



Otsego County Conservation Association
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The Otsego County Conservation Association presents the:

OCCA Circuit Rider Planner Program

Introduction:

Local governments, especially in rural areas, often express their lack of staff expertise to manage growth and development within their borders. Circuit rider programs can help such governments overcome such obstacles. Circuit rider programs typically involve designating one or more trained professionals to be available to provide technical resources and advice to municipalities. The circuit rider is responsible for assisting those communities with a range of planning functions, such as:

- Assisting with comprehensive plans;
- evaluating and revising codes and development regulations;
- analyzing policies; and
- reviewing project proposals.

Process:

To develop a Circuit Rider Planner Program, OCCA has assigned staff to become a circuit rider for given municipalities. The type of assistance that is provided to communities will influence how OCCA allocates Circuit Rider Planner staff time toward program development. Circuit rider programs are most effective when they draw upon the resources and knowledge base of multiple state and county agencies, such as planning, transportation, environment, housing and community development. This enables the sharing of resources, which can be useful in addressing the interdisciplinary issues that often arise in planning issues.

Many types of local technical assistance can be provided to those municipalities that take part in a Circuit Rider program. OCCA has developed a Circuit Rider Planner Program that provides services in two broad categories—*Direct Membership Services* and *Contract Member Services*.

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Direct Membership Services (to dues-paying members only) may¹ include the following:

- Review and analysis of zoning ordinances, subdivision and site plan review regulations, and master plans including suggested amendments and minor revisions.
- Drafting or reviewing proposed land use regulations (e.g., excavation, erosion and sedimentation control, accessory apartments, home occupations, signs, parking, etc).
- Telephone support providing advice and assistance about planning questions.
- Assistance in reviewing occasional subdivision and site plans.
- Short-term research projects on planning issues, data collection and analysis.
- Research and preparation of grant applications.
- Organizational assistance to local land use boards (e.g., rules of procedure, zoning amendment schedules, application forms and checklists).
- Assistance with the National Flood Insurance Program.
- Computer/publication services such as word processing of land use control regulation, updating as necessary, and providing copies.
- Providing copies of town documents at cost.

¹OCCA anticipates that its Circuit Rider Planner will be able to devote approximately 50 hours a year to each community. Each municipality will need to coordinate with OCCA to create a program that best fits its needs within this timeframe.

Contract Member Services:

For those not committing to Direct Membership, OCCA is willing to provide limited services at a contracted rate (hourly). Contact OCCA directly to negotiate a contract based on your particular community need. Preference will be given to Direct Membership participants subscribing to the Circuit Rider Planner Program.