



Tompkins County
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY

121 East Court Street
Ithaca, New York 14850

Katherine Borgella, AICP
Commissioner of Planning and Sustainability

Telephone (607) 274-5560
www.tompkinscountyny.gov/planning

June 2, 2022

Ray Burger, Planning Director
Town of Dryden
93 East Main St.
Dryden, NY 13053

Re: Review Pursuant to §239 -l, -m and -n of the New York State General Municipal Law
Action: Comprehensive Plan, Town of Dryden

Dear Mr. Burger:

This letter acknowledges your referral of the proposal identified above for review and comment by the Tompkins County Department of Planning & Sustainability pursuant to §239 -l, -m and -n of the New York State General Municipal Law. We have no recommendations on this proposal. The Department offers the following comments regarding the proposed plan, which are not formal recommendations under General Municipal Law §239 -l, -m and -n:

Comments

- We suggest adding information to two of the maps in the draft Comprehensive Plan:
 - Map 3 – Wetlands and Floodplains – should include wetlands identified by the Tompkins County Water Resources Council (WRC) which provides more detailed information than the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and federal National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps.
 - Map 5 – Open Space Resources –should include the snowmobile trails maintained by the local snowmobile club, the Dryden-Caroline Drifters.

The County’s GIS Division can provide this information to the Town if needed.

- We have concerns with the Future Land Use Map and its implications. The County supports nodal development patterns for many reasons: to direct investment of limited public resources where it can have the most impact, to support walkable compact development patterns, and to help protect the rural character of communities throughout the County by limiting sprawl.

The Town’s draft Plan’s Future Land Use Map identifies large expanses of “Nodal Development Areas.” These areas are not distinguished from each other and currently do not appear to be focused enough to support many of the reasons for nodes identified above. We suggest the Town either reduce the size of the Nodal Development Areas or consider establishing different types of Nodal Development Areas.

In the Tompkins County Development Focus Areas Strategy, we identified four types of development focus areas – three of which would be applicable in the Town of Dryden (established nodes, emerging nodes, and rural centers). The Town needn’t use the exact same approach, but there are significant differences in terms of designing and implementing strategies,

investing public funding, and establishing successful communities that would be good for the Town to consider.

From the County's Development Focus Areas Strategy:

Nodes, whether established or emerging, are walkable in size. A general rule of thumb is that people are willing to walk up to ten minutes to run an errand or walk to school, but for any greater distance, the inclination shifts to driving. A ten-minute walk translates roughly into a half-mile in distance. Nodes, like Urban Centers, have public water and sewer systems capable of supporting dense and diverse development.

Established Nodes, as the name implies, already exist and have a mix of housing types, diverse businesses and services, and employment opportunities.

Emerging Nodes already partially meet the definition of Nodes, however they lack the mix of land uses that would make them Established Nodes. They do, however, have some water and sewer infrastructure (or plans for those services) with the capacity to support mixed-use development.

Rural Centers, like Nodes, are walkable in size. They usually have a mix of residential development, employment, businesses, and services. The critical difference between Nodes and Rural Centers is the lack of water and sewer infrastructure in the Rural Centers. Without this infrastructure, they cannot support the intensity of development envisioned in Nodes.

Finally, we would suggest including the Villages of Dryden and Freeville on the Future Land Use Map, acknowledging the integral nature of these areas in relation to the Town's future land use plan. The Town might consider labeling them "Nodal Development Areas."

We look forward to receiving notification on the final action taken by your municipality within 30 days of decision, as required by State law. Should you have any questions about this review please contact us.

Sincerely,



Katherine Borgella, AICP
Commissioner of Planning and Sustainability