

J. Ryan McMahon, II
County Executive



Martin Voss
Chairperson

Onondaga County Planning Board

Onondaga County Legislature
June 2026





Onondaga County Planning Board

What is the OCPB?

- The Onondaga County Planning Board (OCPB) operates under NYS General Municipal Law § 239-l, m & n (GML 239) to advise local boards on the potential intermunicipal or county-wide impact of local land use decisions.
- The OCPB annually reviews the County's Capital Improvement Plan.
- The OCPB reviews street names changes.
- The OCPB consists of seven members, five of which are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the Onondaga County Legislature. Two ex-officio members.
- The Department of Planning provides staff support to the OCPB and receives and reviews municipal referrals, coordinates with agencies and County departments, and incorporates guidance and recommendations from County plans into staff reports for Board consideration.



Onondaga County Board vs Local PBs

How is the OCPB Different from Local Planning Boards?

- Resolutions are non-binding; recommendation only. Super-majority to override a disapproval or modification.
- No public hearings, applicant presentations, etc. Municipalities are the applicant.
- OCPB only sees certain cases – must meet 2 criteria for referral to OCPB.
- Up to 500 cases / year from up to 100 local boards.
 - Due to caseload and timing, staff has hours, not weeks to review cases.
 - Recommendations typically returned within 10-15 days of receipt.
- Municipalities rely on OCPB for coordinating agency feedback.





Onondaga County Planning Board Referable Actions

What is a Referable Action?

Per GML 239, there are two criteria for determining if a proposed action is referable to the OCPB. An action is referable when both criteria are met.

Criteria 1: Type of Action

- ☐ Comprehensive Plan
- ☐ Adoption/amendment Zoning or Subdivision Regulations
- ☐ Special Use Permits
- ☐ Site Plans
- ☐ Use or Area Variances
- ☐ Subdivisions
- ☐ Certain other related authorizations

Criteria 2: Location (within 500' of)

- ☐ Boundary of any City, Village or Town
- ☐ Boundary of any County or State park or rec area
- ☐ ROW of any County or State road or highway
- ☐ ROW of any stream or drainage channel owned by the County
- ☐ Boundary of any County or State-owned land containing a public building or institution
- ☐ Boundary of a farm operation in a NYS Agricultural District





Onondaga County Planning Board 3 Types of Review

3 Types of Review:

- Full Board Reviews
- Administrative Reviews
- Exempt Actions

OCPB Referrable Actions Breakdown By Review Type

Action Type	GML 239 Referrable Action	Exempt from Review No County Action Necessary	Administrative Review Referral to County Planning for Staff Level Review	Onondaga County Planning Board Full Review Referral to County Planning for full OCPB Review
Area Variance	Residential front, side, or rear yard setbacks or lot depth (sole referrable action)	x		
	Building height (sole referrable action)	x		
	Residential accessory structures (sole referrable action)	x		
	Reduction in the number of parking spaces (sole referrable action)	x		
	Variances in combination with a related referral requiring Board review	x		
Subdivision	Any other area variance	x		
	Creation of up to 3 lots (sole referrable action)	x		
	Combination of lots (sole referrable action)	x		
	Let line adjustments (sole referrable action)	x		
	Creation of 4-5 lots	x		
Special Permit or Site Plan	Creation of 6 or more lots where each resulting lot is 10 acres or more	x		
	Creation of 6 or more lots where any resulting lot is less than 10 acres	x		
	Subdivision actions in combination with a related referral requiring Board review	x		
	Co-location of telecommunication equipment and accessories on existing structures	x		
	Established project boundaries	x		
	Exterior changes to an existing building (no other site changes)	x		
	Installation of EV chargers, addition of up to 3 spaces	x		
	Minor changes to an existing parking area not affecting square footage (restriping, resurfacing, etc.)	x		
	Exterior changes limited to fencing	x		
	Change of tenant in an existing building (no other site changes)	x		
Zoning Actions	Residential accessory structures (up to 1,000 sq ft)	x		
	Commercial accessory structures (not requiring variance)	x		
	On-premises signs (not requiring variance)	x		
	Off-premises signs (including dwelling units and home occs)	x		
	Residential accessory uses and site plans	x		
Other	All other special permits and site plans	x		
	Site plans or special permit actions in combination with a related referral requiring Board review	x		
	Administration and fees	x		
	Interpretations of language	x		
	Moratoriums, and extensions thereto	x		
Other	Use variances	x		
	Zone change	x		
	All other zoning actions	x		
	Plan amendment / adoption	x		
	Map amendment / adoption	x		
Other	Text or Local Law adoption	x		
		x		

Please note, this table is an unofficial summary, refer to agreements/policies to make official determination.

Revised 12/2024



Onondaga County Planning Board Referral Review

What are the OCPB and staff looking at when they review a referral?

Per GML 239, the intent of the OCPB review is to bring pertinent intercommunity and county-wide planning, zoning, site plan, and subdivision considerations to the attention of the local board, neighboring municipalities, infrastructure and service providers, and the public. GML has defined a list of county-wide and inter-community impacts used to evaluate a project.

- ✓ compatibility of various land uses with one another;
- ✓ traffic generating characteristics of various land uses;
- ✓ impact on existing/proposed County or State institutions or other uses;
- ✓ protection of community character drainage;
- ✓ community facilities;
- ✓ official municipal and County development policies; and
- ✓ such other matters as may relate to the public convenience, governmental efficiency, and achieving and maintaining of a satisfactory community environment.





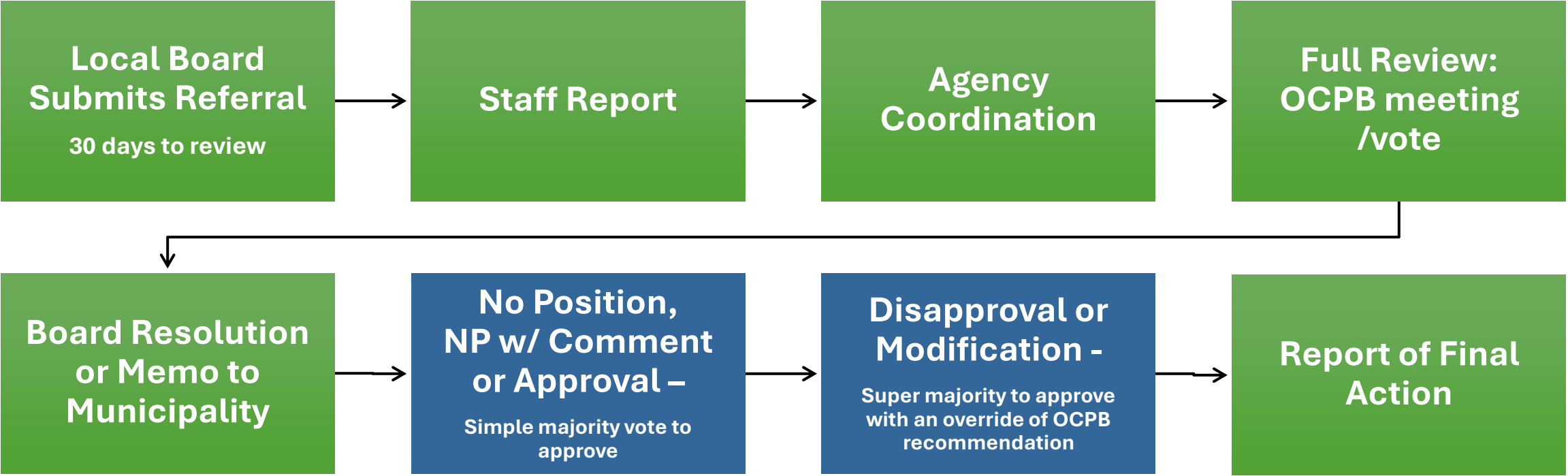
Onondaga County Planning Board Recommendations

**What are the OCPB
recommendations and
what do they mean?**

- Approval
- No Position
- No Position with Comment
- Modification
- Disapproval



Onondaga County Planning Board Review Workflow





Coordinated Reviews

Coordinated Review Meetings

Convene stakeholders for particularly large or complex projects.

May be requested by the municipality, the applicant, or the OCPB.

Opportunity for a project applicant to present and obtain feedback from a variety of permitting and interested agencies on a proposed project.

Can facilitate early and needed coordination and open communication on complex projects.





Onondaga County Planning Board Thanks You

Thank You!

onondaga.gov/planning/ocpb/

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Onondaga County Planning Board

Guide to
Onondaga County
Planning Board Referrals

February 2026

ONONDAGA COUNTY

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

Planning & Economic Development Committee

June 2026



DATA CENTERS

Data centers are physical, highly secure facilities that house thousands of networked computers, servers, and data storage.

Large in scale, modular and highly efficient in design, automated and globally connected.

They are used for cloud services, search engines, social media platforms, video streaming, e-commerce, enterprise software, AI.

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DATA CENTER MORATORIUMS

Town of Clay (proposed)

Town of Dewitt

Town of Lysander

Town of Manlius

Town of Salina

Town of Skaneateles (Banned)

Town of Van Buren

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DATA CENTER STUDY

Onondaga County will undertake a comprehensive study of data center development that seeks to proactively establish a planning and evaluation framework that balances economic opportunity with environmental stewardship and quality-of-life considerations.

Taskforce to oversee the study includes the Office of Economic Development, the Office of the Environment, WEP, OCWA, the Department of Health and the Department of Planning.

The timeline for a finished report is 6 months.

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DATA CENTER STUDY PURPOSE

The purpose of the study is to:

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of the impacts and opportunities associated with data center development
- Establish best practices and policy recommendations for evaluating future proposals
- Create consistent standards and evaluation criteria that can be utilized countywide
- Support municipalities in reviewing data center proposals through technical, engineering, and planning assistance

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DATA CENTER STUDY TASKS

Task 1: Existing Conditions Assessment

- Evaluate current conditions and infrastructure capacity throughout Onondaga County relevant to data center development.

Task 2: Impact Analysis

- Analyze the potential impacts associated with data center development including water and wastewater capacities, noise generation, aesthetic impacts, air quality and environmental considerations and quality of life impacts.

Task 3: Regulatory & Best Practices

- Conduct a comprehensive review of data center planning and regulatory approaches in comparable jurisdictions, with an emphasis on the Northeastern United States.

Task 4: Site Suitability Analysis

- Evaluate locations within Onondaga County that may be suitable for future data center development.

Task 5: Policy & Development Framework

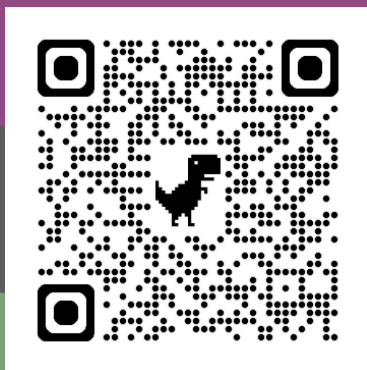
- Prepare recommendations for model zoning provisions, site design standards, noise mitigation measures and environmental performance standards.



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