

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of the Town of Batavia Comprehensive Plan is to guide local officials and community members in making decisions that will affect the future of the Town. Future Town 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 Town and balances competing needs and interests in the community.

Legal Basis

The Comprehensive Plan has been prepared pursuant to NYS Town Law §272-a. Town Law §272-a specifies that the Town Board is responsible for preparing and adopting a Comprehensive Plan. As the law also permits the Town Board to delegate this responsibility to an ad hoc committee established for the express purpose of preparing Comprehensive Plans, the Town Board appointed a Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC) to guide the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan.

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.

Relationship to Genesee County Smart Growth Plan

This Comprehensive Update was prepared in conformance with the “smart growth” principles referenced in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan. These principles include:

- Promote the efficient use of land resources and infrastructure
- Maximize the benefit of existing infrastructure
- Promote economic development in appropriate areas
- Encourage revitalization within the developed areas, focusing on residential neighborhoods, downtown revitalization and re-use of environmentally damaged lands
- Protect prime agricultural soils and other natural resources and encourage the continued viability of agriculture

Upon its adoption by the Batavia Town Board, this Comprehensive Plan Update is expected to provide the basis for the Genesee County Legislature to continue to authorize the Town to review water system hookups for development in the Town of Batavia outside of designated Smart Growth Development Areas.

Summary of Genesee County Smart Growth Plan

The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan was prepared in order to mitigate potential development impacts that would otherwise result from the extension of water service. The Plan delineates Development Areas within which development and re-development will be encouraged. Outside of the designated Development Areas, access to the County-funded portions of the County's water system¹ is subject to the policies and procedures specified in the Smart Growth Plan.

The Town of Batavia has been authorized by the County Legislature to review requests for water hook-ups that serve non-agricultural development outside designated Development Areas. In order to receive this authorization, the Town demonstrated that its legally adopted comprehensive plan was consistent with the principles of "smart growth."

The Town applies the following criteria to requests for water system hook-ups outside of designated Development Areas:

- Impacts on the viability of agriculture
- Consistency with County economic development goals
- Consistency with other available infrastructure
- Consistency with local comprehensive plans, zoning and other land use controls and development objectives
- Impact on Village/ City revitalization programs
- Does the proposal meet a pressing public health or other community need?

The Town is required to keep records to demonstrate that the criteria described above are applied to each request. The County Planning Department monitors hook-up decisions made by municipalities. The County Legislature may rescind the authority to approve hook-ups if the Town does not follow the principles of the Smart Growth Plan.

The Smart Growth Plan maps and recommendations are reviewed every three (3) years. Development Area boundaries may be revised based on changes in Agricultural Districts, local comprehensive plans and zoning districts, sewer and water service areas, and land development patterns.

¹ The "County-funded portions of the County's water system" include all water lines that are constructed by the County, financially subsidized by the County, or supplied with water from a source built or subsidized by the County. These include all of the Town of Batavia's public water lines.

Previous Comprehensive Plans

This document represents an update of the previous Comprehensive Plan, which was prepared in 1993 and adopted in 1997 by the Batavia Town Board. In preparing this plan, the CPC and its consultants used the 1993 Plan as a starting point. The CPC reviewed each of the goals and policies to determine whether they represent the Town's policy.

The CPC and its consultants also reviewed the 1967 Batavia Area Plan. This Plan included several recommendations to improve traffic circulation which were carried over into the 1993 Comprehensive Plan and this 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Process of Preparing the Plan

The Town of Batavia Comprehensive Plan represents the culmination of a planning process that began in March 2006. A Comprehensive Plan Committee met regularly between April 2006 and February 2007 to coordinate the preparation of the Plan.

Members of the CPC included Town staff and representatives from the Town Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals and the community at large. Representatives from the City of Batavia and Genesee County also participated. The following persons participated in the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan:

- Kathleen Jasinski, Co-Chair
- Greg Post, Supervisor, Co-Chair
- Clint Worthington, Zoning Enforcement Officer
- Dan Underhill, Deputy Supervisor
- Art Munger, Town Bookkeeper
- Chad Zambito, Town Councilman
- Paul McCullough
- Steve Mountain, Town Engineer
- Paul Marchese
- Rod Cook, Highway Superintendent
- Gary Diegelman, ZBA Chairman
- Ray Tourt, City of Batavia Engineer
- Gordon Offhaus
- Mike Pullinzi
- Mike Cleveland
- Dave Winters
- Mary Pat Hancock, County Legislature Chairperson
- Dana Stringham
- James Duval, Director, Genesee County Planning Dept.
- Sharon White, Secretary

The Town retained Stuart I. Brown Associates, a planning and management consulting firm based in Rochester, New York, to facilitate the planning process and prepare the plan document.

Introduction

Public participation included a public hearing conducted by the Comprehensive Plan Committee on January 31, 2007 and a Town Board public hearing held on March 7, 2007.

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

- Residential Development
- Economic Development
- Transportation
- Parks and Recreation
- Farmland and Agriculture
- Sewer, Water and other Utilities

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 Town to help achieve the land use goals of the Plan.

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

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

- **natural resources and environmental protection;**
- **farmland and agriculture;**
- **housing and residential neighborhoods;**
- **economic development;**
- **transportation and utilities; and**
- **government and community services, including parks and recreation.**

In each section, the Plan presents:

- **goals;**
- **background information;**
- **issues and opportunities;**
- **recommended actions.**

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.

“**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 Town or other government agencies and descriptions of State or County government programs.
- Highlights of Roundtable Discussions summarize the issues and recommendations presented by residents and resource people who met with the CPC.
- Tools and Techniques present options for Town action to address issues of concern.

Monitoring and Updating the Plan

The Town of Batavia is not static, but is in a constant state of flux and change. Over time, changes that occur in the community 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 Board to monitor changes in the community and to reevaluate the relevance and appropriateness of the goals set forth in the Plan as well as the measures recommended to achieve the goals. The Plan should then be updated, as necessary, to appropriately revise the goals and recommended actions so that 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 Board would be wise to enlist the Town Planning Board and other community representatives to assist with reviewing and updating the Plan, as they may have information and insight to assist the Town Board 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.