



TOWN OF ENFIELD

Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement

For the Comprehensive Plan Update

LEAD AGENCY: GOVERNING BOARD OF THE TOWN OF ENFIELD

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**Written or oral Public Comments will be accepted on the
DRAFT Generic Environmental Impact Statement through _____**

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INTRODUCTION

For the purposes of compliance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), the Town of Enfield Comprehensive Plan and associated appendices shall also serve as a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS). SEQRA establishes a process requiring the consideration of environmental factors early in the planning stages of actions that are undertaken, approved, or funded by State, regional or local agencies. This systematic approach allows adverse impacts to be avoided or mitigated.

According to §617.16 of 6 NYCRR: “Generic EISs may be broader and more general than site or project specific EISs and should discuss the logic and rationale for the choices advanced. They may also include an assessment of specific impacts if such details are available. They may be based on conceptual information in some cases. They may identify the important elements of the natural resources base as well as the existing and projected cultural features, patterns and character. They may discuss, in general terms, the constraints and consequences of any narrowing of future options. They may present and analyze, in general terms, a few hypothetical scenarios that could and are likely to occur.”

PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed “action” that requires SEQRA review is the adoption of the update to the 2001 Town of Enfield Comprehensive Plan. It is the intent of the Enfield Town Board for this GEIS to analyze the proposed update to the Comprehensive Plan to satisfy the Town’s obligation under SEQRA.

The adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is a Type 1 Action under the SEQRA regulations. However, the action will not result in a significant adverse environmental impact. The Plan and its recommendations carefully consider the environmental resources found within the Town and future regulations will be crafted to preserve and enhance those resources. As explained in more detail below, the adoption of the Plan and future legislation is expected to have a positive effect on the Town’s environmental resources.

The Comprehensive Plan should be viewed as a mitigation measure against the prospective impact of development on environmental resources in the Town of Enfield. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan proposed by the Enfield Town Board strives to guide new development in a manner that will enhance the community in the future. Environmental sustainability is one guiding principle that was determined early in the comprehensive planning process as being of particular importance. Environmental sustainability can be thought of as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the community to meet its needs in the future. Specifically, this involves managing the community’s natural resources for the benefit of this and future generations.

Balancing environmental sustainability, fiscal responsibility, and respect for property owners' rights, health and safety, is an important approach that is evident when considering the Plan recommendations as a whole. ***It is important to note that the adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will not result in the approval of any development activity, either private or public. Accordingly, it will not directly result in any physical impacts to the environment; instead, any prospective impact is indirect and as a result of one or more specific proposed projects. As individual projects or activities are proposed, environmental reviews in accordance with SEQRA and local, State and Federal regulations will be conducted by the Planning Board or other designated approving agency on a site-specific basis.*** The site-specific environmental review should consider the scale of the proposed action and consistency with the concepts and vision outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.

The purpose of the proposed action is to set forth a vision for the community given changes in demographics, economic activity, land use, and increased understanding of the threats to the sustainability of the Town's resources. The proposed action seeks to protect the long-term viability of the Town's community, character, natural resources, and quality of life, while improving its economic viability and preserving its rural character. Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, and its implementation through community engagement, subdivision Code Amendments, and Site Plan Review updates, is needed to implement the Town's vision and goals.

The proposed Comprehensive Plan is the product of a multi-year effort undertaken by the residents and boards of the Town of Enfield. The first Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2001. This Comprehensive Plan will serve as the replacement of that document.

The Comprehensive Plan will guide the development of the Town of Enfield over the next 30 years, with timely periodic updates. The Plan includes detail of the existing conditions and future goals and concerns of the residents of the town. It describes a vision for the physical, environmental, social, and economic characteristics of the Town, and outlines recommendations to make that vision a reality.

Goals and recommendations of the Plan address eight areas of interest:

- Heritage and Historic Preservation
- Municipal Services
- Agriculture
- Land Use
- Environmental and Natural Resources
- Built Environment: Public Utilities, Infrastructure, Transportation
- Housing
- Economy and Community

Once adopted, the Comprehensive Plan will serve as a guide for policies and regulations regarding development and conservation. The Comprehensive Plan will inform Town staff, boards, and elected officials on actions and decisions about municipal needs, land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, the natural environment, and community and economic development. The Plan will also provide guidance to the community and outside interests as to the goals of the town and preferred actions that may be taken to meet them through social and financial support.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Town of Enfield has no zoning ordinance, however, local ordinances for Site Plan Review, subdivision regulations, and various Local Laws inform land use requirements and limitations. These documents have served to guide development in Enfield to this point. The Comprehensive Plan update sets forth recommendations to update Site Plan and subdivision regulations to better meet current needs and standards.

Environmental sustainability is one guiding principle that was determined early in the comprehensive planning process as being of particular importance. Environmental sustainability can be thought of as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the community to meet its needs in the future. Specifically, this involves managing the community's natural resources for the benefit of future generations in a way that is compatible with the rural character and landscape of the Town.

The Goals and Actions in this plan reflect a balance between this community's desire to realize positive growth that respects the rural landscape and obligations to environmental protection, while minimizing the impact land use schemes such as zoning places on property rights.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

➤ History Section-

Goal 4: Increase tourism through use of historic points of interest within the town.

Existing Conditions: The Town of Enfield has many buildings that have historically been used for purposes such as shops, churches, or schools that are currently restored as residential homes. Only one building, the Old Mill, located at Robert Treman Park, has Historic Designation.

Other organization's buildings, such as the Enfield Valley Grange, the last remaining Grange building in Tompkins County, struggle to keep their doors open as the structure ages and membership languishes. The Enfield Community Council, established to build community in the Town nearly 45 years ago, exists without a home building to facilitate its programming.

These organizations provide strong historic value to the Enfield community and require attention, funding, and engagement to be sustainable for future generations. Their primary function is to bring Enfield community members together. Strong bonds among residents of a Town make a community resilient to the events that may impact them negatively over time.

Robert H. Treman State Park, which houses the historic Landmark, “The Old Grist Mill”, boasts attendance of over 200,000 visitors each year. While that statistic indicates a very large number of people traveling through Enfield each year to visit the park, Enfield does little to nothing to draw visitors to other areas of interest in the Town such as resort centers or hiking trails, like the Bock-Harvey Forest or Stevenson Preserves. At the same time, little is done by the Town to draw attention to Enfield’s proximity to other area historic points and tourist attractions outside of the boundaries of the town that could encourage compatible development of more recreational activities and services that serve visitors and residents alike.

Potential Adverse Impacts- Increase of transportation in and around the town and at points of interest; waste, degradation in areas of interest, some of which are the responsibility of New York State to address and do not come under the purview of the Town.

Potential Impact Without Proposed Action- None

Alternative Actions to Mitigate Potential Adverse Impacts- Potential actions may require their own SEQR process and potential impacts could be mitigated through that process. An alternative action is to not proceed with this goal and maintain the current conditions. Cumulative climate impact actions can be addressed as each goal is considered, utilizing the SEQR process to review potential actions and mitigate impacts on a case to case basis.

Measures to avoid or reduce both an action's impacts-Examples of mitigation actions could be coordination with public transportation to increase services, maintain trails and areas of high traffic, and provide a waste disposal area that incorporates a recycling system.

➤ **Municipal Services Section-**

Goal 6: Encourage and responsibly manage renewable energy and environmental development in the Town of Enfield in a way that is compatible with our rural way of life.

Existing Conditions: Wind and solar activity in the Town of Enfield is on the rise, with 67 permitted residential solar installations and 3 commercial solar facilities through 2019.

In 2019, the Enfield Town Board adopted a Wind Energy Facilities Law and a Solar Development Addendum to the Site Plan Review which regulate the pace and scope of renewable energy development in the Town. Residents have expressed an interest in renewable energy development to reduce fossil fuel consumption and protect the environment. However, the protection of health, safety, welfare and property serves as a guidepost for all development decisions that may impact the rural landscape and quality of life they enjoy.

Potential Adverse Impacts- Degradation to public transportation routes and impact on quality of land, rural viewshed, issues of decommissioning and recycling concerns with materials used on solar panels and wind turbines.

Potential Impact Without Proposed Action- The Town of Enfield would not be participating in the effort to reduce fossil fuel consumption.

Alternative Actions to Mitigate Potential Adverse Impacts- Each potential action would require its own SEQR process and potential impacts would be mitigated through that process. An alternative action is to not proceed with this goal and maintain the current conditions. Cumulative climate impact actions can be addressed as each goal is considered, utilizing the SEQR process to review potential actions and mitigate impacts on a case to case basis.

Measures to avoid or reduce both an action's impacts-Examples of mitigation actions could be adhering to the guidance provided in the Wind Energy Facilities Law and Solar Development Addendum.

Goal 7- Encourage community organizations for increased resident participation in Town events and programming.

Existing Conditions: Community organizations in the Town of Enfield are close in proximity to one another. Accessibility, parking, aging facilities, transportation and communication challenges, and lack of walkability within the area all limit resident's ability to participate in enriching events and programming.

Connecting and communicating with residents has proved challenging with inadequate telecommunications infrastructure or physical spaces where community members can gather socially. Attention to improving these impediments to social connection is paramount to building and maintaining a sustainable community for generations to come.

Potential Adverse Impacts- Increase of transportation in and around the town and at points of interest; waste, degradation in areas of interest, some of which are the responsibility of New York State to address and do not come under the purview of the Town. Potential adverse impact through disturbance of land and use of resources.

Potential Impact Without Proposed Action- If the programming and events proposed were designed to improve public spaces and the environment, not providing said programming could prevent such improvements from being realized.

Alternative Actions to Mitigate Potential Adverse Impacts- Each potential action may require its own SEQR process and potential impacts could be mitigated through that process. An alternative action is to not proceed with this goal and maintain the current conditions. Cumulative climate impact actions can be addressed as each goal is considered, utilizing the SEQR process to review potential actions and mitigate impacts on a case to case basis.

Measures to avoid or reduce both an action's impacts-Examples of mitigation actions could include the installation of sidewalks, expansion of telecommunication services, and maintenance of existing infrastructure.

- **Agriculture Section-** While there are not specific actions recommended that would create adverse impacts to the environment, the overarching goal of all actions is to continue to embrace agriculture as a leading driver to maintaining our rural character, which is of utmost importance to the Enfield Community.
- **Land Use Section-** While there are not specific actions recommended that would create adverse impacts to the environment, the overarching goal of all actions is to continue to embrace agriculture as a leading driver to maintaining our rural character, which is of utmost importance to the Enfield Community.
- **Environment and Natural Resources Section-** The purpose of this section is to improve and maintain the natural environmental resources through implementation of the goals listed. There are no recognized potential adverse impacts.
- **Built Environment: Public Utilities, Infrastructure, and Transportation Section-**

Goal 3- Improve communication services in the Town of Enfield.

Existing Conditions: Residents and businesses are currently limited in their access to modern communications systems necessary to be competitive in today's educational and economic environment, be it in the Town and in the world.

Potential Adverse Impacts- Impact on rural viewshed, land disturbance and aesthetics.

Potential Impact Without Proposed Action- There is greater concern for Public Health and Safety as underserved residents are unable to reach emergency services due to lack of coverage. Students are at a disadvantage due to lack of educational opportunities. Lack of access to internet hampers economic development opportunities. Communication services are important for community members to build relationships with people and organizations, building community connections.

Alternative Actions to Mitigate Potential Adverse Impacts- An alternative action may be to consider ways to reduce impacts by blending communication infrastructure with other community needs, such as renewable energy development or through stealth installations that mimic the natural environment.

Each potential action may require its own SEQR process and potential impacts could be mitigated through that process. An alternative action is to not proceed with this goal and maintain the current conditions. Cumulative climate impact actions can be addressed as each goal is considered, utilizing the SEQR process to review potential actions and mitigate impacts on a case to case basis.

Measures to avoid or reduce both an action's impacts-Examples of mitigation actions could be reducing our environmental footprint by increasing virtual accessibility to town meetings, information, and social connection, utilizing communication infrastructure to support emergency preparedness, and increasing access and coordination of public transportation.

➤ **Housing Section-**

Goal 2- Strengthen our tax base by encouraging new residents of diverse personal and professional backgrounds to move into the Town of Enfield.

Existing Conditions: Historically, the Town of Enfield has struggled with a high poverty rate, diminished investment in infrastructure, and deteriorating municipal facilities. The absence of public water and sewer, limited cellular and internet services, and public transportation are challenges that impede our ability to attract new housing starts. Focused efforts must be made toward removing these impediments.

Potential Adverse Impacts- Depending upon the type of residential development potential impacts may include degradation to public transportation routes, loss of quality farmland and rural viewshed.

Potential Impact Without Proposed Action-Encouraging development of in the housing sector can increase property values. This is good for homeowners – who typically have more of their net worth tied up in their home than anywhere else – for developers, who stand to gain more from their investment, and for the community, which increases its tax base, and can therefore offer more services. Enhancement to property aesthetics increases pride in the neighborhood for everyone. These changes can often lead to everyone taking better care of their property, whether they own or rent, and can change the character of the neighborhood for the better. If it's planned, upgraded and/or built in an environmentally responsible way, improved housing can conserve energy and resources, provide residents with a healthier, safer place to live, and last generations. Additionally, intelligently designed housing spaces can preserve open space and/or reuse unused, previously-built space.

Alternative Actions to Mitigate Potential Adverse Impacts- Each potential action may require its own SEQR process and potential impacts could be mitigated through that process. An alternative action is to not proceed with this goal and maintain the current conditions. Cumulative climate impact actions can be addressed as each goal is considered, utilizing the SEQR process to review potential actions and mitigate impacts on a case to case basis.

Measures to avoid or reduce both an action's impacts-Examples of mitigation actions could include the installation of sidewalks, requiring less aesthetically invasive expansion of telecommunication services, and maintenance of existing infrastructure.

➤ **Economy and Community Section-**

Goal 3- Work to improve infrastructure which would enable greater economic opportunity for Enfield residents.

Existing Conditions: Historically, the Town of Enfield has struggled with a high poverty rate and diminished investment in infrastructure. The absence of public water and sewer, limited cellular and internet services, and public transportation are challenges that impede our ability to attract businesses. Focused efforts must be made toward removing these impediments in order to grow an economic base that supports the needs of the community.

Potential Adverse Impacts- Degradation to public transportation routes and impact on quality of land and rural viewshed.

Potential Impact Without Proposed Action- The town could lose out on opportunities to improve walkability, lighting, public safety, employment, education.

Alternative Actions to Mitigate Potential Adverse Impacts- Each potential action may require its own SEQR process and potential impacts could be mitigated through that process. An alternative action is to not proceed with this goal and maintain the current conditions. Cumulative climate impact actions can be addressed as each goal is considered, utilizing the SEQR process to review potential actions and mitigate impacts on a case to case basis.

Measures to avoid or reduce both an action's impacts-Examples of mitigation actions could include the installation of sidewalks, expansion of telecommunication services, and maintenance of existing infrastructure.

➤ ***Goal 8- Increase the use of recreational areas within the Town***

Existing Conditions: Enfield is home to magnificent natural beauty such as pristine waterways, a state park and several natural preserves, and a welcoming landscape for many types of outdoor activities. We recognize the importance of preserving these aspects of our community for future generations.

Potential Adverse Impacts- There may be adverse impacts associated with increasing tourism and travel within the Enfield community. The overarching intention in Goals 7 and 8 is to create positive impacts through improvement of public health and safety, community character through engagement, and preservation of recreational and natural areas.

Potential Impact Without Proposed Action- The Town could lose opportunities to improve or maintain existing conditions in greenspaces and other recreational areas, as well as lost opportunity to foster engagement with the outdoors for education, health, and well being of the community.

Alternative Actions to Mitigate Potential Adverse Impacts- Each potential action may require its own SEQR process and potential impacts could be mitigated through that process. An alternative action is to not proceed with this goal and maintain the current conditions. Cumulative climate impact actions can be addressed as each goal is considered, utilizing the SEQR process to review potential actions and mitigate impacts on a case to case basis.

Measures to avoid or reduce both an action's impacts-Examples of mitigation actions could be coordination with public transportation to increase services, maintain trails and areas of high traffic, and provide a waste disposal area that incorporates a recycling system.

➤ **Goal 9- Engage the community**

Existing Conditions: Currently there is an intermingling of residences, small businesses and farms throughout the town. This intermingling can sometimes cause conflict. Enfield residents value and wish to maintain the rural character of the Town. To that end, development should be discouraged that would damage air and water quality, increase noise levels, worsen pollution, create traffic problems, adversely affect Enfield visually, or otherwise degrade the Town's rural nature.

Potential Adverse Impacts- There may be adverse impacts associated with increasing tourism and travel within the Enfield community. The overarching intention in Goal 9 is to create positive impacts to public health and safety, through community engagement.

Potential Impact Without Proposed Action- The Town could lose opportunities to improve social and civic connections and quality of life for residents.

Alternative Actions to Mitigate Potential Adverse Impacts- Each potential action may require its own SEQR process and potential impacts could be mitigated through that process. An alternative action is to not proceed with this goal and maintain the current conditions. Cumulative climate impact actions can be addressed as each goal is considered, utilizing the SEQR process to review potential actions and mitigate impacts on a case to case basis.

Measures to avoid or reduce both an action's impacts-Examples of mitigation actions could be coordination with public transportation to increase services, maintain trails and areas of high traffic, and provide a waste disposal area that incorporates a recycling system.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The cumulative impact the Town of Enfield is likely to experience will not be of a type or magnitude that would adversely impact human health or the environment. While minor adverse impacts to local air quality and water can be anticipated, the Comprehensive Plan seeks to reduce impacts on air quality and water resources overall. Adverse impacts associated with increasing tourism and travel within the Enfield community, such as waste, degradation in areas of interest, degradation to public transportation routes, and impact on quality of land and rural viewshed will likely be offset by mitigation measures outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. The plan focuses on improving air quality by limiting land disturbance, and protecting open space to enhance the aesthetic resources in the community. Additionally, the Plan encourages the protection of community characteristics supported through encouraging sustainable agricultural activities and practices, community education, and farmland preservation.

ISSUES THAT ARE NOT RELEVANT OR SIGNIFICANT

The adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan by the Town of Enfield in and of itself will not impact the environment. However, the adoption of some of the recommendations herein may produce minor adverse impacts to local environmental concerns. These impacts will not be of a type or magnitude that would adversely impact human health or the environment on the whole. The implantation of the Comprehensive Plan will have the effect of improving the environment in Enfield by limiting and mitigating adverse actions, and protecting the environment through a focus on public health and the growth and character of our community. Further consideration for the environment will be fostered through adherence to the SEQRA process.

OPTIONS FOR ADOPTION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Town of Enfield may adopt the Comprehensive Plan as proposed. Alternatively, the Town may adopt the Comprehensive Plan with changes. A third alternative action is not to adopt the Comprehensive Plan. The third alternative might also be referred to as the no-action alternative.

The adoption of the Comprehensive Plan by the Town of Enfield as proposed would provide the most appropriate balance of properly scaled growth and economic development, protection of natural resources, provision for open space and recreational opportunities, as well as enhancement of community health and character. The importance of this balance has been expressed by Town residents and is reflected in the vision and goals of the Plan. This preferred option would further the Town's goals and assist the Town in taking necessary steps to achieve its vision.

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan with changes, while an alternative that the Town could consider, is not the preferred option. The proposed Comprehensive Plan is a culmination of more than seven (7) years of community commitment to providing insight into the community vision of those who live here through over 50 public meetings, a town-wide survey, several revisions, and a comprehensive review. The residents, the Town Board, and the Comprehensive Plan Committee have evaluated numerous alternatives to many of the recommendations which are reflected in the Comprehensive Plan and have dedicated a significant amount of time and energy into developing a plan that reflects the needs and desires of those who live here. The Plan represents the results of a process that included extensive public-involvement. To the greatest extent possible, the Plan, as proposed, provides a balance to meet the stated goals of the Enfield community. Alterations to the Plan at this time may upset the balance that has been achieved.

The no-action alternative would not further the Town's goals and would prevent the Town from achieving its full vision for the future. Further, the Comprehensive Plan being considered for adoption builds upon public input and research over the last decade. Existing Federal, State and

Local Government regulations could be sufficient to protect natural and cultural resources. However, the benefit of the Comprehensive Plan is that it suggests a manner in which the Town can grow, while still enhancing community character and protecting the Town's valuable resources and most valued rural character. This delicate balance can only be achieved through a deliberate and collaborative planning process. The absence of a plan to guide the growth and connectedness of our community will place the Town in a position of reacting to development, community needs, and environmental challenges of the future, rather than being proactive in its efforts.