



April 26, 2023

**Christopher Henry**

Director of Planning and Development  
109 N. Main Street  
Oneida, New York

RE: Oneida Wind Consistency with Local and County Plans

Mr. Henry,

New Leaf Energy has reviewed the applicable local and county land use plans regarding the proposed wind turbine project located off of Brewer Rd. The two applicable land use plans for this site are the City of Oneida Comprehensive Plan and the Madison County Economic Development Strategy. We believe that the proposed wind project is consistent with these plans. Please see below for more details on how this project can help further the goals of these community plans.

### **City of Oneida Comprehensive Plan**

A review of the City of Oneida Comprehensive plan identified several key efforts for the city to focus on. The Comprehensive Plan is a document that presents goals, objectives, guidelines and policies for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth, and community development. Areas of focus were identified, and then goals were established to help further those areas. The goals identified are:

**Goal 1: Provide a transportation system that alleviates congestion while providing adequate provisions for pedestrians.**

**Goal 2: Upgrade and maintain the City's infrastructure.**

**Goal 3: Reestablish the downtown as the City's central business district.**

**Goal 4: Provide a variety of high quality housing opportunities.**

**Goal 5: Improve land management by updating the City's Zoning Ordinance.**

**Goal 6: Develop a focused city-wide economic development plan.**

**Goal 7: Utilize potential and existing recreational and educational facilities to support opportunities for youth and area residents.**

Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7 are not directly applicable to the proposed wind project. However, New Leaf Energy would like to enter into a Host Community Agreement with the City of Oneida that can provide funds to support some of the initiatives identified in the Comprehensive plan to further these goals. A Host Community Agreement can be structured in many ways, potentially earmarking funds for specific projects. For example, a specific activity identified in the Comprehensive Plan to help achieve Goal 1 is to “Create attractive gateways at the major entrances to the city”. Funds from the Host Community Agreement could be used to support this project.

Goals 5 and 6 are more applicable to this project. To achieve Goal 5, the city has recently enacted a wind bylaw identifying the zoning districts where wind energy projects are allowed. This project is an allowed use in the zoning district where it is located.

Goal 6 is related to the economic development of the city. This project will contribute directly and indirectly to the local economy and municipal budget. Areas of focus listed in the Comprehensive Plan include “Encourage growth and development” and “Recognize that tax base is critical”. Most types of traditional development produce some stress on public services and resources such as city water, sewer, additional children in the school district, or traffic generation. In contrast, this project will provide an additional tax base to the city, while requiring none of the city services and public resource demands most development needs.

Although the Comprehensive Plan does not contemplate wind energy projects specifically, this project is not only consistent with the goals listed, but can help further progress towards achieving many of them.

## **Madison County Economic Development Strategy**

Madison county does not have a detailed land use plan, but it does have a number of strategic plans that have been created to guide county decisions. The most relevant plan for projects such as the wind project proposed is the Madison County Economic Development Strategy. This document is meant to provide the community with a clear understanding of the current economic situation, identify potential opportunities as well as challenges for economic growth, and define the efforts required to achieve specific goals.

The Economic Development Strategy identified wind as one of the county's natural resources. Oneida is on the edge of the areas with enough wind resources, with most of the windiest areas of the county located further south in towns such as Fenner. While the strategic plan does not specifically list wind energy as a goal, it does identify the renewable energy sector as a growth market and indicates that this is an opportunity.



It also identified the following overarching goal: **“Madison County must direct its efforts to the growth of a diverse economic base that will provide employment opportunities for a broad cross section of its citizens across the entire county”**. The proposed wind project supports this goal by being a source of investment into the city and county from outside. This project will funnel investment into the county in a range of ways; from direct investment to the host landowner, to more indirect means. While the facility itself is unmanned, the design, construction, and operation of the turbine will support a wide range of employment opportunities within the county. Many services, specifically construction services, will be pulled from local companies, funneling outside investment dollars into the local economy. Additionally, even those specialized services and workers that will need to be brought in from outside of the county will require lodging, food, and other services. This will provide additional revenue for local businesses.

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Given the above, and in the context of the larger New York State Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, we believe this project is consistent with the goals and plans of the City of Oneida, County of Madison, and State of New York. In fact, this type of project is a critical part of achieving those goals.

Sincerely,

New Leaf Energy, Inc.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brandon Smith".

Brandon Smith, PE

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