

# **INTRODUCTION**

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan for the Towns of Fayette and Varick is to guide local officials and community members in making decisions that will affect the future of the two Towns. Future actions that will be based on the policies and recommendations in the Plan include revisions to zoning and other local laws and regulations, capital budgeting, and providing services to the community. The Comprehensive Plan addresses the full spectrum of issues facing the Towns and balances competing needs and interests in the community.

## **Legal Basis**

The Comprehensive Plan has been prepared pursuant to NYS Town Law §272-a. The two Towns agreed to prepare the Comprehensive Plan on a cooperative basis. Town Law §272-a specifies that Town Boards are responsible for preparing and adopting Comprehensive Plans. As the law also permits the Town Boards to delegate this responsibility to an ad hoc Commission established for the express purpose of preparing Comprehensive Plans, the Town Boards of Fayette and Varick appointed a joint Comprehensive Plan Commission (CPC) to guide the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan for the Towns of Fayette and Varick was prepared by a joint commission and is published as a single document. Unless stated otherwise, the recommendations apply to both towns. Each Town accepts only those recommendations that apply to it. Each Town intends to independently adopt the Comprehensive Plan as a guide to decision-making.

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that does not, in itself, have the force of law. However, the Plan will influence changes in Town laws and regulations as well as funding decisions and other Town actions during the next 10 to 15 years. In particular, local zoning regulations must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

## **Process of Preparing the Plan**

The Comprehensive Plan for the Towns of Fayette and Varick represents the culmination of a planning process that began in 2003. The Comprehensive Plan Commission met monthly for more than one year to coordinate the preparation of the Plan.

Members of the CPC included representatives from the Town Boards, Planning Boards, and Zoning Boards of Appeals, as well as citizens at large. The following persons served on the Comprehensive Plan Commission:

### **Town of Fayette**

- Keith Tidball, Chairman
- Edward L. Barto, Supervisor
- Doug Frier
- Cindy Lorenzetti
- Mark Lott
- Carolyn McGuane, Secretary
- Allan Merrill
- Jeff Trout
- Ros Parks

### **Town of Varick**

- Thomas Bjorkman, Vice Chairman
- Annie Bachman
- Alan Gelatt
- Bill Kaminski
- Bob Kayser
- Bill Larzelere
- Frankie Long
- Joan E. Teichner, Supervisor

In May 2004, the Towns retained a team of consultants led by Stuart I. Brown Associates, a planning and management consulting firm based in Fairport, New York, to facilitate the planning process and prepare the plan document. The MRB Group, based in Rochester, New York, provided assistance with mapping and technical issues.

Public participation included a Residents' Survey, distributed in September 2004, a public informational meeting to present the results of the Residents' Survey (2004), a CPC public hearing (2005), and Town Boards public hearing (2005 and 2006).

Several CPC meetings also included roundtable discussions with representatives of various interest groups. Roundtable discussions were held on the following topics:

- Farmland and Agriculture
- Economic Development and Depot Redevelopment
- Housing Development and Neighborhoods
- Watershed Protection

### **Plan Organization**

The **Land Use Overview** presents an overview of the community, summarizes the issues addressed in each section, and shows how the individual topical areas relate to one another. It also presents an introduction to zoning and subdivision regulations, which are the primary tools available to the Towns to help achieve the land use goals of the Plan.

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A **Future Land Use and Conservation Map** presents the Towns' policies regarding land use, and will be used as a guide in revising the Towns' zoning map.

Topical sections of the Comprehensive Plan address the major issues identified by the community:

- **Watershed Protection and Environmental Quality;**
- **Agriculture and Farmland;**
- **Housing and Residential Neighborhoods;**
- **Tax Base and Economic Development;**
- **Transportation and Infrastructure;**
- **Community Facilities and Services;**
- **Hamlets; and**
- **Historic Resources.**

In each section, the Plan presents:

- **Goals;**
- **Background Information;**
- **Issues and Opportunities;**
- **Tools and Techniques; and**
- **Recommended Actions.**

“**Sidebars**” within the Plan document present additional information that supports and/or provides the context for the recommendations in the Plan.

- Relevant Plans and Programs include summaries of plans prepared by the Towns or other government agencies and descriptions of State or County government programs.
- Residents' Survey Highlights present the relevant findings from the survey of Ontario residents conducted in Fall 2003. The final report from the Residents Survey is available at the Town Halls and is included as an appendix to the Comprehensive Plan.
- Highlights of Roundtable Discussions summarize the issues and recommendations presented by residents and resource people who met with the CPC.

The **Implementation Strategy** summarizes the recommended actions by topic, with a proposed time frame, responsible agency, cost estimate, and potential funding sources. A summary of the recommended actions by time frame provides a year-by-year guide to implementing the Plan.

### **Monitoring and Updating the Plan**

The Towns of Fayette and Varick are not static, but are in a constant state of flux and change. Over time, the changes which occur in the communities may render the Comprehensive Plan outdated or inappropriate if the Plan is not updated to take the changes into consideration. Accordingly, it is essential for the Town Boards to monitor changes in their respective communities and to reevaluate the relevance and appropriateness of the goals set forth in the Plan and the measures recommended to achieve the goals. The Plan should then be updated, as necessary, to appropriately revise the goals and recommended actions so the Plan may continue to serve as useful and relevant guide for Town officials.

In communities that experience a slow rate of change, reviewing and updating the Plan at 5-year intervals may be sufficient. In communities that experience rapid change, the Plan may need to be reviewed and updated more frequently, perhaps at 2- or 3-year intervals.

The Town Boards would be wise to enlist their Town Planning Boards and Zoning Boards of Appeals to assist with reviewing and updating the Plan as these boards may have much information and insight that may be beneficial to the Town Boards in determining how the Plan should be revised. As with the initial adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, future amendments to the Plan will require both environmental reviews to evaluate potential adverse impacts and public hearings to provide members of the public to comment on the proposed amendments.