



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Among the most important powers and duties granted by the New York State Legislature to a village government is the authority and responsibility to undertake village comprehensive planning and to regulate land use for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety, and general welfare of its citizens, as stated in Village Law.<sup>1</sup> Village Law requires that a Comprehensive Plan undergo periodic review by the community. The current 2008 Village of Trumansburg Comprehensive Plan also recommends its periodic review.

In 2018, under the direction and supervision of the Mayor and Board of Trustees, the Village of Trumansburg began a thorough review of its Comprehensive Plan to identify and update information to better reflect current conditions in the community since its adoption in 2008. A Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Revision Committee (CPZRC) was appointed to guide the review and revision process in compliance with State requirements. This Executive Summary briefly summarizes the planning process and proposed changes provided in the 2021 Comprehensive Plan Update.

The CPZRC represents each of the Village's elected and appointed boards (Board of Trustees, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals), the Village Zoning Officer/Village Code Enforcement Officer, and several members of the community, all of whom bring important perspectives, experience, and knowledge to the planning process. The Committee's specific mandate is to, among other things, organize and oversee public outreach and conduct its own meetings, gather information, review draft documents created by a third-party planning consultant, and recommend proposed changes to the Village's Comprehensive Plan to the Village Board of Trustees. The Committee has prepared the 2021 Comprehensive Plan based on its review, with the assistance of the Village's planning consultant, Environmental Design and Research, DPC (EDR).

### **Community Outreach**

The CPZRC and EDR initially designed an outreach process to encourage community input into the review and information gathering process through committee meetings, public

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<sup>1</sup> Consolidated Laws of New York State, Section 7-722 of Village Law.



informational meetings, and surveys. All CPZRC meetings were open to the public. The community was encouraged to identify current issues and opportunities in Trumansburg and discuss conditions that changed since adoption of the current Plan. Information was gathered from a variety of sources including in-person meetings with residents, local officials, Village departments, and County agencies.

The first Public Information Meeting occurred in November 2019. This open house style meeting was attended by approximately 66 participants. The meeting included a slide presentation and discussion session using interactive and informational boards. Attendees reviewed and commented on updated community data and mapping and participated in a brief questionnaire to identify community strengths, limitations, opportunities, and challenges facing Trumansburg. Meeting information was posted to the Village website following the meeting to encourage participation from those who did not attend.

Due to public health concerns associated with the COVID-19 outbreak in early 2020, the second public informational meeting was replaced with an in-depth survey prepared by the CPZRC. The survey gathered feedback on specific recommendations considered in the updated Comprehensive Plan. With 266 responses, the 2020 survey received over 20% more responses than the similar 2008 survey. Presentation slides, informational boards, public comments, and survey results are provided in Appendix A of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan.

### ***Updating the 2008 Comprehensive Plan in 2021***

Comprehensive plans are intended to be “living” and readily usable documents. As decision-making tools these plans need to be kept current as community needs and local conditions change over time. While the 2021 Comprehensive Plan is an entirely new document, portions of the 2008 Plan have been retained and carried over into the 2021 Comprehensive Plan with little or no revision necessary because the information either has not changed or is still considered relevant. Information that has not changed or changed only slightly includes, for example, text sections on natural and cultural resources which tend not to change much over relatively short periods of time.



A new Introduction has been added to Chapter 1 of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan. This section describes the planning process and community participation, a new Vision Statement based on community outreach, and procedures for the adoption, future review, and monitoring of the new Plan.

The Vision Statement, found at the beginning of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan, is an articulation of the community's hopes for the future of Trumansburg over the next 20 years. It informs the ensuing Comprehensive Plan and ultimately is a basis for the Village's zoning ordinance and other land use regulations. The Vision Statement results from the contribution by a wide array of community stakeholders, including the CPZRC, participants engaged through outreach meetings and surveys, and discussions with focus groups and Trumansburg residents. Achieving the community's vision requires the development of planning goals, strategies and tangible actions supported and embraced by public officials and the community. Therefore, it is important to keep the Vision Statement in mind as the starting point from which the 2021 Comprehensive Plan is based.

## **A 20-Year Vision**

*Trumansburg, NY, in the heart of the Finger Lakes, is a safe, friendly, and energetic community that values its rich history, picturesque natural settings, attractive neighborhoods, surrounding rural areas, and local businesses. We as a community envision a future Village that:*

- *Offers ample, diverse, and inclusive opportunities for employment, education, and housing;*
- *Encourages social interaction and community engagement in all aspects of Village life by people of all age groups, income levels, and cultural backgrounds;*
- *Protects and promotes our small-town atmosphere with distinctive neighborhoods, downtown businesses and institutions;*
- *Supports entrepreneurs and local businesses that provide services to residents and visitors;*
- *Advances environmental and economic sustainability by encouraging moderate population growth while protecting open space and natural resources;*
- *Is guided by a transparent, responsive, and fiscally responsible Village government committed to public service, health, safety, and welfare.*



## ***Demographics and Socioeconomics***

The 2021 Comprehensive Plan has been updated with more recent demographic and socioeconomic data including population statistics and information on housing and local employment. Data from the 2020 US Census is not yet available, so the Plan contains the most recent information available. As 2020 data become available, the Comprehensive Plan can be easily revised to provide a current profile of Trumansburg.

The population of the Village of Trumansburg reached a low of 1,581 in 2000 after declining for the previous 20 years. This trend reversed in 2010 as the population increased to 1,797 and continued growing to an estimated 1,818 in 2017.<sup>2</sup> The increase in population during 2000-2010 may be attributed to the annexation of Auble Trailer Park and the addition of apartment units in Country Estates during this period. Since 2010 the population appears to have stabilized to about a 1% increase in 2017, a slightly lower rate of increase than the Town of Ulysses and Tompkins County (each estimated at about 3%). Trumansburg's population is older relative to Tompkins County and New York State, with the largest age group 60-69 years old. Of 851 households in Trumansburg, 304 householders are over the age of 65, making up 36% of total householders.

Education/Health/Social Services remains the largest employment sector for both employees residing within the Village (but not necessarily working within Trumansburg) and employees working within the Village (but not necessarily living within Trumansburg). The Village has a wider range of middle-class household incomes when compared to both the Town of Ulysses and Tompkins County according to 2017 US Census data, with a higher *median* household income than Ulysses and Tompkins County (\$33,897 compared to \$32,418 and \$26,144, respectively) but a lower *mean* household income than Ulysses and Tompkins County (\$59,238 compared to \$69,383 and \$64,225, respectively). The household poverty rate in Trumansburg (9.3%) is slightly higher than the Town of Ulysses (8.1%), but significantly lower than Tompkins County (18.3%), New York State (14.6%), and the US (13.8%).

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<sup>2</sup> 2013- 2017 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates



## ***Neighborhood Character***

An emphasis on neighborhood character is presented in the 2021 Comprehensive Plan. Trumansburg is proud of its charm and character, a theme that repeatedly emerged from the community. Input identified neighborhood pride, the uniqueness of some neighborhoods, and the need to maintain and enhance neighborhood character as important issues. In recognition of the varied architecture and aesthetics of different neighborhoods, 18 general character areas have been identified and mapped to show the distinct features of neighborhoods in the Village. Some neighborhoods exhibit a traditional Village style with residences on smaller lots, setback relatively close from the street, and architectural features such as front porches facing public sidewalks. More recently developed neighborhoods exhibit modern suburban styles of architecture such as larger homes on bigger lots, setback farther from the street and lacking sidewalks. Understanding the distinct features of each neighborhood and how neighborhoods relate to one another, including the downtown business area, is helpful in guiding development and decisions about pedestrian movement and public infrastructure, such as the placement of sidewalks, in a way that preserves desirable characteristics and mitigates undesirable ones.

## ***Village Elements***

Six Village elements were discussed in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan: Community, Housing, Economic Development, Environment, Recreation, and Land Use. These elements have been expanded in Chapter 3 of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan to the following ten elements: Natural Resources and Environmentally Sensitive Areas; History and Culture; Housing; Government and Educational Institutions; Parks and Recreation; Land Use and Development; Public Health and Safety; Transportation; Infrastructure and Utilities; and Climate Change. Existing conditions are described along with a path forward for the community to address issues and opportunities related to each element. These same ten elements are used to organize goals, strategies, and recommended actions in Chapter 4.

### ***1. Natural Resources***

Protecting natural resources in Trumansburg by managing land use and development remains important to the community. Opportunities to do so include following smart



growth principles, encouraging the use of green infrastructure where possible to manage stormwater quality and volume, controlling erosion and sedimentation of surface waters, preserving wetlands and floodplains, and protecting natural greenway corridors and open space areas. Many of these protective measures are already in place in the Village's zoning ordinance and other land use regulations.

## *2. Historic and Cultural Resources*

The preservation and enhancement of historic and cultural resources will play a critical role in future of the community. The Village will need to continue to depend on volunteerism, a spirit of involvement, and financial support from various stakeholders. Preserving historic buildings, especially in the downtown core, can be achieved through careful planning and encouraging appropriate adaptive reuse, perhaps by adopting design guidelines, in ways that maintain the historic integrity of the Village. Like most historic Upstate New York communities, Trumansburg has a high percentage of older housing, with many residential neighborhoods built before 1940. Well-maintained historic homes and their contribution to unique neighborhood character are key sources of pride for the Village. Finding ways to help property owners preserve their historic homes in light of increasing maintenance costs will be an ongoing challenge.

## *3. Housing*

The population of Trumansburg is likely to continue to grow at a moderate pace in the coming years which will increase the property tax base without unduly burdening individual taxpayers. A focus on affordable housing will help dismantle exclusionary barriers that result in inequity and a lack of opportunity. It will also help to attract young families, who will in turn contribute to a growth in the school population and to the liveliness of the Village. Additionally, the community should address the need for more affordable Senior housing. Some revision of zoning regulations, specifically regarding accessory dwellings and multi-unit housing, will ease the pressure of providing housing where little buildable vacant land is available.

## *4. Government and Educational Institutions*

Trumansburg has a robust sense of civic engagement and a government that is highly engaged with the community. The Trumansburg Central School District has a good reputation and acts as an educational hub for the region. Furthermore, there are plenty



of volunteer and nonprofit organizations that complement the school district's mission. A larger, growing school-age population is important to the community that will allow for a more robust curriculum, attract more State Aid, and stabilize school taxes. Attracting and retaining young people and families with school age children is critical to the long-term social health and economic vitality of the Village.

## *5. Parks and Recreation*

While there are recreational areas and programs in the Village, there is considerable support for increasing these opportunities based on the results of the recent community survey. The Village should continue to support Trumansburg Community Recreation (TCR) in its endeavors to promote more recreational areas (e.g., swimming pool, skate park, public playground, trails) and recreational programs, particularly for youth. Attention should be paid to providing more free and low-cost opportunities for youth, including a community center and activities where they can be social, active, and engaged. Such efforts will help to keep the community attractive to families and residents of all ages, cultures, and economic status.

## *6. Land Use and Development*

The greatest opportunity for economic development is tourism. There are several initiatives that can be undertaken to attract tourists and visitors to the area. These initiatives include continuing support for local events such as The GrassRoots Festival of Music and Dance, the Trumansburg Fair, and events at the Trumansburg Conservatory of Fine Arts. Improved walkability and bicycle friendliness, as well as an increase in marketing the Village as part of the Finger Lakes Region, will also encourage visitors to experience Trumansburg.

## *7. Public Health, Safety, and Emergency Services*

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged all aspects of Village life and suggests a need to review and update the Village's emergency plan to include public health emergencies. The Village will continue to rely on the County Health Department and the State of New York for guidance. Sharing of services with surrounding municipalities will continue to be an opportunity for expansion and thereby increased revenue. Fire and Emergency Services need additional space for new equipment, administrative offices, technical support, and training. The Police Department also requires improved and expanded space in the near future. Long term, it will become a





priority for EMS to establish satellite locations in surrounding areas that it already serves, to keep response times low for those areas.

## *8. Transportation*

Like many traditional villages in Upstate New York, Trumansburg developed along Main Street and then spread outward into adjoining areas. Because Main Street is maintained by and under the jurisdiction of the New York State Department of Transportation as NYS Route 96, the Village is limited as to what it can do to address transportation-related issues. Pedestrian and bicycle safety, traffic volume and speed, and lack of adequate signage are all problems that need to be addressed by the State yet are a high priority for Village residents. Solutions can be achieved by upgrading existing sidewalks and building new ones and creating walking paths, benches, and bike paths. The Village should continue to coordinate with regional agencies to improve its transportation infrastructure. NYSDOT, Tompkins County Planning Department, and the Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council are available for support in transportation planning. While Trumansburg is well served by public transportation, continuing to offer more transportation options (e.g., buses, ride-shares, and bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure) will provide more opportunity for reducing emissions and barriers to mobility. The challenge will be to maintain and improve the safety of these transportation systems. Limited on-street parking is also an issue, but one that the Village can work on, by pursuing off-street parking space.

## *9. Infrastructure and Utilities*

The Village of Trumansburg is fortunate to have high quality publicly owned water and sewer systems. In addition, the Village Department of Public Works provides reliable maintenance of other Village infrastructure and services. Although a second water source for the Village was recently brought online and a significant upgrade to the sewer plant was completed, water and sewer infrastructure will continue to need regular maintenance, upgrades, and replacement. Furthermore, given that the Village is anticipated to receive more frequent and more intense periods of rainfall due to climate change, stormwater management, poor drainage and persistent localized flooding will need to be addressed. Maintaining the same level of infrastructure for a growing population in a fiscally responsible manner will require careful long-term fiscal planning and management of capital assets.





## *10. Climate Change*

The 2021 Comprehensive Plan discusses the potential implications of climate change. This information is important as the community considers how to improve resiliency against flooding and other impacts that are expected to worsen due to climate change. Meanwhile, community residents also prioritized efforts to mitigate future climate change by reducing current greenhouse gas emissions. A worthy and achievable goal is to transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040. The Village has already begun implementing energy conservation measures. In the summer of 2019, the Village of Trumansburg was officially recognized as a “Clean Energy Community” by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). It has adopted an energy benchmarking policy for municipal buildings, upgraded municipal buildings and street lighting to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and adopted the NYS United Solar Permit. The Village should take steps to further reduce carbon-based energy usage in municipal buildings and operations, to encourage energy conservation by homeowners and businesses, and to support investment in large-scale renewable energy projects. Local policies that protect natural resources and expand the use of green infrastructure can also help build community resiliency and mitigate adverse climate changes through preserving or improving the natural functions of floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, and open space.

### ***Implementing this Living Plan***

An Implementation Table in the 2021 Comprehensive Plan summarizes high priority actions for the community including, but not limited to, possible zoning changes. The Implementation Table identifies responsible parties, timeframes for undertaking actions, and potential sources of funding for those actions that have associated costs.

Key recommendations in the 2021 Comprehensive Plan relate to modifications to the Zoning Ordinance. The 2021 Comprehensive Plan provides the groundwork for a thorough review of the Village Zoning Ordinance, last updated in 2012. Under New York State Village Law, the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan requires that all zoning regulations must be in accordance with the Plan. Changing economic, environmental, and social conditions require changes to Trumansburg’s zoning and possibly other land use regulations.



New maps are provided in an appendix to the 2021 Comprehensive Plan to supplement information on Neighborhood Character and Village Elements. These maps provide the location and extent of environmentally sensitive resources, including wetlands and floodplains; important cultural resources like sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places; community facilities and infrastructure; and patterns of land use within the Village. The maps are a useful decision-making tool that illustrate important resource information based on specific property or parcel data. Property owners and decision-makers can now identify specific locations and parcels that contain significant resources. These maps can facilitate the review of proposed public and private sector actions or projects, for example, when conducting site plan review, as well as provide information to facilitate State and Village Environmental Quality Review procedures.

Additional appendices provide information on the planning process and other planning-related information not included in the main text of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan. These appendices document community participation in public meetings and the community survey, as well as sources of information used in preparing the Plan, a glossary of terms, and documentation of the Plan's adoption and future review process.

The 2021 Comprehensive Plan provides residents and local decision-makers with information needed to make informed choices about the Village's future and can be revisited as the community changes. The Village Planning Board is charged with reviewing the Comprehensive Plan at least every 3-5 years, with special attention given to emerging trends, challenges, and opportunities in the Village, county, state, and nation. The Planning Board is also expected to monitor progress on recommended actions and to report to the Trustees on the status and completion of actions by updating the Implementation Table accordingly. These periodic reviews will likely result in recommendations to the Board of Trustees for future updates and revisions of this living planning document.