



Comprehensive Planning

A Division of New York Department of State

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Statutory Definition

- Expression of municipality's goals and recommended action to achieve those goals
- Outline for orderly growth, providing continued guidance for decision-making
- Document focusing on immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development

67% of NYS Local
Governments have
Comprehensive
Plans

94% of Cities
70% of Villages
60% of Towns

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

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Why it is Important

- Zoning and other land use regulations must be in accordance with plan
 - Defense against spot zoning challenges
- Growth management and prioritization of community investments
 - NYS Public Infrastructure Policy Act
- Other government agencies shall consider a municipality's plan while proposing capital projects
- Annual budgeting and capital planning
- Goals support Grant applications



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When to 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



Rapid growth or decline may need to be addressed



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New infrastructure needed



Special places are disappearing



Renewable energy demand



Photo credit: www.berkshireeagle.com

Economic changes



Incompatible development



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



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Resilience Planning

Considers multiple systems to create vital communities:

- A holistic approach
- New neighborhoods and relocations
- Infrastructure modification and backup

Expand, conserve or revitalize natural protective features:

- Storm damage benefits
- Environmental benefits
- Quality of life benefits for residents and visitors



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Getting Started

- Review your current plan (if one exists)
- Governing Board determines body responsible for plan preparation
- Create a budget / identify funding opportunities
- Review comprehensive plan statute

3 Options to Lead Planning Process:

- Governing Board
- Planning Board
- “Special Board”

Governing Board's Role

- Prepare plan or appoint a ‘special board’ to develop plan
- Plan adoption
- Hold public hearing within 90 days of receiving draft plan
- Governing board also responsible for:
 - Amending land use regulations
 - Developing design guidelines
 - Budgeting for capital improvements
 - Applying for appropriate state, federal and privately funded programs

Potential Partners to Lead Plan Development

- Planning Board or Comprehensive Plan Committee
- Municipal planner
- Municipal engineer
- Municipal attorney
- County planners
- Planning consultant
- Not-for-profit consultant
- Combination of the above

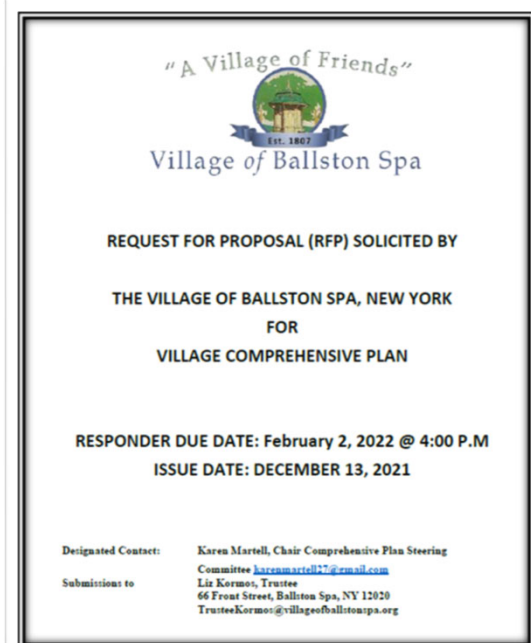


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Using a Consultant

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

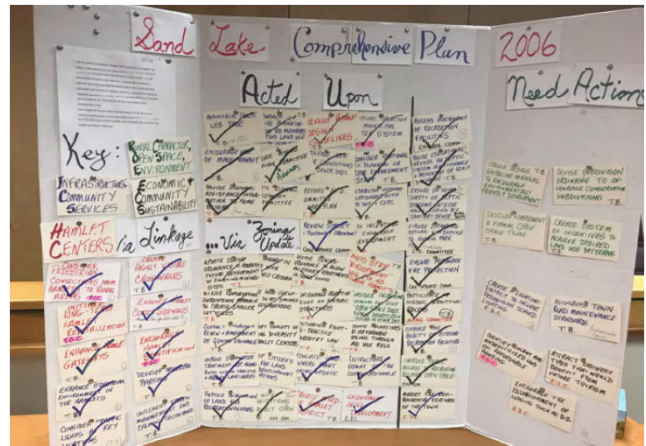
Consultants may provide an unbiased community view



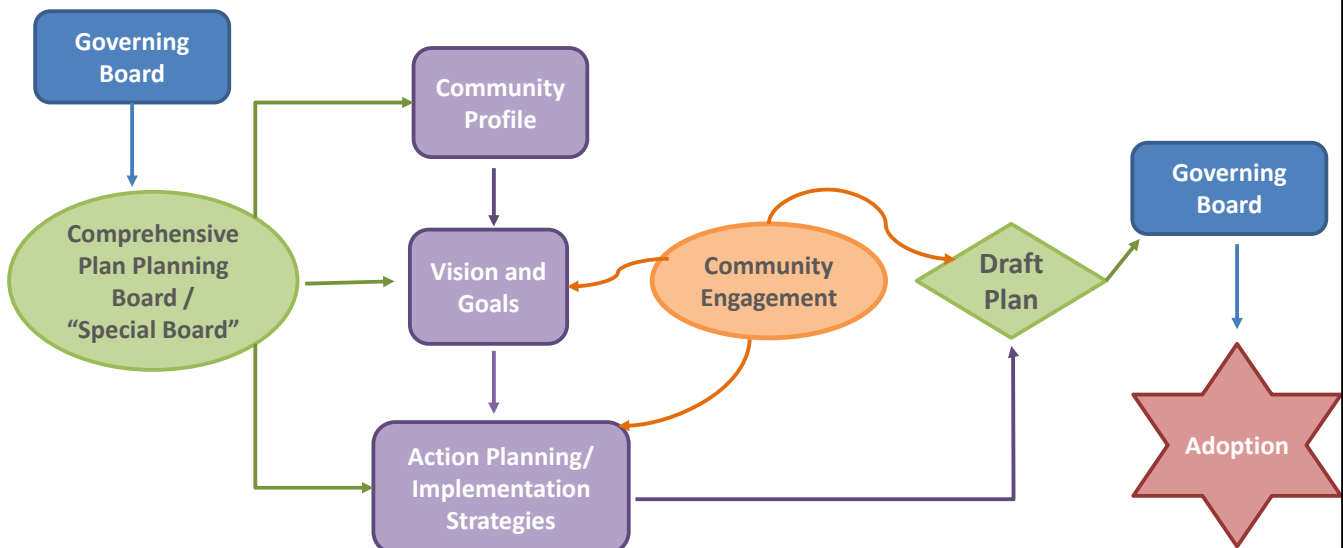
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Process at a Glance

1. Review your existing plan
2. Community engagement
3. Prepare community profile
4. Identify issues
5. Develop vision & goals
6. Recommend actions for goal implementation (Action Plan)
7. Review Draft Plan
8. Adopt plan
9. Implement plan
10. Evaluate plan



Town of Sand Lake, NY Comprehensive Plan review and identified accomplishments



Step 2: Community Engagement

- Ongoing throughout the planning process
- Potential community partners:
 - Business owners
 - Civic leaders
 - Youth and senior organizations
 - Recreation, arts and cultural organizations
 - Environmental experts
 - Elected officials, Planning Board, ZBA, municipal commissions, taskforces



Community Engagement Tools

- Surveys
- In-person/online workshops
- Open houses / charrettes
- Focus groups / round tables
- Key interviews
- Community visioning
- Community asset mapping
- Community forums/social media
- Two public hearings required***



Demographics

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

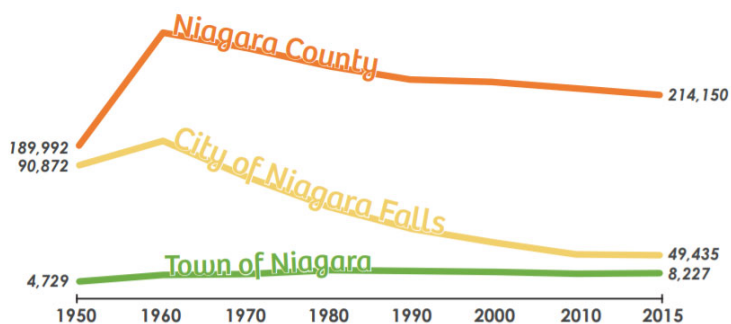


Figure 2: Historical Population Trend Lines
Source: US Decennial Census, 2015 ACS

Town of Niagara Falls

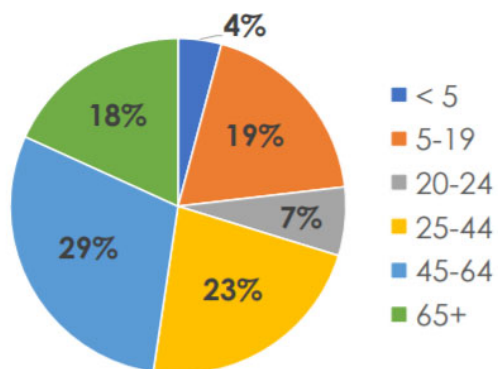


Figure 3: Town Population by Age
Source: 2010 US Census

Economy

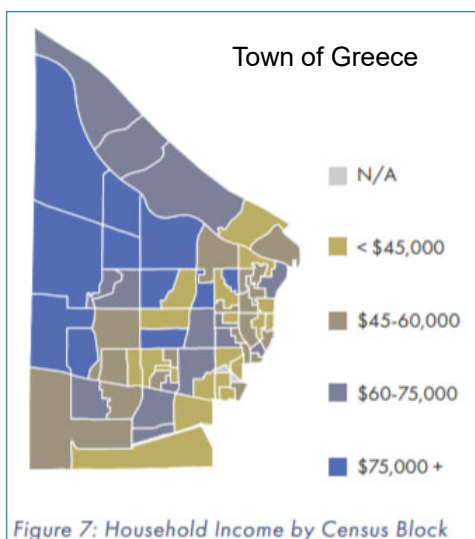


Figure 7: Household Income by Census Block

Workforce characteristics

- Educational attainment
- Unemployment rates
- Places of employment
- Income
- Tax rates/tax base
- Community debts

Educational Attainment

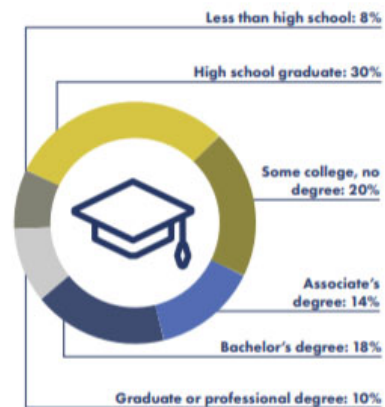
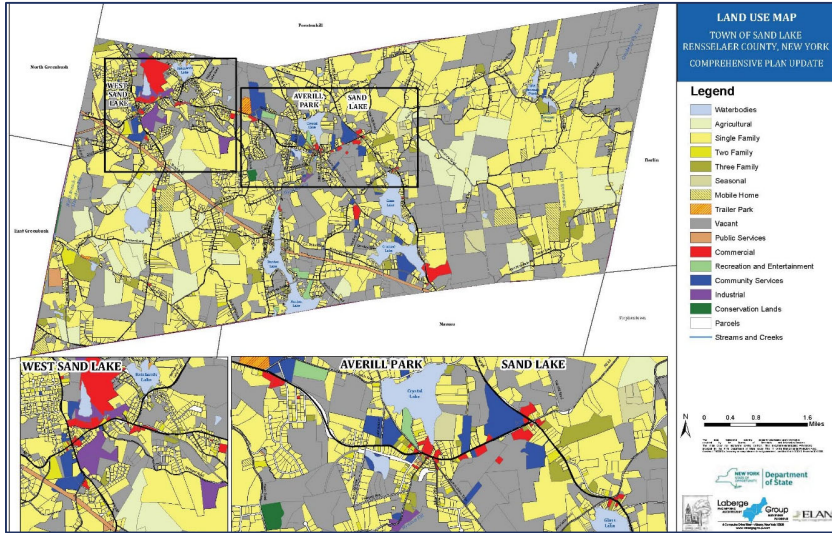


Figure 5: Educational Attainment of Residents

Land Use



Town of Sand Lake

TABLE 12: EXISTING LAND USES

USES	ACRES	PERCENTAGE
AGRICULTURAL	1,851	8.36%
RESIDENTIAL	11,593	51.93%
SINGLE FAMILY	10,220	46.17%
TWO FAMILY	139	0.63%
THREE+ FAMILY	470	2.12%
SEASONAL	263	1.19%
MANUFACTURED HOME	373	1.69%
MANUFACTURED HOME PARKS	28	0.13%
VACANT	7,999	33.42%
COMMUNITY SERVICES	181	0.82%
PUBLIC SERVICES	282	1.28%
COMMERCIAL	228	1.03%
INDUSTRIAL	133	0.60%
RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT	58	0.26%
WATERBODIES	494	2.23%
WILD, FORESTED, CONSERVATION LANDS AND PUBLIC PARKS	75	0.30%

SOURCE: RENSSELAER COUNTY BUREAU OF RESEARCH AND INFORMATION SERVICES - 2017 REAL PROPERTY DATA

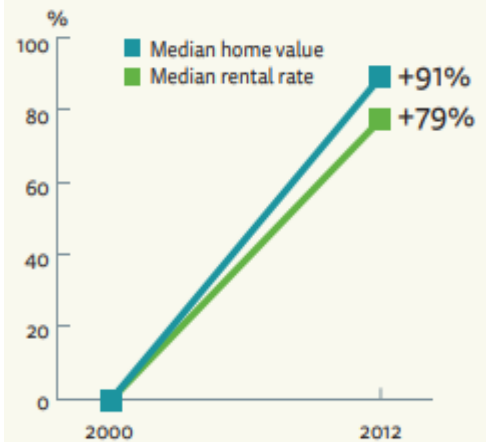
Housing

- 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

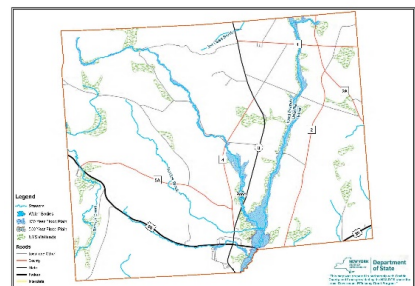
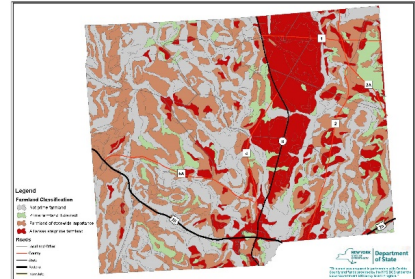
Increase in median home value vs. median rental rate



Natural Resources



- Critical environmental areas
- Water resources
- Fish and wildlife
- Slopes/vistas
- Soil types
- Minerals
- Wind
- Sunlight



Mobility and Transportation

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



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



Overall U.S.A rate of public transportation use



Rensselaer County rate of public transportation use

City of Troy


Public facilities and services



Sewer and water




Schools and libraries



Police, fire, emergency



Social services, hospitals



Parks, recreation, and culture



Gov't land and buildings

Step 4: Identify issues

What are your SWOTs ?

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats



Step 5: Vision and Goals

Vision Statements

- Statement of community's preferred future
- Supported by goals and actions to get there



A wordle created from the most common residents used to describe what they love about their community during a visioning exercise. Bridgewater, NY

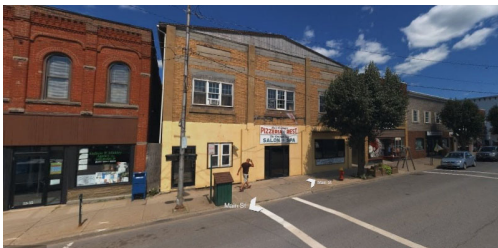


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Step 5: Vision and goals

Goal Statements:

- Based on identified issues from Community Profile and Community Input
- Goals become priorities for future policy development decisions
- Goals are measurable and achievable



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Step 5: Vision and goals

Vision & Guiding Principles

A vision statement establishes the direction of the community over the next five to ten years. It forms the basis for the comprehensive plan and all subsequent recommendations and to achieve the established vision. The vision review was developed with input provided from the public at public open houses, stakeholder meetings, CIP meetings and comments received through the project website.

VISION STATEMENT

In ten years, Canton will be the most connected and accessible community in the North Country.

Situated between the foothills of the Adirondacks and the St. Lawrence River, and home to two institutions of higher learning, Canton will offer an attractive, safe, and healthy environment for its residents and visitors to live, learn, work and play.

With abundant waterfront resources along the Grasse and Oswegatchie Rivers, a vibrant historic downtown, and quiet, independent communities, residents and visitors to Canton will benefit from its broad array of educational, recreational, and agricultural opportunities.

Canton will continue to encourage innovation, connectivity and entrepreneurship while building upon its commitment to sustainability and diversity to welcome visitors and businesses.



TOWN OF CANTON, VILLAGE OF CANTON AND VILLAGE OF FERRISBURGER FALLS | COMPREHENSIVE PLAN | 21

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These guiding principles are intended to be an overarching guide to the specific recommendations that will follow. A community is a series of interconnected systems and resources – each dependent on the other. As such, these guiding principles are closely interrelated and interwoven. The synergy and context by which the recommendations will be implemented will be key to the success of Canton in being its desired vision.

Community Identity

Strengthen Canton's proud identity as the hub of St. Lawrence County by enhancing waterfront resources while supporting downtown redevelopment. Ensure that Canton's accessible downtown promotes a vibrant, safe community for residents and visitors of all ages and income levels. Build on opportunities for recreation, agriculture, heritage-based tourism, the arts and Canton's innovative educational institutions.

Economic Growth

Expand opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship by supporting local businesses and innovation. Leverage Canton's central location in St. Lawrence County to create a cultural and economic center by promoting quality infrastructure and technology, expanding existing businesses and enhancing housing options by attract active community members and skilled employees.

Resiliency and Sustainability

Enhance environmental, fiscal and economic resiliency through sound, deliberate and efficient sustainable practices. Support local government efficiency and the application of smart growth techniques to achieve long-term community resiliency.

Transportation and Mobility

Support a transportation system that is safe, convenient and accessible to people of all ages and abilities, with walkable downtowns, diverse transit options and bicycle-friendly streets.





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Resiliency and Sustainability

Guiding Principle

Enhance environmental, fiscal and economic resiliency through sound, deliberate and efficient sustainable practices. Support local government efficiency and the application of smart growth techniques to achieve long-term community resiliency.

Goals

- Ensure the availability of public facilities, infrastructure and emergency services that adequately meet Canton's present and future needs.
- Encourage smart growth techniques for future growth.
- Consider Canton's fiscal and environmental health in future decisions.

The long-term success of Canton requires a commitment to prudent, sustainable, and forward-looking stewardship of natural resources as well as the economic structures that are the foundation for the quality of life and attractiveness of the community. The economy and environment are fundamentally interconnected and contribute to the ongoing success of Canton. Climate change and other regional, national and global environmental trends, require Canton to evaluate and design future development to reap the present associated resources, in terms of pollution, use energy wisely, protect meaningful and threatened open spaces, and design infrastructure that utilizes (or mimics) natural ecosystem processes to ensure the long-term sustainability and environmental quality. Environmental health also impacts PAU Village of Canton.



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Step 6: Action Planning/Recommended Strategies for Implementation

- Recommended municipal actions to implement the goals of the plan
 - Supportive policies (regulations/guidelines)
 - Programs
 - Capital improvements and expansions
- May include partnerships with other agencies and organizations
- May require amendments to local laws/adoption of ordinances



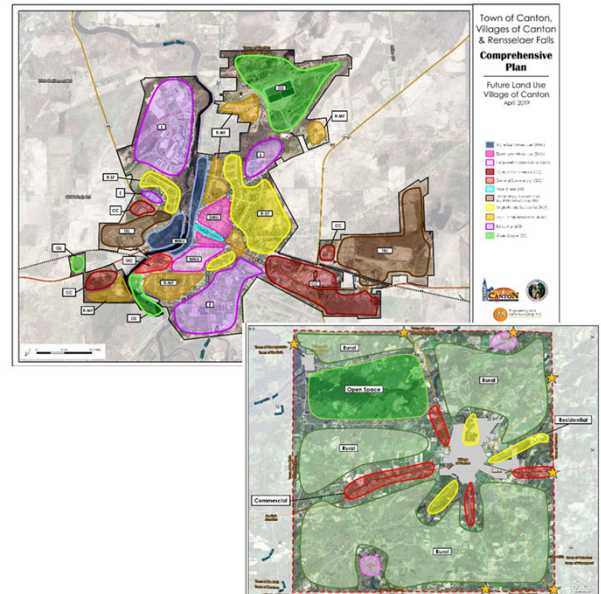
Future Land Use Map

Advantages:

- Visual representation of the preferred future: easy to understand
- Creates a sense of predictability
- Provides guidance for planning and policy-making

Limitations:

- Difficult to prepare
- May seem more rigid than it really is
- No indication of the timing for a proposed development



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Village of Lakewood

Goal:

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



Recommended Actions:

- 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

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Town of Warrensburg: Hamlet Sustainability

Goal:

Advance the ongoing improvement of the hamlet as the cultural and social heart of the community



Recommended Actions:

- Create a vacant properties and storefronts inventory and make this information available
- Expand sewer infrastructure beginning with high-priority residential needs
- Create design guidelines for new infill to protect hamlet character
- Encourage the creation of apartments over businesses



City of Ithaca: Housing

Goal:

- Adequate supply of safe, accessible, and affordable housing available to all residents
- Range of housing options, including different levels of affordability and housing types, in each neighborhood

Recommended Actions (Sample):

- Include affordable units within new market-rate housing developments
- Increase City staff to ensure timely periodic inspections
- Seek out additional sources of financial support for developing subsidized housing
- Review the zoning code and consider revisions to increase flexibility for residential development, while preserving desirable neighborhood characteristics



Town of Bridgewater: Housing

Recommended Actions

- Work with mobile home owners to participate in available Home Replacement grant programs to improve housing quality and value
- Conduct a housing market study
- Sponsor a housing rehabilitation program by securing a grant that will provide for the upgrade and rehabilitation of residential and mixed-use structures



City of Corning: Community Services

Goal: Increase effectiveness and cost-efficiency of municipal services

- Consolidate scattered public safety services into one complex
- Use GIS to track service delivery
- Hire an additional Code Enforcement Officer to handle residential units inspection



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?



Implementation matrix

- Provides a summary framework of goals and actions identified in the plan
- Potential Elements:
 - lead agency/ partners
 - steps for implementation
 - potential funding
 - targeted timeframe for implementation (ongoing, short, medium and long term)

Goals and Recommendations	Project Champion	Potential Partners	Potential Funding	Immediate	Short-Term	Long-Term	Ongoing
Policy Area 1: Destination & Image							
Goal 1: Monitor, support and implement DRI programs and recommendations that improve Oneonta's image.							
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	
Goal 2: Establish the City of Oneonta as a destination for the arts, culture, and recreation.							
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	NYSOA, CDBG, NY Main St		H		✓
DI.6 Leverage and promote existing recreation assets and natural resources, including the Susquehanna River, Wilbur Park, Neatwa 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, BikeNetc.org, colleges, DO					✓

Implementation matrix

Town of Saranac Comprehensive Plan and Revitalization Strategy IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX ❖ = Priority Action			
Action	Implementation Steps	Partners	Potential Funding Source
Goal 1: Revitalize and strengthen the local economy by encouraging vibrant hamlets, safe commercial corridors, and maximum use of the Town's natural resources, all consistent with the community's character.			
❖ 1.1: Work with the APA and DOS to identify lands in the area of Picketts Corners that could be reclassified as "hamlet" in the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan (APLUDP) to expand opportunities for higher density, mixed-use development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze existing lands classified APA Hamlet with regard to current usage and land available for development. Analyze classification of lands surrounding APA Hamlets with regard to current parcel size, vacancy or improvement, land development constraints and existing infrastructure. Meet with the Adirondack Park Agency regarding potential land reclassification. Town Board adopts resolution requesting the land classification amendment to the APLUDP and submits other required documents to the APA. 	APA, NYS DOS, NYS OCR	NYS DOS EPF, CDBG Small Cities Community Planning Grant
1.2: Focus new retail and service commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a Committee to consider development of a local land 	APA, Local property	N/A



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Step 7: Draft Plan Review

1. **MANDATORY:** SEQRA
2. **MANDATORY:** GML §239-m County Planning Agency
3. **POSSIBLE:** Agricultural & Markets Article 25-AA (§305a)
4. **MANDATORY:** Public Hearings
 - On Draft Plan by "Special Board" or Planning Board if in charge of plan development
 - By Governing Board



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State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR)

- Plan adoption is “Type I Action”
 - Potential significant adverse environmental impact presumed
- Full EAF required
- EIS may be required
- May serve as Generic EIS
- Include thresholds and conditions triggering site specific EIS



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: State GML §239-m

Requires local municipalities to 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 such as:

- Compatibility of adjacent land uses
 - Impact of any additional traffic
 - Compatibility with existing municipal comprehensive plans or land use laws
 - Impact on community facilities
- Provides opportunity for additional professional review from County Planning Staff



Step 8: Adopt plan

- Governing Board adopts plan by resolution or other local enactment
- Adopted plan must be considered by other governmental agencies when planning for capital projects



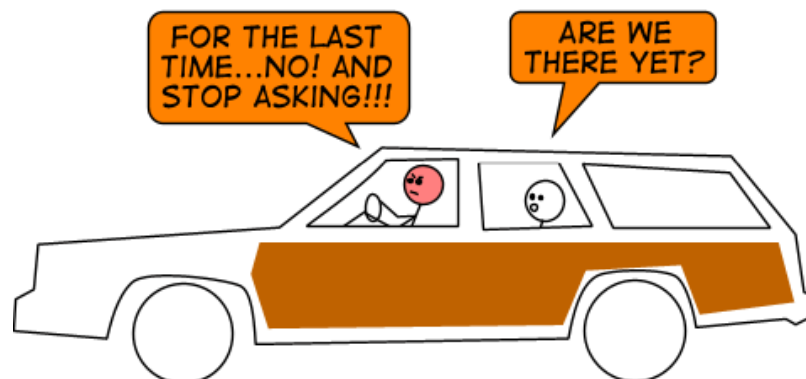
Step 9: Implement Plan

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/committee to ensure planning consistency as governments change every 2-4 years

“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

Monitor, evaluate, and amend plan



“Living documents” need regular attention

Step 10: Evaluate plan

Plan must include maximum intervals for review

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

Plan should be updated to reflect changes to policies and physical characteristics of community

Amendments to plan:

New priorities, opportunities and threats:

- Water quality
- Environmental sensitivity
- Changing technologies
- Scenic, historic resources
- Blight, vacancies
- New/loss of major employer
- Housing
- Sustainability



Funding sources

- NYS DOS Smart Growth Comprehensive Planning Grants (CFA)
- NYS DOS Local Government Efficiency Grants (LGE)
- NYS DOS Local Waterfront Revitalization Program
- NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets funds up to \$25,000 for agricultural protection parts of comprehensive plans
- NYS DEC's Climate Smart Communities
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)



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Resources – Publications

- Guide to Planning and Zoning Regulations in NYS: <https://dos.ny.gov/guide-planning-and-zoning-laws-new-york-state>
- Zoning and the Comprehensive Plan <https://dos.ny.gov/zoning-and-comprehensive-plan>
- Questions for the Analysis and Evaluation of Existing Zoning Regulations <https://dos.ny.gov/questions-analysis-zoning>
- Land Use Moratoria <https://dos.ny.gov/land-use-moratoria>
- All DOS Publications: <https://dos.ny.gov/publications>



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