



MEMORANDUM

CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK
PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
245 WASHINGTON STREET, ROOM 305, WATERTOWN, NY 13601
PHONE: 315-785-7741 – FAX: 315-782-9014

TO: Planning Commission Members

FROM: Michael A. Lumbis, Planning and Community Development Director

PRIMARY REVIEWER: Joseph Albinus, Planner

SUBJECT: Special Use Permit – 144 Eastern Boulevard, Suite 11

DATE: December 31, 2025

Request: Special Use Permit to Allow a Retail Marijuana Dispensary in a Commercial District

Applicant: Kimberly Parker of Fall Leaves Please LLC

Proposed Use: Marijuana Dispensary, Retail

Property Owner: Watertown Center Development LLC

Submitted:

Application Form: Yes	8 ½" x 11" Copy of Tax Map: Yes
Cover Letter: Yes	County Planning Board Review Required: Yes
A Sketch of the Site to Scale: Yes	SEQRA: Unlisted Action

Overview: The applicant proposes to open a Retail Marijuana Dispensary in one of the storefronts in the existing multi-tenant structure on the subject parcel, known as Northland Plaza. The proposed storefront is the former Real Deals storefront. The applicant does not plan any exterior renovations other than new signage. The applicant does not plan any structural modifications but there may be interior renovations needed to comply with New York State regulations enforced by the NYS Office of Cannabis Management. The Zoning Ordinance defines a Marijuana Dispensary, Retail use as follows:

“A business that is registered to operate in the State of New York that engages in the Retail Sale of Cannabis Products.”

Section 310-18 of the Zoning Ordinance, which contains the use table for all districts, requires a Special Use Permit for a Retail Marijuana Dispensary in a Commercial District.

Site Plan Approval: This proposal will not require Site Plan Approval. Section 310-104 of the Zoning Ordinance identifies the following as exempt from Site Plan Review:

- “A. Where the space proposed for occupancy is within an existing building or structure that will not undergo exterior alterations unless the new use is going to require additional parking.”*

The proposed renovations to the structure meet the criteria for the exemption listed above.

Special Use Permit Standards: Article XI of the Zoning Ordinance empowers the Planning Commission to issue Special Use Permits after holding a Public Hearing and reviewing the application against the Special Use Permit Review Criteria.

Section 310-116 of the Zoning Ordinance contains the Special Use Permit Review Criteria that the Planning Commission is tasked with considering. Below is a list of all nine criteria and Staff’s conclusions for each criterion. The following represent Staff’s professional comments only and do not necessarily represent the final position of the Planning Commission, which must reach its own determinations.

A. The proposed use will be consistent with the purposes of this Chapter and the requirements of the zoning district in which it is located.

The stated purpose of the Commercial District, per the Zoning Ordinance is as follows:

“This district facilitates the highest intensity of commercial uses that serve the entire region beyond adjacent neighborhoods. Development character typically is larger lots with franchise architecture, on-site parking and signage. While the desire is to maintain this land use, a higher standard of design to create a uniform/uncluttered look is desired. While the Commercial Corridor is by nature auto-oriented, design standards should still integrate sidewalks, bike lanes, and transit stops into the streetscape.”

The proposed use is consistent with this purpose, as the existing property is a shopping plaza. The proposed business would occupy an existing storefront within the primary building. The built environment would remain unchanged.

B. The proposed use’s compatibility and consistency with the goals and recommendations of the City of Watertown Comprehensive Plan, Complete Streets Ordinance and other approved City plans and programs.

The subject property is in the Corridor Mixed Use future land use character area. The City’s adopted Comprehensive Plan defines this future land use character area as follows:

“Watertown has a number of mixed-use corridors radiating out from the center of the City. While each of these corridors generally serve the local and regional population, they exhibit different characters. Areas along Coffeen, Washington, and State Streets have a mixture of residential and commercial uses where the commercial uses are often in converted large residential structures. Buildings are set back a modest distance from the road, parking is typically behind or at the side of the building, and there are sidewalks that connect to the adjacent neighborhoods. The intent of these areas is to preserve the urban form and limit intrusion of suburban character (i.e., parking in front, large signs, franchise architecture), as well as to serve as gateways into the City. New development and redevelopment should consider pedestrians, bicycles, and transit as a means of integrating into the urban fabric.”

The proposed use is compatible with the other commercial uses on the property and will not create a nuisance to the adjacent businesses or affect the properties surrounding it. The exterior architecture and built environment will not change. This proposal is in harmony with the Comprehensive Plan.

C. The impact on the nature and character of the surrounding neighborhood, natural environment, historic district, or corridor in which it is located.

The proposed use will have a minimal impact on the surrounding corridor. There are numerous nearby retail stores and other commercial businesses within the plaza. The existing shopping plaza is not in a historic district and the only nearby environmental feature is a creek running through the rear of the parcel in the wooded northeastern corner.

D. The overall impact on the site and its surroundings, considering environmental, social, and economic impacts of traffic, noise, dust, odors, release of harmful substances, solid waste disposal, glare, or any other nuisances.

The proposed use would have minimal impact on the surrounding environment and will not create any negative impacts per the items listed above.

E. Restrictions and/or conditions on design of structures or operation of the use (including hours of operation) necessary either to ensure compatibility with the surrounding uses or to protect the natural resources of the City.

The applicant has proposed operating hours of 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Sunday – Saturday which is consistent with the allowed hours listed in Section 310-75 of the Zoning Ordinance. The hours are also similar to business hours of other nearby commercial uses, such as the following examples:

1. United China Restaurant: 11:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday.
2. Subway: 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. Monday-Saturday.
10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. Sunday.

Adjacent uses to the south consist of vacant land, apartments, and other commercial uses. To the west, the subject parcel is across the road from residentially zoned houses, approximately 350ft from the storefront. To the north, the subject parcel abuts the site of the East Hills Apartments. East Hills is approximately 150 feet from the proposed Retail Marijuana Dispensary use. There is a fence along with shrubbery along the boundary between the two parcels. The East Hills parcel is zoned as Planned Campus. There is a grocery store and a contracting company located on the parcel to the east.

This review did not identify any significant detrimental effects to any of the surrounding properties.

F. The adequacy and accessibility of essential public facilities and services, such as streets, parking spaces, police and fire protection, drainage structures, refuse disposal, water and sewer, and schools.

The existing number of parking spaces is adequate for the proposed Retail Marijuana Dispensary use. As the primary building on the parcel is considered a Shopping Center, there are a large amount of parking spaces shared by all businesses in the parcel. A sidewalk exists along the front of the primary building, but it does not connect to the sidewalks located on Eastern Blvd. or State St. The use is not expected to generate a significant amount of pedestrian traffic.

G. The proposed use's impact on traffic congestion, impairment of pedestrian safety, or capacity challenges to Level of Service on existing streets, considering their current width, surfacing, and condition, and any improvements proposed to be made to them by the applicant.

A new retail business occupying a previously vacant storefront will increase trip generation. However, it is exceedingly unlikely to have an adverse effect on the vehicular Level of Service on Eastern Boulevard and State Street.

H. The impact on adjacent historic resources as formally recognized by the New York State and Federal Registers of Historic Places.

The subject property is not adjacent to any formally recognized historic resources. The nearest historic resource is Emerson Place, which is over 5,000 feet away at 1 Emerson Place.

I. In reviewing the adequacy of the Supplemental or General Regulations as they may relate, the Planning Commission may impose more restrictive conditions.

This standard allows the Planning Commission to impose more restrictive conditions after review of this application. Any comments or additional conditions should be stated at the Planning Commission meeting.

Parking and Vehicular Circulation: The applicant is not proposing any additional parking or change to vehicle circulation. All customers and some employees will access the parcel using the entrance facing State Street and there is an additional entrance that can be used by employees and/or contractors at the rear facing the delivery drive aisle behind the building.

Landscaping and Buffers: Since the proposal does not require Site Plan Approval, it would be impractical to require the applicant to bring the site into full compliance with landscaping and buffer requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. The only proposed exterior renovation on the building is adding a new sign.

The site currently contains a 13' +/- wide buffer zone along the north property line, a 40' +/- wide buffer along part of the west of the parcel, and a large greenspace and creek in the northeastern portion of the parcel.

SEQRA: The project is considered an Unlisted Action under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). The applicant has completed Part 1 of the Short Environmental Assessment Form. The Planning Commission will be required to complete Part 2 prior to making a decision on the requested Special Use Permit.

Other: If the Special Use Permit is granted by the Planning Commission, the applicant must obtain the following permits, at a minimum, from the Bureau of Code Enforcement: a Building Permit for any interior renovations or alterations and a Sign Permit for the replacement of the existing sign.

The applicant must also obtain a license from the Office of Cannabis Management in order to operate the marijuana dispensary.

Summary: The following should be discussed by the Planning Commission and included as contingencies in the motion for approval of the Special Use Permit:

1. The applicant shall obtain a Building Permit and Sign Permit from the Bureau of Code Enforcement prior to any construction.

Public Hearing: As noted above, the Planning Commission is required to hold a public hearing on the Special Use Permit application within 62 days of Planning Staff deeming it complete. Planning Staff has deemed the application complete and has scheduled a public hearing for Tuesday, January 6, 2025, at 5:20 p.m. during the Planning Commission meeting to hear public comments on the proposed Special Use Permit.

Planning Commission Action: Prior to voting on the request, the Planning Commission is responsible for reviewing each of the Special Use Permit criteria found in Section 310-116 of the Zoning Ordinance and highlighted in bold text above. After reviewing the criteria, the Planning Commission will be free to make a decision on the request. The Planning Commission shall not issue a Special Use Permit unless it finds that the proposed use will satisfy the criteria listed above.

cc: Planning Commission Members
Dana Aikins, Code Enforcement Supervisor
Kimberly Parker, Fall Leaves Please LLC
Thomas Compo, City Engineer



Above: A satellite view of the subject parcels highlighted in blue and their surroundings.

Site Photos:



Above: Picture of the proposed store front from the front, looking north.

Below: Picture of the proposed storefront from the rear, from the east looking west.





Above: Picture of the proposed storefront from the rear, from the west looking east.

December 12, 2025

Michael Lumbis
Planning and Community Development Director

Special Use Permit Application – Yesca LLC

Dear Mr. Lumbis,

On behalf of Yesca LLC, I would like to submit this Special Use Application to the Planning Board for consideration to establish a licensed adult-use cannabis dispensary at 144 Eastern Blvd, Suite 2, Watertown.

Project Overview:

Yesca LLC currently operates an existing NYS Licensed Cannabis Dispensary within Jefferson County. We have been in operation since May of 2024, having successfully completed multiple OCM regulatory inspections.

This application seeks the approval to expand our responsible, compliant operation within the city of Watertown. The city of Watertown location would be within the zoned Commercial area of the city, where a Special Use Permit is available for this use. We would operate a secure, safe, accessible location for the residents of Watertown, NY and the surrounding communities.

Proposed Location:

The proposed site is an existing 6,800 +/- square foot store front located in the Northland Plaza, and does not require any additional build-out.

- Security and Camera System – this will be installed in accordance with standards and guidelines of the Office of Cannabis Management
- Exterior Renovations - There will be no exterior renovations
- Interior Renovations – No structural modifications or need for building permit.
- Signage - Updated signage will be consistent with local zoning requirements, and OCM requirements.

Hours of Operation:

Proposed operating hours will be 8:00am to 9:00pm, Sunday – Saturday. These hours are in accordance with current city of Watertown ordinance for cannabis dispensaries.

Neighborhood Compatibility:

The proposed location is compatible with the retail and service sector of the commercial zone.

Safety and Community:

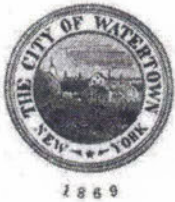
As a currently licensed operator, we work with and will continue to partner with several local non-profit and charitable organizations that strive to improve the local community and its residents. We actively promote education and safe use of cannabis and cannabis products, thru community out-reach, working with State and County organizations.

We look forward to partnering with the City of Watertown, and will be available to answer additional questions at any time.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Parker

Kimberly Parker
Owner
Yesca LLC



City of Watertown
SPECIAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION FORM

City of Watertown, Planning and Community Development Dept.
245 Washington Street, Room 305, Watertown, NY 13601
Phone: 315-785-7741 Email: planning@watertown-ny.gov

Received:

PROPERTY INFORMATION:

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 144 Eastern Boulevard, SUITE Z

TAX PARCEL NUMBER: 5-16-320.100

PROPOSED USE (describe fully; attach additional sheets if necessary): RETAIL CANNABIS DISPENSARY

APPLICANT INFORMATION:

APPLICANT NAME: VESCA, LLC

APPLICANT MAILING ADDRESS: [REDACTED]

PHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED] E-MAIL: [REDACTED]

PROPERTY OWNER INFORMATION (if different from applicant):

PROPERTY OWNER NAME: WATERTOWN CENTER DEVELOPMENT, LLC

PROPERTY OWNER MAILING ADDRESS (if different from subject parcel): P.O. BOX 185, CLINTON, NY 13323

PHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED] E-MAIL: [REDACTED]

CHECKLIST (please include all of the following in addition to this application form):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cover Letter* | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tax Map with subject parcel highlighted* |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site Drawing* | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) form* |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> \$125 application fee * | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Electronic Copy of Entire Submission (PDF Preferred) |

*See appendices for further information

Applicant Signature: Kimberly Parker Date: 12-14-2025

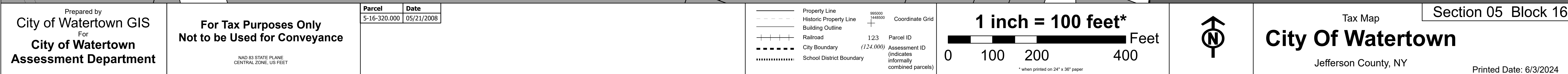
Property Owner Signature (if different): [Signature] Date: 12/14/2025

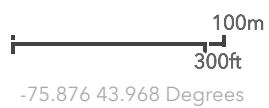
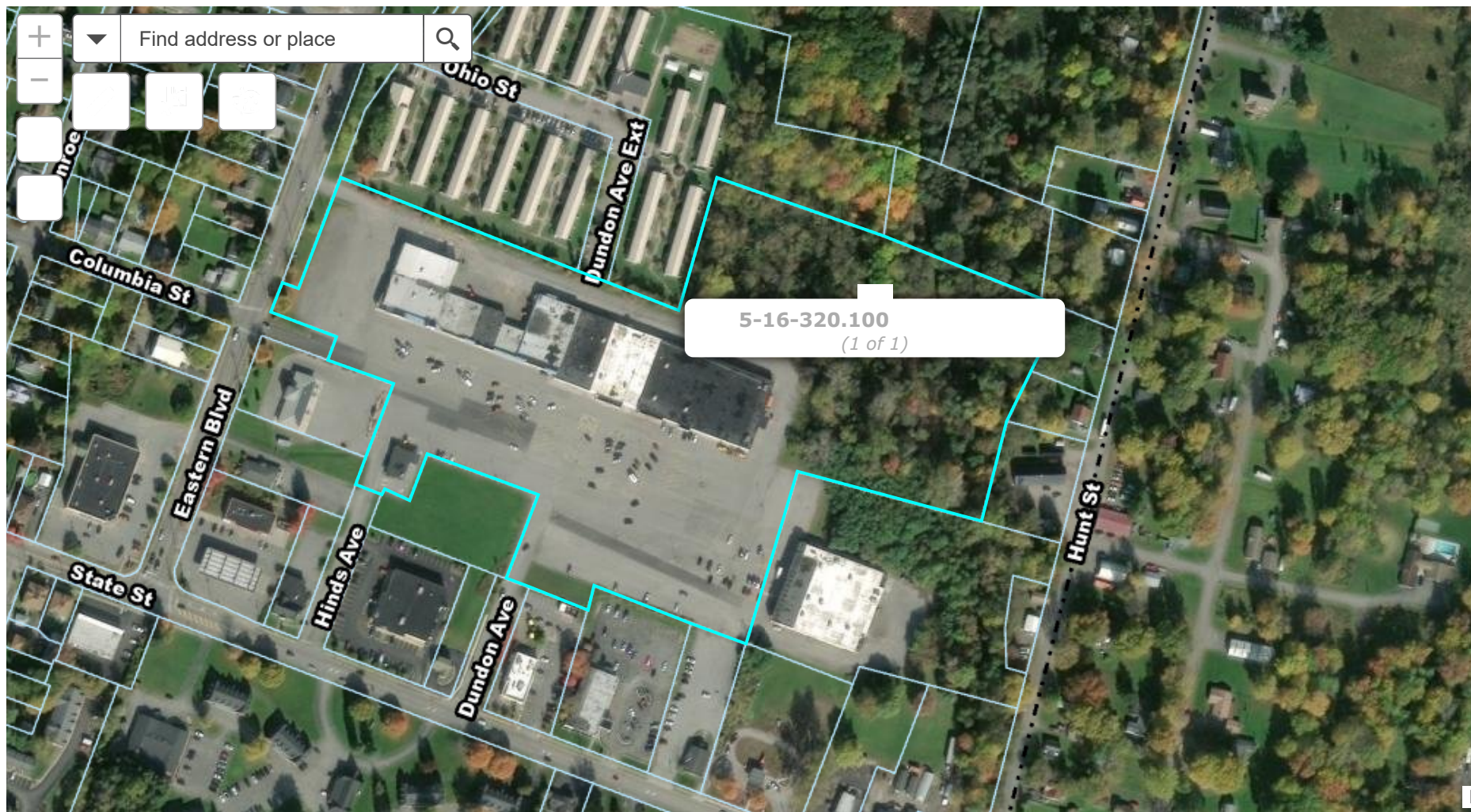




Parcel sqft: 757,944

Parcel ID: 5-16-320.100





Short Environmental Assessment Form

Part 1 - Project Information

Instructions for Completing

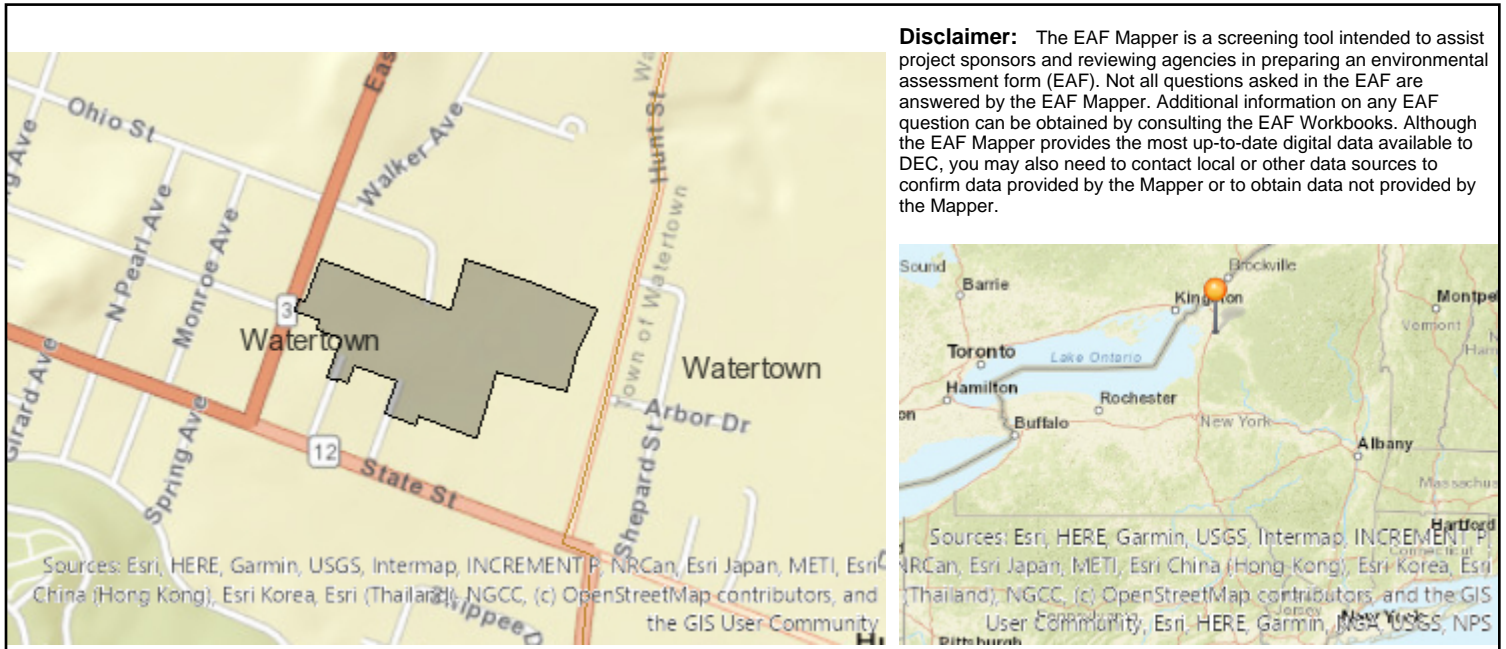
Part 1 – Project Information. The applicant or project sponsor is responsible for the completion of Part 1. Responses become part of the application for approval or funding, are subject to public review, and may be subject to further verification. Complete Part 1 based on information currently available. If additional research or investigation would be needed to fully respond to any item, please answer as thoroughly as possible based on current information.

Complete all items in Part 1. You may also provide any additional information which you believe will be needed by or useful to the lead agency; attach additional pages as necessary to supplement any item.

Part 1 – Project and Sponsor Information				
Name of Action or Project:				
Project Location (describe, and attach a location map):				
Brief Description of Proposed Action:				
Name of Applicant or Sponsor:			Telephone: [REDACTED]	
			E-Mail: [REDACTED]	
Address:				
City/PO:			State: Zip Code:	
1. Does the proposed action only involve the legislative adoption of a plan, local law, ordinance, administrative rule, or regulation?			NO	YES
If Yes, attach a narrative description of the intent of the proposed action and the environmental resources that may be affected in the municipality and proceed to Part 2. If no, continue to question 2.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Does the proposed action require a permit, approval or funding from any other government Agency?			NO	YES
If Yes, list agency(s) name and permit or approval:			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. a. Total acreage of the site of the proposed action? _____ acres				
b. Total acreage to be physically disturbed? _____ acres				
c. Total acreage (project site and any contiguous properties) owned _____ acres				
or controlled by the applicant or project sponsor?				
4. Check all land uses that occur on, are adjoining or near the proposed action:				
5. Urban Rural (non-agriculture) Industrial Commercial Residential (suburban)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Forest Agriculture Aquatic Other(Specify):				
<input type="checkbox"/> Parkland				

5. Is the proposed action,	NO	YES	N/A
a. A permitted use under the zoning regulations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Consistent with the adopted comprehensive plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Is the proposed action consistent with the predominant character of the existing built or natural landscape?	NO	YES	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Is the site of the proposed action located in, or does it adjoin, a state listed Critical Environmental Area?	NO	YES	
If Yes, identify: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. a. Will the proposed action result in a substantial increase in traffic above present levels?	NO	YES	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b. Are public transportation services available at or near the site of the proposed action?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c. Are any pedestrian accommodations or bicycle routes available on or near the site of the proposed action?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Does the proposed action meet or exceed the state energy code requirements?	NO	YES	
If the proposed action will exceed requirements, describe design features and technologies: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Will the proposed action connect to an existing public/private water supply?	NO	YES	
If No, describe method for providing potable water: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11. Will the proposed action connect to existing wastewater utilities?	NO	YES	
If No, describe method for providing wastewater treatment: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
12. a. Does the project site contain, or is it substantially contiguous to, a building, archaeological site, or district which is listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places, or that has been determined by the Commissioner of the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to be eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places?	NO	YES	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b. Is the project site, or any portion of it, located in or adjacent to an area designated as sensitive for archaeological sites on the NY State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) archaeological site inventory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
13. a. Does any portion of the site of the proposed action, or lands adjoining the proposed action, contain wetlands or other waterbodies regulated by a federal, state or local agency?	NO	YES	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b. Would the proposed action physically alter, or encroach into, any existing wetland or waterbody?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If Yes, identify the wetland or waterbody and extent of alterations in square feet or acres: _____ _____ _____			

14. Identify the typical habitat types that occur on, or are likely to be found on the project site. Check all that apply: <input type="checkbox"/> Shoreline <input type="checkbox"/> Forest Agricultural/grasslands Early mid-successional Wetland <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Suburban		
15. Does the site of the proposed action contain any species of animal, or associated habitats, listed by the State or Federal government as threatened or endangered?	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
16. Is the project site located in the 100-year flood plan?	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
17. Will the proposed action create storm water discharge, either from point or non-point sources? If Yes, a. Will storm water discharges flow to adjacent properties? b. Will storm water discharges be directed to established conveyance systems (runoff and storm drains)? If Yes, briefly describe: _____ _____	NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
18. Does the proposed action include construction or other activities that would result in the impoundment of water or other liquids (e.g., retention pond, waste lagoon, dam)? If Yes, explain the purpose and size of the impoundment: _____ _____	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
49. Has the site of the proposed action or an adjoining property been the location of an active or closed solid waste management facility? If Yes, describe: _____ _____	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
20. Has the site of the proposed action or an adjoining property been the subject of remediation (ongoing or completed) for hazardous waste? If Yes, describe: _____ _____	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
I CERTIFY THAT THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE IS TRUE AND ACCURATE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE Applicant/sponsor/name: _____ Date: _____ Signature: _____ Title: _____		



Part 1 / Question 7 [Critical Environmental Area]	No
Part 1 / Question 12a [National or State Register of Historic Places or State Eligible Sites]	No
Part 1 / Question 12b [Archeological Sites]	Yes
Part 1 / Question 13a [Wetlands or Other Regulated Waterbodies]	Yes - Digital mapping information on local, New York State, and federal wetlands and waterbodies is known to be incomplete. Refer to the EAF Workbook.
Part 1 / Question 15 [Threatened or Endangered Animal]	Yes
Part 1 / Question 15 [Threatened or Endangered Animal - Name]	Northern Long-eared Bat
Part 1 / Question 16 [100 Year Flood Plain]	Digital mapping data are not available or are incomplete. Refer to EAF Workbook.
Part 1 / Question 20 [Remediation Site]	No