind
- Water resources
- Slopes
- Climates

# Environment: Critical Environmental Areas

Specific geographical areas with “exceptional or unique character”

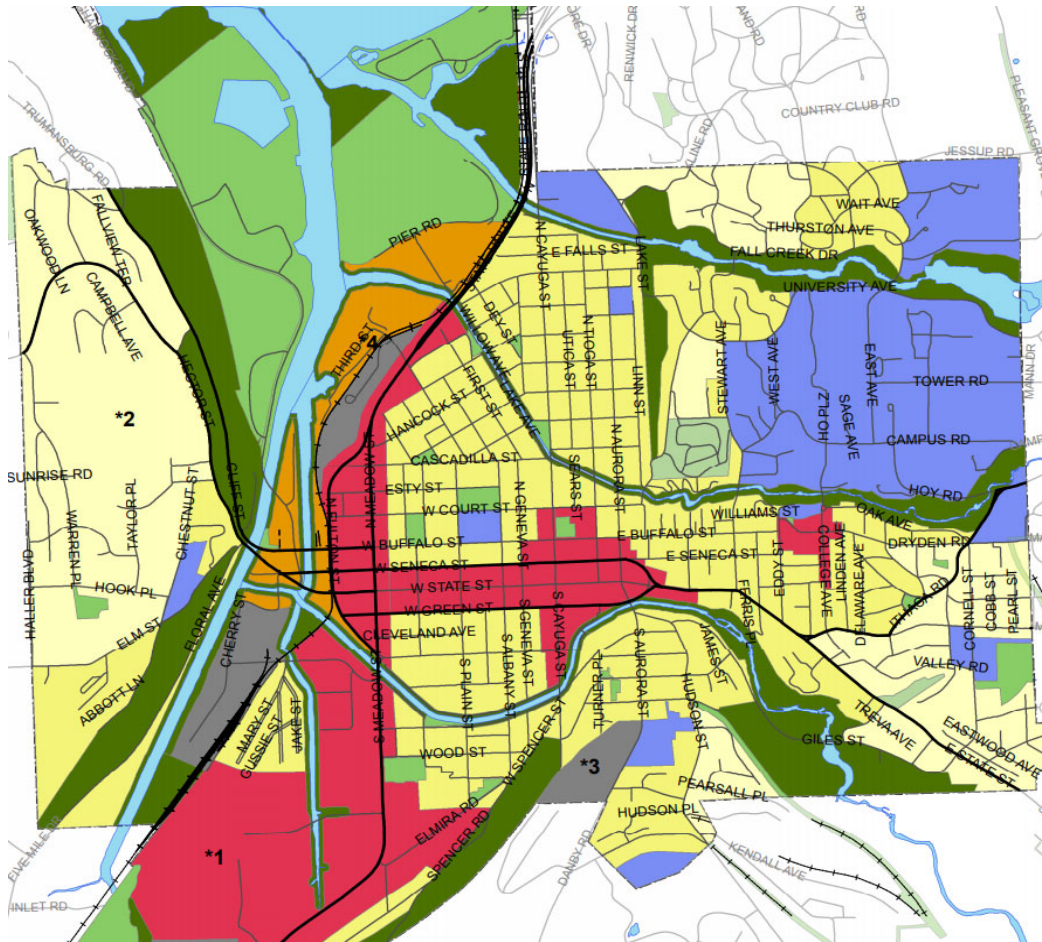


CEAs have:





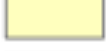









- feature with benefit/ threat to human health;
- Exceptional or unique natural setting;
- Exceptional or unique social, historic, archaeological, recreational, or educational value; or
- Inherent ecological, geological, or hydrological sensitivity to change that maybe adversely affected by any physical disturbance



# City of Ithaca future land use map



### Legend

	Educational		NYS Roads
	Enterprise		City Streets
	Low Density Residential		Waterway
	Medium Density Residential		City Border
	Waterfront Mixed-Use		Focus Area
	Urban Mixed-Use		
	Environmentally-Sensitive		
	Parks		
	Cemetery		

# Identify issues



Help Shape the Future of  
our Community!

## PERINTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SURVEY

[www.PerintonPlan.com](http://www.PerintonPlan.com)



The Town of Perinton has updated its Comprehensive Plan every 10 years since 1959. Now, in 2020, it is time to complete the process again!

By participating in the online survey, you are providing your input and guidance on future decision-making that will impact how you live, work, and enjoy life in Perinton.

Join your neighbors and take the survey today!



CIARAN HANNA  
TOWN SUPERVISOR

# Village of Lakewood

## Goal:

To improve all modes of transportation for a safe and enjoyable environment



## Recommended Action:

- Establish the bicycle LoCo trail to link Village of Lakewood and Town of Busti
- Implement complete streets policy to encourage walking and bicycle use
- Enhance community character by developing streetscape standards
- Direct people to attractions and waterfront by developing wayfinding system

# Town of Niagara: Military Road strip malls



# Town of Niagara

## Goal:

- Transform auto-centric corridor



## Recommended Action:

- New mixed-use overlay district
- Set nonresidential building design standards for infill development
- Prohibit front yard area parking lots
- Reduce minimum lot size and setbacks to create smaller blocks, increase walkability

# City of Ithaca: housing

## Goal:

- Adequate supply of safe, accessible, and affordable housing available to all residents, regardless of their life circumstances or special needs
- Range of housing options, including different levels of affordability and housing types, in each neighborhood.

## Recommended Action:

- Facilitate development of more housing units
- Include affordable units within new market-rate housing developments
- Timely periodic inspections

# Village of Irvington: commercial lodging



# Goal: B&Bs, short-term rentals

## Recommended Action:

- B&Bs by special use permit
- Permit short-term-rentals, but only for short-term lodging use, not for parties or other social events.
- Adequate off-street parking
- Owner occupancy or local contact person needed if owner not present.





# Evaluate alternatives

- Are goals achievable financially?
- Are there more attainable/sustainable alternatives?
- What are cost effective ways to achieve goals?
- What happens if we do nothing?

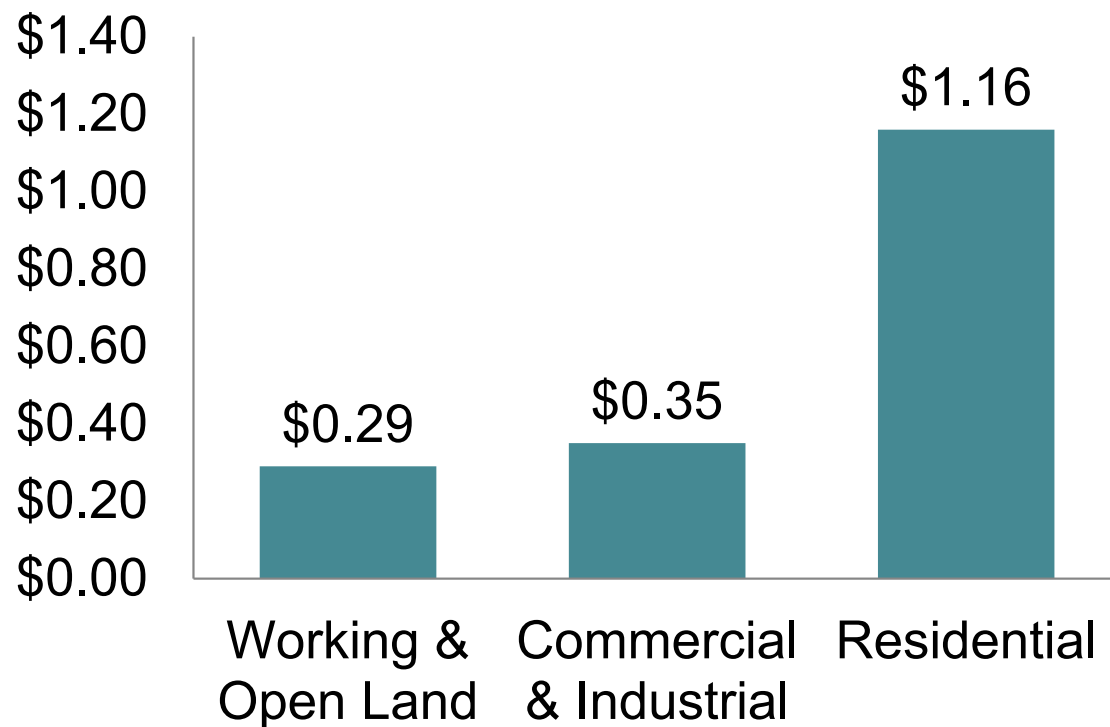


## Financial Planning in the Comprehensive

## Historical financial results: Village of Fabulous, General Fund

Revenues	2015	2017	2019	Av. Increase
Real Property Taxes	152,388	156,632	162,623	2%
Other Real Property Tax Items	16,127	16,219	16,523	1%
Sales and Use Tax	103,506	115,975	110,447	2%
Charges for Services	14,604	14,656	14,104	-1%
State Aid	29,275	24,052	24,287	-5%
Other Local Revenues	22,689	733	0	-100%
Use and Sale of Property	15,582	11,186	31,449	19%
Total Revenues and Other Sources	\$354,171	\$340,103	\$360,083	
Expenditures				
General Government	101,014	110,050	108,025	2%
Public Safety	6,818	6,011	7,805	3%
Health	300	300	300	0%
Transportation	76,912	70,620	129,903	14%
Economic Development	11,500	0	2,750	-30%
Culture and Recreation	18,171	25,622	21,354	4%
Sanitation	960	982	1,066	3%
Other Community Services	15,877	17,496	19,620	5%
Debt Service (Principal and Interest)	0	0	47,687	N/A
Employee Benefits	17,002	38,803	52,448	33%
Total Expenditures and Other Uses	\$248,554	\$269,884	\$390,958	12%
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$105,617</b>	<b>\$70,219</b>	<b>(\$30,875)</b>	

# Cost of Community Services (COCS)



- Baseline of current costs vs. revenues for each land use information, not a prediction
- Evaluates working & open lands equally

# Increase tax base or increase levy?

- Sprawl is more expensive than infill development
- Attract businesses to increase tax base-- otherwise increased levies are hard for taxpayers!



# Bridging the financial divide

- Utilize reserves (not sustainable)
- Raise revenues (increase tax base or tax levy)
- Reduce expenditures
  - Reduce staff (impacts service delivery, employee morale)
  - Scale back or eliminate services (voter backlash)
- Share services

## Revised Projection: Village of Fabulous, General Fund

Revenues	2019	2020	2021	change
Real Property Taxes	165,100	167,615	172,760	2%
Other Real Property Tax Items	16,038	15,567	14,667	-3%
Sales and Use Tax	87,048	68,606	42,616	-21%
Charges for Services	7,450	3,935	1,098	-47%
Charges to Other Governments	450	312	149	-31%
State Aid	27,660	31,501	40,859	14%
Federal Aid				
Use and Sale of Property	11,450	44,679	63,473	19%
Total Revenues and Other Sources	\$315,196	\$332,215	\$335,622	1%
<b>Expenditures</b>				
General Government	106,288	104,579	101,243	-2%
Public Safety	6,805	5,933	4,510	-13%
Health	300	300	300	0%
Transportation	121,137	112,963	98,231	-7%
Economic Development	400	58	1	-85%
Culture and Recreation	28,671	38,495	69,396	34%
Sanitation	1,200	1,351	1,712	13%
Other Community Services	25,907	34,209	59,645	32%
Debt Service (Principal and Interest)	21,658	9,836	2,029	-55%
Employee Benefits	47,921	43,785	36,552	-9%
Contingent Appropriations	11,549			
Total Expenditures and Other Uses	\$371,836	\$351,509	\$373,619	5%
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>(\$56,640)</b>	<b>(\$19,294)</b>	<b>(\$37,997)</b>	

# Revised Projection: expenditures

	2019	2020	2021	Change
General Government	106,288	104,579	101,243	-2%
Transportation	121,137	112,963	98,231	-7%
Employee Benefits	47,921	43,785	36,552	-9%



# Incorporate paying for development into plan

- “Fix it First” strategies
- Infill development and revitalization
- Phase growth



# Consider other plans



## Washington County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan

A Strategic Plan to Enhance the Economic Success of Agriculture in the County



Agriculture and ag-related businesses are a driving force critical to Washington County's economy and quality of life

**State:** coastal resource plan; canal recreationway plan; open space plan; sustainability plan

**Region:** greenway plan; watershed plan; school district plans; neighboring municipalities

**County:** health plan; farmland protection plans; economic development plan; emergency plan;

**Local:** Stormwater management plan; local waterfront redevelopment plans

## COMPREHENSIVE UPDATE OF THE CANANDAIGUA LAKE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN 2014

THE CANANDAIGUA LAKE WATERSHED COUNCIL



# Draft plan



## When do you have enough research to begin writing?

- Satisfied with consultant's progress
- Primary issues are addressed
- Public meeting/public hearings held

# Drafts: Three parallel reviews

1. **MANDATORY:** SEQRA
2. **MANDATORY:** GML §239-m County Planning Agency
3. **POSSIBLE:** Agricultural & Markets Article 25-AA (§305a)

# State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR)

- Lead Agency is local governing board
- Plan adoption is “Type I Action” likely needing EIS
- Full EAF required
- Issue negative declaration if adoption won’t have significant adverse environmental impact
- May serve as Generic EIS; make plan and GEIS available to public as joint document



# Agricultural review with NYS Dept. AGMKT

## Purpose:

- Avoid unintended consequences to farms
- Ensure that comprehensive plans and local laws don't unreasonably restrict or regulate farm operations within agricultural districts.

[AGM Article 25-AA §305-a](#)

## Also see:

- County agricultural protection plans
- DOS publication *"Local Laws and Agricultural Districts: How do they Relate?"*



# County review: GML 239m

Requires local municipalities forward comprehensive plan or amendments to county planning agency for review, comment, and recommendations.

Looks at inter-municipal and county-wide impacts associated with Comprehensive Plan adoption or amendment, such as:

- Compatibility of adjacent land uses
- Impact of any additional traffic
- Compatibility with existing municipal comprehensive plans or land use laws
- Effects on community
- Impact on community facilities

# Implementation

The value of planning comes from municipality's willingness to implement plan by:

- Amending land use regulations
- Developing design guidelines
- Budgeting for capital improvements
- Identifying staff/liaison to ensure planning consistency
- Creating implementation matrix

“Give permanence to the role of the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability” to ensure that planning and design efforts are consistent with comprehensive plan  
--Syracuse's 2040



# Implementation matrix

Goals and Recommendations		Project Champion	Potential Partners	Potential Funding	Immediate	Short-Term	Long-Term	Ongoing
<b>Policy Area 1: Destination &amp; Image</b>								
<i>Goal 1: Monitor, support and implement DRI programs and recommendations that improve Oneonta's image.</i>								
DI.1	Execute DRI Branding & Marketing and Downtown Wayfinding program.	City - Community Development	NYS ESD, OCR, DOS	NYS ESD, OCR, DOS	H			
DI.2	Explore creation of a Community Information Officer position to oversee City's long-term marketing efforts.	City - Personnel	Destination Oneonta (DO)				M	
<i>Goal 2: Establish the City of Oneonta as a destination for the arts, culture, and recreation.</i>								
DI.3	Support ongoing efforts to grow the arts in the City of Oneonta by programming and renovation of existing assets including, but not limited to, the Oneonta Theatre, Foothills Performing Arts Center, and the Community Arts Network of Oneonta (CANO).	City - Community Development	Oneonta Theatre, Foothills, CANO		H			
DI.4	Explore development of a structure (Arts Task Force) to coordinate arts, entertainment, and recreation venues throughout the City.	City	Arts, culture and other related organizations			H		
DI.5	Secure funding to implement recommendations of arts and culture-related studies.	City - Community Development	Arts, culture and other related organizations	NYSICA, CDBG, NY Main St		H		√
DI.6	Leverage and promote existing recreation assets and natural resources, including the Susquehanna River, Wilber Park, Neahwa Park, and the Homer Folks State Forest, to attract tourists and enrich the visitor experience.	City - Parks & Recreation, Parks & Rec Commission	DO, OCCA	NYS EPF				√
DI.7	Work with existing public and private entities to promote year-round recreation activities in the City, including hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling.	City - Parks & Recreation, Parks & Rec Commission	Susquehanna Greenway, Bike/rec orgs, colleges, DO					√

# Governing Board formally adopts plan

- Once adopted, all land use plans must be in accordance. At a minimum, municipality must articulate reason for deviating from plan.
- File adopted plan and any amendments with municipal clerk; copy filed with county planning agency

## What if plan is never formally adopted?

- Capital projects from other governmental agencies may proceed without considering plan.

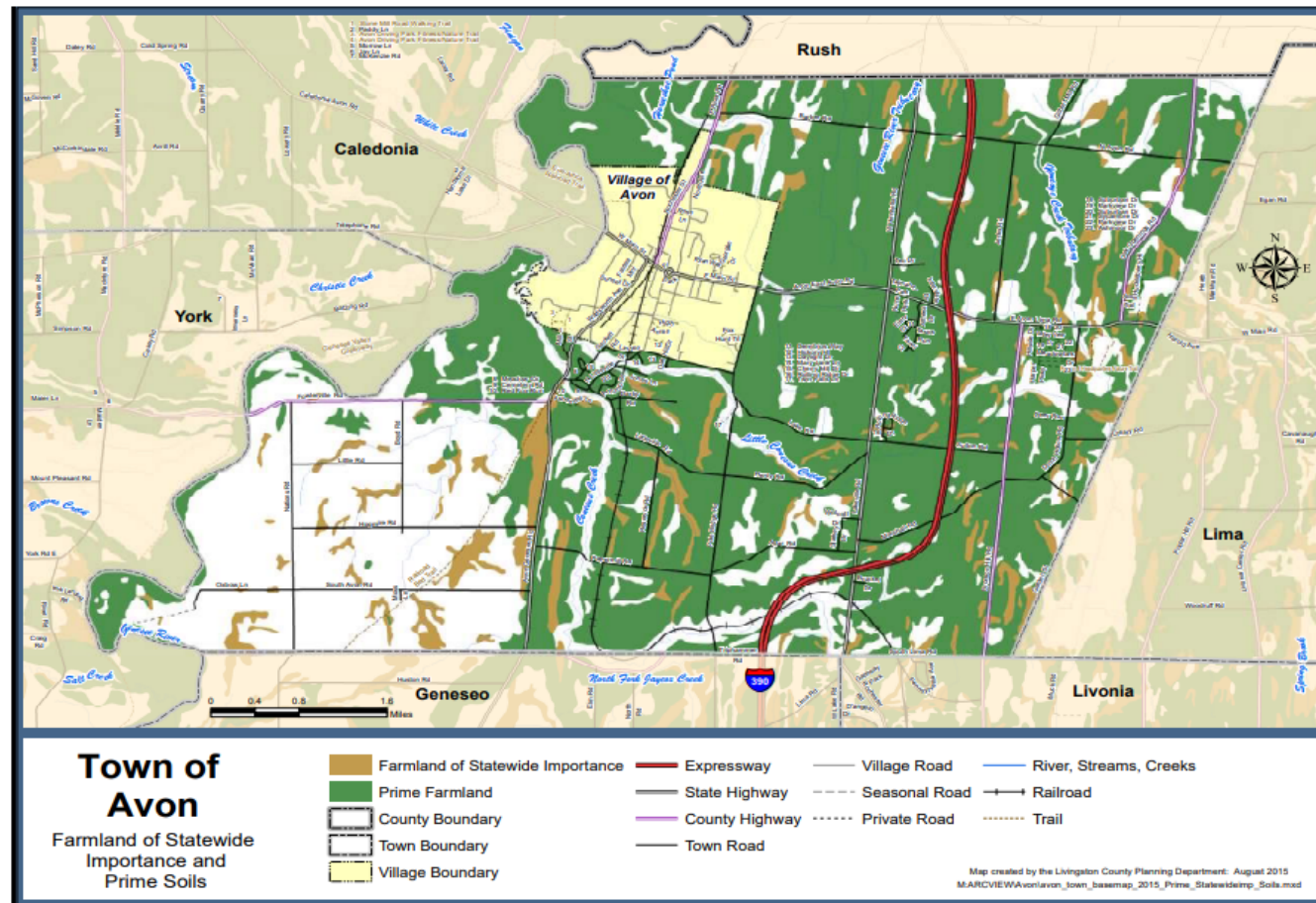
# Monitor, evaluate, and amend plan



“Living documents” need regular attention

# Amendments to plan:

- Soils
- Water quality
- Agriculture
- Environmental sensitivity
- Geology
- Scenic, historic
- Sustainability



# NYS DEC Climate Smart Program

Climate Smart Communities (CSCs) engage in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving climate resilience

1. Pledge to be a Climate Smart Community
2. Set goals, inventory emissions, plan for climate action
3. Decrease community energy use
4. Increase community use of renewable energy
5. Realize benefits of recycling and other climate-smart solid waste management practices
6. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions through use of climate- smart land-use tools
7. Enhance community resilience and prepare for the effects of climate change
8. Support development of a green innovation economy
9. Inform and inspire the public
10. Commit to an evolving process of climate action

Adopt or revise land-use plans & regulations to minimize impact of new development:

- Smart Growth Principals
- Resource-efficient site design guidelines
- Green parking lot standards
- Complete streets & alternative transportation options
- Green building codes

# Resources

- Search engine key words “Comprehensive Planning Resources NY” or “NYS DOS Zoning and the Comprehensive Plan”
- City of Ithaca’s Comprehensive Plan <https://www.cityofithaca.org/165/City-Comprehensive-Plan>
- American Planning Association’s “Comprehensive Plan Standards for Sustaining Place” <https://www.planning.org/sustainingplaces/compplanstandards/>
- Tug Hill Commission training packet <https://www.tughill.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/12CompPlanPacket.pdf>
- Planning Commissioners’ Journal “Your Community’s Little Instruction Book” <https://plannersweb.com/2008/04/your-communitys-little-instruction-book/>
- EPA’s Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities: Madison County <https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/smart-growth-self-assessment-rural-communities-madison-county>

# New York Department of State

## Division of Local Government Services

(518) 473-3355

[localgov@dos.ny.gov](mailto:localgov@dos.ny.gov)

<https://dos.ny.gov/training-assistance>