# BEAUTIFICATION, SIGNAGE, AND PUBLIC ART STRATEGIC PLAN

**2016-2020**

**A five year action plan & guidance document**

The mission of the Tompkins County Beautification, Signage and Public Art Program is to work through program partners and municipalities to increase the aesthetic visual quality of Tompkins County natural and built landscapes, while welcoming visitors and enhancing quality of life for residents.

## Acknowledgements

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

***"Increase the perception of Ithaca and Tompkins County as an outstandingly beautiful community that is simple for visitors to navigate and as a place to visit for the overall beauty of the area".***

- Goal for Beautification, Signage and Public Art established by the Tompkins County 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan

The Tompkins County Tourism Program established a "Critical Action" when it adopted the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan to *"write and implement a Tompkins County Beautification Plan for 2012-2020, to include the square footage, location, and type of gardens maintained by the program, maintenance and infrastructure requirements, design standards, and prioritized actions."* The Tompkins County Beautification Committee, led by the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce, worked throughout 2015 to engage the community and seek input from businesses, municipalities, and tourism program stakeholders to help complete this Plan. As the planning process evolved, so did the scope.

Through the collaboration of many partners long-involved in the Tompkins County Community Beautification Program—including Cornell Cooperative Extension, the Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Ithaca Alliance, and the Strategic Tourism Planning Board, among others—a much more comprehensive plan evolved. This plan includes goals, strategies, and action items to address the needs of the Beautification Program, but also to support efforts to pursue other critical actions in the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan: most notably the implementation of community wayfinding and gateway signage and the creation of a new grant program to encourage public art installations throughout Tompkins County.

Numerous other priority projects and topics came up throughout the process. The concept of place making wove its way into the plan, including exploring concepts like the creation of park-like areas, neighborhood signage programs, enhancing public arts partnerships in places like bus stops, and anticipated need for advocacy by committee members in the future to ensure blighted areas receive attention by municipal leaders and state agencies.

The Beautification, Signage, and Public Art Strategic Plan includes an exploration of the history of the program and its disparate components; the goals and methodology of the plan; numerous ways the community beautification program is implemented county-wide; historic and future efforts regarding community gateway and wayfinding signage; and an exploration of past public art projects and upcoming opportunities for more public art installations.

This plan provides a comprehensive look at the evolution of the program over the last fifteen years, and lays the groundwork for the next five years. Continued partnerships among cooperating agencies will be essential—as are passionate employees and volunteers—to help ensure that the plan is funded, implemented, and remains a priority for the Tourism Program and its stakeholders.

## GOALS

Goal 1: Attractive, welcoming entrances and primary travel corridors
Goal 2: Easy to navigate communities
Goal 3: Public art enhances the overall visual appeal and interest of the area
Goal 4: Attractive, colorful and neat public spaces and amenities
Goal 5: Increased appreciation, awareness, and participation in beautification activities
Goal 6: Attractive built environment
Tompkins County = Outstandingly Beautiful

## Strategies and Actions – Executive Summary Table

This Plan establishes the following Strategies and Actions. Additional details, including lead organization(s), timeline, and measures of accomplishment can be found in the full Plan document.

| Goal | Strategy | *Action* |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Welcoming entrances at all County Gateways | *Implement Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage Plan* |
| 1 | Colorful plantings at County Gateway signs | *Design and install landscape plantings for County Gateway signs* |
| 1 | Colorful plantings at all Community Gateway Signs | *Design and install landscape plantings at all Community Gateway Signs (entrances to towns/villages)* |
| 1 | Attractive highway corridors through City of Ithaca | *Add ornamental trees, landscape plantings and container plantings to corridors through City of Ithaca* |
| 1 | Ornamental and shade trees along major routes in rural towns and villages | *Engage municipalities in planting trees along major routes and in city and village centers* |
| 2 | Wayfinding and Interpretive signs for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians throughout Tompkins County | *Implement the Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage Plan* |
| 2 | Minimize sign clutter on primary travel corridors | *Conduct inventory of existing sign clutter and local sign laws; address illegal signage through enforcement* |
| 2 | Integrated wayfinding system for multi-use trail system | *Develop a wayfinding signage plan for trails as County multi-use trails are completed and connected* |
| 3 | Public art, including murals, sculptures and banners are highly visible in all municipalities | *Establish a public art grant program to encourage public art installations and tactical placemaking activities countywide* |
| 4 | Colorful, attractive, well-maintained and sustainable plantings and along highway corridors in city center | *Develop and implement new landscape designs for existing areas to include more perennials and ornamental grasses* |
| 4 | Colorful, attractive, well-maintained and sustainable plantings in city center and along highway corridors in Ithaca | *Identify new planting sites in Ithaca based on site selection criteria; develop landscape plans for these sites and implement* |
| 4 | Colorful plantings in all village centers | *Engage municipalities in planting bulbs, annuals, perennials and shrub in village centers by training local leaders* |
| 4 | Beautiful parks, trailheads and trails | *Increase resident engagement in park maintenance through volunteer programs like Adopt- a-Park, Friends of Stewart Park, and Friends of Cayuga Waterfront Trail* |
| 4 | Tactical placemaking projects and activities. | *Through micro-scale plans and projects, explore tactical placemaking improvements at key focus areas; identify possible focus areas and develop placemaking toolkit for communities* |
| 5 | Increase number of beautification volunteers in rural municipalities | *Support initiation of Beautification Brigade volunteer groups by identifying and training leaders and offering preliminary plans* |
| 5 | Branding and awareness building for Beautification, Signage and Arts program | *Develop program logo, educational aspect of website and marketing materials for sponsorship* |
| 5 | Engage residents, partner businesses and organizations in beautification efforts | *Increase participation in Business Planting Day in the City of Ithaca, particularly in new areas* |
| 5 | Increase private and business funding of planting sites | *Promote business sponsorship program for public plantings* |
| 5 | Increase number of landscape plantings at businesses and private residences | *Promote best plants and landscape designs with photos and information on Community Beautification website* |
| 5 | Recognize businesses and residents that contribute to beautification efforts | *Develop awards program to recognize outstanding efforts in beautification by residents and business owners* |
| 6 | Well-cared for buildings, public and private | *Advocate for improvement and enforcement of land use regulations to preserve and improve the built environment* |
| 6 | Streetscapes in key focus areas are walkable, attractive and well- maintained | *Propose larger projects such as streetscape improvement projects* |
| 6 | Banner program to increase beautification in areas where landscape plantings are not practical | *Develop banner program for Collegetown and other areas* |

# INTRODUCTION

## Mission

The mission of the Tompkins County Community Beautification, Signage and Public Art Program is to work through program partners and municipalities to increase the aesthetic visual quality of Tompkins County natural and built landscapes, while welcoming visitors and enhancing quality of life for residents.

## Vision

The visual landscape of Tompkins County will be a reflection of its vibrant and caring communities: Welcoming, colorful, artistic and engaging

Imagine this scenario.....*A visitor to Tompkins County arrives at any of the gateways into the county on a state route. A 'Welcome to Tompkins County' sign surrounded by a colorful planting of seasonal bulbs, blooming shrubs, colorful annuals and ornamental grasses immediately tells the visitor that this is a place where the residents and municipalities care about and take pride in their community. The state route is clean, with no litter present, and lined with mature shade trees.*

*As the visitor approaches one of Tompkins County's rural villages on the state route there is another welcome sign at the village entrance, planted with the same palette of shrubs, perennials, bulbs and grasses as the county welcome sign. The main street of this village is historic, charming and well-cared for, with well-tended buildings, inviting shop signs and window displays, and planters with colorful annuals lining the street interspersed with benches and period lighting. A wayfinding sign, featuring information about the local area and a map of attractions, entices the visitor to slow down and spend some time exploring the village's historical and natural sites and business district.*

*After lunch and some shopping at businesses in the village, the visitor continues onto downtown Ithaca. A 'Welcome to Ithaca' sign is planted with a similar palette as the rural welcome sign. The state routes through the city are clean and many of the green spaces along the highway are planted with trees, flowering shrubs, perennials, annuals and spring bulbs. Buildings look cared-for and wherever possible there are landscape plantings, trees in parking lots and planters of annuals in front of businesses.*

*As the visitor approaches the urban center there are large colorful plantings on all street medians. Container plantings at busy intersections and in front of buildings provide color to the urban environment. Murals on buildings and walls and public sculpture reflect the artistic and vibrant nature of the community. The Commons and surrounding blocks are like a jewelbox filled with colorful flowers, art, historic architecture and unique, locally-owned shops and restaurants.*

*Wayfinding signs in and around the city make it easy for the visitor to find parking, accommodation, local attractions, parks and trails. Bike lanes and pedestrian-friendly areas entice the visitor to enjoy the city by foot or bicycle. Mature street trees line the city streets and provide shade to pedestrian areas and outdoor café seating. Both Cornell and Ithaca College are easy to find from academic institutions are well-defined with signage and plantings.*

*Everything about the visitor's visual experience, from arriving at the county gateway to exploring downtown Ithaca, reflects the vibrant and caring communities of Tompkins County.*

# HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM, 1995-2015

## Adopt-A-Planter

The initial seeds for the Community Beautification Program were sown in 1995 by staff from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County in conjunction with community members interested in improving the plantings on the Ithaca Commons and surrounding streets. This group formed the initial Beautification Committee in the City of Ithaca.

The first beautification initiative in the City of Ithaca was an Adopt-A-Planter program for local business owners, with the goal of adding annual and perennial flowers to the existing shrub and tree plantings on the Ithaca Commons. Utilizing volunteer labor and sponsorship of the concrete planters, the Commons was transformed each spring with the addition of colorful plants.
However, it soon became apparent that it was difficult to rely solely on volunteer labor for routine maintenance of the planters throughout the summer. Regular weeding, watering and deadheading are necessary to keep the plantings in good shape all summer. Frequent watering was found to be especially important when growing annuals and perennials in the same planters with trees and shrubs. At the time the Commons was lacking sufficient water spigots so watering was a very difficult task to manage with just volunteers.

## Youth Horticulture Apprentice Program

In 1999 the Youth Horticulture Apprentice Program (YHAP) was established with funding by the Youth Employment Service. This program was led by educator and plantsman Lee Ginenthal; one of the goals of the program was to provide horticultural job training for teens. The youth were paid a stipend to help plant and maintain the flower plantings on the Commons. YHAP provided maintenance and horticultural training for youth on the Ithaca Commons until 2002. At this time the YHAP program relocated to the new Ithaca Children's Garden in Cass Park.

*Plantings in the old Commons fountain – 1999*

*First beautification volunteers on the Commons - 1997*

## Founding of the Community Beautification Program

In 2002 the Tompkins County Hotel Room Occupancy Tax rate was increased from 3% to 5% in order to generate a greater number of tourism-enhancing programs in Tompkins County. The Beautification Committee advocated for a beautification program with secure funding that could expand efforts beyond the Ithaca Commons, and include rural communities as well as major routes into the city and county. The committee also believed strongly that retaining the volunteer aspect of the program would expand its reach as well as providing educational and training opportunities for youth and adults.

In 2001 the Beautification Committee collaborated with the Chamber of Commerce to develop a county-wide beautification program with the goal of improving the aesthetic quality of Tompkins County's rural and urban landscapes with plantings of flowers, shrubs and trees, outdoor sculpture, murals and banners. The room tax provided funding for a half-time program coordinator, whose responsibilities included training and coordinating volunteers to work in the City of Ithaca, ordering plants, tools and other supplies, and managing a matching beautification grants program for the rural communities of Tompkins County.

In fall 2002 the first Tompkins County Community Beautification Coordinator was hired at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County (CCETC). The coordinator works in collaboration with the Beautification Committee and staff from the Chamber of Commerce. In the first year of the program the Beautification Coordinator trained the first group of Beautification Brigade volunteers who worked primarily on the Ithaca Commons and on the three large traffic medians on East State. At that time these medians were a mix of grass, weeds and sprawling, non-flowering shrubs. Staff and volunteers with the Beautification Brigade renovated these medians and they are now jewels of downtown Ithaca from spring to fall when they are filled with colorful flower plantings.

*Sign Triangle (East State Street): Before*

*Sign Triangle: After*

Based on the success of the program in the first two years, funding from the room tax was gradually increased to allow a full-time program manager, a seasonal assistant, and the purchase of a watering van. Several years later the scope of the program was expanded to include signage and public art. The Strategic Tourism Planning Board oversees the Beautification, Signage and Public Art Program and approves the program's budget request before submitting it to Tompkins County Legislature for annual funding.

## Beautification Brigade Volunteers

Volunteers are the backbone of the Community Beautification Program. Each year hundreds of hours are contributed by volunteers with the Beautification Brigade to plant and maintain public planting sites all over the City of Ithaca (see Appendix II, p. XX for map of current planting sites in the City of Ithaca). Volunteers also help propagate thousands of plants for the program. This voluntary labor makes it possible to plant and maintain many areas in the City of Ithaca on a small budget and with a small number of paid staff. In return, volunteers experience hands-on learning, and gain experience in seed sowing and transplanting, bulb planting, container gardening, garden design, and plant maintenance. One of the highlights of the spring is Business Planting Day. The Beautification Program provides free flowering plants to businesses and organizations and the Beautification Brigade mobilizes to plant these in containers at dozens of locations throughout the City of Ithaca.

*Volunteers on Business Planting Day*

*Business planter on the Commons*

## Commons Ambassador Program

In 2002 Room Tax funding was awarded to the Downtown Ithaca Alliance for a seasonal position to water plantings and pick up litter on the Commons and surrounding streets, and answer questions from visitors. Paid staff to perform regular watering on the Commons and surrounding streets was essential to expanding the number of plantings in this area. The new planting areas on the rebuilt Commons include trees, perennials and annuals which will be watered and maintained by the Downtown Ithaca Ambassadors, paid staff that work seasonally on the Commons and surrounding streets. In addition to watering planters, the Ambassadors also answer visitors' questions and keep the Commons and downtown area tidy. Staff and volunteers with the Beautification Program will continue to plant the spring, summer and fall flowers in the planters on the Commons and surrounding streets.

## Rural Matching Grants Program

Beautification funding is available each year for a wide variety of beautification projects in the rural communities. Matching grants are awarded to municipalities, schools and other groups that want to implement beautification projects in their communities. Typically grant funds are used to purchase plants and materials and the matching portion is fulfilled by the value of the volunteer labor. Rural beautification projects have included landscape plantings, tree and shrub plantings, flower planters, banners, park renovation and interpretive signage for historical sites. Some communities have also developed volunteer groups in their communities that are similar in structure to the Ithaca Beautification Brigade. Volunteer coordinators in these communities organize regular work sessions to plant and maintain the plantings and containers in their villages and towns.

For more information about the rural beautification grants program, see Appendix VI for grant guidelines and required reporting documents.

**Examples of projects funded by the Rural Grants program**

*Plantings at Groton Public Library*

*Village of Dryden Main Street planters*

## Continued Growth

In 2015, the Community Beautification continues to go from strength to strength. The program now collaborates with Cornell University and the Finger Lakes Residential Center to have plants grown in their greenhouses by students and volunteers, and this has greatly expanded the number of areas that can be planted with a relatively small plant budget, while also providing more training opportunities for those who help with seeding and transplanting in the greenhouses.

*Beautification Brigade transplanting seedlings*

*Beautification plants at Cornell greenhouse*

After 13 years of planting in the often harsh environment of public planting sites, the beautification staff has accumulated valuable information on the best plants for challenging public sites, in both sunny and shady locations. Each year new plant varieties are trialed in public planting sites in Ithaca while continuing to plant many of the staunch champions that have proven themselves. A gallery of the best annuals, bulbs and perennials for public plantings can be found in the toolkit section Appendix IV.

*Zinnias are tough plants, suitable for roadside plantings*

One of the biggest challenges for public beautification is providing enough water for plants to flourish. Roadside planting areas tend to be hotter and drier than typical garden sites. Annuals are great for continuous bloom throughout the summer but with shallow roots they need very consistent watering to flourish. In order to increase the sustainability and reduce watering of city plantings in dry years we will be piloting some new planting designs that include a greater number of shrubs, ornamental grasses and perennials. These garden designs can be seen in Appendix IV, p. XX.

## GOALS AND METHODOLOGY of THIS PLAN

As the Beautification, Signage and Public Art Program enters its 15th year it's a good time to step back to review the past successes and challenges and develop a cohesive set of goals and strategies to take county-wide beautification to a higher level over the next five years.

The Community Beautification Committee held focus group meetings in winter 2015 and conducted a survey of businesses, tourism stakeholders and municipal officials. The survey questions solicited feedback on past and current beautification efforts, and ideas for high-priority projects in their communities over the next five years.

Some of the recurring suggestions from 190 survey respondents include creating more welcoming entrances to visitors entering Tompkins County, improving the aesthetic quality of main routes into the City of Ithaca, enhancing public parks and trails, adding more public art and sculpture, and helping rural and urban municipalities in their efforts to be welcoming, interesting, clean and safe for visitors. Results of the survey and suggestions from the focus group helped shape the goals and strategies presented in this plan. The survey questions and a summary of responses can be seen on Appendix X on p. **XX.**

# Community Beautification& Planting Program

## WHY BEAUTIFICATION MATTERS

Studies back up what most of us have experienced: public spaces that are clean, that have places to sit down, and that are close to trees, flowers and outdoor art make us feel happier, relaxed and safer. Beautification enhancements provide benefits for businesses, residents and tourists. Research has demonstrated that businesses that are located in areas with beautification elements have higher foot traffic and sales.

Cleveland, Ohio
"The importance of the on-street experience was highlighted in the perception research conducted with visitors and residents. The research showed that lighting, public art, greenery and improved conditions of roads and sidewalks can increase perceptions of cities as being clean, safe and welcoming."

http://www.wkyc.com/story/news/local/cuyahoga-county/2014/08/05/cleveland--downtown- beautification-starts-at-east-4th--prospect/13634111/

*Creek Walk plantings behind the Tompkins County Public Library*

Example: Texas A&M University

"Beautification Draws Customers, Reduces Shopper Stress, and Enhances Store Appeal: Trees and other ornamental plants beautify otherwise bland areas. They help create a positive aesthetic environment that attracts and welcomes customers of local businesses. Stores with landscaped areas have proven to make shoppers feel more at ease, and also contribute to the appeal of a store. This translates into expanded sales resulting from longer shopping occasions and to stores being able to charge slightly higher prices because of an increase in the perceived quality of the store. Landscaping is an effective way to invite more customers to a store and to keep them coming back to experience the positive environment they encounter there."

(Bisco Werner 1996, Brethour 2007, Frank 2003, McPherson 2004, PNLA 2009, Wolf 1998)

http://ellisonchair.tamu.edu/economic-benefits-of-plants/#.VQnPMv7svxQ

*Planters on the Ithaca Commons*

University of Florida

"Aside from the obvious aesthetic benefits, studies indicate that roadside beautification, including landscaping and gardens, can help drivers reduce stress, frustration, and aggression, while helping maintain safe highways. Implementing simple, cost-effective beautification projects can enhance communities and improve quality of life for residents and travelers."

http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/07/080717110228.htm

More detailed guidelines for planter boxes, traffic medians and roadside plantings,as well as plant lists and photos for each type of planting, can be found in the Toolbox section in Appendix IV.

*Spring bulbs on Aurora St. median*

*Volunteers planting summer annuals on Aurora St. median*

*Evergreen branches, twigs and berries for winter interest*

## Role of Volunteers and Community Partnerships

From the inception of early beautification efforts in the mid-90's to the founding of the current Community Beautification Program in 2002, volunteers have played a key role in developing and maintaining planting sites in Tompkins County. Utilizing volunteer labor greatly leverages funding from the Room Tax fund and creates a sense of empowerment for community residents while providing horticultural training.

The program also involves volunteers from Cornell University and Ithaca College, providing opportunities for these often temporary residents to engage in beautifying their Ithaca community, and of course city beautification is a benefit to these institutes of higher learning as it makes the city more attractive to prospective students and their parents.

Cornell Cooperative Extension horticultural volunteer programs include: the Beautification Brigade; the Citizen Pruners, a volunteer group that prunes city street trees; and the Master Gardeners, who maintain several public planting areas in the city and in rural locations.

Other horticultural volunteer groups in the city include Friends of Stewart Park, Adopt-A- Park participants, Cayuga Waterfront Trail volunteers, Six-Mile Creek natural area volunteers, the Ithaca Garden Club, and beautification volunteers in the rural municipalities. All of these volunteers provide invaluable work on beautification projects throughout Tompkins County.

*Dryden beautification volunteers*

*Tompkins County Public Library volunteers*

Developing stronger partnerships with businesses and organizations is one of the key goals of the 2016-2020 strategic plan. These partnerships are essential to expanding the scope of beautification projects on a limited budget. Business and organizations can choose to support the program with volunteer labor or funding for plants. A formal sponsorship program and sponsorship signage will be designed over the next several years to help develop these types of partnerships.

An example of a successful volunteer partnership is one that was forged with the Tompkins County Public Library in 2014. Library volunteers work side-by-side with the Beautification Brigade to plant areas around the library building in downtown Ithaca. The Beautification Program provides plants, and TCPL volunteers work with Beautification Brigade to water and weed the planters to keep them looking fresh all season. The Beautification Program also helped design and plant a cutting garden behind the building that provides fresh flower bouquets inside the library all summer and fall.

## Matching Grants Program for Rural Municipalities

The Tompkins County Community Beautification Program gives grants to Tompkins County municipalities that are outside of the City of Ithaca for beautification projects. Since 2002, approximately $100K has been awarded to rural municipalities for beautification projects, including a 'pocket park' in Forest Home (Town of Ithaca) planted with native shrubs and trees; interpretive signage for the Covered Bridge in Newfield; funding for Main Street plantings in Dryden, Trumansburg, Enfield and Groton; street trees and landscaping on Triphammer Road in Lansing, and colorful plantings at visitor centers, libraries, post offices, schools, village and town offices, and other public locations.

Project organizers are encouraged to speak with the Community Beautification Coordinator before they get too far in planning their project to ensure that it is eligible for funding. The application process is simple and ongoing throughout the year. Applicants will:

- Submit a project description and total budget
- State how much they are asking for from the Community Beautification Program and how the funds will be matched
- Indicate how the project will be maintained

- Submit a final report when the project is complete, with documentation for expenses and volunteer hours. Following a site inspection to ensure that the project is complete, reimbursement is made to the municipality.

Criteria used to determine rural grant awards include:

- The project should be in an area that is highly visible to the public: along a main road or near a public building such as a Town Hall or school.
- It is a 1:1 matching grant. The match can be in the form of money, services, supplies, or volunteer labor.
- It is a reimbursement grant. The municipality agrees to front the money for the project and is then reimbursed by our program when the project is done.
- Existing employee payroll is not an eligible grant expense.
- The typical grant award is $1,000 to $2,000, but awards are made on a case-by-case basis.

*Monarch garden in the Village of Dryden*

*Plantings at Village of Trumansburg visitor center*

## Downtown Ithaca Ambassador and Hospitality Program

According to the 2009 'Profile of Visitors to Tompkins County' study, Downtown Ithaca and the Commons are important in motivating trips to Tompkins County, ranking third in importance after Cornell University and local gorges and state parks. The Downtown Ithaca Ambassador and Hospitality Program was created to help maintain this key community asset and to help provide visitors with supportive on the street concierge like assistance. Ambassador programs are found in a number of larger downtown communities. They provide supplemental cleaning and sometimes safety assistance as well as street level hospitality services, all designed to improve people's experience downtown. The Downtown Ithaca Alliance, with funding from the Tompkins County Tourism Program, has created a modest ambassador program that focuses on supplemental maintenance and cleaning services as well as hospitality. With the re-opening of the Ithaca Commons pedestrian mall the importance of supplemental cleaning and hospitality services has intensified.

Ambassadors are paid employees of the nonprofit Downtown Ithaca Alliance (DIA). They are supervised by the DIA Director of Operations, who is responsible for scheduling and daily oversight of work performed. Their work year is divided into two distinct periods: peak visitor season (May-October) and non-peak (November – April). Cleaning crew ambassadors work throughout the year in both peak and non-peak periods. Hospitality ambassadors work only during peak months. During peak months both clean and hospitality ambassadors cover each day of the week, including weekends and most holidays. Ambassadors have worked full-time and part-time and receive a living wage after a brief trial period. In 2016, the ambassador program will utilize one working supervisor/fore-person and a

series of part-time persons to help cover the needed hours. During the peak summer the paid staff is also supplemented with a seasonal youth employment worker and occasional community service and volunteer helpers.

*Downtown Ithaca Ambassadors*

## Hospitality Responsibilities

The hospitality ambassadors are trained to engage with the passing public, answering an array of questions ranging from simple directions to more complex queries about where to find various goods and services. The ambassadors are typically, but not always, located at or near the DIA's portable red information kiosk that contains brochures, maps, downtown guides, and other downtown oriented information. Ambassadors have cell phones to call for information they cannot readily obtain and access to a computer. Whenever visitors inquire about overnight stays or more detailed regional information, they are directed to the Downtown Visitor Center staffed by the CVB. The red cart is often located next or adjacent to the visitor center to facilitate this cross servicing of visitors. On average, the hospitality ambassadors provide information to between 5,000 and 6,000 people each season.

## Cleaning Responsibilities

Clean crew ambassadors are charged with maintaining the appearance of the Commons and surrounding blocks. This is supplemental cleaning that follows mechanized cleaning performed by the City of Ithaca Public Works Department. Clean crew ambassadors typically are responsible for hand cleaning, including, but not limited to, daily litter pick-up, cigarette butt cleaning, flower bed watering, weeding, small graffiti removal, painting, and numerous miscellaneous maintenance related chores. The scope of these tasks varies by the season. Watering can consume 4-5 hours a day of a single person during dry summer periods. Cigarette butt cleaning can be extensive, particularly during busy bar days. One measurement exercise performed by the DIA in 2008 for the Keep America Beautiful Program found that ambassadors picked up nearly 6,000 cigarette butts in a single 24 hour period from one target block on Aurora Street. Even with the current downtown smoking ban, this problem still exists today.

While ambassadors focus on the pedestrian mall, they also maintain a schedule of cleaning in the entire 22 blocks of the downtown district. Some areas, such as the major bus stops, receive daily attention. Other areas receive less frequent cleaning based on the level of need and trash generated. Ambassadors are always available to modify their schedule to assist with emergency or unexpected situations. They are also assigned to clean up and assist with key downtown events such as summer concerts and festivals.

*Downtown Ithaca information kiosk*

## The Future of the Ambassador Program

As City funding for street and sidewalk cleaning has waned, the ambassador program has added to its scope of work. The new Commons pedestrian mall provides significantly more real estate for maintenance. For example, the Commons has 12 larger planting beds, 6 annual beds, and 78 portable flower planters all requiring regular watering, weeding, and attention.

Looking forward, the need for supplemental maintenance services will continue. Visitors expect a certain level of cleanliness when they visit attractions and the Commons/Downtown is no exception. The DIA will continue to experiment with staffing plans that provide maximum flexibility for the needed 1st and 2nd shift coverage. The ambassador program will continue to work closely with Cornell Cooperative Extension to ensure that there is solid communication between the CCE planting crews and the DIA maintenance crew.

## Additional Beautification Efforts

Various other groups and city departments contribute to beautification efforts in the City of Ithaca. The Department of Public Works City Forestry program plants trees along city streets and in public parks, replacing trees as needed and maintaining a healthy diversity of tree species. Ithaca's City Forestry program has received numerous awards for both the number and diversity of trees planted yearly. Ithaca's Streets and Facilities department recently installed four new 'rain gardens' downtown, located on new pedestrian bump-outs on Green and Seneca Streets. These rain gardens will capture storm water from nearby sidewalks and parking lots as well as adding floral color to these streets.

Additional plantings in the City of Ithaca have been installed in Stewart Park by volunteers with the Friends of Stewart Park and the Ithaca Garden Club. Perennial and shrub plantings have been installed by volunteers along Cayuga Waterfront Trail, a pedestrian/bike trail that runs from Stewart Park to Cass Park.

# Signage

## HISTORIC EFFORTS REGARDING COMMUNITY SIGNAGE

The use of community wayfinding signage to guide and direct visitors is not a new or novel trend.

During the latter half of the twentieth century wayfinding signage was becoming a common feature in several different venues, especially parks, university campuses, and a growing number of urban centers and cities. Such a coordinated signage system did not find its way to Ithaca and Tompkins County. Instead, by 2000, there was a number of wildcat signs appears along Ithaca and Tompkins County roadways placed there, usually illegally, by a growing number of area attractions. They were all different in size and design.

This growing number of wayfinding systems across the United States was increasing the expectations of the motoring public and, when combined with the clutter of many miscellaneous signs installed by individual entities, this concern spawned an initiative by the Tompkins County tourism community in 2000 to address this issue. Utilizing County tourism funds specifically set aside for this purpose, the CVB led an effort to undertake a pilot program to demonstrate the viability and value of a coordinated wayfinding signage program. Particular concern in this program was to be paid to Cornell and Ithaca College signage. The CVB selected 212 Associates,
a NYC based firm that specialized in wayfinding and directional signs programs. The intent of the demonstration was to plan, produce and install wayfinding signs in a small geographic area (the west end of Ithaca) where the problem with sign proliferation was most acute.

This pilot program immediately ran into problems with the State Department of Transportation, which proved to be unreceptive to the designs and proposals prepared by the consultants, After considerable negotiation by former CVB head Bridgette Berry, the pilot was able to install a limited number of signs at some six different locations. The State DOT resistance to the program effectively ended the pilot and the concept of a coordinated wayfinding signage program was shelved for the next fifteen years. While signage was nominally listed as an item for beautification, only entrance signs received any attention during this 15 year hiatus.

By 2014, the idea of a coordinated wayfinding signage program was again revisited by the Beautification Committee. This time the planning task force carefully considered firms who could work effectively and clearly with the State DOT.

## WAYFINDING & INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE PROJECT

### Background

The Tompkins County Wayfinding & Interpretive Signage Project is a comprehensive, well-planned program to address the issues with existing gateway signage, standard DOT signage, and a lack of ample or appropriate vehicular and pedestrian wayfinding signage throughout Tompkins County. The project includes community gateway and municipal welcome signage, informational kiosks with interpretive panels (for pedestrians and cyclists), standard NYS DOT directional signage and recreational/cultural signage, and intra-community wayfinding signage.

Wayfinding is knowing where you are spatially in an environment, knowing where your desired location is, and knowing how to get there from your present location. In Ithaca and Tompkins County, wayfinding is particularly important, because each year we host over a million tourists, college students and their families, and we have a very transient residential population as well as thousands of in-commuters daily. The historic and current signage condition throughout Tompkins County has

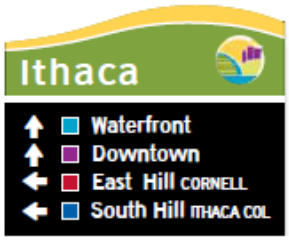
frequently been described as poor, confusing, broken, lacking, absent, and frustrating.

Through a collaborative and comprehensive stakeholder engagement and planning process, a Wayfinding & Interpretive Signage Plan was created to address the issues noted above. From 2013 through July 2014, a Tompkins County Tourism Program grant helped key stakeholder groups and a steering committee work with consultants to formulate a wayfinding system with a clear hierarchy of preferred wayfinding routes. It is on these routes that the wayfinding effort is centered, in order to make navigating through the county clear and easy to understand. The primary and secondary routes were determined to be the main routes travelled when entering the county. The primary and secondary routes also provided connections between municipalities and attractions within the county.

The next step in the process identified which tourism and natural resource attractions/destinations should be signed. The process started with a list of 417 potential attractions. These included cultural and recreational attractions/destinations, private businesses/restaurants, community facilities/services and more. The project team evaluated this list and added over 70 attractions including waterfalls, parks, trails, services, and environmental/nature-based attractions. With a list of approximately 500 potential attractions, the limitations of the number of destinations per sign (four), and the importance of not creating sign clutter, it was necessary to prioritize and identify the major attractions to be the focus of the wayfinding system. Commercial services such as restaurants, retail establishments and businesses were eliminated because they are not necessarily permanent and it was decided that the community wayfinding should not promote individual private businesses. In the end, the project team and Steering Committee identified 56 attractions to be signed, which have the most significant cultural/recreational interest and visitorship.

## Wayfinding Plan Components

The wayfinding system for Tompkins County that resulted from this process is organized to direct visitors and residents, whether traveling by vehicle, bike or on foot, to major attractions and destinations, and to encourage the most efficient and navigable traffic flow. **Gateway signs** introduce one's entry into the county and municipalities. Gateway signs will be enhanced with plantings of perennials, shrubs and ornamental grasses. These plantings will be funded by the rural beautification grants program and maintained by the rural towns and villages. The wayfinding system focuses on primary and secondary routes through the county that people are most likely to travel. **Wayfinding signage** is strategically located along these routes to direct residents and visitors to the major attractions (an additional benefit of the signage is to alert travelers to the presence of these attractions even if they are unable to visit them on that particular trip). The design of the wayfinding signage is consistent throughout the county in order to support the development of a sense of place as one moves through the county. **Interpretive kiosks** are strategically located along these routes and at parking garages and pedestrian areas to provide



information about the region in both traditional and digital formats.

Within the Town and City of Ithaca, the number of major attractions exceeds the capacity of a sign (vehicular directional signs are limited to three or four destination listings per sign). Therefore, for wayfinding purposes, Ithaca has been divided to four districts to allow for simpler understanding and navigation. Travelers will be directed to one of the four districts; once within a district they will be directed to specific attractions and parking within that district. The pedestrian and bicycle wayfinding system also reinforces this district organizational model.

**This project includes the following key visitor and tourist destinations:**

***Parks, Waterfalls, Trails:*** Taughannock Falls, Buttermilk Falls State Park, Ithaca Falls, Ludlowville Falls, Cascadilla Gorge, Robert Treman State Park, Allen Treman Marina, Black Diamond Trail, Finger Lakes Trail, Cayuga Waterfront Trail, Stewart Park, Cass Park, East Shore Park, Myers Park, Ithaca Children's Garden, South Hill Recreational Way, Wildflower Preserve, Hammond Hill State Forest, Danby State Forest, Shindagin Hollow State Forest, Jim Schug Trail

***Theatres:*** Hangar Theatre, State Theatre, Kitchen Theatre

***Educational/Museums:*** Cornell University, Ithaca College, Tompkins Cortland Community College, Museum of the Earth, Sciencenter, Cayuga Nature Center

***Landmarks/Historical:*** *Newfield Covered Bridge, The History Center*

***Shopping/Restaurants*:** Downtown, The Commons, Collegetown, Ithaca Farmers Market, Shopping Mall

***Other:*** Major districts within Ithaca (Downtown, Waterfront East, Waterfront West, East Hill-CORNELL, South Hill- ITHACA COLLEGE) CVB Visitors Center (Downtown Ithaca and East Shore Drive); four parking garages. Many locations indicated above are part of the "Discovery Trail," an important tourist destination marketing project.

The need for additional signage throughout Tompkins County cannot be understated. Directional signage is haphazard, incomplete, and often found in deteriorated condition. Signs were installed at various intervals over the past several decades, and no theme exists from one sign type to another. The result is a confusing, poor looking, and ineffective signage program resulting in a missed opportunity for community branding as well. The impact area for this project is all of Tompkins County, including nine towns and the City of Ithaca, with specific benefit to natural resource assets, tourism properties, Cornell University, Ithaca College, and Tompkins Cortland Community College.

The Ithaca/Tompkins County Convention and Visitors Bureau noted that 8% of visitor phone calls to the CVB are from individuals seeking maps and directions. An estimated 5% of the inquiries from CVB online chat visitor services were requests for maps or directions from those visiting the area, or already located within the area. Over 70,000 print travel guides were distributed YTD, all included maps. A significant portion of ongoing walk-in visitor center traffic, in Downtown Ithaca and on East Shore Drive, includes individuals and families seeking directions and input regarding wayfinding.

With such a high percentage of transient population due to three higher education institutions, and approximately one million total visitors each year, the need for comprehensive, attractive, and clear signage has become a community priority. This project will directly support the Southern Tier Regional Council's efforts to improve the economic impact of tourism by enhancing and simplifying the visitor experience to Tompkins County. By allowing visitors to locate assets such as theaters, waterfalls, hiking

trails, parks, downtown and The Commons, and much more, we will enhance the visitor experience and invite them to stay longer, play more, and spend additional dollars during their visit.

### Next Steps

Throughout 2015, the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce and its Foundation, along with Tourism Program Partners and the County Planning Department, worked to move this project towards plan implementation phase. Significant effort resulted in the following work being accomplished:

- Numerous stakeholder meetings and presentations were held over the course of several months, to discuss the background, goals, and need for the project
- Collaboration with the NYS DOT regarding the project, funding sources, and agency support needed to make the project become reality
- Collaboration with local municipalities capable of supporting the project through installation of signage (and therefore reduction of the most costly item in the budget)
- Project scope and budget revisions, including reduction of the project budget to render it a more feasible project
- Funding requests to project stakeholders, many of which were approved with contingencies
- A grant request was submitted to the Empire State Development and the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council, which was not funded for the 2015 project year

In 2016, The Chamber of Commerce will establish a stakeholder committee to discuss and plan for next steps. Multiple funding sources and follow-up grant applications will be considered as opportunities arise, and in particular, as clarity is provided regarding the process for seeking investments from the Southern Tier Region's Upstate Revitalization Initiative (URI) Funding Award.

The committee will consider project phasing options, and whether an initial project should be considered for 2016-2017 which could be used as a demonstration project and a springboard for implementation of the complete project. Additional meetings and presentations with a wider base of local stakeholders will continue in the first half of 2016.

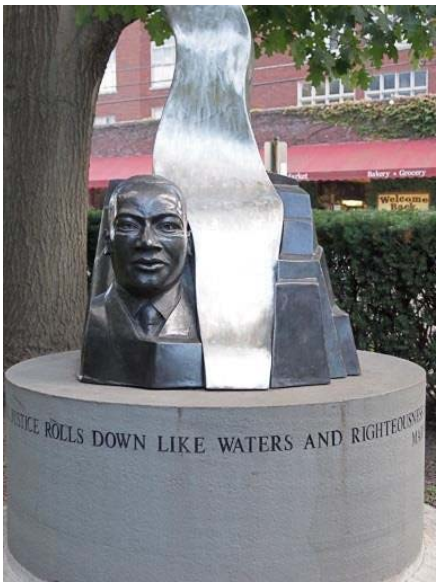
Appendix VII provides more detail about the planned Wayfinding & Interpretive Signage Project, and examples of the various components of the program, as well as some maps detailing new sign placement, sign removal and replacement. The final plan is available in its entirety at www.tompkinschamber.org/wayfinding.

# Public Art

Art can beautify and enhance public places, and has been a tool for beautification and community development here in Ithaca and throughout the country. The Beautification Program created by the Tompkins County Tourism Program has always included public art as an eligible activity, but historically there has been only limited focus on this tool in the past decade. Looking forward, public art offers communities a possible cost effective way to create lasting enhancement to their public spaces and can be a growing part of the Beautification program.

*Downtown Ithaca mural honoring the Haudenosaunee tribe*

There is a history of public art initiatives in our community. In 2000, the Downtown Ithaca Alliance created the Art in the Heart of the City program, a seasonal public sculpture art program that has brought over 150 pieces of eclectic sculpture to the streets and plazas of downtown Ithaca. This program changes annually, refreshing the artistic landscape. The City and DIA have purchased/acquired several pieces over the years, creating a permanent collection of outdoor 3-D art.




*Sculpture on the Ithaca Commons honoring Martin Luther King, Jr.*

The City's Public Arts Commission has promoted two major programs over the past five years: a program to add murals to public spaces and a program to paint utility electric boxes throughout the City. Murals are now present in parking garages as well on public and private buildings. The utility box program, known as "21 Boxes" has painted over 40 boxes and engaged that same number of artists in the process of creating public art.

*Two of the utility boxes painted by local artists through the 21 Boxes program*

The Beautification Program will be seeking to augment these programs and extend the opportunity for public art to communities throughout the County. Key criteria for art placement will be its visibility to tourists and visitors. A 2016 pilot program will provide funds for murals or other low cost public art. This was identified as a "Critical Action" by the 2020 Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Plan, specifically to 'Formalize a public art grant component of the Beautification Program to encourage public art installations throughout Tompkins County.' As such, it is anticipated that a more formal and sustainable public art program will be supported by room tax funding in the years to come.

# Goals, Strategies, and Action Items

**Through the planning process—which included an analysis of the program's history, stakeholder engagement, survey, and prioritization of opportunities by the Beautification, Signage & Public Art Committee—the following key goals were identified as priorities for the next five years:**

1. **Attractive, Welcoming Entrances and Primary Travel Corridors**

First impressions are extremely important, and the first impressions of all visitors to Tompkins County start with travel through the rural communities that ring the City of Ithaca. Visitors should be warmly greeted with Welcome signs at county gateways and entrances to rural villages, flower plantings, well- kept village centers, and visitor signage promoting local attractions. Roadsides should be free of litter and planted with ornamental and shade trees. Visitors should immediately feel that they have entered a community where people care about their surroundings.

Improving the entrances to the county, to the rural towns and villages and to the City of Ithaca was identified as a high priority by many of the survey respondents. Goals for 2015-2020 include installation of welcome signs at all county gateways and village entrances as well as the airport; plantings of flowers, bulbs, trees and shrubs in all rural villages; and working with local municipalities to enforce and improve sign ordinances along main visitor routes and corridors.

*Town of Enfield welcome sign*

2. **Easy-to-Navigate Communities**

Once visitors have arrived in our county, we want to be sure they can get around easily and find visitor attractions and recreational areas. The Tompkins County Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage Plan, funded by the Tompkins County Tourism Program, is a master plan for integrated county-wide wayfinding signage. The plan can be viewed online at http://www.tompkinschamber.org/wayfinding. Goals for 2016-2020 include securing funding to implement the plan, and developing cost-sharing and sponsorship programs to help fund the plan's implementation. Improving wayfinding signage was listed as a high- priority action by many of the survey respondents.

*Interpretive signage at the Covered Bridge in Newfield*

**3. Public art, including murals, sculpture and banners are a vital part of the visitor experience and enhance the overall visual appeal and interest of the area.**

Public art reflects the unique and artistic aspects of Tompkins County, and art elements such as murals, sculptures and banners continue to beautify the environment in winter months when planting areas are dormant. The great variety of art in downtown Ithaca, from outdoor sculptures to large murals to utility boxes painted by local artists, can be replicated in the rural parts of the county. Goals for 2016-2020 include the expansion of public art throughout the county with grants from the Community Arts Partnership (CAP) and sponsorship opportunities. Survey respondents indicated that the increased number of public art pieces in the City of Ithaca is a major asset, and that increasing the number of public art pieces in the rural areas should be a high priority as well.

*Mosaic mural in downtown Ithaca*

**4. Attractive, colorful and neat public spaces and amenities in centers and destinations.**

City and village centers that are tidy, well-lit and planted with flowers and trees are much more likely to attract visitors to stay and linger. Attractive and welcoming centers include places to sit and relax, flower planters, shade trees in summer, trash and recycling bins to encourage tidiness, and street lighting.

Research has shown that businesses that are located in attractive, well-cared for areas are safer and have higher foot-traffic and sales than those that are not, thus beautification benefits residents and local businesses as well as visitors. Many of Tompkins County's rural villages have added Main Street enhancements in recent years, including flower planters, benches and historic lighting. The nearly

completed renovation of the Ithaca Commons will result in an airy, colorful, people-friendly pedestrian area with well-designed and maintained plantings.

Plantings, public art, benches and streetscape improvements are all elements of Placemaking, which "inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of our communities." Placemaking also refers to a "collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value." (www.pps.org). A focus on enlivening specific places in the City of Ithaca and our rural communities with small scale tactical placemaking or "Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper" placemaking projects, can bring immediate benefits both to the spaces themselves and the people who use them, including visitors.

Continuing to add landscape plantings, flower planters, benches and lighting to city and village centers were felt to be very important actions by the survey respondents. Goals for 2016-2020 include maintaining existing planting sites in the city and county; identification of new planting sites based on site selection criteria; designing and implementing plantings that are easy to maintain and drought tolerant; helping rural municipalities develop Beautification Brigades to maintain plantings in town and village centers; supporting tactical placemaking projects and activities including development of a placemaking toolkit for local communities; and engaging volunteer groups to enhance park entrances and trailheads.

*The renovated Commons in downtown Ithaca*

**5. Increased appreciation, awareness, and participation in community beautification activities**

From the inception of the beautification program, community involvement has been a key goal. Engaging volunteers in maintenance of public plantings, parks and trailheads is a win-win partnership as funding can be stretched further and community residents gain hands-on training in horticultural skills. Volunteer groups involved with beautification efforts in Tompkins County include the Beautification Brigades, Citizen Pruners, Friends of Stewart Park, Adopt-A-Park participants, Cayuga Waterfront Trail volunteers, and various gardening groups and neighborhood associations. Some of the survey respondents noted the many benefits of engaging volunteers in beautification efforts.

Goals for 2016-2020 are to continue to increase the number of community members that participate in volunteer beautification projects, in particular to help beautify public parks and trailheads, and to enhance recognition for the program itself to increase and diversify financial support for it.

*Beautification Brigade volunteers planting a city median*

**6. Attractive built environment**

An attractive built environment is an important aspect of community beautification. Flower plantings and street trees are not enough to overcome the negative visual impact of poorly-maintained buildings and infrastructure. Participation from municipalities is needed to enforce ordinances on building maintenance and aesthetic requirements for new construction, such as requiring landscape plantings to soften the visual impact of parking areas. More positive approaches include recognition of well-maintained and beautified residences and businesses through programs like Historic Ithaca's Pride of Place awards. Many survey respondents commented that the quality of the built environment is very important, and that poorly maintained and derelict buildings detract from public beautification efforts.

Goals for 2016-2020 include exploring ways that the Community Beautification Program can promote local guidelines, proposing larger-scale streetscape improvements and expanding the use of banner programs to ensure a high quality of the built environment in Tompkins County.

*Historic building facades in downtown Ithaca*

# Goals, Strategies and Action Items Chart

## WITH GOAL, STRATEGY, ACTION ITEM, AND LEAD ORGANIZATION; WITH PROPOSED TIMELINE TO ACCOMPLISH, AND MEASUREABLE OUTCOMES

**Guide to Acronyms:**

CBP - Community Beautification Program, operated by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County
TCCOC - Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce
TCPD - Tompkins County Planning Department
COI DPW - City of Ithaca Department of Public Works
CAP - Community Arts Partnership
DIA - Downtown Ithaca Alliance
PAC - City of Ithaca Public Art Commission
STPB - Strategic Tourism Planning Board
TCTP – Tompkins County Tourism Program
CBA – Collegetown Business Alliance

**Timing:**

Short: 2016
Medium 2017-2018
Long: 2019-2020

**Goal 1: Attractive, Welcoming Entrances and Primary Travel Corridors**

| Strategy | Action | Lead | Timing | Possible Funding | Measurable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Welcoming entrances at all County Gateways | Implement Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage Plan | TCCOC TCTP | Medium | Tompkins County Tourism, NY State, local municipalities | County Gateway signs installed at 10 entrances into the county, on major routes |
| Colorful plantings at County Gateway signs | Design and install landscape plantings for County Gateway signs | CBP | Medium | CBP Rural Grants program | Landscape plantings installed at 10 new County Gateway signs |
| Colorful plantings at all Community Gateway Signs | Design and install landscape plantings at all Community Gateway Signs (entrances to towns/villages) | CBP | Medium | CBP Rural Grants program | Landscape plantings installed at 22 Community Gateway Signs |
| Attractive highway corridors through City of Ithaca | Add ornamental trees, landscape plantings and container plantings to corridors through City of Ithaca | COI DPW | Long | City of Ithaca Department of Public Works | 20 new trees and shrubs planted along Route 13 corridor in the City of Ithaca |
| Ornamental and shade trees along major routes in rural towns and villages | Engage municipalities in planting trees along major routes and in city and village centers | Rural towns | Long | CBP Rural Grants program | 50 new trees planted in rural towns and villages |

**Goal 2: Easy to Navigate Communities**

| Strategy | Action | Lead | Timing | Possible Funding | Measurable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wayfinding and Interpretive signs for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians throughout Tompkins County | Implement the Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage Plan | TCCOC | Medium | Tompkins County Tourism, NY State, local municipalities | Stakeholder buy-in; funding secured; some phase of project implemented |
| Minimize sign clutter on primary travel corridors | Conduct inventory of existing sign clutter and local sign laws; address illegal signage through enforcement | TCPD, City of Ithaca, Rural towns | Long | None required | Illegal commercial signage is eliminated on Rt 13 South and other primary travel corridors. Potential changes to sign regulations. |
| Integrated wayfinding system for multi-use trail system | Develop a wayfinding signage plan as County multi-use trails are completed and connected | TCPD | Long | Funding? | Wayfinding plan for trail system developed and implemented |

**Goal 3: Public art, including murals and sculpture are a vital part of the visitor experience and enhance the overall visual appeal and interest of the area**

| Strategy | Action | Lead | Timing | Possible Funding | Measurable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Public art, including murals, sculptures and banners are highly visible in all municipalities | Establish a public art grant program to encourage public art installations and tactical placemaking activities throughout the county | TCTP, CAP, PAC | Medium | Tompkins County Tourism, foundations and private donors | # new public art pieces in rural and downtown locations |

**Goal 4:Attractive, colorful and neat public spaces and amenities in centers and destinations**

| Strategy | Action | Lead | Timing | Funding | Measurable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Colorful, attractive, well-maintained and sustainable plantings in city center and along highway corridors in Ithaca | Develop and implement new landscape designs for existing areas to include more perennials and ornamental grasses | CBP, DIA | Medium | CBP, local sponsors | 6 re-designed and installed plantings in City of Ithaca |
| Colorful, attractive, well-maintained and sustainable plantings in city center and along highway corridors in Ithaca | Identify new planting sites in Ithaca based on site selection criteria; develop landscape plans for these sites and implement | CBP | Long | CBP, local sponsors | 5 new planting sites in the City of Ithaca |
| Colorful plantings in all village centers | Engage municipalities in planting bulbs, annuals, perennials and shrub in village centers by training local leaders | Rural towns | Medium | CBP Rural Grants Program | 8 rural municipalities increase square footage of planting area by 25% |
| Beautiful parks, trailheads and trails | Increase resident engagement in park maintenance through volunteer programs like Adopt- a-Park, Friends of Stewart Park, and Friends of Cayuga Waterfront Trail | TCCOC COI DPW, FOSP Rural towns | Medium | Seek funding from Parks and Trails NY (PTNY) for part- time volunteer coordinator for parks and trails | Volunteers engaged in park, trailhead and trail maintenance increased by 50% |
| Tactical placemaking projects and activities. | Through micro-scale plans and projects, explore tactical placemaking improvements at key focus areas; identify possible focus areas and develop placemaking toolkit for communities | Rural towns TCPD DIA TCCOC | Long | Possibly include tactical placemaking in public art grant program | 3 (5?) focus areas have been improved with placemaking elements by 2020. |

**Goal 5: Increased appreciation, awareness, and participation in beautification activities**

| Strategy | Action | Lead | Timing | Possible Funding | Measurable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Increase number of beautification volunteers in rural municipalities | Support initiation of Beautification Brigade volunteer groups by identifying and training leaders and offering preliminary plans | Rural towns | Medium | CBP Rural Grants program | 8 rural municipalities initiate Beautification Brigade volunteer groups |
| Branding and awareness building for Beautification, Signage and Arts program | Develop program logo, educational aspect of website and marketing materials for sponsorship | TCCOC, CBP | Short | CBP | New logo, improved website and marketing materials for sponsorship program |
| Engage residents, partner businesses and organizations in beautification efforts | Increase participation in Business Planting Day in the City of Ithaca, particularly in new areas | CBP | Medium | CBP, business and private sponsors | 50% increase in number of businesses participating in Business Planting Day |
| Increase private and business funding of planting sites | Promote business sponsorship program for public plantings | TCCOC | Medium | Local businesses and private donors | 5 planting areas sponsored by businesses and private donors |
| Increase number of landscape plantings at businesses and private residences | Promote best plants and landscape designs with photos and information on Community Beautification website | CBP | Medium | No funding needed | Enhanced website with photos and information on best plants for public plantings |
| Recognize businesses and residents that contribute to beautification efforts | Develop awards program to recognize outstanding efforts in beautification by residents and business owners | CBP, COC, STPB | Medium | Seek sponsorship from horticulture businesses for awards program | Beautification recognition and awards program in place by 2018 |

**Goal 6: Attractive built environment**

| Strategy | Action | Lead | Timing | Possible Funding | Measurable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Well-cared for buildings, public and private | Advocate for improvement and enforcement of land use regulations to preserve and improve the built environment | DIA, COC, TCPD | Long | No funding required | Advocacy role only; support for Form Ithaca initiative |
| Streetscapes in key focus areas are walkable, attractive and well- maintained | Propose larger projects such as streetscape improvement projects | COC, DIA, rural towns | Long | Funding? | At least one area is proposed for a significant streetscape improvement project. |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Banner program to increase beautification in areas where landscape plantings are not practical | Develop banner program for Collegetown and other areas | COC, DIA, CBA | Short | Seek sponsorship and develop funding for banner program | Banners in place in two new city locations by 2017 |

# APPENDICES

- Appendix I Possible funding for implementation
- Appendix II Tompkins County map of current/potential beautification sites
- Appendix III City of Ithaca map of current beautification sites
- Appendix IV City of Ithaca map of potential beautification sites
- Appendix V Beautification Toolkit (Which includes: guidelines for public plantings, plant gallery of suitable annuals, perennials, bulbs & shrubs for public plantings)
- Appendix VI Sample landscape designs for selected city planting sites
- Appendix VII Selection criteria for location of beautification projects and planting guidelines
- Appendix VIII Rural beautification grant guidelines and final report form
- Appendix IX Municipal Gateway Signage Program Details
- Appendix X Beautification, Art and Signage survey questions and summary of responses

## Appendix I: POSSIBLE FUNDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

### Tompkins County Tourism Program

Since 2002, the Tompkins County Tourism Program has provided major funding for efforts of the combined Beautification, Signage and Public Art Program, with matching support also being provided by program partners the Downtown Ithaca Alliance, City of Ithaca, and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County. Staff administrative support for the program has also been provided by the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce. The Tourism Program is funded by the county hotel room occupancy tax and overseen by the Strategic Tourism Planning Board with staff support from the Tompkins County Planning Department.

Beautification, Signage and Public Art are a focus area in the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan, with an overarching goal to:

> *"Increase the perception of Ithaca and Tompkins County as an outstandingly beautiful community that is simple for visitors to navigate and as a place to visit for the overall beauty of the area."*

This funding source is expected to continue to provide a consistent core base of program support through annual budget allocations. However, rather than significantly growing room tax funding to implement new strategies identified in this Plan, the vision is to engage and inspire additional partners to leverage existing room tax support and add value to these efforts, significantly expanding what room tax funding would be capable of supporting alone.

In 2015, the STPB also voted to recommend $150,000 in Strategic Tourism Implementation (STI) grant funding towards implementation of the Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage Plan. STI funds are geared towards implementing Critical Actions from the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan.

Using a $4,000 reserve balance of room tax funds at the Chamber of Commerce for public art, the Tourism Program in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, Community Arts Partnership and City of Ithaca Public Art Commission has created a pilot public art grant program for 2016. Due to a matching donation from a local private family foundation, the amount available in grant funds will be nearly doubled, to $7,500. In its pilot year, the program will support murals. If successful, the intent is to continue and possibly grow this public art grant program to include sculpture and other types of public art in 2017 and beyond. The STPB will be asked to entertain a 2017 budget request towards these efforts.

The Rural Beautification Grant program, which is funded by room tax and administered by CCETC, distributes about $12,000 a year. Since this program responds to applications on a rolling basis, these funds are to be made available as needed to rural beautification projects that are awarded grant funds. The program has supported interpretive signage projects in the past and could also potentially be used to provide support for kiosks in village centers, which are part of the Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage Plan.

### Sponsorship

Increasing sponsorship is an important new activity of the Beautification Program. Leadership for sponsorship efforts is to be provided by CCETC, with support from the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Ithaca Alliance. There are several areas of possible sponsorship, and in some cases, successful implementation may be dependent upon securing new sponsorship:

- Specific planting areas. Sponsor benefits could include naming rights and recognition through new on-site signage.
- Banner projects
- Business Planting Day
- Awards programs
- Wayfinding sponsorship – individual kiosks and signs along with institutional support for the entire project

### Outside Grants

Parks and Trails New York (PTNY) Growing the Grassroots Grants could be an opportunity for Friends' groups of parks or trails to develop and promote their efforts. http://www.ptny.org/our-work/support/growing-the-grassroots-grants. PTNY has also compiled an impressive list of other funding opportunities, some of which may hold potential to support our local beautification-related efforts: http://www.ptny.org/our-work/support/funding-opportunities

New York State provides funding annually to a variety of projects and initiatives through its Consolidated Funding Application (CFA). Projects which are in alignment with the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council's Strategic Plan are particularly encouraged. The Upstate Revitalization Initiative is an additional state program with $100 million each year over five years (2016-2020) being allocated to support economic development in the Southern Tier Region. The region's URI plan includes several tourism-related strategies including: "Branding and tourism marketing to promote the region's culture", and "strengthen community and tourism infrastructure", with example projects listed including:

- "Community infrastructure projects to enhance the infrastructure of both our college communities and local Main Streets that connect the region and provide an authentic Americana and Southern Tier experience."
- "Improve physical infrastructure necessary to build new high-value tourism products."
- "Upgrade tourism destinations such as performing arts, wineries, breweries, distilleries, agritourism, museums, sports facilities, hiking/biking trails, scenic byway initiatives and major waterfront development projects. "

More information is available on the Southern Tier REDC's website:
http://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/content/southern-tier

The Chamber of Commerce is working to secure state funding for the Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage plan and program administrators should also look for CFA and URI funding opportunities for other Beautification, Signage and Public Art related local initiatives and apply for funding as appropriate.

### Municipal Support

Municipalities in Tompkins County currently provide matching support for rural beautification grant-funded projects as wells as planting and downtown ambassador activities in the City of Ithaca. The City's Department of Public Works also contributes to beautification efforts through the city's urban forestry program and additional tree plantings identified as priorities by this plan will be carried out by this City program.

Municipal support will also be critical to implementing the Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage Plan, in particular support from the City and Town of Ithaca and from rural municipalities hosting community gateway signage and kiosks.

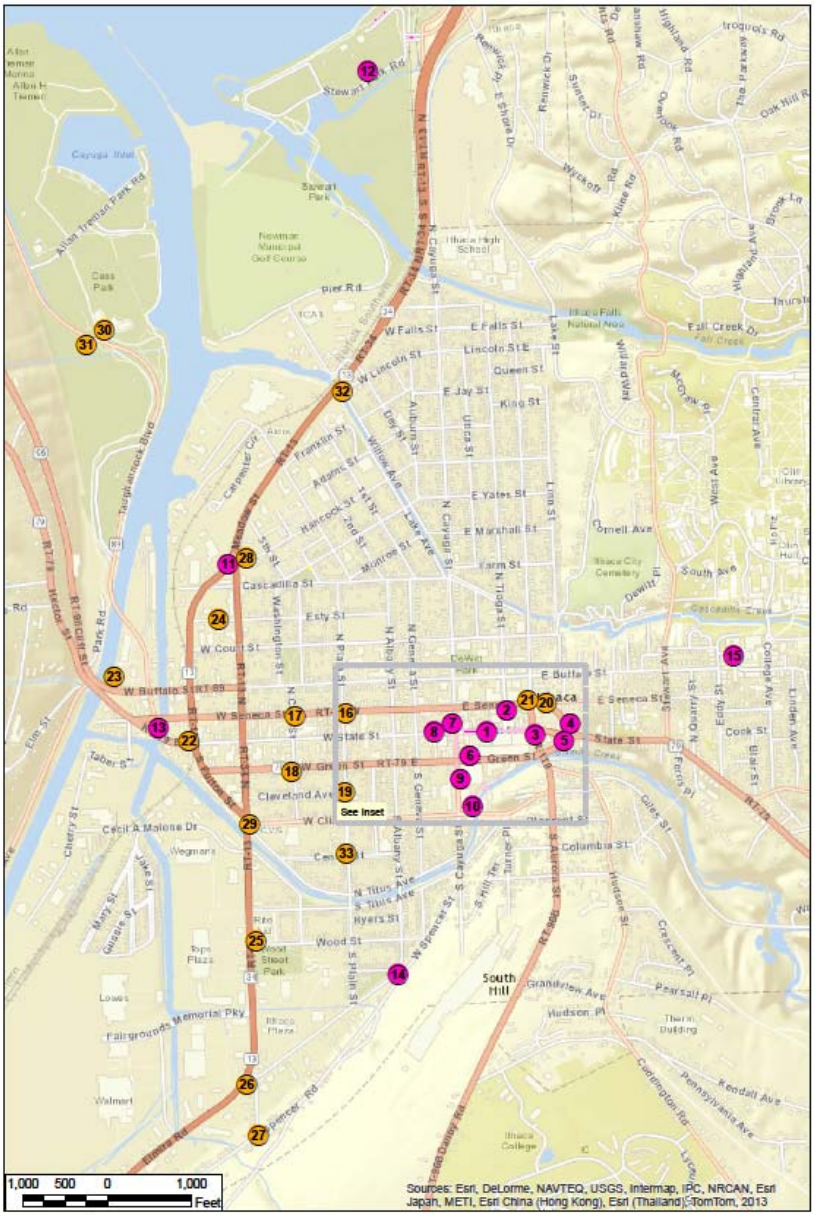
### Program Administration and Staff Support

Program administrators also have staff administrative capacity to support implementation of this plan in several ways.

The Tompkins County Planning Department, in addition to providing overall administrative support for the Tompkins County Tourism Program, will support ongoing implementation of this plan as needed and in the following specific areas: sign clutter identification and municipal support, recognition/award programs, technical assistance on sponsorship, grant-making, grant-writing and program administration.

The Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce receives room tax support for overall administration of the program and the Beautification Committee. The Chamber will lead sponsorship program development, exploration of the banner program, and resident engagement through volunteer "Adopt-A-Park" programs. The Chamber will also continue to provide leadership on the Wayfinding Initiative, which will take considerable effort on coordination and fundraising to make it happen.

# Appendix IV: Map of Current City of Ithaca beautification sites

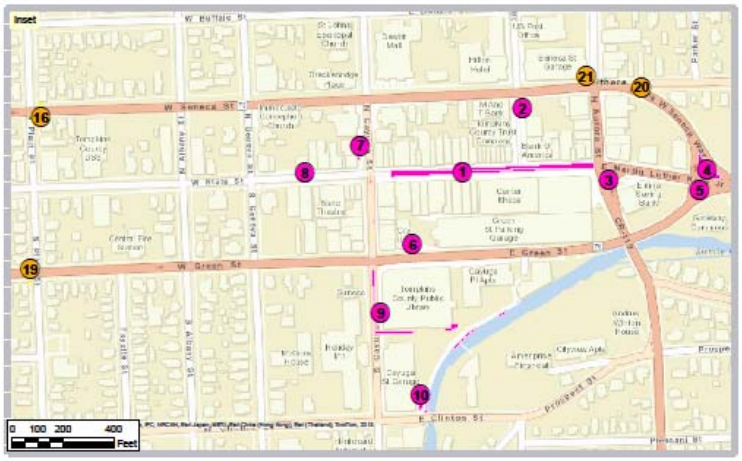



2015 Plantings
Tompkins County
Beautification Program

**Plantings**

- Primary
- Secondary

1 The Ithaca Commons
2 Bank Alley
3 Aurora St Triangle
4 Zelkova Triangle
5 Sign Triangle
6 City Hall
7 Cayuga St Planters
8 West State St Planters
9 Tompkins County Public Library
10 Creek Walk
11 Purity Point
12 Stewart Park
13 Van Horn Park
14 The Rotary
15 Dryden Rd/People's Park
16 Rain Garden Bump-out
17 Rain Garden Bump-out
18 Bump-out
19 Bump-out
20 Seneca Point
21 Rainshadow
22 Bus Station
23 Brindley Park
24 Friends of Library
25 Pump House
26 Gas Station Planting
27 Spencer St
28 Hancock St
29 Clinton St
30 Cass Park Rink
31 Ithaca Sign
32 Bridge to Sciencenter
33 Plain and Center rotary



Suggestions and Tips for Public Plantings

I. **Types of Planting:**
   A. Planters
   B. Plantings on traffic medians
   C. Plantings between roadways and walkways
   D. Plantings on pedestrian walkways

**A. Planters**

Planter boxes and other planter containers are a good way to present plantings.
They can be in front of businesses, on the ground in street tree pits or constructed as structural elements in the streetscape. Examples in Ithaca include the Commons, N. and S. Cayuga St., W. State St. 100 block, Tompkins County Public Library, City Hall.

***Planting/Design Guidelines***

- Good quality potting soil or potting soil/compost mix
- Drainage holes
- Time release fertilizer
- Plants selected for sunny or shady locations
- Directional planters: Tall focus plants in back, trailing plants in front, filler plants
- Non-directional planters: Tall focus plants in center, trailing plants on outside edges, filler plants

***Four-season interest***

- Pansies or other hardy annuals in spring
- Structural planters may support bulbs in spring
- Mixed summer annuals (flowers and foliage) in summer
- Ornamental kale and pansies in fall
- Evergreen branches, berries and woody branches in winter

*Spring Planter: Pansies in single colors or mixes*

***Annuals for Planters in Sunny Locations***

- Tall focus plants:

Canna, Geranium, Marigold, Zinnia, Begonia, Rudbeckia, Butterfly Weed, Grasses

- Trailing plants:

Petunia, Verbena, Sweet Potato Vine, Scaevola

- Filler plants:

Marigold, Geranium, Begonia, Sunpatiens, Osteospermum

- Look for new sun/shade tolerant varieties of Impatiens, Coleus, Caladium, Begonia

***Annuals for Planters in Shady Locations***

- Tall focus plants:

Begonia, Plectranthus, Caladium, Coleus, Alternathera, Persian Shield Strobilanthes, Iresine

- Trailing plants:

Purple Setcresea, Sweet Potato Vine

- Filler plants:

Begonia, Coleus, Caladium, Impatiens

*Raised brick planter at City Hall*

***Fall***

- Ornamental Kale
- Pansies
- Chrysanthemums
- Natural Birch
- White Birch
- Corkscrew Willow
- Red Twig Dogwood
- Teasel
- Winterberry Holly
- Ribbons
- Plastic Berries

***Winter***

- Evergreen Boughs

***Maintenance for planters***

- Deadheading improves appearance
- Regular watering is critical
- Replace plantings before appearance deteriorates
- Fertilize as needed
- Avoid empty planters

B. **Plantings on Traffic Medians**

Examples in Ithaca include Purity Point on Route 13, the three traffic triangles on the east endof the Commons, known as the Tuning Fork: (Aurora Triangle, Sign Triangle, Zelkova Triangle), the Rotary on Old Elmira Road.

***Characteristics/Design Guidelines***

- Drive-by visibility—large swaths of color, bright colors—red, orange, yellow annuals best
- Plant height restriction to keep lines of sight for safety
- Avoid any hard landscape items for traffic safety
- Plant height lower on edges and approaching side, higher in center
- Planting in watering bowls on edges to prevent run-off
- Watering at planting and throughout season/Availability of water
- Deadheading improves appearance
- Usually full sun
- Additional heat from asphalt, salt from winter
- Compost to amend soil
- Mulch for water retention, weed suppression, attractive appearance
- Fertilize as needed

***Four-season interest***

- Bulbs in spring
- Annual flowers in summer
- Ornamental kale, chrysanthemums and pansies in fall
- Structural shrubs in winter, mulch

***Spring***

- Bulbs include varieties of Tulips, Daffodils, Alliums
- Mix of varieties within each color provides succession of bloom
- Deadheading is important for blooms in future years
-

*Spring tulip display on Aurora Street median*

***Summer***

Plant annuals as soon as bulbs finish flowering between the fading foliage. Cut foliage where necessary to expose summer flowers. Use large swaths of color of each plant.

- Marigold varieties: American Mix; Discover Mix; Marvel; Moonsong; Antigua; French; Hero Series; Janie series; Queen Sophia; Red Marietta
- Zinnia elegans varieties: Profusion Series Double Fire; Dreamland Series; Benary's Giant; Dahlia Flowered; Zowie Yellow Flame;

- Zinnia Zahara Double Fire
- Rudbeckia hirta Indian Summer, Irish Spring
- Rudbeckia hirta Tiger Eye
- Petunia Wave Series
- Salvia Red Flare

***Fall***

- Ornamental Kale
- Chrysanthemums
- Pansies

***Winter***

- Shrubs with good structure and twig color, eg. Redtwig Dogwood Arctic Fire

### B. Plantings between Roadways and Sidewalks

Examples in Ithaca include Van Horn Park, the sidewalks at Aurora, Sign and Zelkova Triangles, Dryden Road, the Pump House.

***Characteristics/Design Guidelines***

- Same as roadway plantings, but include:
- Increased use of perennials
- Smaller flowers, smaller swaths of color
- Close up as well as drive-by interest
- Taller plantings in rear of area

***Four-season interest***

- Bulbs in spring
- Annual and perennial mix in summer
- Ornamental kale, chrysanthemums and pansies in fall
- Structural shrubs in winter, mulched and tidied

***Spring***

- Mix of daffodils, tulips and alliums
- Include smaller bulbs: snowdrops, winter aconite, crocus, fritillaria, scilla, chionodoxa, species tulips

***Summer***

Same annuals as suggested for traffic medians, as well as the following;
Annuals and Tender Perennials:

- Butterfly Weed
- Salvia Blue Angel
- Salvia Black and Blue
- Dahlia
- Canna
- Coleus
- Caladium
- Grasses
- Sweet Potato Vine
- Delosperma

Perennials:

- Coreopsis Presto, Moonbeam
- Bergenia
- Echinacea
- Sedum
- Daylily
- Salvia
- Cosmos bipinnatus
- Hollyhock
- Lillies
- Hellebore
- Hosta
- Heuchera
- Grasses
- Hardy Hibiscus
- Lupine
- Liatris
- Gaillardia
- Crocosmia
- Oenothera (Evening Primrose)
- Liriope

***Fall***

- Ornamental Kale
- Chrysanthemums
- Pansies

***Winter***

Structural Shrubs with colorful twigs and berries:

- Redtwig Dogwood Arctic Fire
- Elderberry
- Winterberry Holly (Ilex verticillata)
- Beds mulched and tidied

### C. Plantings on Pedestrian Walkways

Examples in Ithaca include Creekwalk, behind the Tompkins County Public Library

***Characteristics/Design Guidelines***

- Same as roadway plantings, but include:
- Increased use of perennials
- Smaller flowers, smaller swaths of color
- Close up flowers and colors

- Taller plantings in rear of area
- Use of vines if fencing available

***Four-season interest***

- Bulbs in spring
- Annual and perennial mix in summer
- Ornamental kale, chrysanthemums and pansies in fall
- Structural shrubs in winter, beds mulched and tidied

***Spring***

- Mix of daffodils, tulips and alliums
- Include smaller bulbs: snowdrops, winter aconite, crocus, fritilleria, scilla, chinodoxa, species tulips

***Summer***

- Mix of annuals, perennials, shrubs, vines.
- Add ornamental edibles: Bright Lights Chard, Dinosaur Kale, Okra

***Fall***

- Ornamental Kale
- Chrysanthemums
- Pansies

***Winter***

Structural Shrubs with colorful twigs and berries:

- Redtwig Dogwood Arctic Fire
- Elderberry
- Winterberry Holly (Ilex verticillata)
- Beds mulched and tidied

i. **Partnerships with Businesses/ Groups**

1. Business Planting Day
2. Sponsored Plantings

A. **Business Planting Day**

Business Planting Day is a program where businesses in target areas provide one or more planter containers on the sidewalk or walkway in front of their business, as well as pottingsoil. The Beautification Program plans a planting day in early to mid-May when program volunteers plant a variety of foliage and flowering plants in each container. Containers are categorized as sunny or shady and the plant selection reflects the category.

Each container will be designed to contain at least one thriller plant (tall, large, showy), one or more spiller plants (trailing over the front edge), and filler plants (to fill the container). Both flowering and foliage plants are used. Volunteers add time-release fertilizer before planting. Businesses are responsible for watering throughout the season. Businesses are encouraged to deadhead and keep the planter tidy. Program staff or volunteers will also assist to maintain attractiveness.

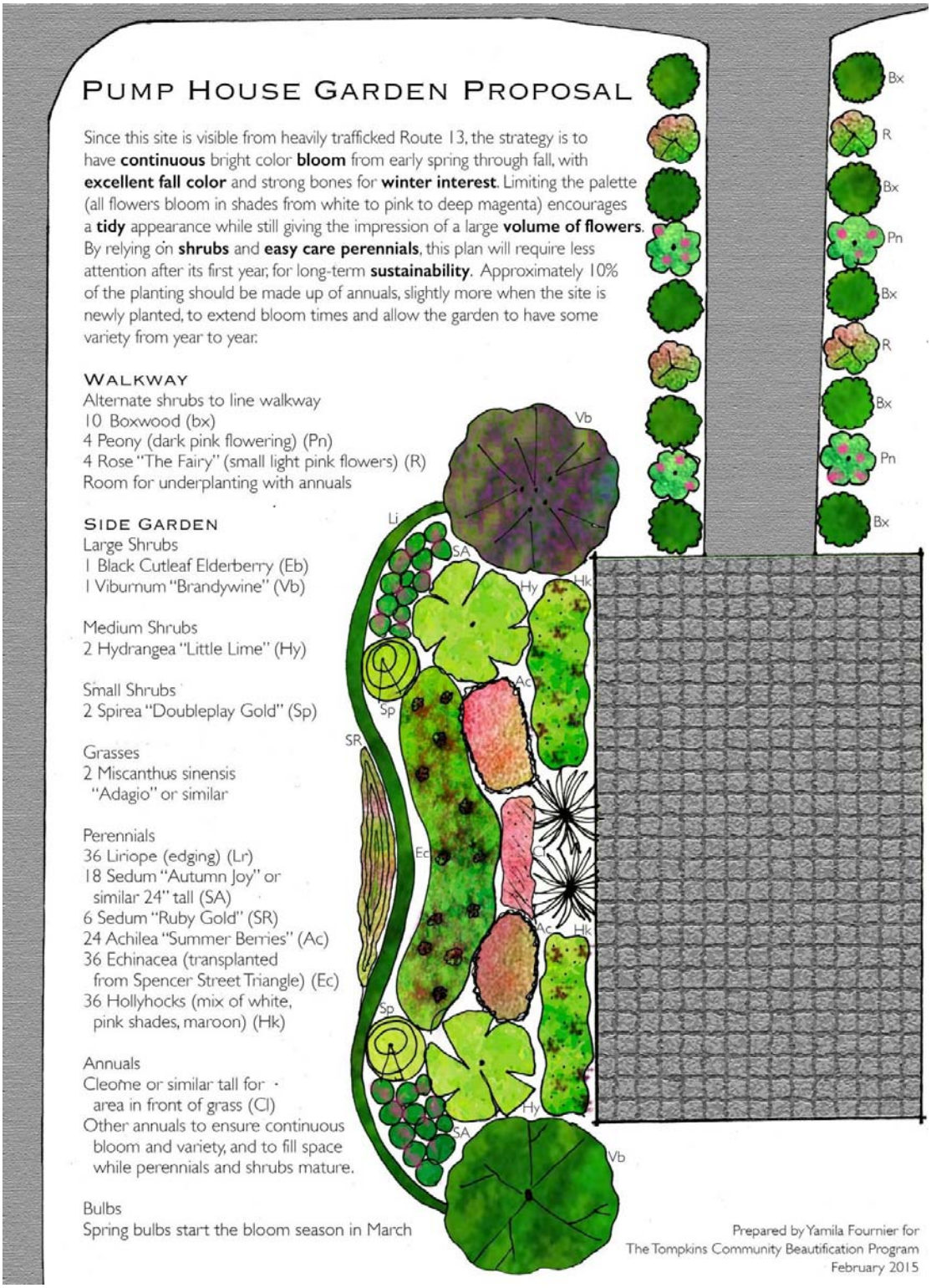
Containers can be planted once in May for the summer season, or may be re-planted for three or four season interest. If multiple season interest is desired, spring planting could be pansies, summer mixed annuals, fall ornamental kale, chrysanthemums and pansies and for winter evergreen greens and mixed sticks with berries, bows. Containers range from plastic window boxes to large round ceramic or plastic urns to custom built foundation planters. Potting soil should be of good quality and light and friable. Time release fertilizer can be added at planting and re-planting if needed. Containers should have drainage holes.

### B. Sponsored Plantings

Businesses are encouraged to adopt or sponsor in-ground plantings in adjacent areas. Individual contracts and expectations can be tailored to each specific sponsorship. Some key items to include might be a mix of the following: funding, volunteers to prep and plant the area, weekly work parties during the season for weeding and watering. Signage to indicate the sponsorship will be placed in the planting area.

## Appendix VII: Sample Landscape Plans for City Sites

The following are sample landscape plans for several of the planting sites in downtown Ithaca, using a mix of shrubs, perennials, annuals, ornamental grasses and spring bulbs.



# Dryden Garage Garden Proposal

This site, alongside the Dryden Road Garage in Collegetown, is a opportunity for placemaking. A bold palette of hot colors - reds, oranges, and yellows - with a casual mix of **easy-care perennials** will make a statement.

A strong backbone of beautiful **shrubs** offering spring flowers, summer blooms, and eye-catching **winter color** and berries, will keep the site vibrant beyond the typical summer bloom season. The perennials on the list offer **nectar for pollinators**. A substantial planting of ascelpias provides much needed food for **monarchs**.

Approximately 25% of the planting should be made up of bulbs and annuals in order to extend bloom times, and to allow the garden to have some variety from year to year. We expect more annuals to be included when the site is newly planted, a transitional strategy, while the shrubs and perennials mature. By the third year, the perennials should be fully matured and can be divided to expand the plantings, further reducing the need for annuals.

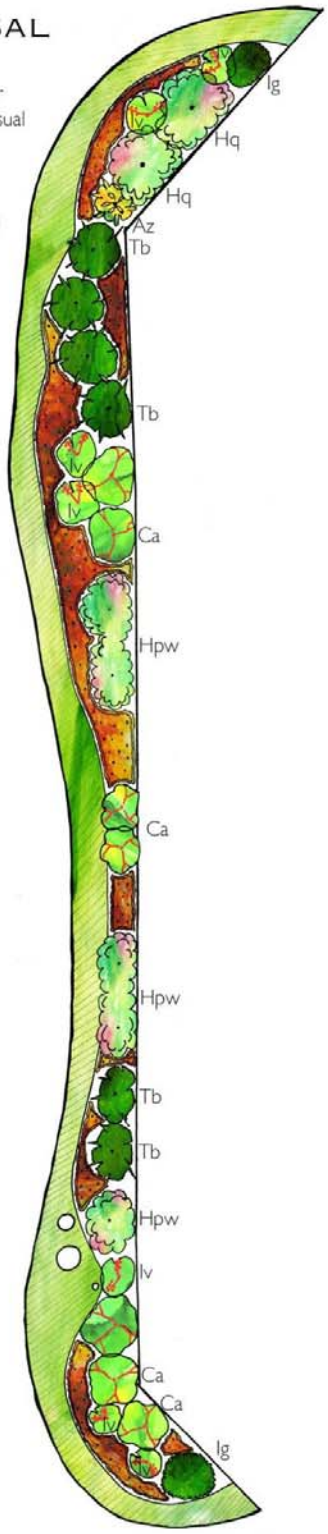
### Large Shrubs
1 Hydrangea quercefolia (Hq)
1 Azalea "Golden Lights" (Az)

### Small Shrubs
Hydrangea quercefolia "Pee Wee" (Hpw)
Ilex glabra "Compacta" (Ig)
Cornus alba "Red Twig Dogwood" (Ca)
Taxus bacatta "Repandens" (Tb)
Ilex verticillata "Red Sprite" (Iv)

### Perennials (P)
Asclepia tuberosa
Asclepia tuberosa "Gay Butterflies"
Coreopsis "Moonbeam" (transplanted from Spencer Street)
Coreopsis "Dwarf Red"
Coreopsis "Mahagony"
Crocosmia
Daylilies (transplanted from Zelkova strip)
Echinacea "Hot Summer"
Echinacea "Fire Bird"
Monarda "Jacob Cline"
Monarda "Grandview Scarlet"
Rudbekia (transplanted from Spencer Street)

### Annuals
Other annuals in hot colors (yellows, reds and oranges)
to ensure continuous
bloom and variety, and to fill space
while perennials and shrubs mature.

### Bulbs
Spring bulbs start the bloom season in March




Prepared by Yamila Fournier for
The Tompkins Community Beautification Program
February 2015

# Zelkova Strip Garden

Since this site gets a large volume of traffic, both from vehicles and pedestrians, the strategy is to have **continuous bright color** bloom from early spring through fall, with **excellent fall color** and strong bones for **winter interest**.

Plants on this **dry site** will need to handle difficult street-side conditions, including salted roads and sidewalks. The plant selection needs to **harmonize** with the plantings in Zelkova Triangle as well as with the plantings in triangle across the street

By relying on **tough shrubs** and **easy care** salt- and drought-tolerant **perennials**, this plan will require less attention after its first year, for long-term **sustainability.** Most of these perennials can be regularly divided after three years, essentially creating **free nursery stock** for more plantings throughout town. Additionally, the plants are favorites of bees, butterflies, and birds - creating beauty as well as **habitat**. This combination of plants is easily replicable and serves as a good **example for homeowners** who wish to beautify their own homes with easy-care plants.

Approximately 20% of the planting (more in the transitional year) should be made up of annuals in order to harmonize with nearby plantings, to extend bloom times, and to allow the garden to have some variety from year to year.

### Large Shrubs
1 Black Cutleaf Elderberry (Eb)

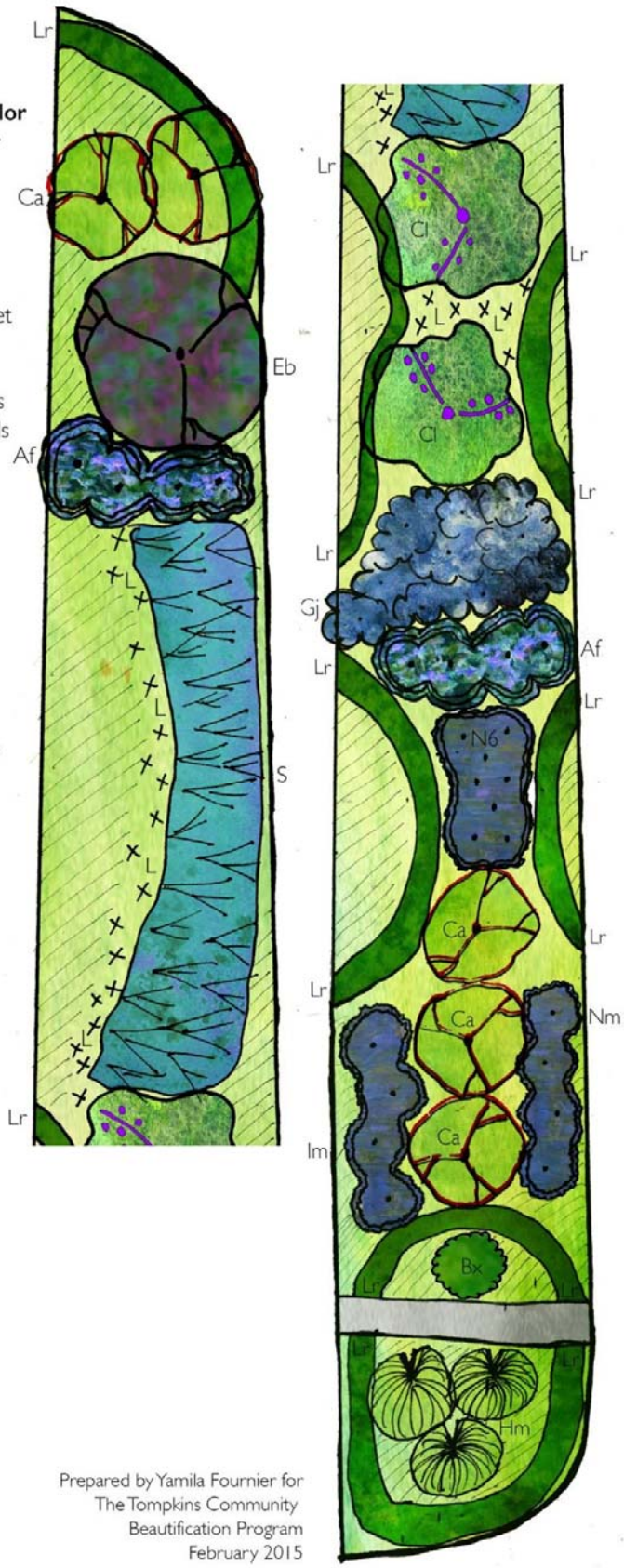
### Medium Shrubs
1 Boxwood (Bx)
2 Callicarpa americana "Beautyberry" (Cl)
5 Cornus alba "Red Twig Dogwood" (Ca)

### Grasses
3 Hakonechloa macra "Aureola" (Hm)

### Perennials
8 Nepeta mussini (Nm)
4 Nepeta "Six Hills Giant" (N6)
6 Aster frikartii (Af)
10 Geranium "Johnson's Blue" (Gj)
Lilies (already on site) (L)
Salvia (already on site) (S)
42 Liriope "Big Blue" (Lr)

### Annuals
Other annuals to ensure continuous bloom and variety, and to fill space while perennials and shrubs mature.

### Bulbs
Spring bulbs start the bloom season in March




Prepared by Yamila Fournier for
The Tompkins Community
Beautification Program
February 2015

## Appendix VII: Selection Criteria for Beautification Sites

Projects funded by the Community Beautification Program are limited to locations and areas that are likely to be visited by tourists and visitors to Tompkins County. This includes all major routes into the county and into and through the City of Ithaca, village and city centers, tourist attractions, historical sites, parks and trailheads.

Municipalities that are applying for funding from the matching beautification grants are required to implement projects at village entrances, main streets, public buildings, parks and other recreational areas. Project sites need to be highly visible from the road. Funding for beautification projects on private property is typically not permitted except under special circumstances, such as a lack of suitable public space. Annual plants are provided to businesses and organizations upon request for planting in containers and hanging baskets in front of their buildings.

Special attention is given by the Beautification Brigade to the Ithaca Commons and surrounding streets (East and West State Streets, Aurora Street, Cayuga Street, Green Street and Seneca Street) as this area is such a prominent tourist destination.

## Guidelines for City of Ithaca Plantings

The following guidelines were developed by the Beautification Committee for City of Ithaca plantings:

- Three seasons of color in the plantings as well as a winter season.
    - The spring season should have a good display of color in place for Ithaca College graduation weekend and Cornell graduation/Memorial Day. These should feature yellow and blue flowers for Ithaca College, and red and white flowers for Cornell. These can be in the same or different plantings, particularly near the base of State Street hill.
    - The summer plantings should use large areas of single varieties of plants, rather than meadow-like plant mixtures. There should be a focus on fewer plant varieties and more uniformity, particularly in the major downtown plantings.
    - The summer season can be particularly challenging because of drought or heavy rain conditions, so it is important to incorporate compost into the plantings for water retention and to mulch and water regularly.
    - The fall season should again focus on bright color using cold-tolerant plants (mums, ornamental kale, pansies, etc.)
    - The winter season should focus on neatness and order of the beds. Spreading or placing cut greens in some places works very well. Mulch can also help project the sense that these spaces are cared for and that the community wants to look great in all seasons.
    - Year round interest can be enhanced by the incorporation of suitable shrubs and ornamental grasses in larger planting areas where visibility is not an issue. These plants provide the backdrop to annuals that are colorful in summer.

- Annuals will provide most of the color, but some areas could use durable longer season perennials (daylilies, liriope, coreopsis) and shrubs should be incorporated into some areas

- Simplicity in design is important especially in places that are mostly seen by people driving by in cars. The height of the plants must be considered because of sight lines. Excessive varieties of plants don't project a sense of order and cleanliness or neatness.

- The most critical places in the City for beautification efforts are:
    - The 3 triangular traffic medians near the base of State Street hill
    - The Ithaca Commons
    - Streets bordering the Ithaca Commons – Seneca, Cayuga and Aurora streets
    - Seneca Way and Green Street
    - The Purity traffic median on Rt. 13
    - Small triangles off 13/N. Meadow at Clinton and at Hancock Street
    - Route 13 North and South in general
    - Youth Bureau / Stewart Park entrances
    - Dryden Road and College Avenue in Collegetown
    - Traffic rotary on Old Elmira Road
    - City entrances/Welcome signs

- Overall, the goal is to project the message that Ithaca and Tompkins County are beautiful and that the people of the community care about our public spaces.

- The role of volunteers and volunteer supervision by CCE staff is very important to the success of the program.

## Appendix VIII: Rural Beautification Grant Guidelines

The Tompkins County Community Beautification Program gives grants to municipalities in Tompkins County, outside of the City of Ithaca, for them to do their own beautification projects. You are strongly encouraged to talk with the Community Beautification Coordinator before you get too far in planning your project.

The application process is informal and does not need to be lengthy. You should

- Write a description of the project
- Include a project budget
- State how much you are asking for from the Community Beautification Program
- Indicate how the project will be maintained

Important points to keep in mind concerning the grants:

- The project should be in an area that is highly visible to the public: along a main road or near a public building such as a Town Hall or school.
- It is a matching grant. The match can be in the form of money, services, supplies, or volunteer labor.
- It is a reimbursement grant. The municipality agrees to front the money for the project and is then reimbursed by our program when the project is done.
- The grant money cannot be used to pay someone who is already on the municipality's payroll.
- The typical range of the grants is $1,000 to $2,000, but each grant is taken on a case by case basis.

For more information, contact Chrys Gardener at 607-272-2292, ext. 241, or email cab69@cornell.edu. More information is available at www.ccetompkins.org/beautification.

## Community Beautification
## Grant Final Report Form

1. Location of Project: _____

2. Amount of Grant: _____

3. Please list your project expenses and attach copies of the receipts for reimbursement:

Item_____ Cost $_____

_____ $_____

_____ $_____

_____ $_____

_____ $_____

_____ $_____

Total to be reimbursed: $_____

4. Please list the matching portion of volunteer time and donations (must equal or exceed the amount of the reimbursement):

5. Value of donated materials (list items and estimated value):

Item_____ Value $_____

_____ $_____

_____ $_____

_____ $_____

_____ $_____

# of volunteer hours:_____x $21.79 (Federal hourly value of volunteer time) $_____

Total value of matching portion: $_____

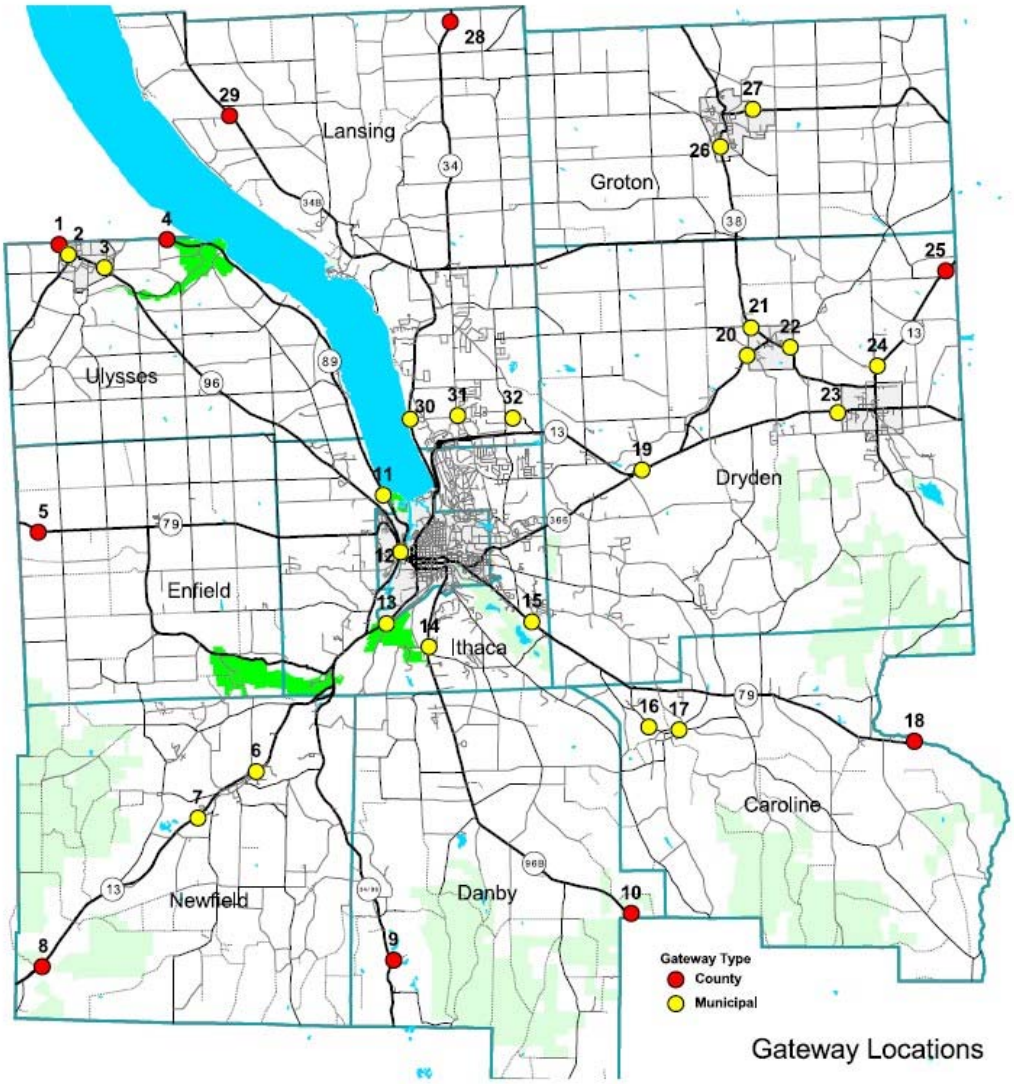
6. Please describe how this project has contributed to increased beautification of your community, and any successes or challenges with this project that you would like to share.

7. Please list the names and contact information of volunteers who helped out with your beautification project. This will help us to create a database of community volunteers who might be interested in working on future beautification projects in Tompkins County.

I_____testify that to the best of my knowledge the above information is accurate.

Signed:_____ Date:_____

## Appendix IX: Municipal Gateway Signage Program Detail:




Gateway Locations

Front of Sign

### County Gateway

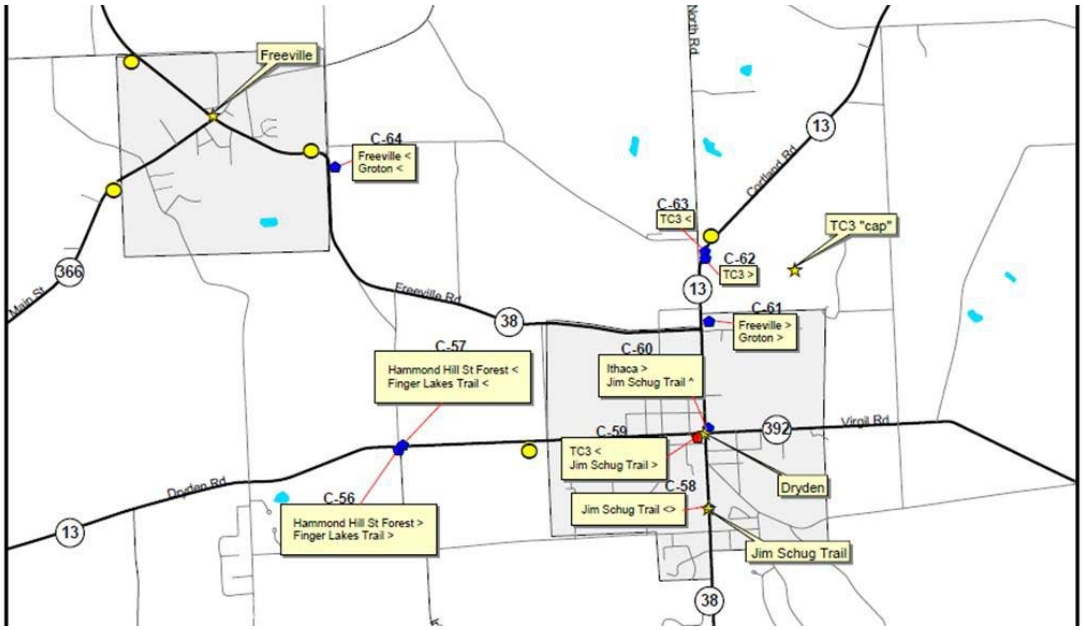
The County Gateway sign is located along identified roads at the county border or at a point near the border that has either a significant view or an existing pull-off area. The Gateway sign indicates arrival/departure and welcomes/thanks the visitor.

### Community Gateway

The Community Gateway sign is located at the community's border or at a point where the "center" of the community is perceived to begin. Two sign sizes are shown; the larger sign on right is designed to accommodate longer community names, such as Brooktondale and Trumansburg. The Gateway sign indicates arrival and welcomes the visitor.

**Map Example of Municipal Gateway plus trail/tourism feature signage in small communities of Freeville and Dryden:**

*Blue denotes new signage; yellow denotes gateway signage; red indicates a replacement sign.*




**Interpretive Kiosk Example:**

The project budget currently includes 10 new informational kiosks with interpretive panels, while the plan included 21 in total. The project team hopes to continue adding kiosks over the next few years as funding allows. These kiosks are complementary to a much larger pedestrian wayfinding effort, and are intended to integrate with existing and planned kiosk systems installed by the Cayuga Waterfront Trail, downtown Ithaca, and Cornell University.

## Interpretive Kiosk

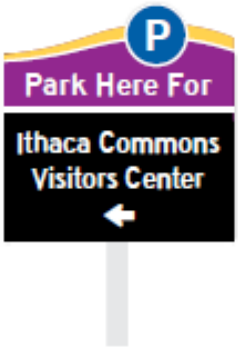
The Interpretive Kiosk is located (a) where a County Gateway sign is adjacent to an existing pull off area or (b) at a point of cultural interest. It includes a map with county attractions and an interpretive panel on the facing side.

**District Directional Signage Examples:**

**Standard NYS DOT Signage:** destination guide signs & recreational and cultural interest area signs

**Parking Information Signage:**

Includes list of program attractions located nearest to point of installation




*All wayfinding signage images provided by Peter J. Smith & Company, Inc. – project consultants*

## Planning Process & Partners:

The inclusive and comprehensive nature of the planning process for this project is noteworthy. Public comment and focus group sessions were part of the planning process. Consultants worked closely with local municipal and institutional leaders, tourism partners, and a Tompkins Chamber project manager, over the course of several months to ensure that existing signage was properly catalogued, stakeholder groups and community members provided input, and that the plan incorporated the most appropriate group of tourism and community assets. Ultimately, 56 tourism and community assets were included in the plan (though over 500 were discovered as part of the planning process.

The Tompkins County Wayfinding & Interpretive Signage Plan, a project of the county's Strategic Tourism Planning Board and led by the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce, and was completed in the summer of 2014. The following entities played a direct role in the creation of the plan by participating on the Steering Committee: The Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board; the Tompkins County Legislature; the City of Ithaca Planning Department; the Ithaca Tompkins County Transportation Council; the Downtown Ithaca Alliance; Cornell University; the Convention & Visitors Bureau; NYSDOT; Tompkins County DSS; TCAT; the Town of Ulysses; and the Tompkins County Highway Division. These stakeholders supported the planning, and ultimately the implementation, of this plan.

## Appendix X: Beautification, Art and Signage Surveys

Three different surveys on beautification, art and signage were crafted by the Beautification Committee and distributed in early 2015. One survey was specifically for businesses and organizations – this survey was further divided into two sections, one with questions for City of Ithaca businesses and organizations, and the other for businesses and organizations outside the city. This survey was distributed by the Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Ithaca Alliance. 61 respondents completed this survey (39 City of Ithaca businesses/organizations + 22 rural businesses/organizations).

The second survey was distributed to tourism stakeholders by the Tompkins County Tourism Program and was completed by 22 respondents. The third survey was sent to representatives from the rural municipalities and was completed by 10 respondents. Shown below is each question from the surveys, immediately followed by a summary of the responses to that question.

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### Beautification, Art and Signage Survey
### For Businesses and Organizations

### Part 1: Beautification Questions for Businesses in the City of Ithaca

**1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the existing aspects of beautification in the City of Ithaca?**

| | Average Value | Number of Responses |
|---|---|---|
| Landscape plantings | 5.69 | 39 |
| Container plantings | 5.69 | 39 |
| Public art | 6.64 | 39 |
| Building maintenance | 5.47 | 38 |
| Tidiness | 5.56 | 39 |
| General aesthetic quality of built environment and public spaces | 5.64 | 39 |

**2. Comments about above ratings:**

| Comment | Number of Times Repeated |
|---|---|
| Finish the Commons | 4 |
| Too many murals/don't like content or style | 3 |
| Not as clean as other cities | 1 |
| Space in front of public library on Green St. – make it more appealing, maybe a small market there? | 1 |
| Pleased with art and flowers in the City | 1 |
| New buildings clash with historic architecture | 1 |
| Need more and larger art | 1 |
| Empty store fronts on the Commons detract | 1 |
| Homeowners don't keep up exteriors – sometimes due to fear of raising assessed value | 1 |

**3. Does your business or organization contribute to city beautification in any of the following ways?**

| | Number of responses | Percentage of responses |
|---|---|---|
| Landscape plantings | 18 | 60% |
| Container plantings | 15 | 50% |
| Windowboxes or hanging baskets | 8 | 27% |
| Historic building | 8 | 27% |
| Unique signage | 12 | 40% |
| Public art (mural, sculpture etc) | 9 | 30% |
| Other | 1 | 3% |

**4. Are you aware of the Business Planting Day organized by the Tompkins County Beautification Program each May? This event takes place every May - businesses and organizations that provide a planter and soil can have annual flowers planted for free by Beautification Brigade Volunteers.**

| | Number of responses | Percentage of responses |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 15 | 38% |
| No | 24 | 62% |

**5. Are you interested in participating in the Business Planting Day in May 2015? If so please provide the name and address of your business or organization and your contact details.**

Nine respondents provided their contact info, and were contacted by the Beautification Program Manager in May 2015 to participate in the Business Planting Day.

**6. The Beautification Program is considering offering a sponsorship program for public plantings. What sponsor benefits would make this opportunity potentially attractive to you?**

| Comment | Number of Times Repeated |
|---|---|
| Advertising | 1 |
| Team Building activity | 1 |
| On-site recognition with attractive signage | 3 |
| Free parking space | 1 |
| Reasonable cost | 1 |

**7. Do you think that the entrances into the City of Ithaca provide an attractive and welcoming entrance to visitors? (Choose one)**

| | Number of Responses | Percentage of Responses |
|---|---|---|
| Yes, very attractive and welcoming | 2 | 5% |
| Somewhat attractive and welcoming | 15 | 39% |
| A little attractive and welcoming | 17 | 45% |
| Not attractive and welcoming at all | 4 | 11% |

**8. Please share any positive or negative comments about beautification in the City of Ithaca from customers or clients**:

| Comment | Number of Times Repeated |
|---|---|
| Loved herb plantings planted near business by Beautification Brigade | 1 |
| Too much construction/tall buildings | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| East State St. medians and traffic rotary – nice plantings | 1 |
| Commons construction going on too long | 3 |
| Route 13 corridor is unattractive | 2 |
| Traffic rotary is unattractive | 1 |
| Need more floral color in the city | 3 |
| Messiness of the city | 1 |
| Don't like graffiti-type public art | 1 |
| Use funds for infrastructure – streets and sidewalks | 1 |
| The public art is great | 1 |
| City tree roots upheaving the sidewalks is a problem | 1 |
| Liked the moveable planters on Commons during construction | 1 |
| Plantings are overgrown/too tall | 2 |
| Give more attention to parks and waterfront areas | 1 |

**9. If you could select the three most important potential beautification projects in the City of Ithaca in future years, what would they be?**

| **Comment** | **Number of Times Repeated** |
|---|---|
| Finishing the Commons | 13 |
| Rt. 13 corridor | 11 |
| East and West State Street | 1 |
| Landscape plantings for Cayuga Waterfront Trail | 3 |
| Improvements to city and state parks | 9 |
| More public art | 4 |
| Waterfront area | 3 |
| No more big box stores | 1 |
| Vacant buildings need to be rented and maintained | 3 |
| Clean up litter | 3 |
| Improve gateways into city | 7 |
| More homeowners planting curbside and front gardens | 1 |
| More plantings/better plantings | 4 |
| Fix streets and sidewalks | 2 |
| Collegetown beautification | 1 |
| Hanging baskets and banners | 2 |
| Plant more trees | 3 |
| Better wayfinding signage | 1 |

**10. What do you see as the biggest challenges to beautification efforts in the City of Ithaca?**

| Comment | Number of Times Repeated |
|---|---|
| Need to think bigger | 1 |
| Better multi-jurisdiction coordination | 1 |
| High percentage of renters | 1 |
| Funding | 14 |
| Empty storefronts | 1 |
| More trees needed | 1 |
| Historic preservation of buildings | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Need more uniform mass of color in plantings | 1 |
| Vandalism | 2 |
| Poor implementation of streetscape standards | 1 |
| Need standardized wayfinding signage | 1 |
| More awareness/caring about beautification | 3 |
| Route 13 corridor – bad first impression | 2 |
| Goose droppings in parks | 1 |
| Hard to satisfy so many tastes | 2 |
| Maintenance | 1 |
| Weather/climate | |

**11. Any other comments or feedback regarding beautification in the City of Ithaca?**

| Comment | Number of Times Received |
|---|---|
| Finish the Commons | 2 |
| Looking forward to reading strategic plan | 1 |
| Have a beautification competition for businesses | 1 |
| Homeowners and business owners all need to clean up their properties | 1 |
| Homeowners should use the same plants that are used in city plantings | 1 |
| Wayfinding signage is needed | 2 |
| Look at examples of other communities, for example Niagara-on-the-Lake | 1 |
| Develop smart phone app for plantings, art, parks etc | 1 |

**12. How many distinct pieces of public art would you say you have noticed in the city of Ithaca?**

| Comment | Number of Times Repeated |
|---|---|
| 1 – 2 | 1 |
| 3 – 4 | 2 |
| 6 – 8 | 4 |
| ~10 | 5 |
| ~12 | 5 |
| ~15 | 1 |
| ~20 | 3 |
| ~25 | 5 |
| ~30 | 2 |
| ~50 | 2 |
| ~100 | 2 |

**13. Which of the following mechanisms for funding public art do you agree with: (Check all that apply)**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Room-tax funded | 18 | 47% |
| Artist donated | 21 | 55% |
| Business sponsorship | 26 | 68% |
| All of the above | 16 | 42% |

**14. The Beautification Program is considering offering a business sponsorship program for public art. What sponsor benefits would make this opportunity potentially attractive to your business or organization?**

| Comment | Number of Times Received |
|---|---|
| Plaque/recognition signage | 8 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Free parking space | 1 |
| Choice of artist/location of artwork | 4 |
| Sponsor preservation/maintenance of artwork | 1 |
| Reasonable sponsorship levels, eg. starting at $100 | 2 |
| Business provides wall space for mural, grant for artist stipend and materials | 1 |
| Website about public art with sponsorship recognition | 1 |

**15. Which of the following mechanisms for funding signage/wayfinding signage programs do you agree with.**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Local government tax revenue | 16 | 43% |
| Room-tax revenue | 20 | 54% |
| State/federal grants | 24 | 65% |
| DOT | 18 | 49% |
| Private foundation | 23 | 62% |
| Private business/non-profit | 17 | 46% |
| Any/all of the above | 15 | 41% |

**16. The Beautification Program is considering offering a sponsorship program for wayfinding signage. What sponsor benefits would make this opportunity potentially attractive to your business or organization?**

| Comment | Number of Times Repeated |
|---|---|
| Recognition/name on signage | 5 |
| Budget-friendly sponsorship | 2 |
| Free parking space | 1 |

**17. Please provide your contact details if you would are interested in more information about beautification, arts or signage in the City of Ithaca:**
Four businesses filled in their contact info and were contacted.

**(Question 18 asked if their business was located in the City of Ithaca or outside – their response directed them to the appropriate survey questions. Question 19 required City of Ithaca respondents to answer 'yes' to end their portion of the survey.)**

## Part 2: Beautification Questions for Businesses Outside the City of Ithaca

**20. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the existing aspects of beautification in Tompkins County? (Drag the sliders to rate each element.)**

| | Average Value | Number of responses |
|---|---|---|
| Landscape plantings | 5.68 | 22 |
| Container plantings | 5.82 | 22 |
| Public art | 6.64 | 22 |
| Building maintenance | 6.09 | 22 |
| Tidiness | 6.09 | 22 |
| General aesthetic quality of built environment and public spaces | 6.32 | 22 |

**21. Any comments about the above ratings?**

| Comment | Number of times repeated |
|---|---|
| Any art/plantings contribute to beautification | 1 |
| Some county areas are very good, others need a lot of work | 1 |
| Dryden's beautification is well-done | 1 |
| Approaches at the County borders could use significant improvement | 1 |
| People don't properly care for their plantings | 1 |
| Varna needs more attention – entrance to Cornell | 1 |

**22. Does your business or organization contribute to county beautification in any of the following ways?**

| | Number of responses | Percentage of responses |
|---|---|---|
| Landscape plantings | 10 | 83% |
| Container plantings | 4 | 33% |
| Windowboxes or hanging baskets | 3 | 25% |
| Historic building | 6 | 50% |
| Unique signage | 2 | 17% |
| Public art (mural, sculpture etc) | 2 | 17% |
| Other | 2 | 17% |

**23. The Beautification Program is considering offering a sponsorship program for public plantings. What sponsor benefits would make this opportunity potentially attractive to your business or organization?**

| Comment | Number of times repeated |
|---|---|
| Support not-for-profits to beautify their properties | 1 |
| Sponsorship implies that plantings are not worthy of proper funding | 1 |
| Contests/awards for best plantings | 1 |
| Expert site planning and plant advice | 1 |
| Brochure, plaque or sign with recognition of sponsorship | 8 |
| Involve local youth groups in maintenance of plantings | |

**24. Do you think that the entrances into Tompkins County provide an attractive and welcoming entrance to visitors?**

| | Number of responses | Percentage of responses |
|---|---|---|
| Yes, very attractive and welcoming | 0 | 0% |
| Somewhat attractive and welcoming | 10 | 45% |
| A little attractive and welcoming | 7 | 32% |
| Not attractive and welcoming at all | 5 | 23% |

**25. Please share any positive or negative comments about beautification in Tompkins County from customers or clients:**

| Comment | Number of times repeated |
|---|---|
| Love the colorful annuals planted on highway | 1 |
| Lack of structure/landscape planning/large-scale plantings | 1 |
| Cass Park area needs work | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Public art/mural don't appeal to everyone | 1 |
| Beautification Brigade in Dryden does a great job | 1 |
| Routes along the lake are scenic and welcoming | 1 |
| Entrances to Tompkins County need plantings, better signs | 3 |
| Varna is a gateway to Cornell – needs help | 1 |

**26. If you could select the three most important potential beautification projects in Tompkins County in future years, what would they be?**

| Comment | Number of times repeated |
|---|---|
| General appearance and cleanliness of roads, homes and businesses | 4 |
| Gateways into the coun | 7 |
| Lakefront Area/Cayuga Waterfront Trail | 1 |
| Route 13 in the City of Ithaca | 6 |
| Finish the Commons | 7 |
| Repaving Streets | 1 |
| Signage | 4 |
| Public art | 3 |
| Park maintenance and enhancement (esp. Stewart and Cass ) | 10 |
| More public trails | 1 |
| More seasonal plantings | 2 |
| Help non-profits beautify | 1 |
| Preserve green space | 1 |
| Address dilapidated buildings/vacant lots | 1 |
| Ornamental tree plantings | 1 |
| Hanging baskets on businesses | 1 |

**27. What do you see as the biggest challenges to beautification efforts in Tompkins County?**

| Comment | Number of times repeated |
|---|---|
| Cost | 10 |
| Maintenance | 4 |
| Open mindedness to updating landscapes to sustainable, environmental, etc | 1 |
| Weather | 2 |
| Differing definitions of public art and beauty | 3 |
| Lack of cleanliness of urban areas | 1 |
| Lack of concern/caring/maintenance by population | 3 |
| Many personal homes are not well maintained | 1 |

**28. Any other comments or feedback regarding beautification in Tompkins County?**

| Comment | Number of times repeated |
|---|---|
| Let local landscape companies do paid work to benefit area | 1 |
| Huge potential in Tompkins County/Ithaca | 2 |
| Master Plan - great idea | 1 |
| Sponsorship is a good idea | 1 |

**29. How many distinct pieces of public art would you say you have noticed in Tompkins County?**

| Comments | Number of Times Repeated |
|---|---|
| 5 to 10 | 7 |
| 10 to 15 | 2 |
| 15 to 20 | 5 |
| 20 to 30 | 3 |

**30. Which of the following mechanisms for funding public art do you agree with.**

| | Number of responses | Percentage of responses |
|---|---|---|
| Room-Tax funded | 9 | 45% |
| Artist donated | 10 | 50% |
| Business sponsorship | 13 | 65% |
| All of the above | 8 | 40% |

**31. The Beautification Program is considering offering a sponsorship program for public art. What sponsor benefits would make this opportunity potentially attractive to your business or organization?**

| Comment | Number of times received |
|---|---|
| Money and supplies | 1 |
| Press conference | 1 |
| Donation of funds by public | 1 |
| Donor plaques/recognition | 7 |
| Meet the artist | 1 |
| Free artworks to display | 1 |

**32. Which of the following mechanisms for funding signage/wayfinding signage programs do you agree with: (Check all that apply)**

| | Number of responses | Percentage of responses |
|---|---|---|
| Local government – tax revenue | 9 | 50% |
| Room-tax revenue | 9 | 50% |
| State/federal grants | 10 | 56% |
| DOT | 7 | 39% |
| Private foundation | 8 | 44% |
| Private business/non-profit | 5 | 28% |
| Any/all of the above | 8 | 44% |

**33. The Beautification Program is considering offering a sponsorship program for wayfinding signage. What sponsor benefits would make this opportunity potentially attractive to your business or organization?**

| Comment | Number of times received |
|---|---|
| Sign for my business | 2 |
| Recognition in the form of signage or a plaque | 3 |
| Keep advertising off way finding signage | 3 |

**34. Please provide your contact details if you would are interested in more information about beautification, arts or signage in Tompkins County.**
Six businesses provided contact information for follow-up.

## Beautification, Art and Signage Survey
## For Tourism Stakeholders

**1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the existing aspects of beautification in Tompkins County?**

| | Average Value | Number of responses |
|---|---|---|
| Landscape plantings | 6.73 | 26 |
| Container plantings | 6.50 | 26 |
| Public art | 7.33 | 27 |
| Building maintenance | 6.50 | 26 |
| Tidiness | 5.96 | 27 |
| General aesthetic quality of built environment and public spaces | 6.52 | 27 |

**2. Optional comment about the above ratings:**

| Comment | Number of times received |
|---|---|
| Dirty sidewalks | 2 |
| Parking garages are uninviting | 1 |
| Finish the Commons | 3 |
| Too much effort on downtown – need more focus on rural areas | 2 |
| More multicultural art/plantings in diverse neighborhoods | 1 |
| Good public art downtown | 3 |

**3. Do you think beautification is important for tourism?**

| | Number of responses | Percentage of responses |
|---|---|---|
| Very important | 22 | 79% |
| Moderately important | 6 | 21% |
| Somewhat important | 0 | 0% |
| Low importance | 0 | 0% |
| Not important at all | 0 | 0% |

**4. Optional comment about above rating:**

| Comment | Number of times received |
|---|---|
| Art and beautification are important | 2 |
| Creating community and unique local character are important | 3 |
| Many people visit for natural areas rather than city environment | 1 |
| Need beautification in winter too | 1 |
| Focus on beautification in downtown Ithaca – focal point of city | 1 |

**5. Does your business or organization contribute to county beautification in any of the following ways?**

| | Number of Responses | Percentage of Responses |
|---|---|---|
| Landscape plantings | 7 | 30% |
| Container plantings | 9 | 39% |
| Windowboxes or hanging baskets | 0 | 0% |
| Historic building | 7 | 30% |
| Unique signage | 3 | 13% |
| Public art (mural, sculpture etc) | 7 | 30% |
| Other* | 9 | 39% |

*Write-in comments for 'other' included rock garden plantings and outdoor park/picnic space

**6. Please share any positive or negative comments about beautification in the Tompkins County from customers or clients.**

| Comment | Number of times received |
|---|---|
| Love the painted utility boxes | 1 |
| Need more effort in Southside area and around GIAC | 1 |
| Love the plantings and planters | 1 |
| Route 13 properties need beautification | 1 |
| Love the murals and public art | 1 |
| Hear comments on drabness of downtown Ithaca | 1 |
| Positive comments about Cass Park | 1 |
| Stewart Park is under used and under maintained | 1 |

**7. Do you think that the entrances into Tompkins County provide an attractive and welcoming entrance to visitors?**

| | Number of responses | Percentage of responses |
|---|---|---|
| Yes, very attractive and welcoming | 3 | 11% |
| Somewhat attractive and welcoming | 10 | 36% |
| A little attractive and welcoming | 11 | 39% |
| Not attractive and welcoming at all | 4 | 14% |

**8. If you could select the three most important potential beautification projects in Tompkins County in future years, what would they be?**

| Comment | Number of times received |
|---|---|
| Maintain roads | 1 |
| Clean sidewalks | 1 |
| Improve entrances into county (county gateways) | 7 |
| Bridge over Rt. 13 S – paint the words, plantings, mural on bridge abutments | 2 |
| Clean up/tear down dilapidated buildings | 2 |
| Improve entrances into city (city gateways) | 5 |
| More public art/murals | 4 |
| Finish the Commons | 7 |
| More bike trails/bike lanes | 3 |
| Less sprawl/big box stores | 1 |
| Enhance Black Diamond Trail with plantings and signage | 1 |
| Beautify TCAT bus shelters | 2 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Beautify Collegetown/entrance to Cornell | 2 |
| Waterfront area improvements | 3 |
| Winter beautification | 1 |
| Wayfinding/destination signage for visitors | 4 |
| Plantings and other improvements at parks | 6 |
| Route 13 corridor | 5 |

**9. What do you see as the biggest challenges to beautification efforts in the Tompkins County?**

| Comment | Number of time received |
|---|---|
| Funding | 10 |
| Volunteers | 2 |
| Long-term maintenance | 3 |
| Lack of comprehensive plan | 2 |
| Climate | 1 |
| Empty storefronts | 1 |
| Aging street trees | 1 |
| Lack of caring/awareness | 3 |
| Non-local businesses/big box stores/inappropriate development | 3 |
| Route 13 corridor | 2 |
| Preserving agricultural landscapes in rural areas | 1 |

**10. Any other comments or feedback regarding beautification in the Tompkins County?**

| Comment | Number of times received |
|---|---|
| Downtown plantings/medians are beautiful | 2 |
| Need more art, especially multi-cultural art | 2 |
| Residents need to clean up and maintain their properties | 1 |
| Label plants in public plantings | 1 |
| Need more diversity in beautification projects | 2 |
| Control the panhandlers | 1 |

**11. How many pieces of public art have you noticed in Tompkins County?**

| Comment | Number of times received |
|---|---|
| 1 - 5 | 3 |
| 5 – 10 | 2 |
| 10 - 12 | 3 |
| 15+ | 2 |
| 20 – 25 | 5 |
| 30 – 35 | 3 |
| 40+ | 2 |
| 100+ | 2 |

**12. Which of the following mechanisms for funding public art do you agree with?**

| | Number of responses | Percentage of responses |
|---|---|---|
| Room-Tax funded | 15 | 100% |
| Artist donated | 12 | 80% |
| Business sponsorship | 13 | 87% |
| All of the above | 8 | 53% |

**13. The Beautification Program is considering offering a business sponsorship program for public art. What sponsor benefits would make this opportunity potentially attractive to you?**

| Comment | Number of times received |
|---|---|
| Plaque/acknowledgement of sponsor | 3 |
| Sponsor chooses the artwork | 1 |
| Sponsor contributes space, materials, volunteers etc | 1 |
| Sponsor maintains artwork | 1 |

**14. Which of the following mechanisms for funding signage/wayfinding signage programs do you agree with?**

| | Number of responses | Percentage of responses |
|---|---|---|
| Local government – tax revenue | 9 | 60% |
| Room-tax revenue | 8 | 53% |
| State/federal grants | 10 | 67% |
| DOT | 10 | 67% |
| Private foundation | 4 | 27% |
| Private business/non-profit | 4 | 27% |
| Any/all of the above | 8 | 53% |

**15. The Beautification Program is considering offering a business sponsorship program for wayfinding signage. What sponsor benefits would make this opportunity potentially attractive to you?**

| Comment | Number of times received |
|---|---|
| Business name on signage | 2 |
| Attractive, creative signs | 1 |
| Can't afford to sponsor signs | 2 |

## Beautification, Art and Signage Survey
## For Rural Municipalities

**1. Your municipality:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Enfield | 1 |
| Newfield | 2 |
| Town of Ithaca | 1 |
| Village of Trumansburg | 1 |
| Village of Dryden | 1 |
| Town of Danby | 1 |
| Town of Caroline | 1 |
| Town of Ulysses | 1 |

**2. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the following aspects of beautification in your municipality?**

| | Average Value | Number of Responses |
|---|---|---|
| Landscape plantings | 5.00 | 9 |
| Container plantings | 4.00 | 9 |
| Public art | 2.56 | 9 |
| Building maintenance | 6.11 | 9 |
| Tidiness | 7.11 | 9 |
| General aesthetic quality of built environment and public spaces | 5.89 | 9 |

**3. Any comments about the above ratings?**

| Comment | Number of times received |
|---|---|
| Improvement in town/village beautification due to availability of rural grants | 2 |
| Old buildings and empty storefronts detract | 2 |
| Need for more public art, benches and plantings | 1 |
| More landscaping (public and private) on state routes | 1 |

**4. Are you aware of the rural beautification grants that are available through the Tompkins County Beautification Program?**

| | Number of responses | Percentage of responses |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 7 | 78% |
| No | 2 | 22% |

**5. Has your municipality applied for and received these grants in recent years? Why or why not?**

| Comment | Number of times received |
|---|---|
| Yes | 6 |
| No | 2 |

**6. Do you think that the rural beautification grants are an effective way to improve beautification in your municipality?**

| | Number of responses | Percentage of responses |
|---|---|---|
| Highly effective | 3 | 33% |
| Somewhat effective | 4 | 44% |
| Slightly effective | 2 | 22% |
| Not effective | 0 | 0% |
| Completely ineffective | 0 | 0% |

**7. Does your municipality have support for beautification projects from local volunteers, businesses and organizations?**

| | Number of responses | Percentage of responses |
|---|---|---|
| High level of support | 4 | 44% |
| Some support | 4 | 44% |
| A little support | 0 | 0% |
| No support | 1 | 11% |

**8. Do you think that the gateways into Tompkins County and the rural municipalities provide an attractive and welcoming entrance to visitors?**

| | Number of responses | Percentage of responses |
|---|---|---|
| Yes, very attractive and welcoming | 1 | 11% |
| Somewhat attractive and welcoming | 4 | 44% |
| A little attractive and welcoming | 2 | 22% |
| Not attractive and welcoming at all | 2 | 22% |

**9. If you could select the three most important potential beautification projects in your municipality in future years, what would they be?**

| Comment | Number of times received |
|---|---|
| Entrances from Route 13 into Ithaca need attention | 2 |
| Maintain/replace municipal buildings or | 2 |
| Need to replace/plant new street trees | 4 |
| Town park needs renovation | 1 |
| Gateways into Tompkins County | 2 |
| Preservation of historic cemeteries | 1 |

**10. Any other comments or feedback regarding beautification in your municipality?**

| Comment | Number of times received |
|---|---|
| People notice and appreciate town/village beautification | 1 |
| Interested in rural grants program | 2 |
| Have lost old street trees in village which not been replaced | 1 |
| War memorial needs updating | 1 |

**11. How many distinct pieces of public art would you say you have noticed in Tompkins County?**

| Comment | Number of times received |
|---|---|
| None | 1 |
| 10 to 12 | 2 |
| 25 | 2 |
| 30 | 1 |
| Many – mostly downtown; far less in rural areas | 2 |

**12. Which of the following mechanisms for funding public art do you agree with?**

| | Number of responses | Percentage of responses |
|---|---|---|
| Room-tax funded | 2 | 22% |
| Artist donated | 2 | 22% |
| Business sponsorship | 3 | 33% |
| All of the above | 5 | 56% |

**13. The Beautification Program is considering offering a sponsorship program for funding public art. What sponsor benefits do you think would make this potentially attractive to businesses or organizations in your community?**

| Comment | Number of times received |
|---|---|
| Advertising for sponsor | 2 |
| Businesses display artworks | 1 |
| Website/newsletter mention of sponsor | 1 |
| Tie-in with other art destinations in Tompkins County | 1 |
| Promote ideas that benefit all (eg. Family Reading Partnership banners) | 1 |

14. **Which of the following mechanisms for funding signage/wayfinding signage programs do you agree with: (check all that apply)**

| | Number of responses | Percentage of responses |
|---|---|---|
| Local government – tax revenue | 1 | 11% |
| Room-tax revenue | 5 | 56% |
| State/federal grants | 6 | 67% |
| Department of Transportation (DOT) | 4 | 44% |
| Private foundation | 6 | 67% |
| Private business/not-for-profit | 6 | 67% |
| All of the above | 3 | 33% |

**15. The Beautification Program is considering offering a sponsorship program for funding a comprehensive wayfinding signage program. What sponsor benefits do you think would make this potentially attractive to businesses or organizations in your community?**

| Comment | Number of times received |
|---|---|
| Advertising | 1 |
| Sponsors shown on maps | 1 |
| Joint advertising with sponsors listed on wayfinding signage | 1 |
| Not enough information to comment | 1 |

**16. Please provide your contact details if you would are interested in more information about beautification, arts or signage projects in your municipality.**

Six municipality representatives submitted their contact information for follow-up.