



**Division of Local  
Government Services**

# Comprehensive Planning

A Division of New York Department of State

# Statutory definition

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

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



# Reasons for importance

- Zoning and other land use regulations must be in accordance with plan
  - Defense against spot zoning challenges
- Other government agencies shall consider town's plan while proposing capital projects
- Annual budget and capital plan
- Grant applications
- Growth management and prioritization
  - NYS Public Infrastructure Policy Act, 2010



# When to update your plan

How old is your existing plan?



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**Rapid growth or decline**



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**New infrastructure needed**



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**Special places are disappearing**



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## Economic changes



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**Inconsistent development**

# Community resilience

“The ability of a system to withstand shocks and stresses while still maintaining its essential functions.”



## Resilient Communities:

- Are familiar with their natural hazards
- Are prepared for them
- Recover quickly when they occur



# Resilience planning

Considers multiple systems to create vital communities:

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

Expand, conserve or revitalize natural protective features:

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



# NYS DEC Climate Smart Program

Climate Smart Communities (CSCs) engage in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving climate resilience

1. Pledge to be a Climate Smart Community
2. Set goals, inventory emissions, plan for climate action
3. Decrease community energy use
4. Increase community use of renewable energy
5. Realize benefits of recycling and other climate-smart solid waste management practices
6. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions through use of climate-smart land-use tools
7. Enhance community resilience and prepare for the effects of climate change
8. Support development of a green innovation economy
9. Inform and inspire the public
10. Commit to an evolving process of climate action

Adopt or revise land-use plans & regulations to minimize impact of new development:

- Smart Growth Principals
- Resource-efficient site design guidelines
- Green parking lot standards
- Complete streets & alternative transportation options
- Green building codes

# Planning board's role - drafting

- A. Entire planning board drafts plan
  - B. Independent 'special board' with at least one planning board member drafts plan
  - C. Local governing board drafts plan and accepts recommendations from planning board
- Board preparing plan must hold public hearing
  - Planning board or 'special board' may not adopt plan



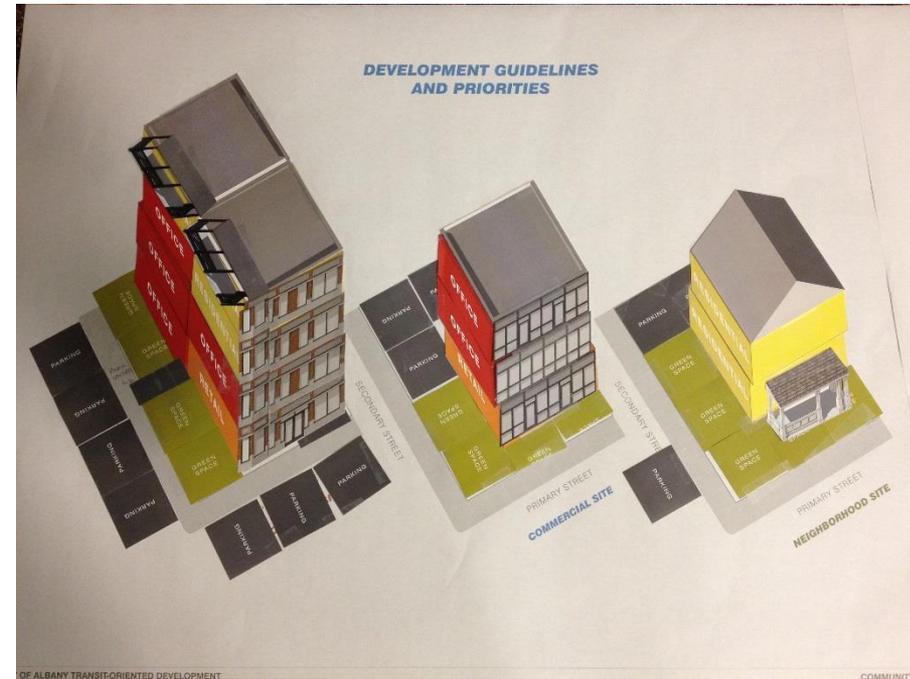
# Governing board's role - adoption

- Passage of local enactment by governing board needed to implement or amend plan
- Hold public hearing within 90 days of receiving draft plan
- Governing board also responsible for:
  - Amending land use regulations
  - Developing design guidelines
  - Budgeting for capital improvements
  - Applying for appropriate state, federal and privately funded programs



# Public's role - participation

- Public hearings
- Informing the public
  - Open meetings
  - Local news media
  - Access to materials
- Involving public
  - Surveys
  - Informational sessions
  - Ongoing outreach
  - Design charrette



# Getting started

- Governing Board determines body responsible for plan preparation
- Create a budget
- Refer to your current plan (if one exists)
- Review comprehensive plan statute

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

## Possible Leaders:

- Governing Board
- Planning Board
- Special Board

## Sources of Assistance:

- County planning department
- Consultant
- Others:
  - College students
  - Retired workers
  - Municipal employees
  - Resident experts



# Identify community stakeholders

- Business owners
- Civic leaders
- Elected officials
- Environmental experts
- Planning Board and ZBA



# Who will draft the plan?

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



# Using a consultant

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



Consultants may provide an unbiased community view



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# Process at a glance

1. Identify issues
2. Survey
3. List goals
4. Prepare plan
5. Consider alternatives
6. Adopt plan
7. Implement plan
8. Evaluate plan



# Step 1: Identify issues

What are your SWOTs ?

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats



# Step 2: Survey



## AGRICULTURE

- Farmland protection
- Agro-tourism

Farmer's markets



## HISTORIC/CULTURAL/ARCHEOLOGICAL

- State & Federal historic sites and structures
- Native American sites



## PARKS & RECREATION

- Open space preservation
- Regional connections

Trails



# Survey



## ENVIRONMENT

- Natural features
- Endangered species
- Wind

Water resources  
Minerals, soils  
Gases



## DEMOGRAPHICS

- Seniors
- School aged children
- College students

Seasonal residents  
Immigrants  
Household Income



## HOUSING

- Styles/types
- Number of units
- Vacancy rates

Age  
Quality  
Value

# Survey



## ECONOMY

Economic trends  
Regional Employment  
Local Industry

Retail Leakage  
Tourism



## PUBLIC SERVICES

- Schools
- Fire/police/hospitals
- Water/sewer

Civic Centers  
Senior services  
Libraries



## TRANSPORTATION

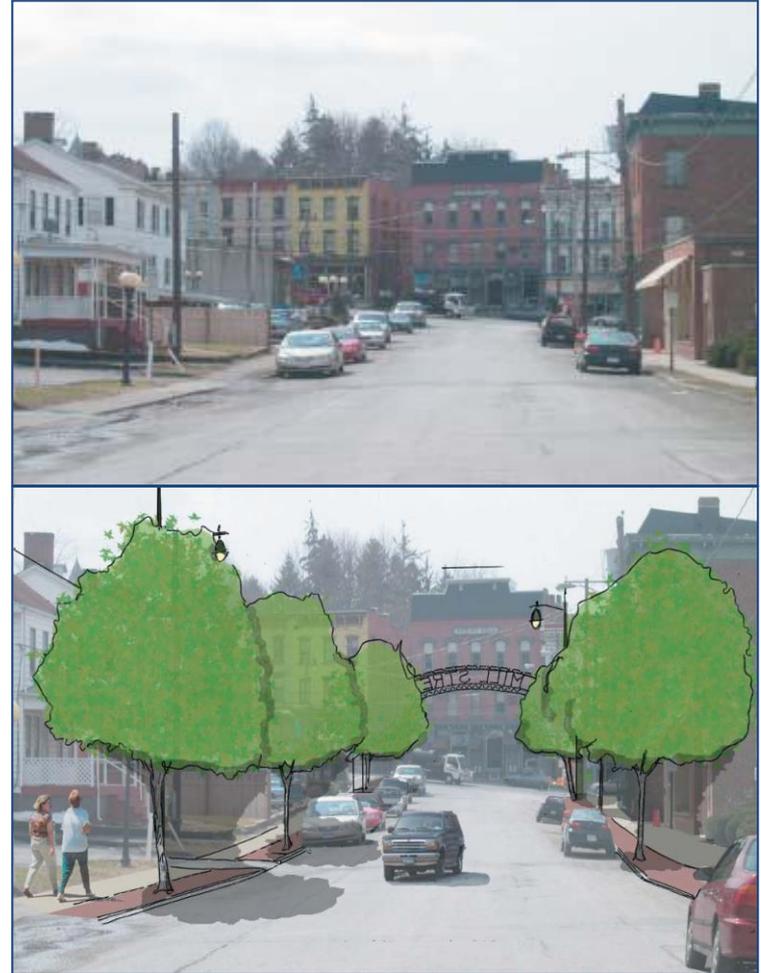
- Streets/roads
- RR/airport
- Public transit

Sidewalks  
Parking  
Bicycle lanes



## Step 3: Identify goals

- Based on identified issues (SWOTs)
- Goals become priorities for future policy development decisions
- Goals are measurable and achievable



# Town of Ledyard's goals

- Farmland protection



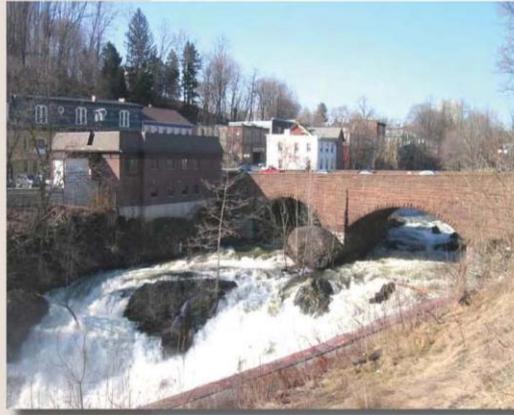
# Ledyard's recommended actions

- Ag zoning district to support farming
- Subdivision law to reduce impacts of development on farm operations/active farmland
- Maintain lower property taxes for farmlands
- Site infrastructure away from farmland



# Village of Wappingers Falls

## WAPPINGERS FALLS VISION PLAN



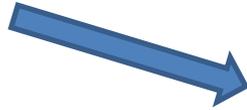
"A public visioning process to promote pedestrian access and develop environmental tourism as catalysts for Village revitalization."



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# Wappingers Falls: goals

Village parks



Village gateways



Gorge, Falls, &  
Lake Wappinger



# Wappingers Falls' recommended actions

- Central business district revitalization
- Streetscape improvements
- Walkability/readability
- Park and open space improvements



# City of Corning



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# Corning: goal

Increase effectiveness and cost-efficiency of municipal services



# Corning: actions

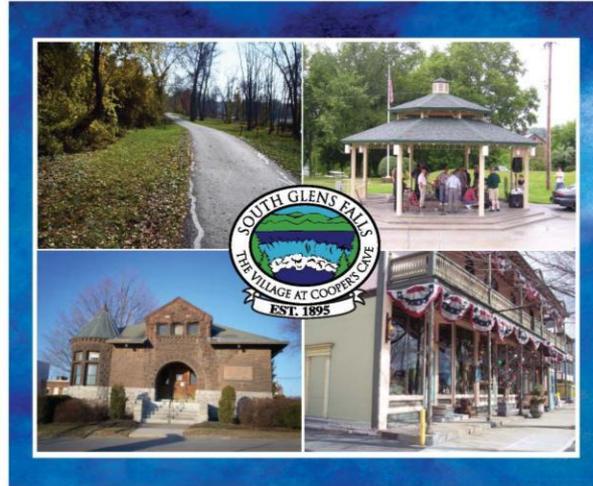
- Consolidate scattered public safety services into one complex
- Use GIS to track service delivery
- Hire an additional Code Enforcement Officer to handle residential units inspection
  - Largely self-supporting, paid for by fees charged for each inspection



# Village of South Glens Falls

## VILLAGE OF SOUTH GLENS FALLS

SARATOGA COUNTY, NEW YORK



### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

JULY 2008



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# South Glens Falls' goals

- Provide affordable and accessible housing options
- Promote new construction in harmony with existing neighborhoods



# S. Glens Falls' recommended actions

- Update zoning:
  - Senior housing and assisted living facilities by allowed by SUP
  - Allow accessory and in-law apartments
- Create walkable and connected neighborhoods:
  - Link new housing to existing residential and commercial areas with access roads, sidewalks and trails





## Financial Planning in the Comprehensive Plan

What is your community's long range financial plan?



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## Historical financial results: Village of Arkport, General Fund

Revenues	2010	2012	2014	Av. Increase
Real Property Taxes	152,388	156,632	162,623	2%
Other Real Property Tax Items	16,127	16,219	16,523	1%
Sales and Use Tax	103,506	115,975	110,447	2%
Charges for Services	14,604	14,656	14,104	-1%
State Aid	29,275	24,052	24,287	-5%
Other Local Revenues	22,689	733	0	-100%
Use and Sale of Property	15,582	11,186	31,449	19%
Total Revenues and Other Sources	\$354,171	\$340,103	\$360,083	
Expenditures				
General Government	101,014	110,050	108,025	2%
Public Safety	6,818	6,011	7,805	3%
Health	300	300	300	0%
Transportation	76,912	70,620	129,903	14%
Economic Development	11,500	0	2,750	-30%
Culture and Recreation	18,171	25,622	21,354	4%
Sanitation	960	982	1,066	3%
Other Community Services	15,877	17,496	19,620	5%
Debt Service (Principal and Interest)	0	0	47,687	N/A
Employee Benefits	17,002	38,803	52,448	33%
Total Expenditures and Other Uses	\$248,554	\$269,884	\$390,958	12%
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$105,617</b>	<b>\$70,219</b>	<b>(\$30,875)</b>	

## Projected results: Village of Arkport, General Fund

Revenues	2015	2017	2019	Change
Real Property Taxes	165,287	170,748	176,389	2%
Other Real Property Tax Items	16,624	16,826	17,032	1%
Sales and Use Tax	112,254	115,957	119,781	2%
Charges for Services	13,982	13,740	13,503	-1%
State Aid	23,179	21,112	19,230	-5%
Use and Sale of Property	37,485	53,253	75,655	19%
Total Revenues and Other Sources	\$368,810	\$391,636	\$421,589	4%
<b>Expenditures</b>				
General Government	109,853	113,601	117,477	2%
Public Safety	8,073	8,638	9,242	3%
Health	300	300	300	0%
Transportation	148,090	192,459	250,121	14%
Economic Development	1,923	940	460	-30%
Culture and Recreation	22,233	24,102	26,128	4%
Sanitation	1,094	1,153	1,215	3%
Other Community Services	20,686	22,996	25,563	5%
Employee Benefits	69,508	122,082	214,420	33%
Total Expenditures and Other Uses	\$381,761	\$486,271	\$644,926	16%
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>(\$12,951)</b>	<b>(\$94,634)</b>	<b>(\$223,337)</b>	

# Increase tax base or increase levy?

Sprawl is more expensive than infill development

- Attract businesses to increase tax base
- Increased levies are hard for taxpayers



# Bridging the financial divide

- Utilize reserves (not sustainable)
- Raise revenues (increase tax base or tax levy)
- Reduce expenditures
  - Reduce staff (impacts service delivery, employee morale)
  - Scale back or eliminate services (voter backlash)
- Share services

## Revised Projection: Village of Arkport, General Fund

Revenues	2015	2017	2019	change
Real Property Taxes	165,100	167,615	172,760	2%
Other Real Property Tax Items	16,038	15,567	14,667	-3%
Sales and Use Tax	87,048	68,606	42,616	-21%
Charges for Services	7,450	3,935	1,098	-47%
Charges to Other Governments	450	312	149	-31%
State Aid	27,660	31,501	40,859	14%
Federal Aid				
Use and Sale of Property	11,450	44,679	63,473	19%
Total Revenues and Other Sources	\$315,196	\$332,215	\$335,622	1%
<b>Expenditures</b>				
General Government	106,288	104,579	101,243	-2%
Public Safety	6,805	5,933	4,510	-13%
Health	300	300	300	0%
Transportation	121,137	112,963	98,231	-7%
Economic Development	400	58	1	-85%
Culture and Recreation	28,671	38,495	69,396	34%
Sanitation	1,200	1,351	1,712	13%
Other Community Services	25,907	34,209	59,645	32%
Debt Service (Principal and Interest)	21,658	9,836	2,029	-55%
Employee Benefits	47,921	43,785	36,552	-9%
Contingent Appropriations	11,549			
Total Expenditures and Other Uses	\$371,836	\$351,509	\$373,619	5%
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>(\$56,640)</b>	<b>(\$19,294)</b>	<b>(\$37,997)</b>	

# Revised Projection: expenditures

	2015	2017	2019	Change
General Government	106,288	104,579	101,243	-2%
Transportation	121,137	112,963	98,231	-7%
Employee Benefits	47,921	43,785	36,552	-9%



# Incorporate into plan

How can you incorporate paying for development into your plan?

- “Fix it First” strategies
- Infill development and revitalization
- Phased growth

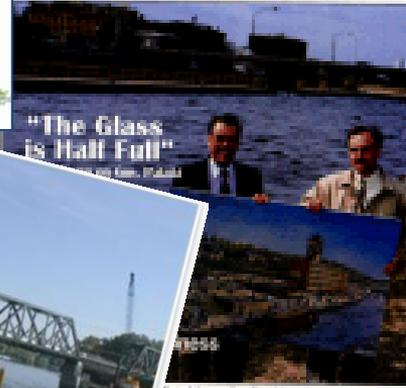


# Consider other plans

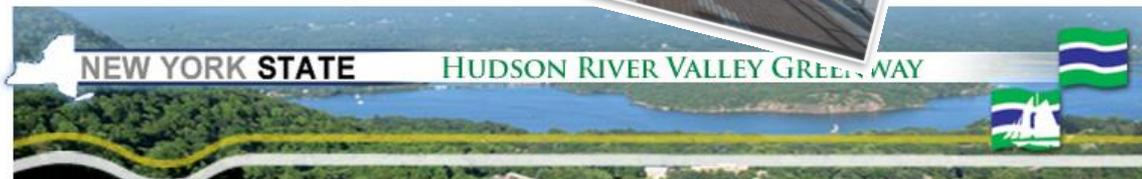
- County farmland protection plans
- Coastal resource plans
- State open space plan
- County economic development plan
- Neighboring municipalities
- DOT regional office
- School district
- Canal recreationway plan



## OSWEGO COUNTY BUSINESS

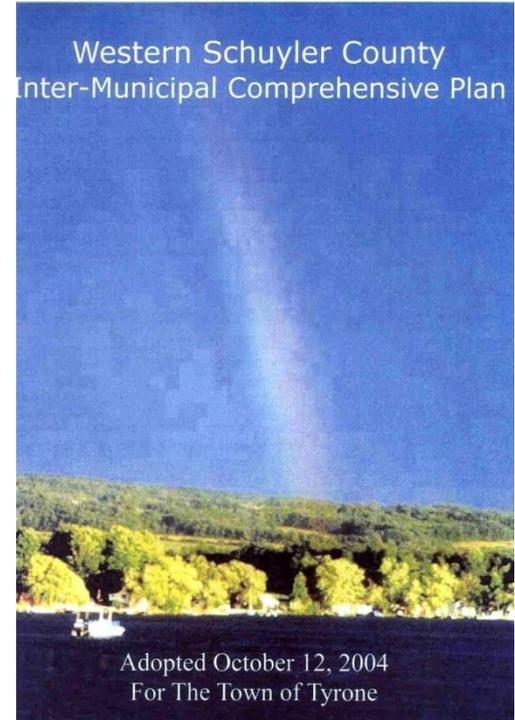


at the Canal Recreationway



# Sample table of contents

1. Introduction and/or executive summary
2. Existing conditions
3. Trends
4. Environmental framework
5. Development goals & policies
6. Land use constraints & opportunities
7. Land use development plan
8. Fiscal impacts
9. Implementation strategies
10. Maps
11. Appendices  
(Surveys, public meeting notes/summaries, regulations, design guidelines, budgets for capital improvements, grant applications)



## Step 4: Draft plan

When do you have enough research to begin writing?

- Primary concerns are addressed
- Public meetings held (statutorily required and others)
  - All Special Board meetings are open to the public
- Monitor consultant's progress
  - Review work early to ensure consistency with community's vision



# Parallel reviews

- County planning
- Agricultural
  - If necessary
- SEQRA



Hold at least one public hearing during plan preparation



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# County planning agency review

- Governing Board must refer plan to County PB for review
- County review looks for county-wide or inter-municipal impacts
- GML §239-m

Local actions can affect regional growth



# Agricultural review

## Agriculture & Markets Law

- Plan is subject to requirements
  - Article 25-AA (§305a)
- Also consider county agriculture & farmland protection plans created under
  - Article 25-AAA



See DOS publication “Local Laws and Agricultural Districts: How do they Relate?”

# State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR)

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



# Step 5: Evaluate alternatives

- Are goals achievable financially?
- Are there more attainable/sustainable alternatives?
- What are cost effective ways to achieve goals?



## Step 6: Adopt plan

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



# Step 7: Implement plan

Suggestions to promote concepts outlined in plan:

- Amend land use regulations
- Develop design guidelines
- Budget for capital improvements



## Implementation matrix

### Town of Copake Comprehensive Plan Implementation Matrix - July 6, 2011

Goal/Catalysts/Actions	*	Z	Phase	Partners	Funding
Encourage light industry, manufacturing and business parks which do not negatively impact the environment.			Ongoing	Town of Copake	No Cost
Review the effectiveness of the floating industrial district.		Z	Short	Town of Copake, Planning Board, Zoning Board, Zoning Update Committee	No Cost
Limit development around Copake Lake to protect water quality and encourage historic preservation in Copake Falls.		Z	Short	Town of Copake, Zoning Committee	No Cost
Support further development of the Rail Trail.			Short/Ongoing	Harlem Valley Rail Trail, Town of Copake	Town of Copake, Harlem Valley Rail Trail, NYS OPRHP
Recognize Copake North as an area of significance.			Ongoing	Town of Copake	No Cost
Explore provision of tax incentives to preserve historic resources.			Medium	Historical Society, Town of Copake	To Be Determined
Encourage low-impact development and sustainable infrastructure where appropriate.		Z	Medium	Town of Copake, Planning Board, Zoning Board, Zoning Update Committee	No Cost

## Step 8: Evaluate plan

Plan must include maximum intervals for review

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

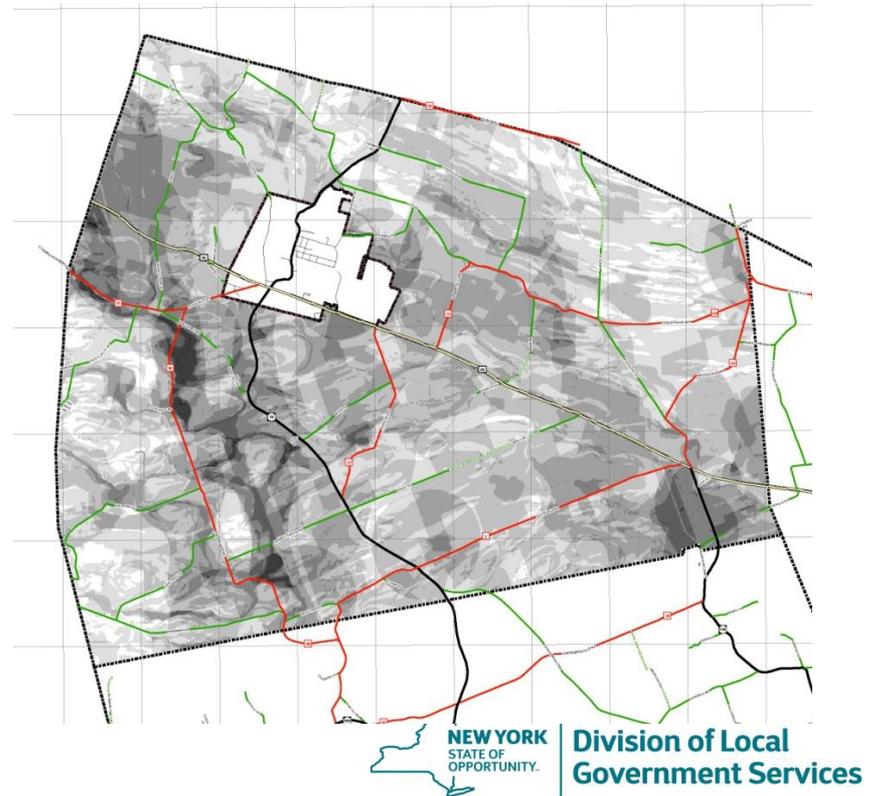
Plan should be updated to reflect changes to policies and physical characteristics of community



# Amendments to plan: example

## Priorities for Protection

- Water quality
- Agriculture
- Environmental sensitivity
- Geology
- Scenic, historic



# Funding sources

- NYS DOS Local Government Efficiency Grants (LGE)
- NYS DOS Local Waterfront Revitalization Program
- NYS Smart Growth
  - For designated geographic areas
- NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets
  - Funds up to \$25,000 for agricultural protection components of comprehensive plans
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)
- Citizens Empowerment Grant



# Resources

- “A Practical Guide to Comprehensive Planning,” NY Planning Federation (2000), (518) 432- 4094: [www.nypf.org/publications.html](http://www.nypf.org/publications.html)
- Pace Law School Land Use Law Center:  
[www.law.pace.edu/landuse/landuse\\_library.html](http://www.law.pace.edu/landuse/landuse_library.html)
- New York Department of State: [www.dos.state.ny.us/lgss/pdfs/zncompplan.pdf](http://www.dos.state.ny.us/lgss/pdfs/zncompplan.pdf)
- The Community Planning Website: [www.communityplanning.net/index.html](http://www.communityplanning.net/index.html)
- Design Charrette website: [www.charrettecenter.net](http://www.charrettecenter.net)
- Planning Commissioners’ Journal: [www.plannersweb.com](http://www.plannersweb.com)
- Rural Smart Growth Audit Tool, Madison County:  
[www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-07/documents/madison\\_county\\_sgja\\_071015.pdf](http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-07/documents/madison_county_sgja_071015.pdf)



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