



DRAFT PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES

TOMPKINS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2014 JUNE 2014 *For Public Review*

Planning helps maintain and promote livable, vital communities. Local municipalities play a key role by developing and implementing comprehensive plans that reflect their own goals. The County Comprehensive Plan provides an opportunity to coordinate these efforts and create a shared community vision. In 2004, the Tompkins County Legislature adopted the County's first Comprehensive Plan. In 2008, that plan was amended, adding a chapter on energy and greenhouse gas emissions. Today, the Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan includes eleven Principles, 57 Policies and 77 Action Items.

It is time to update that plan. A draft set of revised principles and policies has been prepared and the County is requesting your thoughts on these principles and policies, listed below. We are also looking for your ideas on what actions can be taken to carry out the policies.

The County Comprehensive Plan outlines ways the community can address regional and intermunicipal issues that may or may not be included in local planning efforts. Often, local municipalities have a full workload simply addressing the important day-to-day issues of local concern. County and regional planning can help municipal governments address key issues of concern, such as sprawl, economic development, housing affordability, and environmental protection. It can also help residents of rural and urban areas to recognize their inter-connectedness and issues of mutual interest.

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

Sustainability

Tompkins County should be a place where the needs of current and future generations are met without compromising the ecosystems upon which they depend.

Regional Cooperation

Tompkins County should be a place where all levels of government work cooperatively to address regional issues.

Fiscal Responsibility

Tompkins County should be a place where taxpayer dollars are invested in public infrastructure and facilities in the most efficient manner possible.

LIVING IN TOMPKINS COUNTY

Housing

Tompkins County should be a place where housing is affordable, safe, and appealing.

It is the policy of Tompkins County to:

1. Encourage a variety of housing options in development focus areas.
2. Support new development of housing whose total costs, including utility and transportation expenses, are affordable to households with a range of incomes.
3. Promote energy efficient housing.
4. Provide housing options for an aging population.
5. Maintain an adequate supply of housing for people requiring supportive services.
6. Improve the existing housing stock.

Transportation

Tompkins County should be a place where transportation choices are efficient, affordable, and healthy for people and the environment.

It is the policy of Tompkins County to:

1. Maintain critical elements of the existing transportation network to support the movement of people and goods.
2. Reduce the use of fossil fuels in transportation.
3. Shift travel away from driving-alone to biking, walking, carpooling/ridesharing, and using public transit.
4. Support a pattern of land use that allows people to move efficiently and affordably.
5. Provide for the effective movement of freight to, from, and within the county.
6. Provide airport services that support community and business needs.

Jobs and Business

Tompkins County should be a place where economic prosperity is accessible to all.

It is the policy of Tompkins County to:

1. Support economic development that provides high-quality employment opportunities that provide workers with living wages and benefits.
2. Promote the growth and development of local businesses and encourage the purchase of locally-produced goods and services.
3. Work with institutions of higher education to diversify the local economy and enhance community vitality.
4. Promote innovation and technology transfer, and support entrepreneurs working to start and grow competitive businesses.
5. Support quality of life measures that enhance the local business climate and attract employees.
6. Promote development of a strong land-based rural economy.
7. Provide opportunities to all county residents to develop the skills necessary to obtain high-quality employment.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Natural Features

Tompkins County should be a place where natural features and working rural landscapes are preserved and enhanced.

It is the policy of Tompkins County to:

1. Preserve the natural features and ecosystems within the Natural Features Focus Areas.
2. Protect farmland within the Agricultural Resource Focus Areas for agricultural use.
3. Reduce the adverse impacts to native species and ecosystems caused by invasive organisms.
4. Promote best management practices that protect natural resources and keep working lands in production.
5. Improve public access to outdoor recreation resources and opportunities.

Water Resources

Tompkins County should be a place where water resources are clean, safe and protected.

It is the policy of Tompkins County to:

1. Protect the ecological, economic, and recreational functions of Cayuga Lake.
2. Protect aquifers from contamination by limiting development within groundwater recharge areas.
3. Protect streams and their watersheds to maintain water quality, manage stormwater and flooding, and enhance ecological diversity.
4. Preserve existing wetlands and restore wetland functions.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Tompkins County should be a place where the energy system is carbon neutral.

It is the policy of Tompkins County to:

1. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from all sectors.
2. Improve the efficiency of all components of the community energy system.
3. Encourage the use of local renewable energy sources and technologies.
4. Promote best management of natural resources to increase carbon capture and storage.
5. Reduce the amount of material disposed of in landfills.

Climate Adaptation

Tompkins County should be a place where the entire community is prepared for the economic, environmental, and social impacts of climate change.

It is the policy of Tompkins County to:

1. Maintain floodways and limit development within floodplains to reduce damages from floods.
2. Improve connectivity of open space to prevent fragmentation of ecosystems and isolation of plant and wildlife populations.
3. Promote adaptation measures that lessen climate impacts on the local economy.
4. Encourage actions that protect vulnerable populations from the impacts of climate change.
5. Prepare for community recovery in the event of a disaster.

NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES

Healthy Communities

Tompkins County should be a place where the built environment promotes healthy, safe, and active lifestyles.

It is the policy of Tompkins County to:

1. Promote bicycling and walking throughout the County by making them safe, efficient and appealing transportation options.
2. Encourage the development of lively streets with a variety of opportunities for daily activity, recreation, and social interaction.
3. Foster the expansion of a countywide trail network.
4. Encourage efforts to improve the accessibility of the built environment to allow everyone to participate in community life.
5. Promote community facilities and networks that support regular social interaction.
6. Discourage land use practices that threaten community health or safety

Development Patterns

Tompkins County should be a place where growth is concentrated in compact, walkable, mixed-use communities.

It is the policy of Tompkins County to:

1. Promote mixed-use development in Development Focus Areas.
2. Increase the amount of housing in Development Focus Areas.
3. Protect rural character and scenic resources by limiting sprawl.
4. Maintain and improve public and private infrastructure within Development Focus Areas.
5. Support land use controls that reinforce Development Focus Areas.
6. Strengthen downtowns as retail, service, employment and community centers.