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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: L. STEPHEN BRESCIA, CHAIR, ORANGE COUNTY LEGISLATURE
THOMAS FAGGIONE, CHAIR, RULES & INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
HARRY PORR, DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUIIVE

FROM: DAVID E. CHURCH, AICP, COMMISSIONER OF PLANNING

SUBJECT: ORANGE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2018 PROPOSED UPDATE

DATE: APRIL 10, 2019 SEVEN (7) PAGES

With this memo, The County Planning Department is transmitting to the Legislature the proposed Final County Comprehensive Plan Amendments. This Final version has been reviewed by Planning staff in cooperation with the County Planning Board; and, this version incorporates relevant public comments received from the public hearing and in writing. A summary of those comments and Planning Department response to them is attached to this memo.

As per County Charter and Administrative Code, and consistent with NYS General Municipal Law, I am required to report to the Legislature, at least every five (5) years, on necessary updates to the County Comprehensive Plan and to follow certain specific procedures for such update. The Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2015 with the additions of an Economic Development Strategy and a new chapter on Agriculture and Farmland Protection.

The current recommended updates – consistent with the Draft versions shared earlier this year which were subject to public comment – include two components:

- ✓ First, the primary or “core document” known as Strategies for Quality Communities – first adopted in 2003 and updated as recently as 2010 – will be replaced by a new Comprehensive Plan consisting of twenty-two pages as attached here.
- ✓ Second, a new supplemental Chapter 6 to the Plan entitled “Transportation” consisting of eighty-five pages also attached here, will be added to the Comprehensive Plan.

These documents are also available digitally on sharefile at <https://orangecountygov.sharefile.com/d-s423f8ab206947c7b>

In cooperation with the County Planning Board, I am transmitting and recommending the attached documents for final adoption by the Orange County Legislature as amendments to the County Comprehensive Plan, dated April 10, 2019.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Comprehensive Plan update process began with the soliciting of public comments through the County website and a public engagement/social media site called coUrbanize, and has continued through a Facebook page postings, numerous interviews by Planning Department staff, a set of public meetings and one public hearing held by the County Planning Board, and a two part public hearing held by the Legislature in the City of Newburgh on February 27, 2019 and in Goshen on March 20, 2019. Twenty-two (22) people spoke at the Legislative Public Hearing = 10 spoke in the Newburgh location and twelve in Goshen. Five written comments were also submitted, four by citizens who also spoke at a public hearing, equaling a total of 23 individual commenters.

Core Document Comments

- Priority Growth Area map comments (see below)
- General concern/emphasis of preservation of open space (one request for PDR program)
- Park preservation
- Surge in warehouse development (concerns about impact on environment, open space, economic development impact, traffic congestion, quality of life)
- Description of development trends in Chester, should be revised
- Add a paragraph to clarify that this plan supersedes other Plans, but priorities outlined in Open Space Plan still relevant and consistent
- Schunneunk Trail Connection issue/threat

Priority Growth Area Comments

- Public water supplies and watersheds (Walton Lake in particular)
- Steep slopes Schunneunk should be removed, and should overlay other resources identified from prior supplemental chapters
- Transit Hubs (commuter rail stations) revisit- include Stewart, larger Park and Rides in Newburgh, Central Valley, Monroe
- Map doesn't identify Newburgh as a transit hub
- Map should have a note for reader to refer back to text, describing considerations for designation
- South of Tuxedo Park include in growth area
- Emphasize source water protection in narrative description of Priority Growth Area

In response, Planning notes the following:

- The Orange County Open Space Plan was adopted as Supplemental Chapter 1 of the Orange County Comprehensive Plan. The Supplemental Chapters are being retained as part of this update, as are their recommendations. The recommendations of the Open Space Plan are often cited in project review letters issued by the Department, and the Department continues to advocate for open space protection and preservation to the greatest extent feasible.
- The description of development trends in Chester has been revised.

- Transit Hubs on the Priority Grown Areas map have been revised to include additional areas and renamed to Transit Centers, for ease of use of the document.
- Requested note has been included on the Priority Growth Areas map.
- Clarifications have been made within the Priority Growth Areas section to ensure that language about environmentally sensitive areas within the Priority Growth Areas is clear.

Chapter 6 Transportation Comments

- Lack of service Newburgh to Goshen
- Request for extended services/weekend service in Newburgh
- Getting students to Colleges
- Getting people to Court
- Desire to expand Newburgh/Beacon Ferry service and add weekend service
- Newburgh Bus Terminal (not located in the heart of the City and not accessible by sidewalks)
- The need for expanded public transit options to get to citizens to work
- The need to identify Newburgh as a Transit Hub (this issue will be addressed in the Priority Growth Area Map revision.)

Transportation (General, not related to public transit)

- Reducing congestion (particularly 17M)
- The need for prioritization of **maintenance** on existing roads
- Greater trail protection and interconnection

In response, Planning notes the following:

The review of the public hearing transcript, as well as the submitted written comments, has confirmed that they are consistent with the core values that were identified in the public outreach phase of the comprehensive planning process. At the heart of the specific issues raised at the public hearings are the need and desire for the County to represent a place that promotes a transportation system that will support and enhance the economic development of the county, while being mindful of the environmental and quality of life values identified in previous planning documents such as the preservation of open space, farmland protection, and other environmental assets, such as trails and water resources. Public comment has also re-affirmed the desire that any further development of the public transit system, to support economic opportunity throughout the county, be equitable, safe, reliable and affordable.

As such, refer to pages 5-6 of Chapter 6 where the core values, county vision and nine (9) goals to achieve the vision are stated. There were no comments made during the public comment period that were either inconsistent or non-supportive of the vision and goals identified in this Chapter. One subject matter, the lack of a transit hub nearer the center of the City of Newburgh, warranted a change in the text on page 47, first full paragraph, where the following text was added:

The establishment of primary hubs was recommended at several locations: the existing 17K bus terminal in Newburgh, Metro North's Middletown/Walkkill station and Monroe/Woodbury (Woodbury Common.) Secondary hubs were recommended in Goshen and Port Jervis. Overwhelming public comment also suggests re-establishing a potential transit-oriented center within the City of Newburgh in the vicinity of upper Broadway. With the

development of the hubs, Dial-A-Bus services would feed into the main line bus system, completing the three legs of the County triangle (see Map 9 on page 48).

All Changes to the Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Chapter, listed:

Comprehensive Plan:

- Cover page—“Final Draft 1/3/19” was deleted and replaced with “*Proposed Final, April 10, 2019*”; bottom photo was replaced
- Preface—first line, struck “*As written and amended,*” and started the first sentence with “*The Orange County Comprehensive Plan*” . . . ; Fourth paragraph, changed 2018 to 2019.
- How To Use This Document, second page—struck the section called “*Future Supplemental Chapters*” in its entirety
- Page 3, part A.ii., Water Master Plan—first sentence, changed “*business planning document*” to “*business plan*”
- Page 5, section A.v, Economic Development Strategy—third line down, changed “*New York State’s Economic Development Regions*” to “*New York State’s Regional Economic Development Councils*”
- Page 5, section B, Identified Needs—reformatted
- Page 7, section C, Mission and Vision for Orange in 2018 and beyond—changed section header to “*Mission and Vision for Orange County in 2019 and Beyond*”; second paragraph, first sentence—changed “*This Comprehensive Plan for Orange County states our needs for the future*” to “*states the County’s needs for the future*”; second paragraph, last sentence—struck the words “*of our*” so that the last clause reads “*to gain as much meaningful participation from as many citizens as possible.*”
- Page 8, first column, first paragraph—first sentence, struck “*Throughout the public outreach process, we have identified*” and changed the sentence to read “*Four “core values” define how we see ourselves and how we intend to shape the future of Orange County.*”
- Page 11-first column, first paragraph—struck “*Orange County has the 12th-largest population in New York State*”, and replaced with “*Orange County is the 7th most populous county in New York State outside of New York City*”; first column, last paragraph, changed “*Secondly*” to “*Second*”; second column, first paragraph, changed “*thirdly*” to “*third*”
- Page 14—second column, first paragraph, struck the clause “*similar to Ulster County’s RUPCO*”
- Page 15, Section C, Development Trends—second column, first sentence, struck “*Strategies for Quality Communities, was written*” and rewrite the second sentence as “*Since 2006, two new villages and one new town have been created, and . . .*”
- Page 16—first column, first paragraphs, third line, corrected typo to read “*soils*”; first column, second paragraph, first sentence amended the Town of Palm Tree description as follows “*the Town of Palm Tree, newly formed as of January 1, 2019, which incorporated around the Village of Kiryas Joel includes a portion of the land north of NYS Route 17 formerly in the Town of Monroe*”; second column first paragraph, ended first sentence at “*additional land for expansion.*” And struck the clause “*and so satellite communities . . .*”; second column second paragraph, split the last sentence into two sentences, beginning “*The medical industry*” and “*The agricultural industry*”
- Page 16—reformatted section D.

Additions and rewordings in the Priority Growth Area section include:

1. In the second paragraph of this section, the fifth sentence was augmented to include the following phrase in parenthesis: *“Such places typically have the infrastructure to serve growth, including transportation (both motorized and non-motorized), central water and sewer services, dense housing, and other infrastructure that enables efficient and logical development.”*
2. In the Growth Areas subsection (i), the word “cities” was added to the following sentence: *“Within the Growth Areas, the County encourages additional urban development within those areas of higher density such as cities, villages and hamlets.”*
3. The bulleted list of factors to consider in the Priority Growth Areas was augmented to read:

*The Growth Areas are intended to be able to accommodate growth that is projected for the County, considering the **factors** discussed within this section, and typically include:*

- *Centralized water and sewer services*
 - *Land use and zoning that allows for a diverse mix of uses and housing types within a walkable area*
 - *Existing municipal plans for development and conservation*
 - *Complete Streets criteria, such as a connected road network, bicycle lanes and accessible sidewalks, along with other facilities to increase safety and ease of use*
 - *Other services and infrastructure that allow for the efficient use of land and relatively low-impact development*
 - *Transit opportunities, including train stations, park and rides, and other intermodal connections*
 - *Neighborhood-scale commercial and institutional uses that are pedestrian-friendly*
4. The list of *“Features and areas that should be preserved whenever possible”* now includes *“Land affecting a drinking water supply”* as the first bullet.
 5. The sentences *“Similarly, the County has recommended that areas adjacent to the Hudson, Delaware and Wallkill Rivers be included within the Priority Growth Areas. This recommendation does not intend to direct additional development to sensitive or already-developed riverfront areas, but instead aims to prioritize investments in infrastructure and amenities in these areas”* were merged and amended slightly to read:

“Similarly, while the County has recommended that areas adjacent to the Hudson, Delaware and Wallkill Rivers be included within Growth Areas, this recommendation does not intend to direct additional development to sensitive riverfront areas, but instead aims to prioritize investments in infrastructure and amenities in these areas.”

6. Within the Priority Growth Area text and map, the term *“Transit Hub”* was replaced with *“Transit Center.”*

7. The paragraph related to Transit Centers (subsection iii) was amended from: *“Additional focus for growth within the County should be given to areas of existing transit service. Priority consideration should be given to providing options for intermodal connections between transit, motor vehicle, and pedestrian or bicycle transportation for both long-distance and local travelers. The County strongly endorses the transit-oriented development concept that offers pedestrian-scaled projects and an appropriate mix of residential and commercial development at densities and scales sited to take advantage of transit connections”* to:

“Additional focus for growth within the County should be given to areas of existing and future transit service. As shown in the Priority Growth Area map, Transit Centers include both commuter rail stations and areas where bus transit (i.e. park and rides) exists or is needed. Priority consideration should be given to providing options for intermodal connections between transit, motor vehicle, and pedestrian or bicycle transportation for both long-distance and local travelers. The County strongly endorses the transit-oriented development concept that offers pedestrian-scaled projects and an appropriate mix of residential and commercial development at densities and scales sited to take advantage of transit connections.”

8. The first paragraph of the “Areas Outside Priority Growth Areas” subsection (iv) was augmented to include the following as the last sentence: *“Protection of these resources, while a priority in all regions of the County, is especially crucial in rural areas in order to avoid fragmentation of the natural landscape and disruption of the County’s critical agricultural industry.”*

9. Map changes included:

- i. Addition of the following Transit Centers, due to bus transit availability via park and ride lots:
 - a. Broadway in the City of Newburgh
 - b. Park and ride on 17K (Town of Newburgh)
 - c. Stewart airport
 - d. Central Valley
 - e. Monroe park and ride
 - f. Goshen park and ride
 - g. Middletown park and ride
- ii. Extension of the Growth Area in Pine Bush along Route 52 to reflect expansion of businesses and water service
- iii. Expansion of the Growth Area in Highland Falls to also encompass Fort Montgomery
- iv. Expansion of the Growth Area in the Town of Warwick to include the Warwick Industrial Park
- v. Removal of portions of the Growth Area along Schunnemunk Mountain
- vi. Removal of the Bloomingburg vicinity from the Growth Area

Transportation Chapter:

Cover page—"Final Draft 1/3/19" was deleted and replaced with "Proposed Final, April 3, 2019"

Page 47—Section C, Transit Hubs, first column, first full paragraph, added new second sentence:
"Overwhelming public comment also suggests re-establishing a potential transit-oriented center within the City of Newburgh in the vicinity of upper Broadway. With the development of the hubs . . ."

Page 62—replaced Trails map with corrected and updated version