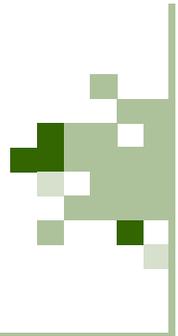


Tompkins County Planning Department

2011 Annual Report



121 East Court Street, Ithaca, NY 14850
607-274-5560 www.tompkins-co.org/planning

From the Commissioner

In 2011 we responded to new opportunities, and potential threats, that involved large commitments of unplanned staff time. We also operated with fewer staff and more responsibilities than we had in 2010. As a result we made limited progress in reaching some of the expected measures of success on our departmental priorities, but accomplished unexpected successes in other important areas.

In January we lost a key staff person when Senior Planner Jeanne Leccese left to lead the Creating Healthy Places initiative of the Health Planning Council. It wasn't until June that we were able to fill Jeanne's former position with a part-time planner, recognizing that future budgets were likely to require further staff reductions. In 2011 we also took over responsibility for supporting the County's Tourism program including staff support to the Strategic Tourism Planning Board. This was delayed by a longer than anticipated recruitment process, so we also played catch-up in terms of reaching the goals we had set for our support of that program during 2011.

In July of 2011 Governor Cuomo introduced the Regional Economic Development Councils and Strategies, requiring an intensive effort on our part to participate in one of the key working groups. While we had been initiating discussions regarding sustainable rural and community development among counties in the Finger Lakes Region, the Governor's plan put Tompkins County in the Southern Tier Region with a different set of communities and priorities. We were successful in transferring some of the work we had begun in the Finger Lakes regional effort to a successful request for funding for a Rural Initiative Fund for the Southern Tier.

In the fall, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) released a grant opportunity under the Cleaner, Greener New York program for up to \$1 million to fund regional sustainability plans. Completing a regional plan would then make communities eligible for up to \$90 million in competitive implementation funding. Under a tight deadline we convened county, regional and city planners from the Southern Tier and agreed to prepare an application on behalf of the region. As a result we were awarded funds and became the first region to initiate our planning effort.

As the intensive two-month Regional Economic Development Strategy process and was coming to a close and we were in the midst of applying for the NYSERDA funding, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation released the revised draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement on gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale. Staff put in many hours over the late fall and early winter reading and commenting on those revisions.

While we continued to make some progress on virtually all elements of the 2011 Work Program established at the beginning of 2011, we were forced to delay many efforts in order to proactively respond to all of the initiatives at the State level and adjust to a reduced staff. This report does not show the progress on the Work Program we had envisioned and hoped for, but the work completed has been significant and necessary under the circumstances. The reduction in staff continues to hamper our work in several areas and we will continue to prioritize and attempt to set realistic expectations for the future. Although many efforts were delayed in 2011, they will be advanced in 2012. The bottom line is that we no longer have capacity in the department to take on new and emerging issues and still continue to make expected progress on our annual work plan.

Ed Marx, AICP
Commissioner of Planning and Community Sustainability



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STAFF — 2011

Katie Borgella, AICP, Principal Planner

Scott Doyle, AICP, Senior Planner

Dariele Drake, Principal Account Clerk/Typist

Sharon Heller,
Geographic Information System Analyst

Joan Jurkovich, AICP, Deputy Commissioner

Tom Knipe, Senior Planner/Tourism Coordinator

Jeanne Leccese, Senior Planner

Ed Marx, AICP,
Commissioner of Planning
and Community Sustainability

Leslie Schill, Senior Planner

Chuck Thomas, Senior Planner

Kathy Wilsea, Secretary

Tompkins County Planning Department

Goals, Objectives and Measures of Success



The Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan includes Principles, Policies and Actions that guide much of the work of the Planning Department. The Plan establishes a process for monitoring and reporting progress on plan implementation through the annual *Indicators of Success* reports. However, this monitoring is intended to measure the community's progress and depends upon many outside factors that may impact the pace of that progress. At the Tompkins County Planning Department (TCPD), we also measure our success in achieving our specific goals and objectives for the year. Our goals and objectives do not reflect every activity undertaken by the department in 2011 but, rather, identify our priorities. Two broad goals originally established in 2007 continue to guide our work:

- 1. Continue to make substantive progress in implementing the actions identified in the Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan.**
- 2. Effectively and efficiently administer the program responsibilities assigned to the Planning Department.**

Objectives and measures of success were modified to reflect priorities for 2011 and the year-end status of these measures is outlined below.

Goal 1: Complete planning strategies to guide all major efforts of the department.

Objective 1. Complete the Conservation Strategy.

Measure of Success: The Conservation Strategy is completed and endorsed by the Legislature.

End of year status: Progress on the Conservation Strategy was deferred until 2012.

Objective 2. Complete a Development Focus Area Strategy working with local municipalities throughout the county and seek the endorsement of those municipalities.

Measure of Success: The Development Focus Area Strategy is complete and has been endorsed by a number of municipalities.

End of year status: The draft Development Focus Area Strategy was completed but most municipal and public outreach was deferred until 2012.

Objective 3. Assist the Strategic Tourism Planning Board in completing their Five Year strategic plan.

Measure of Success: The Strategic Plan is completed.

End of year status: Substantial progress was made in drafting the Strategic Tourism Plan with expected completion in 2012.

Goal 2. Continue progress on implementing adopted strategies.

Objective 1. Implement several key elements of the Energy Strategy.

Measure of Success: The following have been initiated and several key milestones identified and attained:

Energy Road Map - Create an integrated approach to assessing long-range energy demand and supply and key decisions that will need to be made to reach the county's 2050 goal of an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Energy Upgrade Financing - Make public or private financing available to households or businesses seeking to make energy efficiency and renewable energy system investments.

LEED Policy Development – Develop a policy to require that all new county buildings and major renovations achieve at least a LEED Silver certification.

End of Year Status: Four graduate-level Cornell students were recruited and retained to explore the potential and existing energy supplies in Tompkins County. TCPD staff worked with students and professors from engineering, business administration, and city and regional planning to hone the scope of work, direct the studies, and review the work products. With coordination assistance from TCPD, others in the community, including Alternatives Federal Credit Union and Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services, created financing resources for energy efficiency work while we awaited resolution at the state and federal level of legal hurdles to implementing a Property Assessed Clean Energy program. In addition, TCPD actively worked with partners on creating strategies to motivate home and business owners to reduce energy use in existing buildings through work on the Get

Your GreenBack Tompkins Campaign, as well as launched with Cornell cooperative Extension of Tompkins County the UpgradeUpstate.org website as a web portal to disseminate accessible information to homeowners on how to make energy upgrades. The first draft of the green building policy was developed for review by the County Legislature in 2012.

Objective 2. Advance implementation and monitoring of the Housing Strategy.

Measure of Success: Two additional rounds of the Housing Fund grant program are completed and a monitoring report on the status of affordable housing development in the county is completed.

End of year status: Completed two funding rounds for the Community Housing Fund resulting in grant awards totaling \$230,000 supporting development of 12 affordable housing units. The monitoring report was drafted but awaits completion of an ongoing countywide multi-family market study before publication.

Goal 3: Complete the new five-year implementation plan for the County Comprehensive Plan.

Measure of Success: The five-year implementation plan is adopted by the Legislature.

End of year status: Work continued to identify primary agencies for implementation of new actions but completion of the new implementation plan was deferred.

Goal 4: Implement sustainability initiatives both within county government and in the community.

Objective 1. Advance the concept of a downtown sustainability center.

Measure of Success: A business plan is developed and key partners are enlisted to support the development of the Center.

End of year status: A team of Park Fellows from Cornell University was enlisted to complete a feasibility study and business plan in 2012. The Sustainability Internship Program was implemented, work was undertaken on the development of the initial displays for the Center and a plan to temporarily open the Center in available space in the new County Human Services Annex was approved by the County Legislature.

Objective 2. Advance sustainability initiatives within county government.

Measure of Success: Green fleet policy is fully implemented with measurable results.

End of year status: Full implementation of the green fleet policy was not advanced in 2011 although individual departments did continue work on their plans.

Objective 3. Initiate one regional sustainability initiative in cooperation with other counties and organizations.

Measure of Success: A regional initiative within the Finger Lakes centered on sustainable land use is developed and outreach to other Finger Lakes region counties is initiated.

End of year status: The Rural Initiative Fund was developed as part of the Southern Tier's Regional Economic Development Council Strategy and received \$3 million in funding from the State of New York. Also, TCPD applied for NYSERDA's Cleaner Greener Regional Sustainability Grant Program and selected a preferred consultant to expedite the work.

Goal 5: Complete transition of Tourism program management to the Planning Department.

Objective 1. Complete administrative transition of tourism programs.

Measure of Success: All tourism programs currently administered by County Administration have been transferred to the Planning Department.

End of year status: All tourism administrative functions and program support were successfully transferred to the Planning Department.

Objective 2. Advance tourism product development.

Measure of Success: At least one new tourism project or product is identified and endorsed by the Strategic Tourism Planning Board.

End of year status: Grant applicant outreach and assistance performed in 2011 led to 55% growth in grant applications supporting tourism product development. This led to five distinct new tourism projects/products being funded in early 2012. Action on major new projects and products was deferred pending completion of the Strategic Tourism Plan.



Cornell Plantations

Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan

Seventh Annual Progress Report on Plan Implementation

The Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the County Legislature on December 21, 2004. The plan provides:

The Planning Commissioner will report annually to the County Legislature on progress in implementing the Plan. This will include identification of action items that have been initiated and the results of those actions. The Commissioner's report will include measures of success by which to monitor the Plan's progress and any barriers to implementation that have been encountered. The appropriate measurement tools will be developed during the implementation process.

■ Natural Features

Action: Define stream corridor buffers for the major tributaries to Cayuga Lake and encourage use of appropriate measures to preserve the designated stream buffers, and

Action: Develop or identify model stream buffer ordinances.

Stream Corridor Management Program

In 2011, the County's Flood Hazard Mitigation program was formally restructured as the *Tompkins County Stream Corridor Restoration & Flood Hazard Mitigation Program*. This program is available to fund three different types of projects:

- 1) Stream corridor revegetation and protection,
- 2) Stream bank stabilization which may include minor instream structures,
- 3) Stream corridor assessments or feasibility studies for larger scale projects where implementation will be funded through outside revenue sources.

Three additional stream buffer planting projects occurred in 2011 which resulted in the planting of 364 plants along over 1,200 linear feet of stream.

Action: Develop or identify model performance standards to preserve natural resources, and

Action: Establish a program to protect and manage land for agricultural and forestry use in the focus areas identified in the Comprehensive Plan using tools appropriate to the functions of those resources, and

Action: Establish an open-space program to protect or preserve natural resources and recreational amenities in the focus areas identified in the Comprehensive Plan using tools appropriate to the functions of those resources, and

Action: Develop and disseminate educational information tailored to each Natural Features Focus Area and each Agricultural Resources Focus Area.

County Conservation Strategy

Early work was completed in 2011 to result in a 2012 Conservation Strategy that will create a unified vision for conservation across the rural and natural landscapes of Tompkins County. The Strategy will incorporate findings from the two-part Conservation Plan: Natural Resource Focus Area Plan (Part I) and Agricultural Resource Focus Area Plan (Part II).

■ Housing Choices

Action: *Produce a three- to five-year affordable housing needs assessment to use as a basis to guide development of appropriate subsidized rental and ownership housing to meet local needs.*

Community Housing Affordability Program and Community Housing Trust Program (known collectively as the Housing Fund)

Two funding rounds were completed as part of the Housing Fund in 2011. A total of \$230,000 was awarded for two affordable housing projects. One project is for eleven new townhouses located in the Town of Ithaca. The other is a new single family home in the City of Ithaca. With the assistance of the Housing Fund (2009-2011), 160 new affordable housing units will be added to the current housing stock.

Affordable Housing Needs Assessment Report Update

In the spring of 2011 a housing affordability analysis was initiated by the Tompkins County Planning Department to quantify the inventory of affordable housing within the County. The initial research was concluded in 2011 and a "Housing Affordability Index" was created documenting, as of calendar year 2010, the number of affordable housing units and their location, along with a detailed analysis of new housing units built between 2005 and 2010.

The actual increase in total housing units between 2005 and 2010 was 1,771 or 295 units per year. Should that housing unit creation rate continue through 2014 a total of 2,950 can be expected for the period of 2005-2014; or 76% of the "Tompkins County Affordable Housing Needs Assessment" projected need of housing units. However, the number of affordable units is falling far short of projected need.

■ Rural Resources

Action: *Establish a program to protect and manage land for agricultural and forestry use in the focus areas identified in the Comprehensive Plan using tools appropriate to the functions of those resources.*

The Tompkins County Planning Department continued to support the use of the state-funded Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program as noted in Part II of the Conservation Plan, however the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets did not issue any new requests for proposal for new PDR applications in 2011.



Town of Caroline

Bensvue Farm

In late 2011, TCPD and Town of Lansing staff received notice that NYS had allocated funding under the state's Farmland Protection Program to purchase the development rights on the Bensvue 951-acre organic dairy farm to allow for permanent protection of the land and continued agricultural use of the property. The application was approved in 2010, and this project was scheduled to be finalized in early 2012.

Howser Farm

The Howser Farm, the first farm in the County to participate in the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program, is annually monitored by the Tompkins County Planning Department. The project's monitoring plan calls for the Department to walk the entire boundary of the farm every other year. 2011 marked a year in which only part of the boundary line was walked. In 2011 the farm was subdivided in accordance with the terms of the easement and a portion of the land was sold to another farm operation in the region. The monitoring visit found no substantial problems in relation to the easement on either Mr. Howser's or Ms. Preylowki's parcels.

Jerry Dell Farm

The Jerry Dell Farm was notified in late 2007 that it had received funding for Purchase of the Development Rights of the portion of their farm in the Town of Dryden. This project provides that Tompkins County is a co-holder of the PDR easement with the Town of Dryden. The Town has been designated as the project manager for this project, however the Tompkins County Planning Department was instrumental in obtaining preliminary approval for the project's easements and site plan in 2011.



Cayuga Inlet

■ Water Resources

Action: Continue to conduct aquifer studies.

The County's Aquifer Study Capital Program is administered by the Planning Department. In 2011, the County agreed to provide financial support for a study of the West Branch of Cayuga/Fishkill Aquifer in the Town of Newfield. The County agreed to partner with the Town of Newfield and the US Geological Survey (USGS) to undertake the study, with study costs divided between the County (35%), the Town (35%), and USGS (30%). USGS will undertake an analysis of data from existing wells to characterize the aquifer increasing the community's understanding of how the aquifer functions to provide water to homes and businesses in the area.

Action: Update the county flood hazard mitigation program to incorporate watershed-based approaches to reducing the risk of flood damages.

The Flood Hazard Mitigation Program Technical Advisory Committee convened in June 2011 to visit and evaluate projects for the 2011 program. The committee includes representation from the Tompkins County Soil & Water Conservation District, the Tompkins County Health Department, the Tompkins County Planning Department and the United States Geological Survey.

Streambank projects in the Towns of Caroline, Danby and Ulysses were selected for implementation. These projects joined several other projects from 2008 in development. Since 2007, the program has included projects in seven different jurisdictions and five watersheds.

■ Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Action: Work with local municipalities, school districts, businesses, institutions of high education, and non-profits to develop a 5-year strategy to reduce community greenhouse gas emissions by at least 10% of 2008 emission levels, including a detailed plan for County government to achieve the same target.

Implementing a "New Local Measure" identified in the 2020 Energy Strategy, the groundwork was laid in 2011 to fund feasibility studies for combined heat and power and district energy in two key areas of the County in 2012. The first area is the vicinity of Cayuga Medical Center on West Hill and the second is the Emerson site on South Hill. TCPD staff met with CMC officials and adjacent landowners to discuss the potential for district energy loops off of the hospital's primary loop and a potential biomass-fueled combined heat and power plant on CMC property. District energy on South Hill was the focus of a case statement prepared by a working group of the Tompkins County Climate Protection Initiative, headed by TCPD staff. Use of the case statement by TCCPI members resulted in submission of an EPA brownfields grant application, with award announcements anticipated in late spring 2012.

Action: Conduct an educational campaign on energy issues and energy choices that address topics such as home heating options, energy efficiency measures, transportation options, food production, and renewable energy systems.

In partnership with scores of local partners, Tompkins County planning staff actively worked on creating motivating strategies and messaging around ways to save energy and money in the areas of Food, Building Heating and Lighting, Transportation, and Waste. Hundreds of people were involved in the initial planning for the campaign and thousands were reached with the campaign message in 2011. Another aspect of helping people to reduce energy use was Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County's launch of the UpgradeUpstate.org website as a web portal to disseminate accessible information to homeowners on how to make energy upgrades. TCPD staff worked closely with CCETC staff in developing the site.

Action: Adopt and expand local tax incentives, such as sales and property tax abatements, to encourage homeowners and businesses to invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy systems.

TCPD staff continued to track the status of Property Assessed Clean Energy programs nationally and worked with County legislative leaders to secure co-sponsorship from our Congressional representatives for the PACE Assessment Protection Act of 2011 to provide a national legislative solution to the problems holding up PACE. Additionally, County Planning staff worked with local partners, including local banks, to encourage private institutions' efforts to create loan programs to assist homeowners in financing energy upgrades. Local banks and housing agencies created these opportunities and widely publicized them to the community in 2011.

Action: Develop a plan to address the specific energy needs of low-income people, including recommendations for improvements to existing energy-related programs and identification of potential pilot projects to address energy needs.

Applying the recommendations of a report produced by a TCPD intern in 2010 regarding improving energy-related programs serving low-income people in Tompkins County, TCPD staff worked with Better Housing for Tompkins County to craft a spring 2011 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development application to address those needs. The \$400,000 Healthy Homes grant was awarded to the County in December 2011. Another recommendation from the report was also implemented, primarily by Cooperative Extension staff with input from TCPD staff, to train the 2-1-1 hotline volunteers to provide information on energy retrofits and the Get Your GreenBack Tompkins campaign resources through its hotline services.

Action: Develop or identify a model building energy code that can be phased in, as well as incentives to assist with code compliance, and

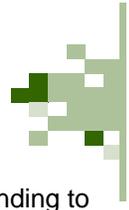
Action: Develop or identify model land development regulations and design standards that support denser development in areas with water and sewer services (including residential, in-fill, and mixed-use) and limited development in areas without such services.

2011 marked the first year of the three year "Climate Showcase Community" grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency to fund innovative on-the-ground approaches to creating dense neighborhoods that enhance residents' quality of life while using fewer resources. The year was productive, including development of the following: draft zoning regulations, draft request for proposals for development of the County-owned land on West Hill, compilation of data on prior and current energy usage in EcoVillage's first two neighborhoods (showing that EVI residents use, on average, 40% less gas, 53% less electricity, and 70% less water than typical homes in NYS (for energy) or the U.S. (for water)), and the 15-page paper by Liz Walker discussing the mission, goals, best practices, challenges and lessons learned over the past 20 years of developing EVI. Project staff began presenting widely about the grant in 2011 and reached nearly 1,100 people.

Action: Conduct an educational campaign on energy issues and energy choices that address topics such as home heating options, energy efficiency measures, transportation options, food production, and renewable energy systems, and

Action: Promote green business development and create green job training opportunities for workers, high-school students, and college students.

In 2011, an exciting new community-based initiative was launched to create a downtown Sustainability Center. A steering committee comprising representatives from the Downtown Ithaca Alliance, City of Ithaca, Tompkins County, Sustainable Tompkins, Ithaca College and Cornell University developed a guiding vision, obtained a \$25K seed grant from the Park Foundation, and started a search for a Center coordinator. Tompkins County Planning served as program support for this effort and launched the inaugural round of the Sustainability Center Internship Program, a future program of the Sustainability Center. Also, the Planning Department oversaw the development of exhibit designs for an energy efficiency exhibit and a waste reduction exhibit to be housed in the Center. Finally, the County allocated temporary space for the Center's initial location, to be available in 2012.



■ Regional Sustainability Planning

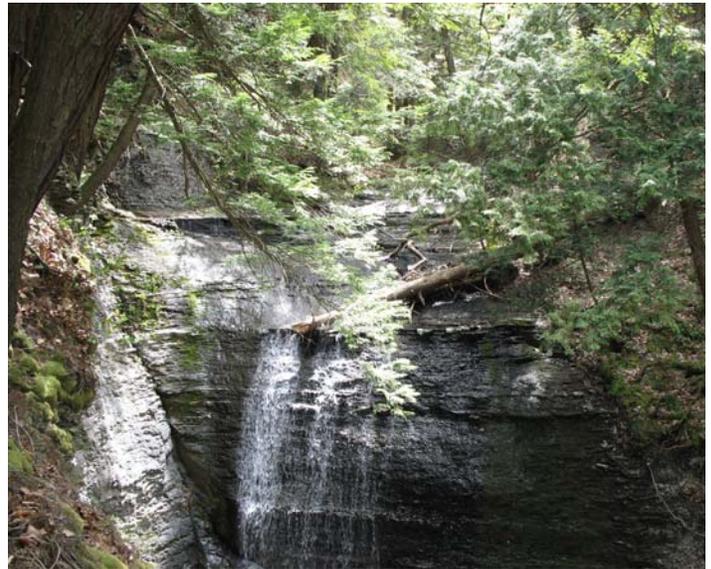
In October of 2011, the Planning Department spearheaded a regional effort to seek \$1 million in state funding to prepare a Regional Sustainability Plan. The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) announced in December that the County's application was being funded.

The Regional Sustainability Plan will cover the Southern Tier Region, encompassing the counties of Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga and Tompkins. The County will work closely with two regional planning agencies, the Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board and the Southern Tier East Regional Planning and Development Board, to undertake this planning effort.

The eight-month planning process will begin in early 2012 and end in late 2012, enabling organizations in the region to submit applications for state funding for sustainability projects to the state's nearly \$90 million implementation fund. The Plan itself will primarily focus on the objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in order to support the State's goal of reducing state-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050. In order to do so, the Plan will address a multitude of issues, including building energy use, transportation, land use, water and wastewater treatment, solid waste management, economic development, and climate change adaptation.

■ Tourism

The Planning Department assumed administrative responsibility for the Tompkins County Tourism Program with the hiring of Tom Knipe, Senior Planner/Tourism Coordinator in June 2011. The Tourism Program consists of 18 distinct tourism product development and marketing programs funded by the County's hotel room occupancy tax. 2011 room tax revenues were \$1,916,329, a 6.9% increase over 2010, and the program contracted with over 75 community partners to deliver tourism-related projects and services. In 2011 the Planning Department provided tourism program coordination and evaluation, tourism grant management, strategic tourism planning, and financial oversight. In 2012, the Planning Department will also provide tourism program budget development support.



Finger Lakes Trail, Town of Ithaca

In addition to coordinating and contracting with a number of community partners to deliver tourism programs and supporting the work of the Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB), the Planning Department directly administers four of seven competitive tourism grant programs. In 2011, we led a successful grant workshop, made small improvements to application forms, established the use of scoring rubrics for grant review, and developed and implemented a new system for electronic application submission and review, saving many hours of staff time and many reams of paper. In addition, we provided technical advice and support to dozens of applicants to improve the likely impact of their projects. We developed a new grant database and other means of streamlining grant processing. These and other nuts and bolts improvements implemented in 2011 will allow us to focus more energy in the future on planning, strategic plan implementation, encouraging new initiatives, providing consultation and technical support to program administrators and grant recipients, securing additional outside funding, developing and implementing a robust and consistent method of program evaluation for all tourism programs, and communicating with stakeholders about the contribution of the Tourism Program to economic development and quality of life.

Efforts to update the County's strategic tourism plan took big strides forward in 2011. The Department helped STPB clarify the framework for the plan, define new elements and enhancements, develop a very well-attended and successful community planning workshop and establish other new outreach methods for the plan. The plan is scheduled for completion in mid-2012.

Other notable 2011 activities include revitalizing the Tourism Partner Award program, coordinating with the County Highway Department and the Beautification Program on installation of welcome signs in the Towns, and developing formal tourism-related comments to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation on the revised draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement for natural gas drilling.

■ Land Policy Administration

The Planning Department assists the County in managing its lands by maintaining a current inventory of all County landholdings and identifying surplus properties that should be sold or transferred to another entity. The Department also evaluates all properties that are subject to foreclosure each year and identifies properties that could serve a higher public good if protected in some way, or that pose liability issues to the County. By working with State agencies and other land protection organizations, the Planning Department evaluates each situation and recommends a course of action to the Legislature. Since the County land policy was first adopted in 1995, the Department has facilitated the sale and protection of 177 acres of important natural areas to groups including the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Finger Lakes Land Trust, and Cornell Natural Areas Program. In 2011, Planning Department staff reviewed the 14 parcels subject to foreclosure proceedings in order to determine the existence and significance of natural, cultural and historic resources on the properties. It was determined that none of the parcels required added action prior to auction. In May 2011, the County Legislature's Government Operations Committee authorized the continued withholding of a parcel on Taughannock Boulevard, which lies adjacent to the Black Diamond Trail, along with a parcel on West King Road, which is located within UNA-149, Lick Brook and Inlet Valley Slopes. Both parcels were in the process of finalizing purchase details with State Parks. Final transactions of these parcels are anticipated in 2012.

■ Homeownership Program

In 2010, Tompkins County was awarded \$750,000 in CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) funds to continue the Tompkins County Homeownership Program. Since the program's inception in 1993, 326 low- and moderate-income households have purchased homes through the program. The recent CDBG grant award assisted ten families in 2011 and will assist an additional eleven families in 2012. The program will continue to be delivered by Better Housing for Tompkins County (BHTC) and the Tompkins County Planning Department. BHTC will also provide housing counseling services as part of the program delivery.

■ Healthy Homes Rehabilitation Program

This new program has been funded with New York State Community Development Block Grant funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. The program will assist 23 low-moderate income homeowners to address serious home health and safety concerns: replacing failing wells and sewage systems and improving indoor air quality by making energy-related upgrades in these homes. The County, through the grant sub-recipient Better Housing for Tompkins County, Inc., will be implementing the program in 2012 through 2013.

■ Snowmobile Trail Grant Program Administration

The NYS Snowmobile Program is administered by the Planning Department as a flow through grant. The County served as the sponsoring municipality and grant funds were passed directly to snowmobile clubs. A total of \$35,335 was awarded for the 2011-2012 Season. Funding is provided on behalf of five snowmobile clubs for maintenance of 113 miles of trails for snowmobile use in Tompkins County.



Hamlet of Speedsville, Town of Caroline

■ General Municipal Law Development Reviews

One hundred fifty-one projects were reviewed under New York State General Municipal Law section 239 -l, -m, and -n. Referrals were received from thirteen of the municipalities in the county. Projects included amendments to zoning ordinances, approval of site plans and subdivisions, issuances of special permits, and requests for variances. Of these projects, twenty-eight were found to have potentially significant negative intercommunity or countywide impacts, and recommendations were made to modify the projects to mitigate those impacts.

■ Indicators of Success

The Indicators of Success Report final drafts for 2009 and 2010 were developed and will be published electronically in 2012.

■ SPDES Permit

The Tompkins County Planning Department provides support to help the County meet the requirements of its State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit for stormwater (as required by the Phase 2 stormwater regulations). All municipalities affected by Phase 2 regulations may participate in the Tompkins County Stormwater Coalition, which helps coordinate stormwater management activities to ensure a cohesive and balanced approach to stormwater management that spans municipal boundaries. Members of the Stormwater Coalition entered into a contract with Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District to provide coordination of the Stormwater Coalition and prepare annual reports.

The 2011 Annual State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit was presented at a public meeting of the Water Resources Council in May 2011 and was subsequently filed with the NYS Department of Conservation in June 2011, in accordance with state requirements.

■ Agricultural District Update

The 8-Year Update for Ag District 1, the eastern half of the County, began in 2011 and is scheduled for completion in 2012. The Planning Department provides mapping support for this process.

■ Local Government Assistance

Village of Trumansburg Zoning Ordinance Re-Write

In 2011, the Planning Department continued to provide support to a re-write of Trumansburg's Zoning Ordinance. Begun in 2008, the efforts to re-write the ordinance were spurred when the Village updated its Comprehensive Plan. The Zoning Ordinance re-write has involved several opportunities for public input and work with various committees. Work on the re-write will continue into 2012.

The proposed ordinance includes many interesting elements:

- An inclusionary housing provision is proposed which would require the provision of affordable housing units when ten or more units of housing are constructed. The ordinance includes density bonuses for such housing to support these efforts.
- New 'gateway' commercial zones are proposed at the primary entrances to the Village along Route 96/Main Street.
- Overlay zoning districts are proposed to help protect wetlands and stream corridors.

These elements all emerged from the recommendations of the Village's Comprehensive Plan.

Village of Lansing Small Areas Plan Request for Proposals

The Village of Lansing desired to study development potentials, and their impacts, for an area in the Village in the northwest quadrant of the Warren Road/Route 13 intersection. Several development proposals had been discussed and potential issues identified which the Village wished to explore more fully. The County Planning Department compiled basic data about the area and identified several potential impacts. Department staff then worked with Village officials to draft a Request for Proposals to conduct a more detailed analysis of the area, including development alternatives, anticipated impacts, and potential mitigation measures.

■ Natural Gas Drilling: Support for Local Efforts

In 2010, the County received financial support from the Park Foundation to help the community prepare for potential natural gas drilling activities. This support allowed the Planning Department to provide significant support to the Tompkins County Council of Governments in 2011 as they worked together to prepare for the possibility of new gas drilling activities in Tompkins County.

In addition, the Tompkins County Planning Department was able to produce a report entitled "Municipal Tools for Addressing Potential Gas Drilling Impacts." The report identifies some of the steps that municipalities can take to address the anticipated impacts of gas drilling on the community (see <http://www.tompkins-co.org/planning/MunicipalToolsreGasDrilling.htm>). The report identifies 20 tools available, ranging from updating local comprehensive plans to establishing noise, light, and air standards, and road protection ordinances.

■ **County Sustainability Team**

The County Sustainability Team convened twice in 2011 to discuss ongoing projects and to hone the 2011 team focus on employee involvement. A presentation was made to the Legislature in April 2011 on 2010 accomplishments. A new County Sustainability website project was initiated in 2011 that will provide information about County sustainability initiatives and programs, including facilities' improvements, waste and resource use reduction, and employee involvement opportunities, to County employees as well as the public.

■ **Ludlowville Stormwater Control Project**

The Ludlowville Stormwater Control Project is a project coordinated by the Tompkins County Planning Department to help to address concerns over repetitive flooding and property damage associated with stormwater in the hamlet of Ludlowville. The selected consultant completed a project feasibility study and alternatives analysis in 2010 which established the basis for designed mitigation projects. Ultimately two mitigation projects were identified in 2011: the building of an upstream detention pond and streambank stabilization. Construction of both of these measures is anticipated in the Summer and Fall of 2012.

Key contributors to the project continue to be the Town of Lansing Highway Department, the Tompkins County Highway Division and the Tompkins County Soil & Water Conservation District.

■ **Hazard Mitigation**

The Planning Department coordinated the initial steps of the *Tompkins County Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazards Mitigation Plan Update* in order to comply with FEMA requirements and further reduce risks associated with hazards. In 2011, the initial municipal meeting was held and a consultant was hired to assist with the update.

Tompkins County's Hazard Mitigation Coordination continues to be based out of the Tompkins County Planning Department. In addition to coordinating the mitigation plan update the Coordinator also serves as the local conduit for Federal and State mitigation funding opportunities.

■ **Advisory Boards**

Four Advisory Boards receive administrative support from the Planning Department: the Strategic Tourism Planning Board, the Planning Advisory Board, the Environmental Management Council and the Water Resources Council.

Strategic Tourism Planning Board

The Planning Department assumed responsibility for administrative support to the Tompkins County STPB in 2011. STPB is charged with providing oversight and strategic direction to the Tompkins County Tourism Program with the goals of promoting economic development and enhancing quality of life.

Tom Knipe and Kathy Wilsea provide staff support to the STPB. In addition to scheduling, agenda development, and meeting minutes, the Department helped recruit two new members to the STPB, developed new board member intake procedures, updated the board orientation, and assisted in rewriting STPB bylaws to incorporate board member term limits, associate member positions, committee descriptions and changes to committee structure. More information on STPB is available at: <http://www.tompkins-co.org/tourism/>

Tompkins County Planning Advisory Board

The Planning Advisory Board provides comment and guidance to the activities of the Planning Department and provides advisory comment to the County Legislature on Planning issues. In 2011 the PAB provided review and comment for the following projects:

- Planning Department's Work Program
- Finger Lakes Regional Rural Revitalization Initiative
- General Municipal Law 239-l-m-n Review Process
- Climate Showcase Communities
- Development Focus Areas Strategy
- Proposed Changes to Agricultural District 1
- Downtown Sustainability Center
- Housing Needs Update

Agendas and minutes for PAB are available at:

<http://www.tompkins-co.org/planning/committees/PAB/index.htm>

Tompkins County Environmental Management Council

The Tompkins County EMC is one of the oldest EMCs in the state, having been created in 1971. The EMC acts as an advisory body to the County Legislature on matters affecting the preservation, development and use of the natural features of the County.

Major efforts of EMC in 2011 included:

- Providing comments to New York State Department of Environmental Conservation on the draft supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement on high volume hydraulic fracturing for natural gas,
- Sponsorship of a public event about dredging in general and Cayuga Inlet in particular. EMC member Brian Eden arranged to have a Cornell horticulture class report on their semester of work learning about dredging. The event was held at Tompkins County Public Library and was well attended. The class report is available on the EMC website under "current issues" (address below).
- Working to advance the update of the Unique Natural Areas Inventory, for which a contract was developed in 2011. This work is slated for completion in 2012.
- The Energy Committee requested that the Legislature arrange a meeting with MEGA concerning purchase of electricity for county operations. Committee members participated at an August meeting of the Legislature's Planning, Development and Environmental Quality Committee to urge that the bid specifications require bidders to provide a fully integrated portfolio of energy sources rather than pricing wind and solar separately or offering the supplemental purchase of renewable energy certificates.

More information on EMC is available in their Annual Report on their website: <http://www.tompkins-co.org/emc/>

Tompkins County Water Resources Council

The Tompkins County Water Resources Council (WRC) advises the Tompkins County Legislature on matters related to water resources management and planning, and is charged with identifying problems, proposing priorities, and promoting the coordination of activities in the management and protection of the County's water resources. The WRC provides a public forum for local communities and stakeholder groups to address and discuss their water resources concerns, and it is the intent of the group to coordinate the water resources-related efforts of local governments, public and private institutions, and agencies and organizations throughout the County.

The WRC also serves as the County's water quality coordinating committee, responsible for the development of the Tompkins County Water Quality Strategy (WQS), which is intended to help prioritize local water resources issues and concerns and identify strategies to address these concerns. Council and committee goals are drawn directly from the strategies of the WQS.

WRC committee action in 2011 included:

- Following identification of *hydrilla verticillata* in Cayuga Inlet, the Education Committee participated in activities of the Outreach Group of the Hydrilla Task Force by assisting at a public outreach forum and posting Hydrilla information posters at marinas along the shores of Cayuga Lake. Helping the Outreach Group of the Hydrilla Task Force to reach public officials and the local community will continue into the foreseeable future.
- In 2011, the Wetlands Committee finalized a sample wetlands local law. The sample is based on a review of local laws that are currently on the books in other towns in New York State. The sample local law will be distributed to the municipalities in Tompkins County in 2012.
- The Gas Drilling Committee organized comments to send to New York State Department of Environmental Conservation on the draft supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement and the proposed regulations for gas drilling.

More information on the Water Resources Council, including their 2011 Annual Report, is available at: <http://www.tompkins-co.org/planning/committees/WRC/index.htm>



Robert Treman State Park