



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Highlights of the **February 5, 2015** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

#### **Legislators Learn About Proposed Update to County Comprehensive Plan**

Tompkins County Planning Commissioner Ed Marx provided Legislators a detailed overview of the draft 2015 Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan. The proposed 2015 Plan represents the first full update of the County's Comprehensive Plan since it was first adopted by the Legislature in 2004.

The Plan is available for review on the County website at <http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/compplan>.

The updated Plan, which has been endorsed by the County's Planning Advisory Board and recommended for adoption by the Legislature's Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality, will be the focus of a public hearing before the Legislature at its next meeting, February 17, at 5:30 p.m. The hearing will take place at Legislature Chambers, located at the Governor Daniel D. Tompkins Building (second floor), 121 E. Court Street, Ithaca.

Commissioner Marx noted that the Plan presents a vision for the future of the community based on a set of principles that reflect community values as expressed by the County Legislature. He said three overarching principles addressing Sustainability, Regional Cooperation, and Fiscal Responsibility, are reflected throughout the Plan, with remaining principles related to the economy, housing, and transportation; the environment; climate change; and neighborhoods and communities. The Plan addresses climate adaptation for the first time, as well as the issue of healthy communities. It recommends 28 action items for County government to initiate within two years.

According to the principles, recommended in the Plan, Tompkins County should be a place where:

- the needs of current and future generations are met without compromising the ecosystems upon which they depend;
- all levels of government work cooperatively to address regional issues;
- taxpayer dollars are invested in public infrastructure and facilities in the most efficient manner possible;
- economic prosperity is accessible to all;
- housing is affordable, safe, energy efficient, and appealing;
- transportation choices are efficient, affordable, and healthy for people and the environment;
- natural features and working rural landscapes are preserved and enhanced;
- water resources are clean, safe, and protected;
- the energy system meets community needs without contributing additional greenhouse gases to the atmosphere;
- the entire community is prepared for the economic, environmental, and social impacts of climate change;
- the built environment promotes healthy, safe, and active lifestyles;
- new development is focused in compact, walkable, mixed-use communities.

Legislature Chair Mike Lane commended Commissioner Marx and his staff for excellent work in drafting the Plan and said he's looking forward to hearing comments from the public at the hearing later this month.

*Contact: Planning Commissioner Ed Marx, 274-5560.*

### **Legislature Receives Annual Compliance Program Report**

The Legislature received its annual year-end report on the Tompkins County Compliance Program from Deputy County Administrator and County Compliance Officer Paula Younger, who chairs the County's ten-member Compliance Committee. As stated in the report presented to the Legislature, the Tompkins County Compliance Program "is designed to demonstrate good stewardship of the people's trust and resources, focusing on regulatory compliance controls, policies, and staff training that encourage a culture of integrity and transparency." Core elements of the Program include reviewing, assessing, and revising existing policies and procedures for the purpose of addressing areas of compliance risk; working with departments to develop standards and processes for addressing specific functional risk areas; developing internal systems and controls to promote compliance in accordance with our legal and ethical requirements; identifying/monitoring potential non-compliant issues; and assisting with education and outreach to staff.

Deputy Administrator Younger reported that, among key accomplishments during 2014 were continued work in the area of information technology compliance—including privacy, data protection, and information security policy development, which led to two new County policies adopted by the Legislature—and recommending a Security Risk Analysis Process regarding protected health information, as required by the federal Health Information Affordability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Review the full report presented to the Legislature at the Compliance Program website at <http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/tccp> (click on "End of Year 2014 Compliance Progress Report).

*Contact: Deputy County Administrator Paula Younger, County Compliance Officer, 274-5551.*

### **County Administrator Reports on County Department Accomplishments**

County Administrator Joe Mareane presented to the Legislature his annual summary of major accomplishments by County departments during 2014.

View the Administrator's presentation on the County Administration section of the County website at [www.tompkinscountyny.gov/ctyadmin](http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/ctyadmin).

*Contact: County Administrator Joe Mareane, 274-5551.*

Among other business

The Legislature passed a resolution requesting that the State Public Service Commission extend the comment deadline on two elements of its "Reforming the Energy Vision" proceeding, which seeks to overhaul regulations governing utility companies to support energy efficiency and renewables, encouraging investment in distributed energy sources. The measure notes Tompkins County has demonstrated its interest and support of implementation of renewable energy sources, but has only recently learned of these proceedings and asks, in part, that a February 10 comment deadline be extended until May 20, to enable submission of meaningful comments.

The Legislature accepted a \$400,000 award of New York State Community Development Block Grant funds to continue its Healthy Homes rehabilitation program for low- to moderate-income homeowners, the program delivered by Better Housing for Tompkins County and the County Planning Department. Funds will assist 23 households make energy-efficient home improvements and repair or replace well, septic systems, and roofs.

County Finance Director Rick Snyder reported on the County year-end sales tax distribution for 2014, noting that total receipts for 2014 came in 4.73% above those for 2013, with fourth-quarter receipts up 9.3%, compared to the fourth quarter of 2013.

Legislature Chair Mike Lane announced his charge to the Tompkins County Bicentennial Commemoration Commission to mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the County's founding in 2017, and his appointment of the first 13 members of the up-to-25 member Commission. The Commission will be co-chaired by the Chair of the Legislature and County Historian Carol Kammen.

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