



**Division of Local
Government Services**

Comprehensive Planning

A Division of New York Department of State

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

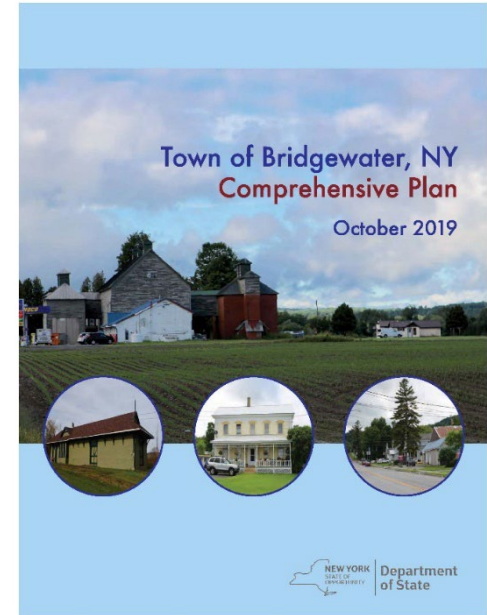
67% of NYS Local Governments have Comprehensive Plans

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

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

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



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



New infrastructure needed



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Special places are disappearing



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Renewable energy demand



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Photo credit: www.berkshireeagle.com

Economic changes



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Incompatible development



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Inconsistent development



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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

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



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”



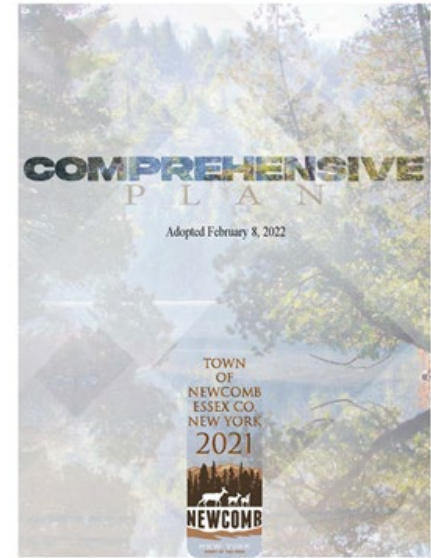
Governing Board's Role

- 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 in Plan Development

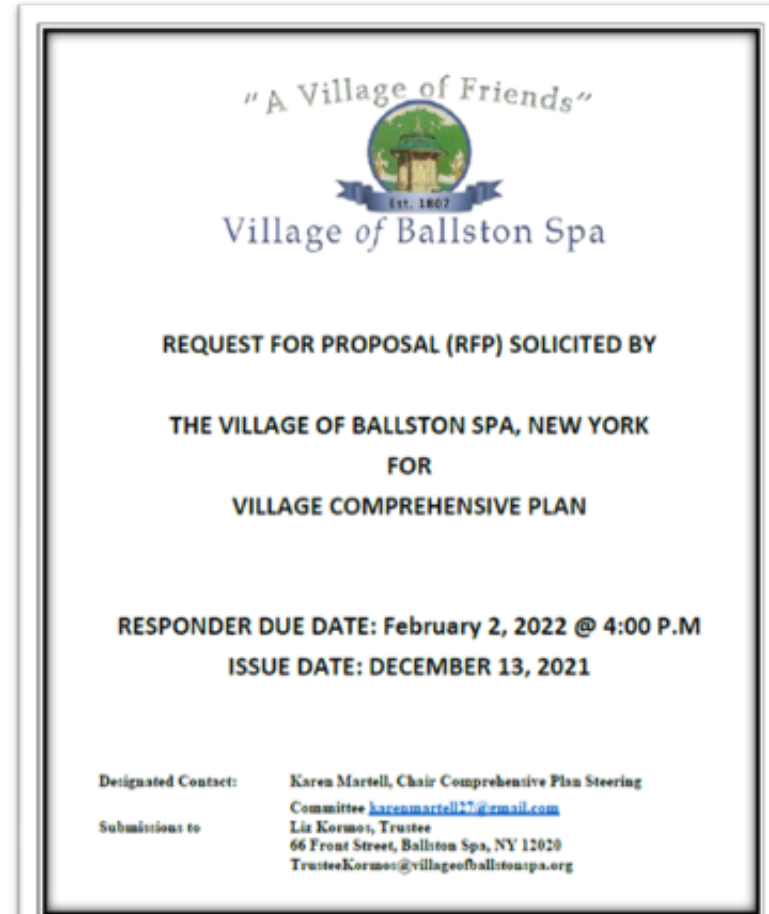
- Planning Board
- Comprehensive Plan Committee
 - Include community members representing different backgrounds and ideas
- Municipal planner
- Municipal engineer
- Municipal attorney
- County planners
- Planning consultant
- Not-for-profit consultant
- Combination of the above



Using a Consultant

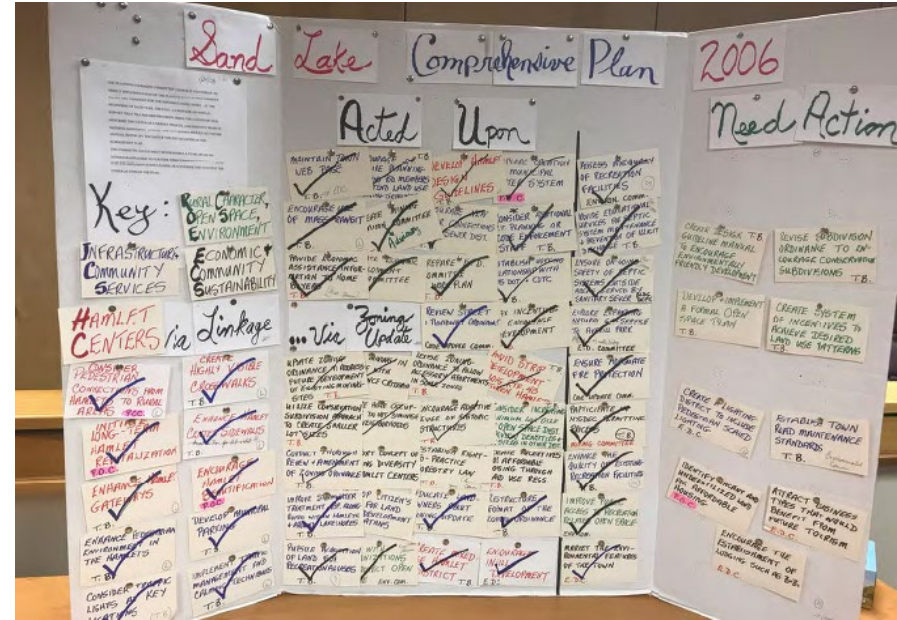
- Role in plan preparation varies
- Interview and check references
- Identify staff assigned to plan
- Consider relevance of their experience
- Identify any subcontractors

Consultants may provide an unbiased community view



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

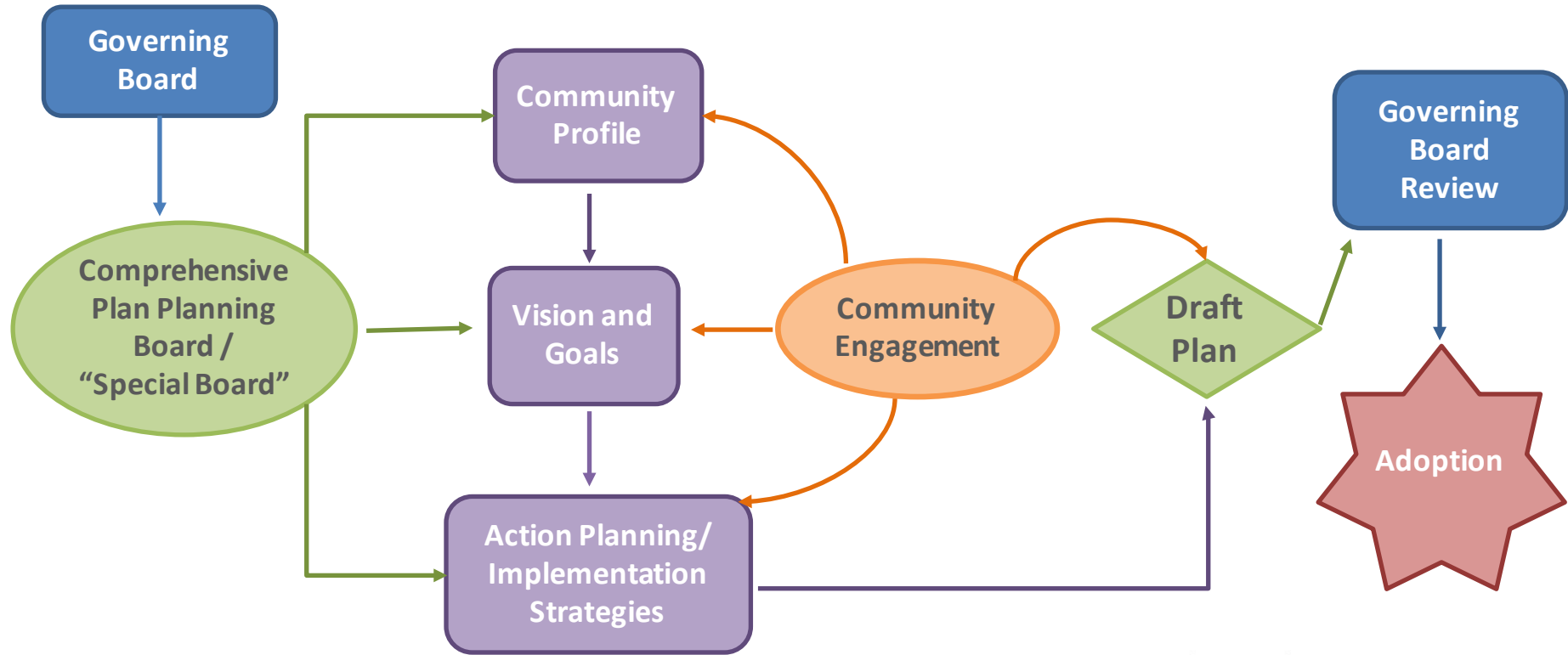


Town of Sand Lake, NY Comprehensive Plan review and identified accomplishments



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Step 2: Community Engagement

- Ongoing throughout the planning process
- **Potential community partners:**
 - Business owners
 - Civic leaders
 - Youth and senior organizations
 - Recreation, environmental, arts and cultural organizations
 - Elected officials, planning and zoning officials and staff, municipal commissions, county and regional planning boards



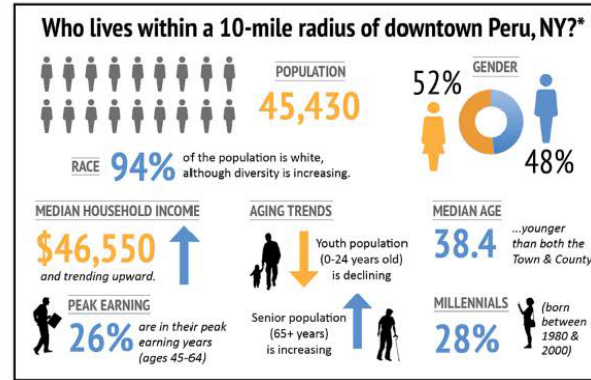
Community Engagement Tools

- Surveys and interviews
- Workshops, open houses, charrettes, walk and talks, focus groups
 - Engage where the community already gathers - parks, coffee shops, farmers markets, neighborhood gatherings; community events
- Interactive websites; videoconference option
- Community visioning exercises
- Community asset mapping
- Community forums/social media
- Two public hearings required***



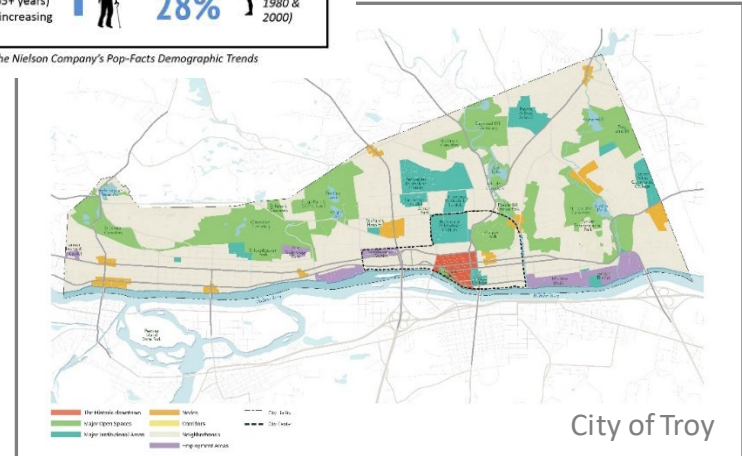
Step 3: Community Profile of Existing Conditions

- Demographics
- Economy
- Existing land uses and land regulations
- Housing
- Transportation
- Public services
- Environmental conditions

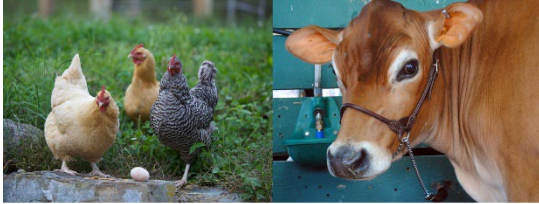


*All data based on 2015 estimates from the Nielson Company's Pop-Facts Demographic Trends

Maps and infographics can visually convey and summarize data



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



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Demographics

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

Town of Niagara Falls

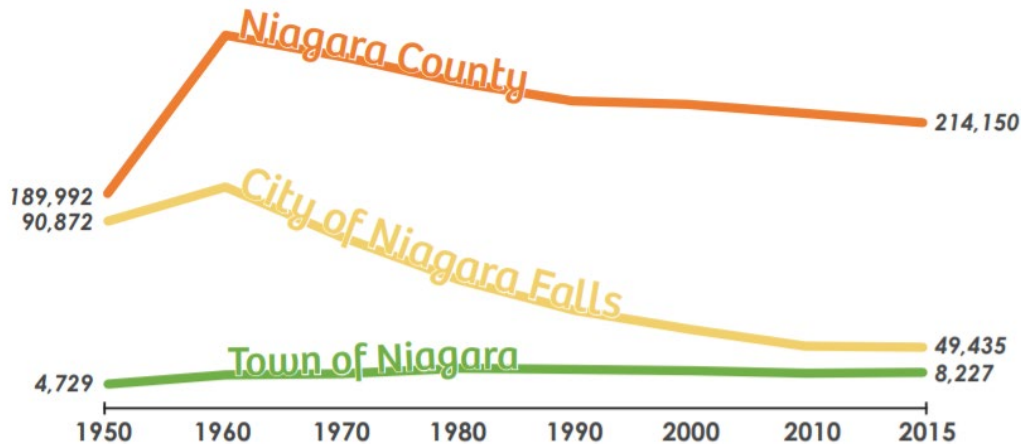


Figure 2: Historical Population Trend Lines

Source: US Decennial Census, 2015 ACS

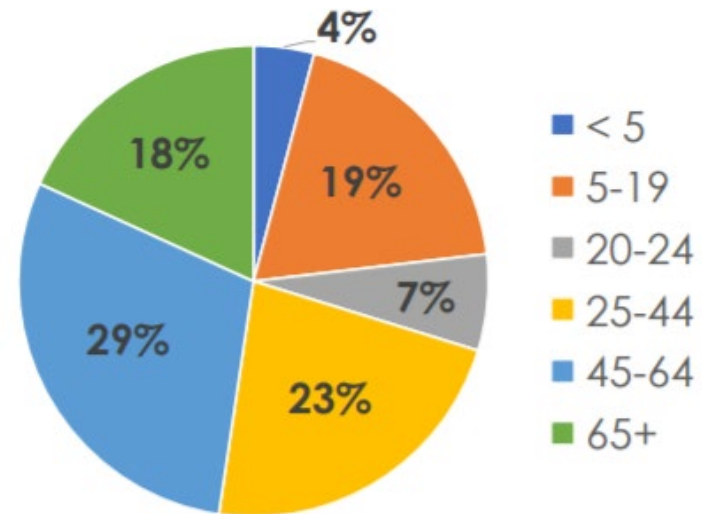
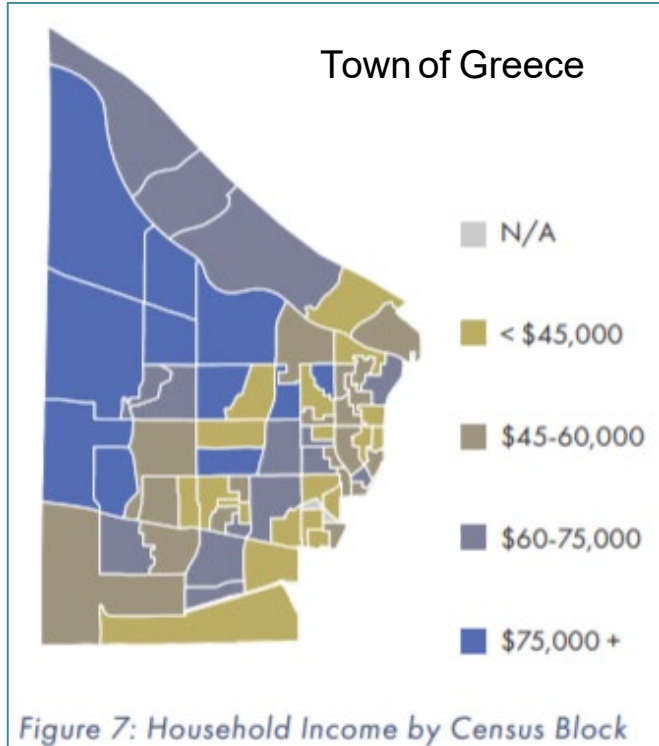


Figure 3: Town Population by Age

Source: 2010 US Census

Economy



Workforce characteristics

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

Educational Attainment

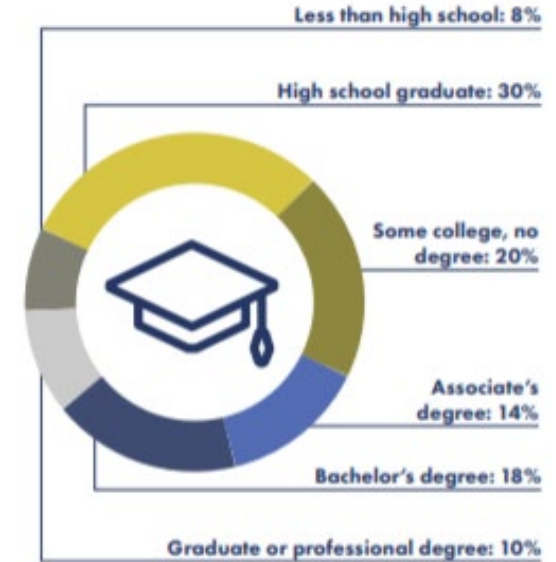


Figure 5: Educational Attainment of Residents

Land Use

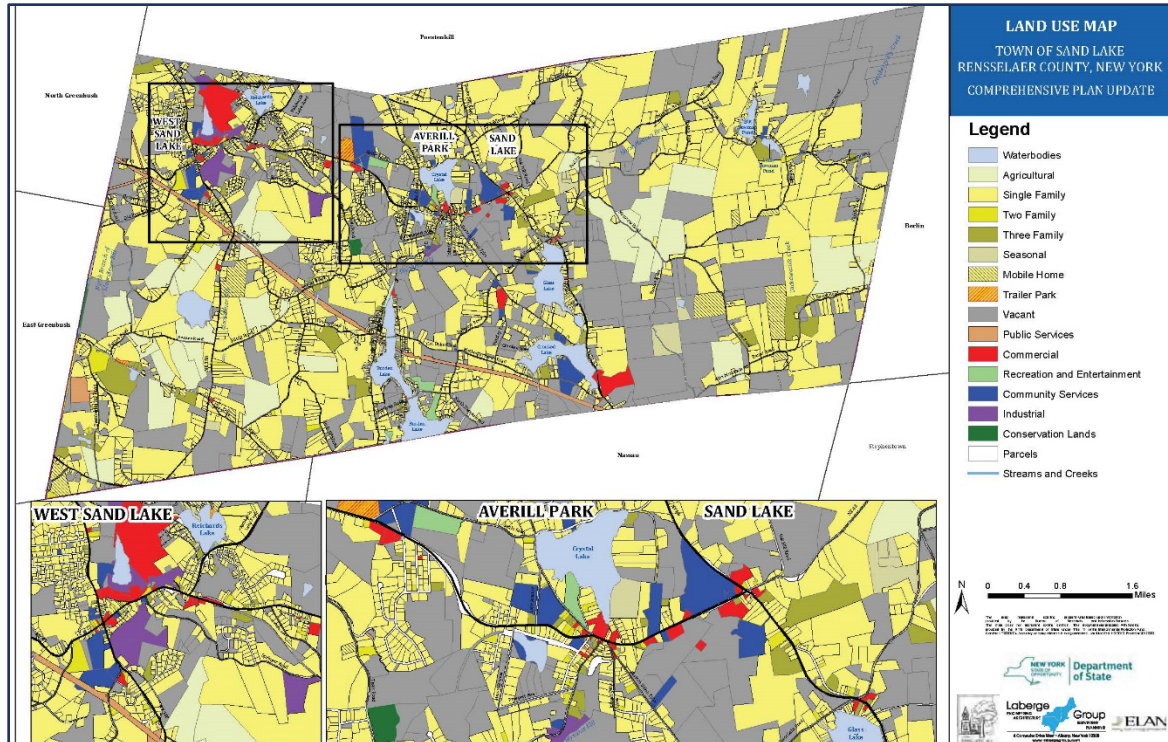


TABLE 12: EXISTING LAND USES

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	7,399	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

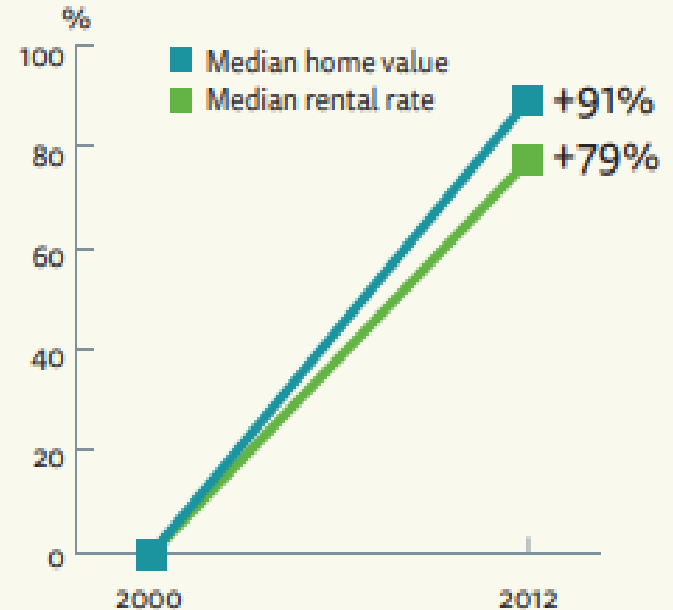
Housing

- 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

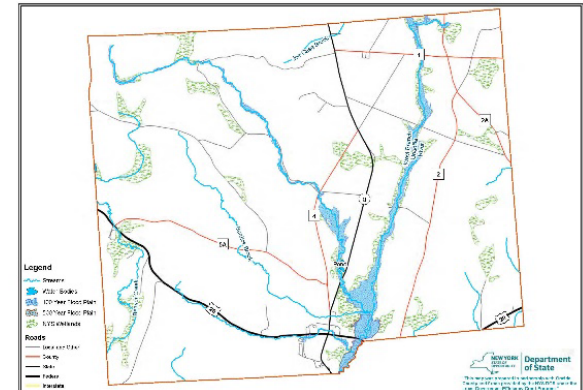
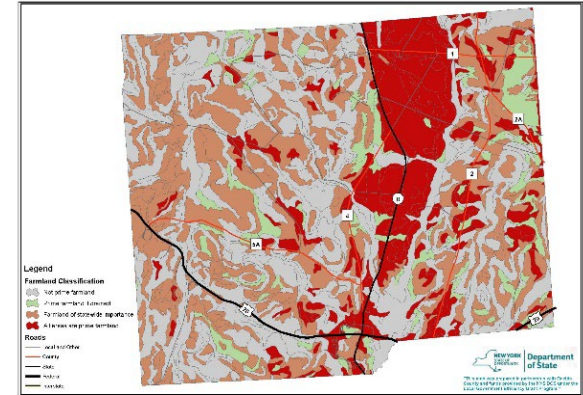
Increase in median home value
vs. median rental rate



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

City of Troy

5.0%

Overall U.S.A rate of public transportation use

2.5%

Rensselaer County rate of public transportation use

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



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 aim to achieve the established vision. The vision below was developed with input gathered from the public at public open houses, stakeholder meetings, CPC meetings and comments received through the project website.

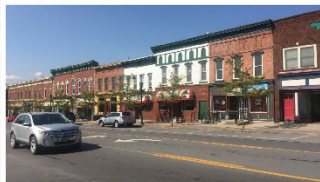
VISION STATEMENT

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 REINSELAER FALLS | COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2-1



To achieve the Vision, a series of guiding principles were developed. Taken together, these guiding principles present a sustainable framework for a healthy, productive and creative community.

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 networks – each dependent on the success of the other. As such, these guiding principles are closely interconnected and interrelated. The synergy and connectivity between the recommendations within each guiding principle will be paramount to the overall success of Canton achieving its desired vision.

Community Identity

Strengthen Canton's proud identity as the hub of St. Lawrence County by enhancing waterfront resources while supporting downtown reinvestment. Ensure that Canton's accessible downtown promotes a vibrant, active 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 providing quality infrastructure and technology, expanding existing businesses and enhancing housing options to 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

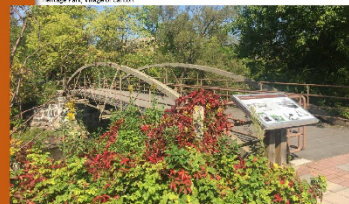
Enhance environmental, fiscal and economic resiliency through sound, deliberate and efficient sustainable practices. Support local government efficiency and the application of smart growth techniques to achieve long-term community resiliency.

Goals

- Ensure the availability of public facilities, infrastructure and emergency services that adequately serve 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 long-term success of Canton. Climate change, and other regional, national and global environmental trends, require Canton to structure and design future development in ways that protect watersheds, resources, minimize pollution, use energy wisely, protect meaningful and varied parcels of open space, and design infrastructure that utilizes (or mimics) natural ecosystem processes to ensure the long-term sustainability and environmental quality. Environmental health also

Heritage Park, Village of Canton



TOWN OF CANTON, VILLAGE OF CANTON AND VILLAGE OF REINSELAER FALLS | COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

5-1

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



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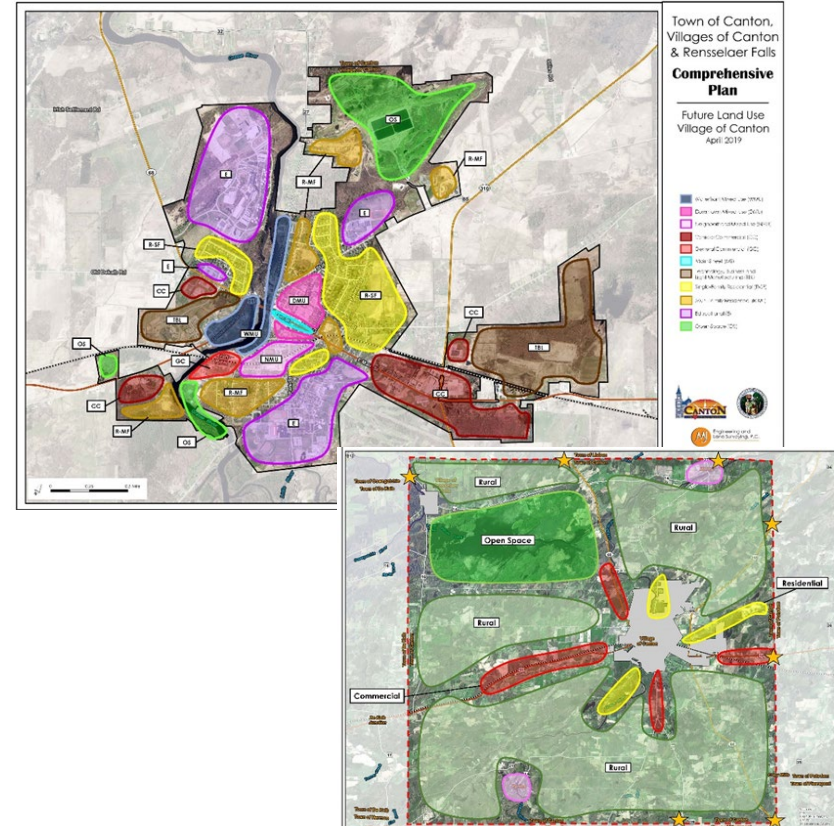
Future Land Use Map

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



Evaluate Alternatives

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



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

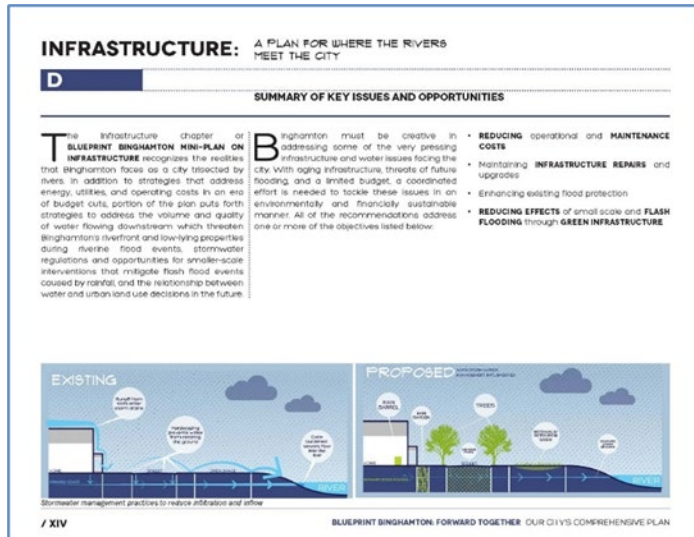
City of Binghamton: Infrastructure

Goal:

Improve Stormwater Management and River Water Quality

Recommended Actions:

- Enforce and enhance Urban Runoff Reduction Plan (URRP) requirements
- Continue to make sewer system improvements
- Develop public education and awareness campaign for stormwater and sewer overflows to encourage individual action and responsibility



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



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City of Ithaca: Housing

Goal:

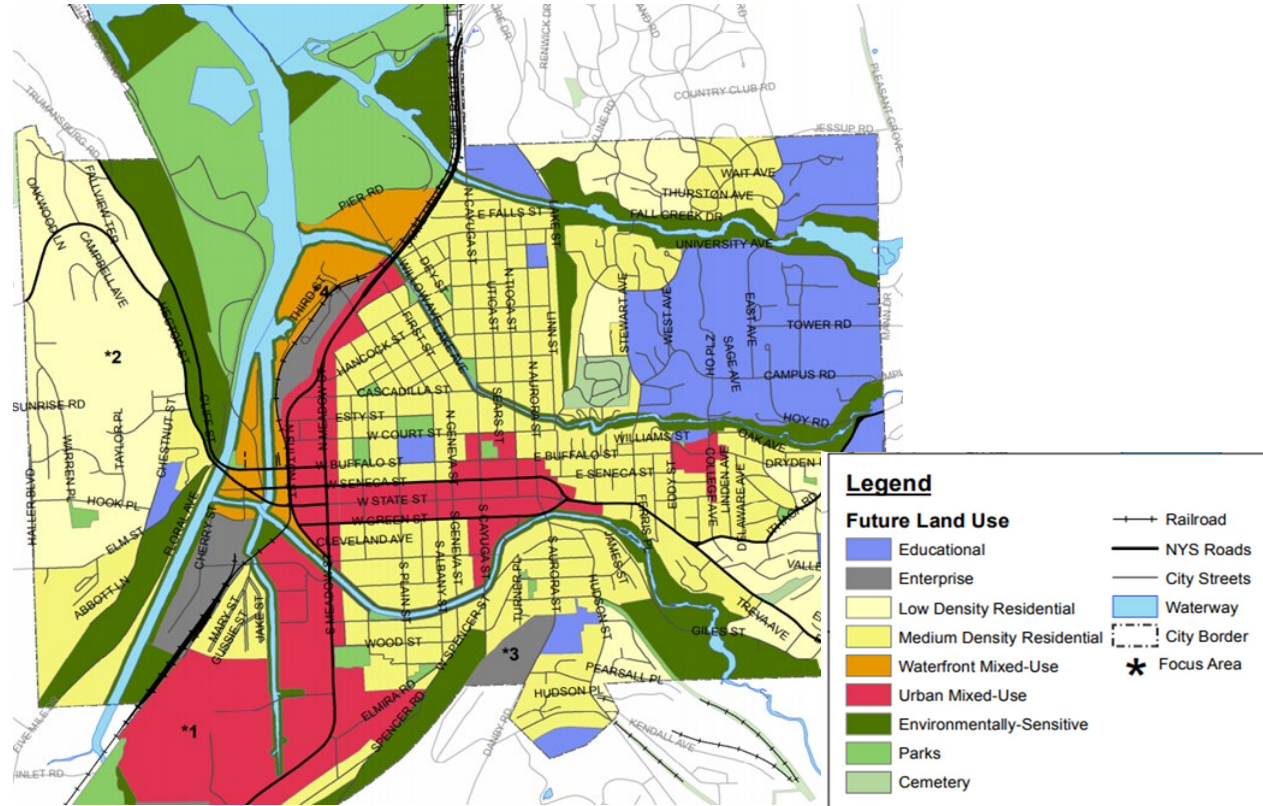
- Adequate supply of safe, accessible, and affordable housing available to all residents
- Range of housing options, including different levels of affordability and housing types, in each neighborhood

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

City of Ithaca: Housing

A Future Land Use Map in the plan identifies future opportunities for housing



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



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



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
- Seeking grants and low-interest financing
- 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



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

Step 10: Evaluate Plan

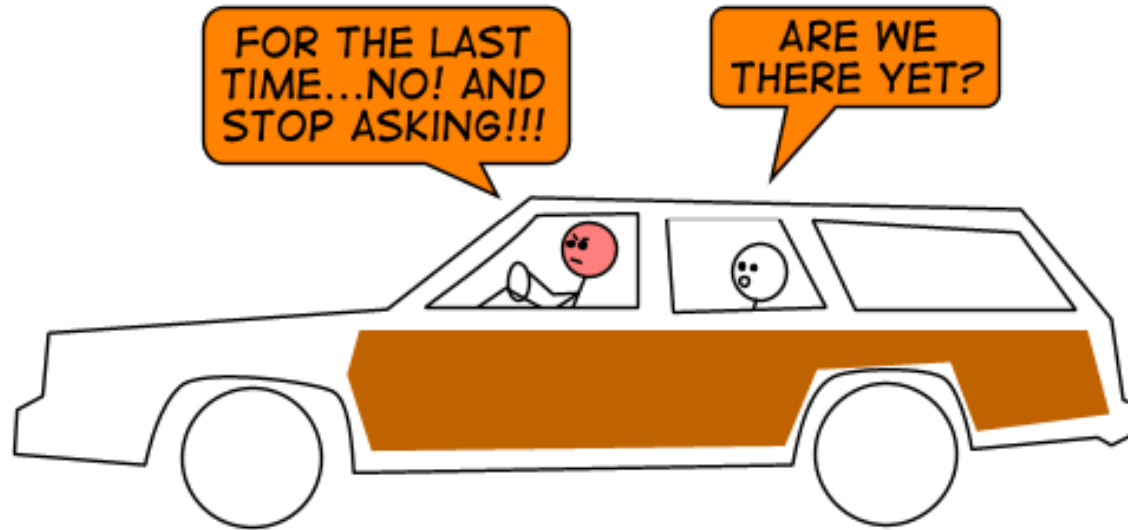
Plan must include maximum intervals for review

- 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



Monitor, Evaluate, and Amend Plan



“Living documents” need regular attention

Funding Sources

- NYS DOS Smart Growth Comprehensive Planning Grants
- NYS DOS Local Government Efficiency Grants (LGE) for intermunicipal plans
- 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)



New York Department of State

Division of Local Government Services

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