

# Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development



KARI TERWILLIGER, AICP  
DIRECTOR





# Our Role

The Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development is a multi-disciplined, progressive Planning & Economic Development Office with a staff of 7 professional planners committed to providing assistance to the 23 Towns and 9 Villages within the County, improving the quality of life in our communities and protecting our natural resources.

Our work generally includes:

- Land use planning, environmental resource protection, renewable energy development and park and recreation planning
- Town and village comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances and open space plans, recreation and farmland protection plans,
- Preparation of state and federal grant applications and management of capital projects secured by the department



Principal Environmental Planner, Michele Wunderlich, pictured with Finger Lakes Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance.



Director, Kari Terwilliger, at the Downtown Revitalization Initiative Award Ceremony for the Villages of Cayuga, Union Springs, and Aurora Joint DRI.

# County Planning - The Past Decade

Since 2014, the Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development has engaged in the following:

- 29** **LAND USE PROJECTS- Towns & Villages**  
Master & Comprehensive Plan Updates, Zoning Regulations-Whole Docs & Amendments
- 26** **ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS- Countywide**  
Invasive Species Monitoring, Reporting, Response, & Trainings, Owasco Flats Wetland Restoration, Watershed Management Plans, Total Maximum Daily Load Plans
- 22** **MAPPING PROJECTS- Countywide**  
Police & Fire Department Mapping (Town, Village, and City), FEMA Mapping, Board of Elections, Parks & Trails
- 15** **ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS- Towns & Villages**  
Broadband Study, Pro-Housing Designations, Local Waterfront Revitalization Plans, NY Forward & Downtown Revitalization Initiative applications and awards
- 12** **PARKS & TRAILS PROJECTS- Countywide**  
Emerson Park Master Plan, Sterling Nature Center Functional Management Plan, Cato-Brutus Trail, Emerson Park Improvements, ADA Kayak Launch at Frontenac Park, CCT Feasibility Study

# County Planning - The Past Decade

11

## AGRICULTURE PROJECTS- Countywide

Maintenance of Ag District, PDR FPIG Program, Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plans (county & towns)

8

## WASTE MANAGEMENT PROJECTS- Countywide

Local Solid Waste Management Plan, Sewer & Septic System Mapping, Cayuga Recycles Program

8

## ENERGY PROJECTS- Countywide

NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities Grants 2017 & 2024, CCPUSA Strategic Organization & Operations Plan, Community Solar Project, County Fleet Electric Vehicles, Solarize Cayuga Initiative

7

## HEALTH PROJECTS- Countywide

Health Preparedness Planning & Training Exercises

In addition, our staff provides land use and natural resource protection related assistance, as needed, to our towns and villages answering questions, providing training, conducting research, and producing technical memos (white papers).

# Over \$22 Million Secured in grant funds to support this work!\*

\* Includes a \$10M DRI award for the Villages of Cayuga, Union Springs & Aurora AND a \$2.25M NY Forward award for the Village of Moravia

# Boards & Committees - Director

The Planning Director is a voting member of the following:

- Cayuga Cortland Workforce Development Board
- Cayuga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board (AFPB)
- Cayuga County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CCCVB) AKA Tourism Board of Directors
- Currently serving as Vice Chair of the full Board and Chair of the Planning Committee
- Cayuga County Economic Development Coordination Group
- Cayuga County GML 239-1, m & n Review Committee
- Cayuga County Micron Housing Committee
- Cayuga County-Owned Real Property Committee
- Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency (WQMA)
- Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway Board of Directors
- CNY Regional Economic Development Council (designee)
- CNY Regional Planning & Development Board
- NYS Association of County Planning Directors

# Boards & Committees – Planning Dept. Staff

## Voting Membership

- Cayuga County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)
- Cayuga County GIS Coordination Group
- Cayuga County GML 239-1, m & n Review Committee
- Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency (WQMA)
- Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization
- Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FL-LOWPA)

## Provide Staff Assistance to:

- Cayuga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board (AFPB)
- Cayuga County GML 239-1, m & n Review Committee
- Cayuga County Planning Board
- Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency (WQMA)
- Owasco 9E Plan Coordination Committee
- Technical Advisor to the Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection Committee

# 2025 Department Highlights

## Current Grants

- Cayuga Countywide Strategic Plan
- Countywide Pre-Planning Inventory and Analysis of Brownfield Sites
- County Infrastructure Grant Program
- NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities: EV Charging Stations & Solar Panels at County Owned Sites
- Finger Lakes – Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance Grant Program
- Town of Sterling & Village of Fair Haven Local Waterfront Revitalization Program

## Programs

- Cayuga Recycles: Annual electronics, hazardous waste, and tire disposal events.
- Owasco Flats Wetland Restoration & Riparian Buffer Program



# 2025 Department Highlights - Continued

## **Municipal Assistance**

- Assisted the Villages of Aurora, Cayuga, Fair Haven, Moravia, Union Springs and Weedsport in obtaining Pro-Housing Community Certifications. Continuing to assist other municipalities with their certification applications.
- Administering the Moravia NY Forward Small Project Fund.
- Providing GIS Mapping Services to Towns and Villages.

## **Supporting County Departments**

- Assisting Parks & Trails with grant applications.
- Providing planning & mapping services to the Health Department.

## **Other Department Work**

- Supporting agriculture through the County PDR Program and providing technical assistance to farmers.
- Water Quality Management Agency & Other Water Quality Work.



# 2025 Challenges

- Ongoing budget constraints, like those faced by neighboring counties, continue to shape our planning and prioritization efforts.
- Continuing to balance countywide initiatives with the needs of our individual communities.
- Finding new ways to support our Legislature and their desire to drive economic development and revenue generation for the county.
- Maintaining a high standard of excellence in the quality and quantity of our work and the recognition we have received across the region and state, while onboarding new staff.
  - While staff turnover presented challenges in the past, we're now pleased to be fully staffed with energetic young professionals that are eager to learn, grow, and gain experience in all aspects of county planning.

# CAYUGA COUNTY PLANNING IN THE NEWS

## 3 Cayuga County Villages Awarded DRI Funding

Mon, February 5, 2024 by Ed Vivenzio

## Planning Dept. Seeks Funding for Brownfield Assessment Project

Fri, August 16, 2024 by Ed Vivenzio

## 'Open for business': How Auburn, Cayuga County partnered to support \$23M housing project

From the *The Citizen* long reads: Check out the past year's in-depth local reporting series

Robert Harding Mar 13, 2025 Updated Apr 18, 2025 4 5 min to read

## Progress Advancing on Moravia NY Forward Projects

Tue, August 20, 2024 by Ed Vivenzio

## Eco Talk: Clear out your clutter at spring electronics recycling event in Cayuga County

Frank Clarke, special to The Citizen Feb 14, 2025 Updated Feb 14, 2025 0

## Cayuga County seeks public comment on waste management plan

The Citizen staff Jan 22, 2024 Updated Feb 26, 2025 1

## Cayuga County holiday tree recycling program to return

The Citizen staff Dec 5, 2024 0

ECO TALK

## Eco Talk: Invasive species in Cayuga County, and you

Michele Wunderlich, special to The Citizen May 31, 2024 Updated Jul 6, 2024 0

## Fair Haven Seeks Pro-Housing Designation

Tue, November 12, 2024 by Ed Vivenzio

WATERSHED WATCH

## Effler: Stream restoration in Owasco Lake watershed moves forward

Adam Effler, special to The Citizen Sep 20, 2024 0

## Cayuga County Planning Dept. Prepares to Update 55 Year Old Strategic Plan

Wed, August 28, 2024 by Ed Vivenzio

## OLWMC: New Signage to Increase Awareness of Watershed

Mon, January 22, 2024 by Ed Vivenzio

LOCAL NEWS

## 'Groundbreaking' ADA-compliant kayak launch installed at Union Springs park

Robert Harding | Updated Sep 27, 2024

## What you can, can't bring to Cayuga County hazardous waste collection

Evan Tuthill, special to The Citizen Sep 13, 2024 Updated Sep 20, 2024 0

## Potential DRI project list finalized in Aurora, Cayuga, and Union Springs

By Mathew Adams October 31, 2024 4:59 am

CONQUEST

## Conquest: Comprehensive plan complete, now comes Community Day

Joni Lincoln Special to The Citizen Jul 1, 2023 Updated Aug 5, 2024 0

ENVIRONMENT

## Cayuga County tire collection event scheduled for June

The Citizen staff 4 hrs ago 0



# Cayuga County 2025 Highlights & Challenges



JONATHAN ANNA  
CHAIR  
CAYUGA COUNTY LEGISLATURE



# 2025 Highlights & Challenges

- **Economic Development**

- Utility scale solar and wind projects
- Major industries expanding, hospital expansion, and the need for more housing
- Strategically positioned to support the growth of neighboring counties
- Expansions to public water, sewer & broadband infrastructure
- Positioning the County to be a bigger part of the regional economy



# 2025 Highlights & Challenges - Continued

- **Closure of the County Office Building**

- Roof damage, vermiculite investigation, document retrieval, & department relocation
- Opportunity to become more efficient and streamlined
- Prioritizing providing quality essential services while reducing unnecessary spending

- **Developing a Balanced Budget**

- Reducing our structural deficit as we strive for sustainable growth

- **Consistency in Leadership and Staffing**

- Complete the projects that we start regardless of who is in charge

# Thank you!

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