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Town of Lansing

Monday, August 8, 2011 7:00 PM

PLANNING BOARD

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS

(*Denotes present)

Nancy Loncto	*	Tom Ellis
Larry Sharpsteen	*	Lin Davidson, Chairman
Viola Miller	*	David Hatfield
Richard Prybyl		
* Jeffrey Overstrom, EIT		
Lorraine Moynihan Schmitt, Esq.		
* Robert Cree, TB Liaison		

Public Present

Ed Marx

Connie Wilcox

Kathy Miller

Joan Jurkowich

Heather Filiberto

Ryan Buchanan

General Business

Lin Davidson, Chairperson called the Planning Board Meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Mr. Davidson requested to know if there was anyone from the Public that wished to speak with concerns other than what was on the Agenda. There were none.

Ed Marx, Commissioner of Planning and Community Sustainability - Discussion of the Tompkins County Industrial Development Area Programs

Mr. Marx gave a brief presentation on the following;

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Tompkins County Development Focus Areas Strategy: An Overview

Introduction

In 2003 and 2004, the Tompkins County community rallied behind a vision of development that centered on creating vibrant communities while protecting natural and agricultural lands. This vision was captured in the “Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan” (adopted in 2004). Achieving that vision will involve altering the recent pattern of development experienced in the County. As the Forward to the Comprehensive Plan envisions:

Growth in population is concentrated around existing population centers in accordance with local comprehensive plans. Most new development is built at increased density and designed to include attractive buildings, landscaping, and streetscapes that promote neighborly interaction and greatly enhance the quality of life.

Development Focus Areas

The Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan identified two types of focus areas: Natural Features Focus Areas and Agricultural Resources Focus Areas. Development Focus Areas are identified as those areas where development efforts should be concentrated. A Development Focus Area is a walkable, relatively dense concentration of mixed-use development that provides:

- A variety of housing types (single-family homes, condominiums, apartments, etc.)
- A mix of commercial and community services
- Employment opportunities
- Public transit access to other Development Focus Areas in the County

By concentrating most future development into compact walkable neighborhoods with a variety of services, we can create great places to live that support services and facilities that make a community vital. With lessened development pressures in the rural areas of the County, it will be easier to protect the natural and agricultural areas held so dear in our community and not lose those areas over time to the effects of sprawl development.

The alternative is to continue on the path we have followed over the last several decades. The impacts of sprawling development are seen in increasing traffic congestion and commute times; air pollution; inefficient energy consumption and greater reliance on foreign oil; loss of open space and habitat; inequitable distribution of economic resources; and the loss of the rural character of our landscape.

The Development Focus Area Strategy identifies four types of Development Focus Areas: an Urban Center, Established Nodes, Emerging Nodes, and Rural Centers.

The Vision

This Strategy envisions that approximately two-thirds of all new development will occur in Development Focus Areas and one-third will take place outside of these areas for the foreseeable future. This is achievable if the Development Focus Areas are: held to high design standards so as to attract residents and businesses; supported and promoted by public policies, including land use regulations; the focus of community investment in infrastructure; and connected through significant transit, pedestrian and bicycle links between the Urban Center and the other Development Focus Areas

Benefits of Focusing Development

There are many benefits to focusing most development into compact communities, benefits that accrue to residents of the focus areas, developers, local governments, and to the community as a whole.

Affordability. Developing land at higher densities lowers the cost of infrastructure and increases the efficiency of land use. By reducing the costs of development, housing costs are lower. By making walking, biking, and public transit viable options to the private automobile for many trips, and often allowing shorter auto commutes, transportation costs are lower. Also, developing more densely allows the installation of more affordable energy

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systems, such as district heating. All in all, these cost savings can add up to a substantially more *affordable cost of living* for residents in the Development Focus Areas.

Vibrancy. People want to live in strong communities: where there are friendly relationships among neighbors, where the quality of the built environment is high, and where residents feel they can live a safe and healthy life. By building on the distinct identities of existing neighborhoods and creating new ones that possess their own special sense of place, the Development Focus Areas can be exceptional places to live. Attractive design of public spaces, attention to details, and proximity of housing to schools, parks and other services help create walkable neighborhoods that have a certain vibrancy many people find desirable.

Reduced Pressure on Farmland and Natural Areas While not all new development will be located in Development Focus Areas, by providing places where people want to live and where the community welcomes development, there is reduced pressure to develop in areas already valued by the community for their important agricultural, recreational and natural lands.

Efficiency. According to the Urban Land Institute, developing on the outskirts of existing communities eventually costs a community from 40 to 400 percent more than infill development, when the costs of building and maintaining new roads, sewers, fire stations, schools and other public facilities are taken into account. Short-term private profits may result from developing outside of population centers, but the long-term costs are passed on to the public in the form of higher taxes, deteriorating infrastructure, and distress of existing businesses. As noted earlier, development at higher densities reduces the total cost of development. It also reduces the community's ongoing cost to maintain infrastructure. Developing in existing population and employment centers takes advantage of the public and private investments already made in those areas.

Reduced Overall Traffic. With stores, services, housing and employment in close proximity to one another, walking and biking are more compelling and realistic options for a broader range of residents, thus reducing traffic on the entire road network. In addition, with transit connections between all the Development Focus Areas and the Urban Center, most commuters will have a viable alternative to driving to work.

Other Benefits.

- Improved health. Public health is improved due to cleaner air from traffic reductions and increased activity by people walking and biking more.
- Improved water quality. Building compactly results in less impervious surfaces, such as parking lots, resulting in improvements to local and regional water quality.
- Improved resiliency and adaptability. By making alternatives to driving viable and attractive, and creating close-knit communities that could potentially share energy infrastructure, resiliency to changes in energy markets is greatly enhanced.

Achieving the Vision

Several types of actions will need to be taken to achieve the vision espoused by this Strategy. These fall into four broad categories:

1. **Density and Design.** Promote compact mixed-use development in the identified Development Focus Areas. The success of these communities will be dependent, in part, on the quality of the design of the areas.
2. **Development Regulations.** Review local development regulations, including zoning and subdivision regulations, to ensure that they promote the type of development envisioned in this Strategy. Require residential development at net densities between four and fifteen units per acre, with higher densities in the core. Establish minimum density standards for all new residential development.
3. **Infrastructure Improvements.** Implement improvements to existing public water and sewer systems to support compact mixed-use development.
4. **Connections.** Provide pedestrian facilities within each Development Focus Area to make walking an attractive transportation alternative. Provide and maintain transit connections between the Urban Center and the other Development Focus Areas. Also, provide strong pedestrian and bicycle connections between the Development Focus Areas and existing developed areas near the Focus Areas.

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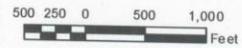


South Lansing Area

-  Lansing Town Center
-  South Lansing Development Focus Area



Tompkins County Planning Department



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Due to a lack of a quorum, no other business occurred. The Meeting ended at 8:00 PM.