

MUNICIPAL PLANNING ASSISTANCE Program Guidelines

The Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability has set aside up to 200 hours of staff time to work on planning projects identified by municipal officials. Our work can take one of two forms: Direct Services or Best Practices Reports.

Direct Services.

The Department will work for and under the direction of an individual municipality on a specific local project, such as helping to write a chapter of a comprehensive plan, facilitating public meetings on planning-related topics, or updating a portion of a local ordinance.

Best Practices Report.

The Department will research best practices for local governments to address a specific issue they are struggling with, such as implementing form-based codes or identifying alternative methods for preparing population projections. A final written “Best Practices Report” would be provided to all municipalities and, if appropriate, the County would conduct a training session on its findings and recommendations.

Eligible Applicants:

Every town, village or city government within Tompkins County is eligible for this program.

Cost of Assistance:

For Direct Services, the municipality will pay for half of the assigned planner’s time at a rate of \$27 per hour. The County will pay the other half of the planner’s time and cover minor incidental costs (such as local travel, printing, and the like).

For a Best Practices Report, there would be no charge to any municipality.

Project Selection:

Call for Projects [2020]

Three projects have already been selected for 2020. However, if any of these projects are canceled and the Department has staff available, we will reach out to municipalities to announce our availability.

Call for Projects [2021]

A formal call for projects for 2021 will be made in September. Municipal officials are encouraged to contact the Department at any time to discuss project ideas.

Selection Criteria

The selection process is based on the availability of staff with the required expertise; and, preference is given to

- municipalities without professional planning staff,
- projects that would further the principles and policies of the Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan, and,
- municipalities who have not previously participated.

The Department selects as many projects as it can support (probably one to three in any year).

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