



Tompkins County
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY

121 East Court Street
Ithaca, New York 14850

Edward C. Marx, AICP
Commissioner of Planning and Sustainability

Telephone (607) 274-5560

Memorandum

To: Members of the Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee
of the Tompkins County Legislature
From: Scott D. Doyle, AICP, Tompkins County Planning and Sustainability Department
Re: **Use of Tompkins County Natural Infrastructure Capital Project Funds for Support of the
Lounsbery Tract –Six Mile Creek Source Water Protection Project**
Date: June 22, 2017

Requested Action

Support the use of funds from the Natural Infrastructure Capital Project Funds for the acquisition of easement on Lounsbery Farm for the purposes of protecting and improving the stream buffer to Six Mile Creek, the City of Ithaca's water source.

Background

The *Natural Infrastructure Capital Program* is focused on protection, by acquisition, easement, restoration and/or stabilization, of: upper watershed forests and wetlands; stream corridors and floodplains; and aquifer recharge areas. The objectives are to: **1)** protect and enhance those natural systems that can help to mitigate the impacts of intensive rainfall events that are expected to continue to increase as a result of climate change; **2)** help decrease sediment loads in streams and Cayuga Lake; and **3)** protect overall water quality in streams, surficial aquifers and Cayuga Lake. Additional benefits could include improved wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities. The impact over time will be to reduce risks of flooding and protect public and private water supplies. The program may also help to fund demonstration green infrastructure projects on County properties.

The Tompkins County Legislature funded the five year capital program for years 2017-2021 and the Planning, Development and Environmental Quality Committee approved the program overview and evaluation criteria in January 2017.

The Natural Infrastructure committee of the Planning Advisory Board meets annually, or as needed to respond to time-sensitive opportunities, to review projects presented by the Planning Department. When projects are ready for implementation, recommendations from the committee are reviewed by the full Planning Advisory Board and the Commissioner of Planning and Sustainability and presented, with their recommendation, to the legislative committee responsible for oversight of the Planning and Sustainability Department. If approved by the legislative committee, project funding will proceed in compliance with county procedures for contracting for capital projects; project funds will be administered by the Planning and Sustainability Department.

Proposed Project

As noted in the attached document, the project is to provide \$15,000.00 from the Tompkins County's Natural Infrastructure Project funds to support the acquisition of a perpetual conservation easement on the Lounsbery Tract held by the Finger Lakes Land Trust in the Town of Caroline, Tompkins County in order to protect the 3,900 foot forested buffer to Six Mile Creek, as well as the entire farm property. The Finger Lakes Land Trust will be the lead on this project and is also seeking \$15,000.00 in funding from the City of Ithaca's Six Mile Creek Watershed Protection Fund and a grant of \$250,000.00 from New York State's Water Quality

Improvement Project Funding (WQIP) under its new Source Water Protection funding. An important aspects of the grant is to restore forest cover in the riparian buffer to Six Mile Creek in order to reduce sediments in the stormwater runoff and slow the flow rate of the runoff into the creek. Discussions with the Town of Caroline are pending regarding the project and will be completed prior to bringing the resolution to the full Legislature for approval.

Budget Implications

The Natural Infrastructure Capital Program is funded at \$200,000 for 2017.

Contact Information

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Attachments

- Proposed Six Mile Creek Source Water Protection Project – Lounsbery Tract Support Materials and Maps from the FLLT