



COUNTY OF ONONDAGA—CITY OF SYRACUSE
Office of the County Executive – Office of the Mayor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DATE: April 8, 2013
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**COUNTY EXECUTIVE JOANIE MAHONEY, SYRACUSE
MAYOR STEPHANIE MINER, AND COUNTY LEGISLATURE
CHAIRMAN RYAN MCMAHON ANNOUNCE EFFORT TO
FORMALLY CONSOLIDATE CITY AND COUNTY PLANNING
DEPARTMENTS**

*IMPROVED CITY COUNTY PLANNING AGENCY FRAMEWORK WILL MERGE
CITY BUREAU OF PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY INTO THE SYRACUSE
ONONDAGA COUNTY PLANNING AGENCY*

SYRACUSE, N.Y. – Onondaga County Executive Joanie Mahoney, Syracuse Mayor Stephanie Miner and Chairman of the Onondaga County Legislature Ryan McMahon announced an agreement in principle to consolidate the City of Syracuse Bureau of Planning and Sustainability into the Syracuse Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA). The consolidation plan, which would take effect on July 1, requires the approval of the Syracuse Common Council and the Onondaga County Legislature.

The Syracuse Onondaga County Planning Agency was created by the City of Syracuse and Onondaga County in 1968 to provide planning services to Onondaga County and zoning administration services to the City of Syracuse. SOCPA employees currently staff the Onondaga County Planning Board, which reviews certain development projects within Onondaga County, the County's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) office as well as the Office of City Zoning Administration.

Mayor Miner formed the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability at the beginning of her tenure as Mayor; the City did not have a planning office prior to the Bureau's launch in 2010. The Bureau, headed by the City's Director of Planning and Sustainability Andrew Maxwell, has been crucial to improving the City's planning, sustainability, and economic development efforts.



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“Over the past three years, we have had tremendous success in sharing services and collaborating with our partners in City Government. We’ve co-located our economic development offices, we’ve consolidated City/County purchasing, we share the cost of a City/County arborist, and we’re benefitting from tremendous cooperation in our ongoing Save the Rain effort,” said County Executive Joanie Mahoney. “Merging the very capable and dedicated staff of the City’s Bureau of Planning and Sustainability with our equally committed professionals at SOCPA is a natural fit where the whole will absolutely be greater than the sum of its parts,” the County Executive continued.

“The merger of these agencies is an important step in our effort to find innovative ways for the city and county to work together,” said Syracuse Mayor Stephanie A. Miner. “Intergovernmental cooperation is crucial to the future of our community. By focusing our efforts on enhancing metropolitan planning efforts, we strive to make our community a better place to live. I am excited for this efficient and effective partnership.”

“I am very pleased to join the County Executive and the Mayor in announcing this timely and worthwhile government consolidation. SOCPA is an important organization within our County government, and I look forward to this effort helping to streamline and further improve the project review and approval process within the City and throughout the County,” said Ryan McMahon, Chairman of the Onondaga County Legislature.

“Long term planning is vital to the health and quality of our neighborhoods,” said Syracuse Common Council President Van B. Robinson. “We must take every step necessary to smartly and affordably improve the quality of life for the people of the City of Syracuse and Onondaga County and this merger is a major advancement in that effort.”

Under the agreement in principle, County Executive Mahoney will nominate Andrew Maxwell to serve as the Commissioner of the newly structured Syracuse Onondaga County Planning Agency. Don Jordon, the current Director of the Agency, will serve as Deputy Commissioner and Director of the Agency’s enhanced Geographic Information System (GIS) office. Mr.



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Jordan is a veteran of the County's GIS effort and will serve as the County's point person on enhancing GIS services within the City as well as for Towns and Villages within Onondaga County.

"Don Jordan has been a tremendous asset to my team over the past five years and I would like to thank him for agreeing to resume his responsibilities leading the County's efforts to improve, expand and enhance our use of GIS services throughout the County," added County Executive Joanie Mahoney.

In May, the County Executive will submit to the County Legislature for their consideration: a proposed amendment to the County Charter, creating the position of Commissioner of the Syracuse Onondaga County Planning Agency, an Inter-Municipal Agreement that establishes the framework of the Agency, including the creation of the three directorships and the position of Deputy Commissioner, an amendment to the 2013 County Budget, as well as the formal nomination of Mr. Maxwell to serve as Commissioner.

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