

Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan  
FAQs  
August 2015

In 2013 the Hamilton Town Council appointed a Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC) to revise the existing 1999 Comprehensive Plan and to ensure its continued relevance. Committee members include Travis Dubois, Ian Helfant, Darrell Griff, Harvey Kliman, Greg Owens, Jody Palmer, Carolyn Todd, and Town Council members Peter Darby and Chris Rossi.

With guidance from a planning consultant, the CPC conducted a town-wide survey, a visioning workshop, and multiple focus groups to identify issues, collect community ideas, and identify opportunities that serve as the basis for the new comprehensive plan. This public input formed the key foundation and strength of the revised plan. That information, together with demographic and environmental data and new maps, were used to identify Hamilton's strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats facing the Town.

The revised plan addresses those issues and opportunities that are important to our community, and its goals are updated to reflect the needs and views of today's residents in response to emerging trends. **The plan is not a law, but is a document meant to guide Town government in future decision-making.**

After two years of work a draft of the updated Comprehensive Plan is ready for public review and comment. The CPC has put together this FAQ to help Hamilton residents and landowners understand what the plan is, how it can be used, and how it will help the Town of Hamilton long-term.

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

### ***What is a comprehensive plan?***

A Comprehensive Plan is a document that establishes a series of goals, strategies, and actions designed to help the Town meet the community's needs and desires over the next 10 to 15 years. The plan is created with community input, reflects its vision for the Town of Hamilton's future, and is a roadmap to realizing that community vision.

### ***How is it used?***

A Comprehensive Plan guides decision making for Town municipal leaders and informs other government agencies, community organizations, local businesses, and residents about the Town's vision, goals, and future actions. When implemented, it helps to ensure that the community's needs are met, both now and in the future. New York State's laws also require that all land use regulations that are adopted must be in accordance with a comprehensive plan. The plan will therefore guide future zoning and other land use law changes. Comprehensive Plans are also important to support grant requests.

***How is the plan adopted?***

The plan is offered for community review at public hearings held by the Comprehensive Plan Committee, and later, by the Town Council. The plan is subject to an environmental review conducted by the Town. Then the plan must be approved by the Madison County Planning Department. After those steps are completed, the plan can be adopted by a resolution of the Town Council. Comprehensive Plans are not subject to public referendum (vote.)

***Is this plan a law?***

This plan is not a law. It is a plan! The recommendations made in this Comprehensive Plan will not take effect until the Town Board decides to act on them. Some recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan will be implemented through new or updated local laws and policies, or other programs initiated by the Town Council as needed.

***What actions will come from the plan?***

The plan attempts to improve the quality of life for residents in Hamilton. It includes a variety of recommended actions to achieve the goals identified from community input. These actions will be implemented over time, and range from making changes in specific zoning and subdivision laws to Town support of local agricultural economic development programs. The plan does not recommend a complete rewrite of the zoning law, but it does offer suggested updates that would help the Town successfully reach its goals.

Some of the zoning actions recommended in the plan include allowing for the use of conservation subdivisions to promote farmland and open space preservation, changing the density of residential development, helping make the laws more farm-friendly, and identifying and having careful project review in areas that have critical environmental features.

But, the plan is not just a land use plan: recreation, housing, and economic development needs are also addressed with a series of goals and strategies.