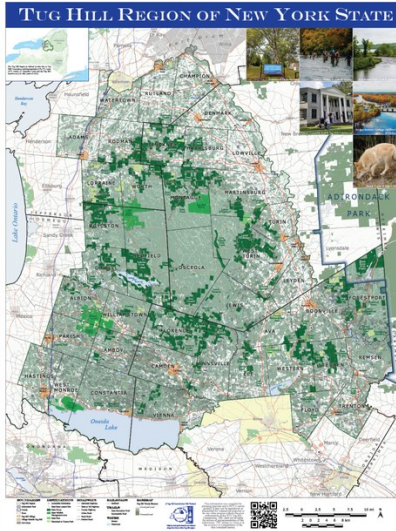
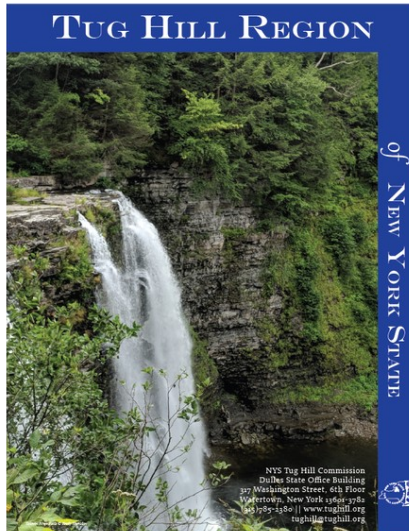


# TUG HILL TIMES



NYS TUG HILL COMMISSION | DULLES STATE OFFICE BUILDING | 317 WASHINGTON STREET | WATERTOWN NY 13601 (315) 785-2380 | [www.tughill.org](http://www.tughill.org)

June 5, 2020



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## New Tug Hill Regional Map Brochure Available for Download

The Tug Hill Commission has published a new version of its *Tug Hill Regional Map*, available online at [tughill.org/about/what-is-the-tug-hill-commission/](http://tughill.org/about/what-is-the-tug-hill-commission/). Printed copies will not be immediately available, but the document can be downloaded and printed, or viewed as a flipbook on the commission's website.

The map and accompany text were last updated in 2012. The map brochure is used for a variety of purposes, including:

1. Introducing the public to the Tug Hill region's geography, natural resources, economy, recreational opportunities, and energy profile;
2. Presenting the Tug Hill Commission and its mission;
3. Showing essential features of the region, such as the regional boundary, the municipalities' boundaries, and destinations—especially forested areas;
4. Illustrating the character and highlights of the region; and
5. Underscoring the importance of our region in New York State.

## Executive Order Extends Period Allowing Non-In-Person Municipal Meetings

As interpreted by the Committee on Open Government ([www.dos.ny.gov/coog/](http://www.dos.ny.gov/coog/)), Executive Order 202.34, issued May 29, 2020, extends Executive Orders 202.14, 202.28 and 202.31 and with that, municipalities may continue to meet by means other than in person, with certain stipulations as previously established.

Executive Order 202.34 contains "directives for the period from the date of this Executive Order through June 27, 2020", and its specific extension of previous Executive Order 202.31 "is hereby continued until and unless later amended or extended by a future Executive Order."

Executive Order 202.34 can be found at:

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/no-20234-continuing-temporary-suspension-and-modification-laws-relating-disaster-emergency>

## Tug Hill Commission Meeting June 15

The Tug Hill Commission board will meet remotely via Zoom on Monday, June 15, 2020 from 10:00 am to 11:30 am. The agenda will include routine business of the commission and updates on projects and community needs. The meeting can be accessed at [us02web.zoom.us/j/87288997834](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87288997834), or by phone (929) 205-6099 with meeting ID 872 8899 7834. Call-in number users note this is a long-distance call, please plan accordingly.

## June 16 Webinar: NYStretch Energy Code 2020

**Host:** New York State Green Building Conference on Tuesday, June 16, 2020 at 2– 3 PM, presented by Marilyn Dare from NYSERDA and Josh Stack from Stack Resilience, LLC

**Description:** Stretch energy codes are used to help achieve greater energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reductions in new construction. Attend this session to learn more about the stretch code, the economics and benefits of adopting NYStretch, and the tools and resources available to assist communities in its adoption.

**Registration:** Go to [www.eventbrite.com/e/nystretch-energy-code-2020-a-tool-for-meeting-communities-climate-goals-tickets-106943563076](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nystretch-energy-code-2020-a-tool-for-meeting-communities-climate-goals-tickets-106943563076)

## Justice Court Solutions Webinar June 18

Angie Kimball, Cooperative Tug Hill Council Circuit Rider at the Tug Hill Commission, will deliver a webinar on Thursday, June 18, 10:30 am—Noon on *Justice Court Solutions for Small Towns and Villages*. Please register in advance for this webinar at [us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_BHgunBP3RAqC5M4x6kpvhQ](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_BHgunBP3RAqC5M4x6kpvhQ).

There are multiple options available to municipalities for shared services in the justice courts, some of which require home rule legislation and action by the State Legislature and some which require no home rule legislation and local action only. This session will provide details on these options and share several real-life Tug Hill examples. The commission's issue paper on the topic is good background material, available at [www.tughill.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Justice-Court-Consolidation-Solutions-Final.pdf](http://www.tughill.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Justice-Court-Consolidation-Solutions-Final.pdf).

## How to Enhance Transparency in Planning Proceedings Webinar June 23

Public confidence in government is low. Local leaders must find opportunities to bring the public “under the tent” as it relates to planning decisions. Simply “checking the boxes” in terms of open meetings requirements is not enough to ensure that the public understands projects and their potential impact. This session will examine best practices and inexpensive (or free) tools to ensure the public understands the impact of proposed projects and your thought process in arriving at a final decision. Please register in advance for this webinar at [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_99808LDGQ3WQgBkvg6odxg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_99808LDGQ3WQgBkvg6odxg).

**SPEAKER:** Matt Horn, ICMA-CM, Director of Municipal Services at the MRB Group, [www.mrbgroup.com](http://www.mrbgroup.com). Matt is a former city manager with a strong background in infrastructure planning, strategic development, and community engagement. He has extensive experience in municipal budgeting and finance, collaborative service delivery, comprehensive planning, downtown revitalization and economic development. His municipal consulting background includes internal process auditing, public relations assistance and guidance, and development of local government management capacity, as well as long-term strategic planning for community growth.

# Local Governments and COVID-19: An Overview

As regions across NYS move through the four reopening phases, local governments have questions on what applies to them and how they should conduct business going forward. The commission has tried to compile as much relevant information as possible for you to consider as reopening continues to progress through the phases. Additionally, NYCOM is preparing guidance for municipalities and that will be shared once available.

- Local governments are considered essential and were never “closed” by the Governor’s executive orders. Local governments were required to deem which employees and services were “essential” versus “non-essential.” For many towns and villages, that meant closing offices and performing office-based tasks remotely and shifting infrastructure-related employees to staggered work schedules, for example.
- With many municipal offices beginning to reopen, guidance from **Empire State Development** states: *“Municipal government operations should practice physical distancing and telecommuting as much as possible, however it is up to the individual municipality how they determine which functions are essential. All local governments are operating at a maximum of 50% in-person workforce presence.”* [esd.ny.gov/nyforward-faq](https://esd.ny.gov/nyforward-faq)
- Regarding face masks, **NYS Department of Health** guidance states *“Essential businesses, as well as state and local government agencies and authorities, must procure, fashion, or otherwise obtain face coverings and provide such coverings to employees who directly interact with the public during the course of their work at no-cost to the employee.”* [coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/04/doh\\_covid19\\_eo20216employeefacecovering\\_041420.pdf](https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/04/doh_covid19_eo20216employeefacecovering_041420.pdf)
- Pursuant to [Executive Order 202.10](#) all non-essential gatherings of individuals of any size for any reasons (e.g. parties, celebrations, or other social events) are canceled or postponed. However, Executive Orders 202.32 and 202.33, issued subsequently, allow ten or fewer people to gather for any lawful purpose or reason, provided that social distancing protocols and cleaning and disinfection protocols required by the Department of Health are adhered to. [esd.ny.gov/guidance-executive-order-2026](https://esd.ny.gov/guidance-executive-order-2026)
- [Executive Order 202.34](#) authorizes businesses to deny entry to individuals who do not wear masks or face-coverings.
- Examples of practices being used by some local governments include:
  1. Develop a reopening plan using the template provided by NYS, [www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/NYS\\_BusinessReopeningSafetyPlanTemplate.pdf](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/NYS_BusinessReopeningSafetyPlanTemplate.pdf).
  2. “By appointment only” for the public that needs to do business with the municipality.
  3. Have a mail drop for paperwork that needs to be delivered to the municipality.
  4. Designate doors as enter and exit only to minimize people coming into contact.
  5. Mark areas on floor six feet apart where needed, have seats in meeting rooms six feet apart.
  6. Make hand sanitizer available for staff and visitors.
  7. Offer a remote component to your board meetings, even if most are meeting in-person. The commission can help you hold a hybrid Zoom and in-person meeting.
- Contact your county’s Health Department for advice and guidance:
  - Jefferson County [co.jefferson.ny.us/departments/PublicHealth](https://co.jefferson.ny.us/departments/PublicHealth)
  - Lewis County [www.lewiscounty.org/departments/public-health/public-health](https://www.lewiscounty.org/departments/public-health/public-health)
  - Oneida County [ocgov.net/oneida/health](https://ocgov.net/oneida/health)
  - Oswego County [health.oswegocounty.com/](https://health.oswegocounty.com/)

# Commission Fosters Collaboration in Broadband Research

Broadband coverage on Tug Hill has been a topic of discussion for many years at the commission. Recognizing the need for improved connectivity in our communities, a collaboration began in 2015 with the Cooperative Tug Hill Council to survey internet service in the towns of Rodman, Harrisburg, and Turin. Respondents indicated that 83% had internet service, but 72% of those households were unsatisfied with their service. Of the 17% without internet service, the top three reasons for being unserved were: affordability, unsatisfactory internet service, and a feeling that they do not need internet.



Source Household survey in Rodman, Harrisburg, and Turin (2015).

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the issues with broadband on Tug Hill have been elevated. Areas of greatest concern are households, especially low-income households, with children K through 12 attending school virtually, households of persons with telehealth needs, and households with people teleworking.

Fortunately, a task force—New Upstate Cellular Coverage Task Force—was created to understand coverage in Upstate NY, and a program—the New NY Broadband Program—was created to distribute grants across the state. Several of these grants have been awarded in recent years to providers to extend their coverage into unserved and underserved communities on Tug Hill. There is also a plan titled “Charter Communications’ NYS Broadband Expansion Plan” that was created when Charter (i.e., Spectrum) took over Time Warner Cable in NYS. Local officials can request coverage maps for their municipalities, which requires signing a non-disclosure agreement.

It is generally agreed that the broadband coverage mapping resources that do exist, publicly, are flawed or limited. In order to better understand the needs in our Region, especially for broadband build out, the commission will partner with the Development Authority of the North Country, Syracuse University, Cornell University, and Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization to conduct research on broadband coverage in the Tug Hill Region as a whole.

This research will assist in identifying unserved and underserved communities to better service their needs. Key areas that will be studied are accessibility to service, affordability of service, and quality of throughput. Three important service areas that will be highlighted in this project are broadband for education in the home, telehealth, and public safety.

The information gathered throughout this project will be used to recommend short-term and longer-term innovative and cost-effective solutions, streamline municipal regulations, and apply for grants in unserved and underserved communities. If you would like to contribute to our efforts, please reach out to Alaina, [alaina@tughill.org](mailto:alaina@tughill.org), and Carla, [carla@tughill.org](mailto:carla@tughill.org). Stay tuned for more information as our efforts continue.

## Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust Conducts Community Survey



The Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust’s 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary is approaching, and the land trust is reaching out to the larger Tug Hill community to hear what conservation work and programs are desired moving forward.

Over the past 30 years, the land trust has conserved over 20,000 acres of working farms, forests, and wildlands through 105 permanent, voluntary conservation agreements. They also own one public conservation area with trails and have assisted other communities to create trails of their own.

The survey can be accessed at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/THT060120>. Each email address is treated as a new survey participant by the survey and you are welcome to share the survey link with others. Responses are needed by June 26. At the end of the survey, respondents can enter a drawing to win a gift basket of Tug Hill Tomorrow gear and three books about the Tug Hill region. Answers are kept confidential.

# Public Service Commission Notice on Renewable Energy Facility Host Community Benefit Program, Comments Due July 3

As part of the Accelerated Renewables law, the NYS Public Service Commission is required to develop a host community benefit program. A draft of the program's structure has been released, with comments due by July 3, 2020. The major components are:

- The program will apply to renewable energy projects greater than 25 MW (nameplate generating capacity).
- The renewable energy developers will fund a benefit for electric distribution to customers located in the municipalities that host their project.
- The benefits can be a bill discount, a credit, or a compensatory or environmental benefit for impacted electric utility consumers.
- Some of the factors affecting the amount of benefits are the average electrical output of the facility, the average number of customers, and the impact on environmental justice communities.

If you have any comments or questions regarding the program's structure, including financial structure, or utility coordination, email [secretary@dps.ny.gov](mailto:secretary@dps.ny.gov) or mail comments to Hon. Michelle L. Phillips, Secretary to the New York State Public Service Commission, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York, 12223-1350 by **4:30 p.m. on July 3, 2020**. Refer to Case 20-E-0249 in your correspondence.

If you wish to monitor the status of this case, visit the Department's website at <http://documents.dps.ny.gov/public/MatterManagement/RequestAPStatus.aspx>

## Recorded NYCOM Webinars Available on Website

The following webinars are available on NYCOM's website at <https://www.nycom.org/training/additional-training-events/webinars/2-uncategorised/1063-recorded-webinars>

- COVID-19 Pandemic
  - ⇒ Securing Federal Funding in a Time of Crisis
  - ⇒ Helping Local Businesses During the COVID Pandemic: Advice from the Front Lines
  - ⇒ Workforce Management in the Shadow of a Pandemic
  - ⇒ 2020 Village Elections Update and Conducting the Organizational Meeting
  - ⇒ Enforcing the Governor's COVID Executive Orders & the Procedure for Issuing Local COVID-Related Emergency Orders
  - ⇒ Conducting Meetings and Public Hearings During the COVID-19 Pandemic
  - ⇒ As a result of Executive Order 202.15, the discussion in this webinar regarding conducting in-person public hearings is no longer valid.
- New Officials
  - ⇒ The Roles and Responsibilities of Municipal Officials
  - ⇒ Open Meetings Law
  - ⇒ Municipal Finance Fundamentals
  - ⇒ Ethics and Civil Service Essentials
- Planning & Zoning (CLE)
  - ⇒ Planning and Zoning in a Nutshell
  - ⇒ FOIL and Records Management: Understanding Records in the Local Government Setting
  - ⇒ Architectural Review Boards: Understanding ARBs and How They Fit into Traditional Euclidian Zoning
  - ⇒ Group Homes, Local Government-Owned, and Religious and Educational Property: Understanding Exemptions to Local Land Use Regulation



**ANNOUNCEMENT:  
2019-2020  
New York State Archives  
LGRMIF Grant Cycle  
Extension**



**Please Note:**

The 2019-2020 LGRMIF grant cycle has been extended to **December 31, 2020!**

Contact the Grants Administration Unit for more information: [archgrants@nysed.gov](mailto:archgrants@nysed.gov), (518)474-6926.

## Contact Us

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Facebook: [www.facebook.com/TugHillCommission](https://www.facebook.com/TugHillCommission)

To request our newsletter electronically please email [gwen@tughill.org](mailto:gwen@tughill.org) or call 1-888-785-2380.

For upcoming trainings, grant deadlines, and meetings, view our [calendar](#).

## American Farmland Trust Releases New Report on Farmland

American Farmland Trust (AFT) has a new report out entitled [Farms Under Threat: The State of the States](#). Farms Under Threat is AFT's multi-year initiative to document the status of and threats to America's agricultural land while at the same time offering policy solutions to save that land. *The State of the States* paints a striking picture of the threats facing agriculture and documents the steps every state has taken to protect and retain their agricultural land base for working farms and ranches.

Along with the report, maps and policy findings are available on an [interactive website](#) with additional resources, such as summaries for each state to highlight the findings from AFT's mapping and policy analyses.

New York's AFT office held a webinar on June 3<sup>rd</sup> for an in-depth look at the findings and an overview of the tools now available to help planners, land protection practitioners, policymakers and advocates strengthen and expand agricultural land retention and protection efforts in New York. To register for a similar webinar being held throughout June and July focusing on other state across the nation, go to AFT website at <https://farmland.org/farms-under-threat-state-based-webinars/>.

For more information about AFT, contact Samantha Levy, New York Policy Manager, at 1(315)679-4772 or [slevy@farmland.org](mailto:slevy@farmland.org).

## DEC Invites Public Comment on Draft Trout Stream Management Plan

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is seeking angler feedback on a proposed plan to manage trout in inland streams. The proposed changes are designed to safeguard wild trout and expand fishing opportunities. The deadline for the public to comment on the draft plan is **June 25, 2020**. Interested anglers and communities in the Tug Hill region can review and share their comments at: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/111015.html>, and by emailing [trout@dec.ny.gov](mailto:trout@dec.ny.gov).

Major elements of the draft plan include: drawing a clear line between wild fish and stocked trout management; placing greater emphasis on habitat improvement; making management simpler and more understandable; eliminating unnecessary regulations; providing year-round fishing opportunities through the creation of a statewide catch-and release season; extending the duration of stocking on select stream reaches; increasing the size of stocked fish; ensuring that each stocking contains some fish that are 12 inches or larger; improving the vigor of hatchery brown trout for increased survival; developing an interactive map for information on stream reach management and fishing access locations; and expanding outreach on the significance of wild trout populations and the water they inhabit.

To view trout streams in the region and state, visit: [newyork.fisheries.org/fish-atlas-maps-of-new-york/](http://newyork.fisheries.org/fish-atlas-maps-of-new-york/)