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Transportation study scope adopted by Town of Ithaca Planning Board

ITHACA, N.Y. - An important step toward future completion of a study on Cornell University's potential population growth and related transportation issues was reached Tuesday, February 7 at the Town of Ithaca Planning Board meeting, with the adoption of a scope for a transportation-focused Generic Environmental Impact Statement (t-GEIS).

Scoping is the process by which a "lead agency," in this instance the Town's planning board, identifies significant issues to be evaluated in the draft t-GEIS, which will be researched and written over the next 12 to 18 months by the applicant, Cornell University. Potential mitigation measures needed to minimize or eliminate adverse impacts are included in the scope. In short, it is similar to a table of contents for what the t-GEIS will study

The t-GEIS will evaluate the transportation-related impacts of hypothetical population growth scenarios over the next decade. To date, Cornell and the Town of Ithaca have worked cooperatively with several area municipalities, Tompkins County and the New York State Department of Transportation on this initiative.

Martin/Alexiou/Bryson, a North Carolina-based consulting firm specializing in college and university transportation projects, and Trowbridge and Wolf of Ithaca have provided technical analyses.

"This important collaborative effort between the university, city and many others should pay long-term dividends for Tompkins County," said Town of Ithaca Supervisor Cathy Valentino. "The t-GEIS will also complement the town's efforts in further developing its transportation plan, and provide opportunities for public input at many levels."

"We developed the issues to be analyzed through a community scoping process," said Cornell Director of Transportation and Mail Services Bill Wendt. "The next step is for consultants, neighbors, and Cornell community members to put our collective talents to work, bringing creative ideas into the process."

Cornell officials are looking forward to a series of neighborhood information-gathering sessions beginning this spring, as well as future community meetings, to identify and examine impacts and potential mitigations.

For regularly updated details on the transportation-focused Generic Environmental Impact Statement, including the scope, access: www.tgeisproject.org.