

**SUMMARY OF PROGRESS**  
**CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY'S NEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**  
**Presentation to Chautauqua County Planning Board**  
**December 2, 2008**

**A. The County's New Plan Offers Hope for the Future**

Chautauqua County has not undertaken a significant comprehensive planning effort since 1978. In the meantime, conditions and trends have continued changing such as population and migration patterns, new technologies, cultural attitudes, regional economic markets, modes of transportation, housing opportunities, environmental problems, and other forces that are sweeping across the globe.

These changes are creating a global civilization and a global economy that is pockmarked with backwater communities that do not share in the latest growth and technology. Those communities that do not adjust to these changes may be slowly by-passed in the coming decade. The young people in those by-passed communities will live with fewer opportunities and will have diminished futures unless they move to other, more dynamic communities. And that is a problem because rural communities need young people to invest their time and energy in creating more dynamic futures.

We want the new comprehensive plan to assist Chautauqua County as it transforms into one of those more fortunate communities. The new plan can accomplish that major task by:

- (1) Re-positioning Chautauqua County to take advantage of global realities. This will ensure that the county's people will not be by-passed by larger market forces.
- (2) Attracting young people from throughout North America, by offering them a future that rides the crest of global changes. The young people today are the future tomorrow.
- (3) Celebrating Chautauqua County's rural heritage and the full range of rural amenities that urban areas have lost. Many people seek the open spaces, clean environment, small town character and values, and pace of living that can be found in Chautauqua County.

In other words, Chautauqua County can expect to grow if it:

- (1) Becomes more fully integrated with the emerging, global economy.
- (2) Attracts and keeps young people motivated to stay in Chautauqua County.
- (3) Renews a robust community life and protects its rural heritage through rural design solutions that allow growth to continue in a way that does not destroy the small town character, quality of life, and clean environment that people now enjoy.

## **B. We Want the Community to Support the New Comprehensive Plan**

There are no shortcuts to these outcomes. It will be hard work, and the new comprehensive plan must start off doing the right things so that later, in 2010 and beyond, the County's people (and not just local, county, regional and state agencies) will support and help implement and update its action plans.

A major concern has been, once the professional consulting firm has completed the new plan and the County Legislature considers it for adoption, that its proposed policies and action plans will be implemented. That is why the proposed work plan has five phases with feasible steps to get people involved step-by-step over a two year timeline. This work plan and timeline were presented to the Chautauqua County Planning Board on August 5, 2008, and published on County websites and distributed to over 600 people throughout Chautauqua County. That foundational, framework paper's title is: **"A New Comprehensive Plan Can Make A Difference, Chautauqua County, New York: Target 2010,"** dated August 5, 2008. It followed a rough draft discussion paper on the value of young people and how they are central to the future of Chautauqua County, with the title: **"A New Comprehensive Plan Needs A New Approach,"** dated June 12, 2008. Both of these papers were written by Terry H. Martin, Ph.D., and are available. The paper on young people is being revised and will be published with other discussion papers in March 2009.

The work plan and timeline have also been revised and updated as of December 2, 2008. More details were also published on the status of where the County is in its five phase, two year planning process. This paper was widely distributed in late October, 2008, with the title: **"Discussion Papers and Polling Sample: Highlights of Luncheon Held on October 29, 2008,"** by Terry H. Martin, Ph.D. That paper is also available at this time.

We are pleased to report that the revised work plan and timeline are responsive to this County's situation as of December 2008, based on what we have learned so far. The timeline for completing the plan has been extended and now has a projected completion date in mid-2010. The primary reason for this extension has been to give the people, community institutions, and County officials time to become aware of this new process, so that they can begin participating in any of the five phases over the next two years.

This comprehensive planning process will bloom in the spring and summer of 2009, when the County hires a professional planning consulting firm to prepare the actual plan using different planning techniques, and to conduct countywide public participation activities. The firm will be hired under a competitive "Request-for-Proposal" process that will begin in January and February 2009. This countywide planning process will include a full range of planning activities that people expect from such an undertaking, for most of 2009 and extending into 2010.

These many activities will be widely published in local media and posted on County websites. To improve this community outreach effort, the County Planning Department has been creating a new website that, ultimately, will post the completed plan so that everyone can help in its review and updating.

## **B. Progress as of December 2, 2008**

The Chautauqua County Planning Department, under the leadership of Bill Daly, Director of Planning & Economic Development, has taken the following steps in Phases 1 and 2 of the two year, five phase planning process. Work under Phases 3, 4 and 5 have not yet started. The initial steps that have been taken under Phases 1 and 2 (described below) are laying a solid foundation for the new plan, and are getting people involved in more than just attending public hearings. The objective is to have a network of active people working with County officials and its professional consulting firm throughout 2009 and 2010.

### **PHASE 1: Building Blocks – Laying A New Foundation**

- (1) **Review.** Bill Daly and staff introduced Terry H. Martin, consultant, to the County Planning Board. He has been hired part time to assist the Planning Department in organizing and supervising the comprehensive planning process. They reported at that time that they would report quarterly to the County Legislature and County Planning Board for oversight and feedback. This meeting on December 2, 2008, is the first such review meeting. The next review meeting is expected in April 2009.
- (2) **Informal Discussions with Stakeholders.** Because it is not possible to start with all people on all topics, a beginning point was started with workforce issues and young people, and has steadily broadened out to encompass more issues and more people. This approach replaced a more formal survey approach as a first step, on the recommendation of experts from Cornell University. These informal talks are not highly visible, but are helpful for scoping out that many different policies that the plan needs to consider, such as economic development, tourism, sustainable energy, housing, health care, environmental protection, and many other components. These separate topics have traditionally been developed on separate tracks by different organizations at different times. One participant said that this has been occurring “in isolation from each other.” In the new plan, these many components will be integrated into one overall, coordinated strategy.
- (3) **Discussion Papers.** A series of discussion papers have been under discussion, to be written by people who live and work in Chautauqua County. The first two discussion papers were presented in draft form for comment, and are the framework, young people, and discussion paper luncheon papers written by Terry H. Martin. The next discussion paper is being circulated beginning December 5, 2008, on tourism by Andrew Nixon. More than 20 other people have also volunteered, as of December 2, 2008, to help write discussion papers on a variety of topics. These draft papers will be circulated for comment between now and the Spring of 2009. All papers will be revised before the end of March 2009, and given to the consulting firm that the County will be hiring to prepare the plan. Their contract will require them to consider these discussion papers along with their other planning techniques, as they prepare the plan.
- (4) **Consensus Forming Events.** A series of special events have also been organized in a long-term effort to educate people in Chautauqua County and to frame issues with factual foundations and solid science. As of December 2, 2008,

the following events have been held and are scheduled (with others to follow in 2009):



- (a) An official “Kick-off” event was held on September 15, 2008. More than 75 people from throughout the County attended this first meeting for the new comprehensive planning process. This event had catered food and beverages, and was held at the Chautauqua Suites in Mayville, New York. Randall Arendt was the featured speaker. He is a renowned expert in a “rural-by-design” approach that allows growth to continue without destroying rural communities. He does not see these as being incompatible, that it just takes careful design decisions to avoid problems. Randall’s work will be a cornerstone for creating an entirely new vision for people in Chautauqua County, and will be widely discussed during the public participation activities in 2009. This professional consulting firm will develop a new vision for Chautauqua County that incorporates Randall’s approach and gives it a context so that the County’s overall vision reflects a broader range of people’s hopes for the rest of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- (b) Rural Preference Survey was conducted by Randall Arendt in two workshops, on October 5, 2008 at the Chautauqua Lake School (which included a detailed residential design training session for a smaller group of people), and on November 5, 2008 at the Chautauqua Suites where the results of the survey were presented (which also included a detailed training session for over 30 people on commercial design techniques).
- (c) A major Energy Conference was held on November 14 and 15, 2008, which featured numerous displays by the County’s leading energy providers and entrepreneurs. Approximately one thousand people attended this two day event, which was held at the Chautauqua Suites in Mayville, New York.
- (d) An international meeting on Lake Erie and its watersheds and lakefront areas will be hosted by Chautauqua County on December 5 and 6, 2008, in cooperation with the Ohio Environmental Council, for the annual meeting of the Bi-National Lake Erie Forum. This Forum advises the U.S.E.P.A. and Environment Canada on the Lake Erie portion of Great Lakes Basin clean-up strategies. People from all around Lake Erie in both nations will attend this event which will be held at the Clarion Hotel in Dunkirk, New York.
- (e) A regional Economic Summit will be held in Chautauqua County on January 27, 2009. Experts from the private sector and New York State agencies will discuss the latest economic situation and how a comprehensive plan can help make a difference over the longer term. Event details are not yet available.

## **PHASE 2: Structuring the Upcoming Process**

- (1) A Legal Analysis will be conducted on the County’s Charter to consider ways to strengthen planning and development capacities within Chautauqua County, and to lay out and design a professional, generic environmental review of the new plan once it is in the final stages of preparation (called a GEIS for short). If the

GEIS for the new plan is structured properly, many benefits can be created for various projects and programs within the County that are related to the new comprehensive plan. A highly recommended law firm has submitted a proposal a sole-source contract, which has been approved by Bill Daly and is under review at this time by the County' Legal Department.

- (2) A review is being conducted within the County Planning Department on the types of data and information that the professional consulting firm may need when it conducts its planning process in 2009. This work is pending as of December 2, 2008.
- (3) A "rural-by-design" guidebook is being prepared by Randall Arendt for Chautauqua County, as a foundation stone for the new comprehensive plan. It will include a detailed presentation on the results of the Rural Preference Survey, a wide range of design concepts and techniques for residential, commercial and industrial properties. This guidebook will also include two demonstration projects, one on the Westfield Industrial Park, and the other on the Ellicott/Falconer commercial strip along Route 394. A special industrial site design will be presented for the Southern Tier Brewing Company's new location, and will include a proposed trail. This design guidebook will be presented by Randall Arendt in May/June 2009, in a countywide training workshop, where copies will be available, and Randall will show people how to use the guidebook. This guidebook is expected to be a useful tool within the County for the coming 10 to 20 years.
- (4) A countywide, random sample poll will be conducted by a professional polling firm, on topics that are relevant to the new comprehensive plan. It will be a statistically sound survey and the results will be fed into the professional consulting firm's work in preparing the new plan (more details on this polling effort are presented in the paper on the Discussion Paper Luncheon mentioned above).

This is the end of work completed as of December 2, 2008. Many other steps are being taken, however, to prepare for Phases 3, 4 and 5. For example, work has started to identify professional consulting firms that have expertise in comprehensive plans, and in organizing a "Request-for-Proposal" process of the spring of 2009. The consulting firm is expected to be selected and hired no later than April/May, 2009, with work beginning at the time the contract is signed.

### **C. The Status of the \$250,000 Budget**

The following budget has been approved by Chautauqua County for preparing its plan:

#### Capital Budget:

2008: \$150,000  
2009: \$100,000

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Total: \$250,000

To date, \$50,650 has been obligated by contract for Randall Arendt's unique services, and \$15,000 has been recommended for legal analysis on the County Charter and GEIS requirements. As of December 2, 2008, this is the budget status:

(1) Plan Preparation not to exceed this amount: (Competitive PFP will give a range up to this amount)	\$164,350
(2) Randall Arendt Sole Source Contract:	50,650
(3) Legal Analysis on Charter/GEIS Sole Source Contract:	15,000
(4) Held in Reserve, Pending Adjustments:	20,000
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Total:	\$250,000

Respectfully Submitted:

SIGNED:

William Daly, Director, Chautauqua County Planning Department

Terry H. Martin, Ph.D. Consultant  
Comprehensive Plan Coordinator

DECEMBER 2, 2008

Send your comments on this paper to us by December 20, 2008, to [thm@atlanticbb.net](mailto:thm@atlanticbb.net).