

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** September 20, 2024

**PROJECT #:** 2104.24003.000

**TO:** Town of Ulysses Comprehensive Plan Update Steering Committee

**FROM:** MRB Group

**RE:** Planning Foundations Memo

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### INTRODUCTION

This memorandum serves as an overview of previous local and regional planning documents. The following documents were analyzed for the memorandum:

- Town of Ulysses Comprehensive Plan (2009)
- Town of Ulysses Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan (2013)
- Town of Ulysses Natural Resources Inventory (2018)
- Route 96 Corridor Management Study (2008)
- Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway Plan (2001)
- Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan (2015)

### OVERVIEW OF PREVIOUS PLANNING DOCUMENTS

#### Town of Ulysses Comprehensive Plan (2009)

The Town of Ulysses Comprehensive plan developed plan was a community-drive plan with a unified vision.

The primary focus areas were:

- Environment and Natural Resources
- Sustainable Land Use and Development
- Local Economy
- Community Services
- Community Identity

Each policy area consisted of various objectives and action items to be implemented.

## Previous Vision Statement from 2009

*“Ulysses is a rural community in the Finger Lakes region that takes great pride in its agricultural heritage and character, natural resources, and small-town atmosphere. Significant community features, including our farms and lakeshore, make Ulysses a desirable location for residents and visitors alike. We will continue to celebrate and protect our unique resources by promoting efforts that support agricultural sustainability, open space conservation, a balanced approach to economic development, and revitalization of village and hamlet centers. We will strive to effectively balance future growth with the conservation of key community assets through proactive planning in a manner that benefits all residents, both today and in the future.”*

## Town of Ulysses Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan (2019)

The Town of Ulysses Agriculture and Farmland Protect Plan takes a comprehensive look at agricultural assets, threats, and protection methods.

### Vision Statement

*“Ulysses will be home to a healthy and diverse collection of farms that employ a variety of marketing strategies, are supported by community members and local policies, and contribute to economically viable and environmentally sound agricultural enterprises.”*

### Threats Identified:

- Land Values
- Farm Succession Planning
- Development Pressure
- Community Education
- Town Land Use Policies and Regulations
- Environmental

### Farmland Protection Goals

1. Strengthen the agricultural economy.
2. Improve public understanding of farming.
3. Establish appropriate tax policies that support farming.
4. Enhance land use policies to better protect farmland.

### Areas Recommended for Farmland Protection:

- Agricultural Core
- Route 96 Corridor South
- Lakefront
- Village Edge
- Hamlet

### Town of Ulysses Natural Resources Inventory (2018)

The Town of Ulysses Natural Resources Inventory analyzed various natural resources. The types of natural resources analyzed in three categories: hydrology; geology and soils, and land Use and land cover. Each category section of the inventory defined what the resource(s) are, what resources are in Ulysses, why the resource(s) are important, and supporting maps and data.

#### Types of Natural Resources Analyzed:

1. Hydrology
2. Geology & Soils
3. Land Use and Land Cover

### Route 98 Corridor Management Study (2008)

The Route 96 Corridor Management Study is intended to assist the Town of Ulysses, Town of Ithaca, City of Ithaca, and Tompkins County to plan for future growth along the corridor. This plan is meant to be a tool that defines a preferred development pattern for the corridor and provides strategies to reduce anticipated traffic-related impacts that may be caused by new development. This plan was developed into four (4) technical reports:

- **Technical Report #1** - Focuses on Existing Conditions within the study area and lays the framework for later projections, analysis, and recommendations. Technical Report #1 provides a baseline of information relevant to the corridor from which to learn from, and build on.
- **Technical Report #2** – The analysis and considerations component of the overall study and is subdivided into three main components: traffic projections, traffic impact analysis, and opportunities and constraints analysis. Each of these sections helps to identify what opportunities, issues, and obstacles exist with regard to creating a more livable and desirable corridor.
- **Technical Report #3** – Technical Report #3 provides recommendations for the Corridor including traffic, land use, quality of life, and other topics deemed important by local residents and Technical Review Committee members.
- **Technical Report #4** - An implementation-based document that defines specific actions and activities desired to achieve and meet the recommendations and goals set forth in Technical Report #3.

### Principles of Access Management

- Provide a Specialized Roadway System
- Limit Direct Access to Major Roadways
- Promote Intersection Hierarchy
- Locate Signals to Favor Through Movements
- Preserve the Functional Area of Intersections and Interchanges.
- Limit the Number of Conflict Points
- Separate Conflict Areas
- Remove Turning Vehicles from Through Traffic Lanes
- Use Non-traversable Medians to Manage Left-Turns Movements
- Provide a Supporting Street and Circulation System.

### Conceptual Plans

- Jacksonville Hamlet Conceptual Plan
- Cayuga Medical Center Conceptual Plan

### Context Zones Analyzed

- Jacksonville Hamlet Node
- Cayuga Medical Center Node
- Route 96 Corridor-wide

### Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway Plan (2001)

The purpose of the Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway Plan is to protect and enhance the experience of users as they travel around Cayuga Lake. The corridor management plan component outlines the Stewardship Plan, Tourism Development Plan, and Marketing and Promotion Plan for the Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway.

### Vision Statement

*“The Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway is a diverse transportation corridor, which links scenic views of Cayuga Lake and the surrounding agricultural and woodlands; year-round recreational opportunities; historical resources; wineries; the City of Ithaca and quaint village and hamlet areas to form an interesting, inviting rural traveling experience.”*

### Goals

- Highlight the scenic beauty of the region by encouraging travel along the lake
- Unify the numerous natural, recreation, tourism, and cultural resources along the Lake through signage and marketing materials
- Attract increased travel and economic activity along the Byway Route

- Support tourist activity through carefully designed and placed signs, interpretive centers and information kiosks
- Develop existing Byway resources through the implementation of the Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway Master Plan
- Manage and improve the Byway routes and facilities to ensure travelers safety, responsible development decisions and community support of the Byway designation
- Provide the foundation for a Comprehensive Finger Lakes Scenic Byway network
- Manage the various resources along the lake to create a sustainable byway and ensure conservation of the many natural resources.

**86.75-mile Byway Route includes:**

- 1.95 miles along Routes 5 & 20 from Route 89 to State Route 90
- 24.06 miles along State Route 90 from Route 5 & 20 to Route 34B
- 11.86 miles along Route 34B from State Route 90 to Route 34
- 7.28 miles along Route 34 from Route 34 to Route 89
- 41.60 miles along Route 89 from Route 34 to Routes 5 & 20

**Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan (2019)****Overarching principles:**

- The needs of current and future generations are met without compromising the ecosystems upon which they depend (**Sustainability**).
- All levels of government work cooperatively to address regional issues (**Regional Cooperation**).
- Taxpayer dollars are invested in public infrastructure and facilities in the most efficient manner possible (**Fiscal Responsibility**).

**Principles (Priority Action Areas)**

- The Economy
- Housing
- Transportation
- Natural Resources
- Water Resources
- Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Climate Adaptation
- Healthy Communities
- Development Patterns

**County Actions to be Initiated by 2025**

1. **Municipal Assistance:** Undertake direct outreach and engagement with municipalities several times each year to identify opportunities to assist their implementation of projects that would directly promote the policies of the Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan or projects identified in County strategies. [Department of Planning and Sustainability]

2. **Strategic Tourism Plan:** Update the Tompkins County 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan (2012). [Strategic Tourism Planning Board, Department of Planning and Sustainability]
3. **Priority Trails:** Work with community partners to further implement the Tompkins Priority Trails Strategy. [Department of Planning and Sustainability]
4. **Route 13 Corridor Study:** Develop the 2020 State Route 13 Corridor Study and identify opportunities to implement recommendations. [Department of Planning and Sustainability, Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council]
5. **Housing Funding:** Identify and pursue methods to continue and expand the Community Housing Development Fund Program. [Department of Planning and Sustainability]
6. **HABs Strategy:** Establish a detailed countywide Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) strategy based on the Cayuga Lake and Owasco Lake HABs Action Plans and identify the actions, and the appropriate lead agencies, to be taken in Tompkins County that would most effectively reduce HABs . [Water Resources Council]
7. **Stream Corridor Protection:** Provide resources to support and encourage local officials to establish mechanisms and programs for protecting stream corridors. [Department of Planning and Sustainability]
8. **Watershed Rules and Regulations:** Evaluate existing watershed rules and regulations within the region to determine best practices for protecting drinking water quality and enforcement mechanisms, focusing on the potential of establishing such rules for the Cayuga Lake watershed. [Department of Planning and Sustainability, Health Department]
9. **County-Owned Forestlands:** Establish clear goals for managing County-owned Forest Lands and develop a plan of action for advancing those goals. [Environmental Management Council, Department of Planning and Sustainability]
10. **Resiliency and Recovery Plan:** Develop the Tompkins County Resiliency and Recovery Plan that both includes an update of the Tompkins County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2013) and develops tools to support resiliency and post-disaster economic recovery. [Department of Planning and Sustainability]
11. **Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory:** Conduct greenhouse gas emissions inventories both for the community and for County government operations, to be able to compare and track progress from the 2008 GHG Emissions and Energy Use Inventories. [Department of Planning and Sustainability]
12. **Energy Infrastructure:** Work with the Public Service Commission, state agencies, and NYSEG to plan for and support reliable and adequate energy infrastructure in the County that advances the

County's greenhouse gas emissions goals, while supporting the County's Economic Development Strategy and Housing Strategy. [Department of Planning and Sustainability]

- 13. Business Energy Advisors:** Continue to implement the Business Energy Advisors program and explore methods to improve and expand its impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the commercial sector. [Department of Planning and Sustainability]
- 14. Employee Commutes:** Assist County employees in reducing greenhouse gas emissions from their daily commutes. [Department of Planning and Sustainability, Department of Human Resources]
- 15. Net-zero Emissions Facilities and Fleet:** Undertake an inventory and analysis of County facilities and fleet to determine a financially sound path to net-zero emissions. [Facilities Department, Department of Planning and Sustainability]
- 16. Water and Sewer Study:** Support TCAD's update of the Countywide Inter-Municipal Water and Sewer Feasibility Study for Tompkins County (2010) and disseminate the results to municipalities. [Department of Planning and Sustainability]
- 17. Planning and Design:** Identify and share ways local municipalities can use the Planning and Design Principles from the Development Focus Areas Strategy (2012) in their communities. [Department of Planning and Sustainability]
- 18. Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail:** Complete tasks associated with the regional Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail Implementation grant from the New York State Department of State. [Department of Planning and Sustainability]

## CONCLUSION

This overview provides insight and a baseline understanding of local and regional aspirations, goals, and implementation strategies. The comprehensive plan update should keep these insights in mind when developing a vision, guiding principles and implementation strategy. Having synergies with local and regional plans can foster collaboration and build support for implementing initiatives.