



Inclusion Through Diversity

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December 8, 2014
TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County Planning, TCAD Pledge Collaborative Approach on Energy and Economic Development

Addressing the community's energy needs while reducing greenhouse gas emissions poses an immense challenge that demands immediate action, and developing a vibrant local economy that provides more good jobs is a top priority of County government.

Tompkins County Area Development, the County's designated economic development agency, and the *Tompkins County Planning Department*, which provides analysis and planning to address community energy and greenhouse gas emissions, today announced an agreement to collaborate on addressing long-term and immediate energy needs and emissions in ways that contribute to a vital local economy. This collaboration will include bringing a broad variety of voices to the discussion of community goals and strategies, as well as tangible steps to meet both energy and economic development goals.

"We hope this collaboration can provide resources to support business decisions that take into account the current and future energy and climate environment," said Tompkins County Commissioner of Planning Ed Marx. "We want to help businesses identify cost-effective solutions that meet their energy needs, allow them to grow and, at the same time, contribute to community greenhouse gas reduction goals."

"A movement toward more sustainable energy infrastructure and economic development and job creation are not mutually exclusive goals," noted Michael Stamm, president of Tompkins County Area Development (TCAD). "Tompkins County has a long and enviable history of stimulating private sector investment and creating employment opportunities while enhancing the quality of life we all cherish so deeply. TCAD is committed to working with the leadership of the County to create and implement sustainable energy solutions that also meet the energy needs of our customers."

While both organizations believe that overall goals for strengthening the local economy and reaching energy and greenhouse gas emissions targets are compatible and can be mutually reinforcing, they also recognize that there may be specific instances where they come into conflict. In such cases, the County Planning Department's Energy Fund and the Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency's Tax Incentive tools will be employed in an attempt to find a mutual-gains solution to the perceived conflict. They also acknowledge that, in instances where no clear mutually beneficial solution can be identified, the attempt to meet both goals will need to be weighed in making a decision.

Meeting long-term and intermediate targets

Near- to long-term energy planning will be addressed primarily through two initiatives:

Energy Roadmap. This project, being developed by the County Planning Department, will consider alternative energy scenarios that would allow the community to achieve an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, with interim goals to indicate meaningful progress. TCAD will be

an active participant in the process and work to bring important voices from the business community to the discussion.

Energy Focus Areas. For those areas of Tompkins County critical to the county’s economic success—such as downtown Ithaca, the business parks and industrial sites near Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport, and Ithaca’s East and South Hills—TCAD and Tompkins County Planning will attempt to engage NYSEG, the Municipal Electric and Gas Alliance (MEGA), funders at NYSERDA, and other potential partners to evaluate energy infrastructure and devise long-term plans to meet current and future commercial, industrial and residential energy needs while reducing GHG emissions.

Approach regarding specific projects

Regarding more immediate issues, especially those relating to specific economic development opportunities, the following tools will be employed:

Energy Fund. \$20,000 to support collaborative efforts to meet energy and greenhouse gas reduction goals is allocated by the County Legislature as part of the Planning Department’s 2015 budget. The Planning Department will work with TCAD to make a portion of this funding available to help businesses considering expansions and residential developers proposing new projects evaluate efficiency and renewable energy options to reduce their carbon footprint while supplying the energy needed for their business operations.

IDA Incentives. TCAD, which provides staff support to the County’s Industrial Development Agency, will work with the IDA and Planning Department to structure an incentive program for businesses that reduce their carbon footprint as part of a job-creating expansion.

Broadening Awareness. TCAD and the Planning Department agree to institutionalize consideration of economic and energy impacts throughout their work, including individual project review and technical and financial assistance efforts—in part, making businesses and developers aware of available community resources and encouraging them to consider energy options as they pursue economic development projects.

“One of the greatest challenges of our time is how we can foster economic growth and also make meaningful reductions to our carbon footprint,” stated Michael Lane, Chair of the Tompkins County Legislature. “The work being done by the County and TCAD is helping to chart that path, for Tompkins County and beyond.”

TCAD and the County Planning Department agree that discourse in the community around the topics of economic development, energy, and greenhouse gas emissions must be based on clear and accurate information and occur in a civil and respectful manner. Both organizations are committed to work together to provide community leadership in setting such a tone.

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