

Planning Division 2021 Local Government Services Report

The Local Government Services (LGS) Program administers Sections 807 and 808 of the Adirondack Park Agency Act and its implementing regulations. Two program staff provide oversight of the eighteen Agency-approved Local Land Use Programs (ALLUPs) and review approximately 100 variance referrals and 30-50 zoning amendments annually from the participating program municipalities. Additionally, staff respond to numerous informational requests from local officials within the Park. The workload is driven by strict statutory deadlines for responses to variance referrals and the need to provide timely responses to inquiries from elected and appointed officials.

The COVID-19 Pandemic continued to have an unprecedented effect on the work of the Local Government Services Program. The difficult decision again was made to not hold the 2021 Adirondack Park Local Government Day Conference. Throughout the year, Agency staff focused on the distribution of educational and training information to local governments. Towns and Villages had to drastically rethink the way they do business and throughout the year many had to shut down services completely.

A summary of Local Government Services accomplishments and reportable items in 2021 is provided in the table below. The information is compiled from LGS Committee monthly reports. The data highlights the number of Adirondack communities and officials that staff consulted with and provided assistance to during the course of 2021. The table also includes the number of intra-Agency consultations with Agency staff and coordination and planning initiatives with other state agencies and regional and state organizations.

Local Government Services Summary of Program Accomplishments and Reportable Items	2021 Totals
ALLUP amendments approved by Board/by Del Res	0/4
ALLUP variances referred/reversed	131/3
ALLUP JIF responses	262
Comprehensive Plans reviewed	0
Meetings with Municipal Officials	8
<i>“ALLUP” denotes “APA-approved local land use program”</i>	

The reportable items in the table above include the following activities in the following categories:

- ALLUP Amendments - In 2017 the Agency amended the Delegation Resolution (Del Res) to allow for approval of certain ALLUP amendments under the authority of the Executive Director. This change allowed certain amendments to local land use controls to be approved by Agency staff without Agency Board approval. The Agency approved four amendments to ALLUPs in 2021. The following amendments were approved pursuant to the Del Res:

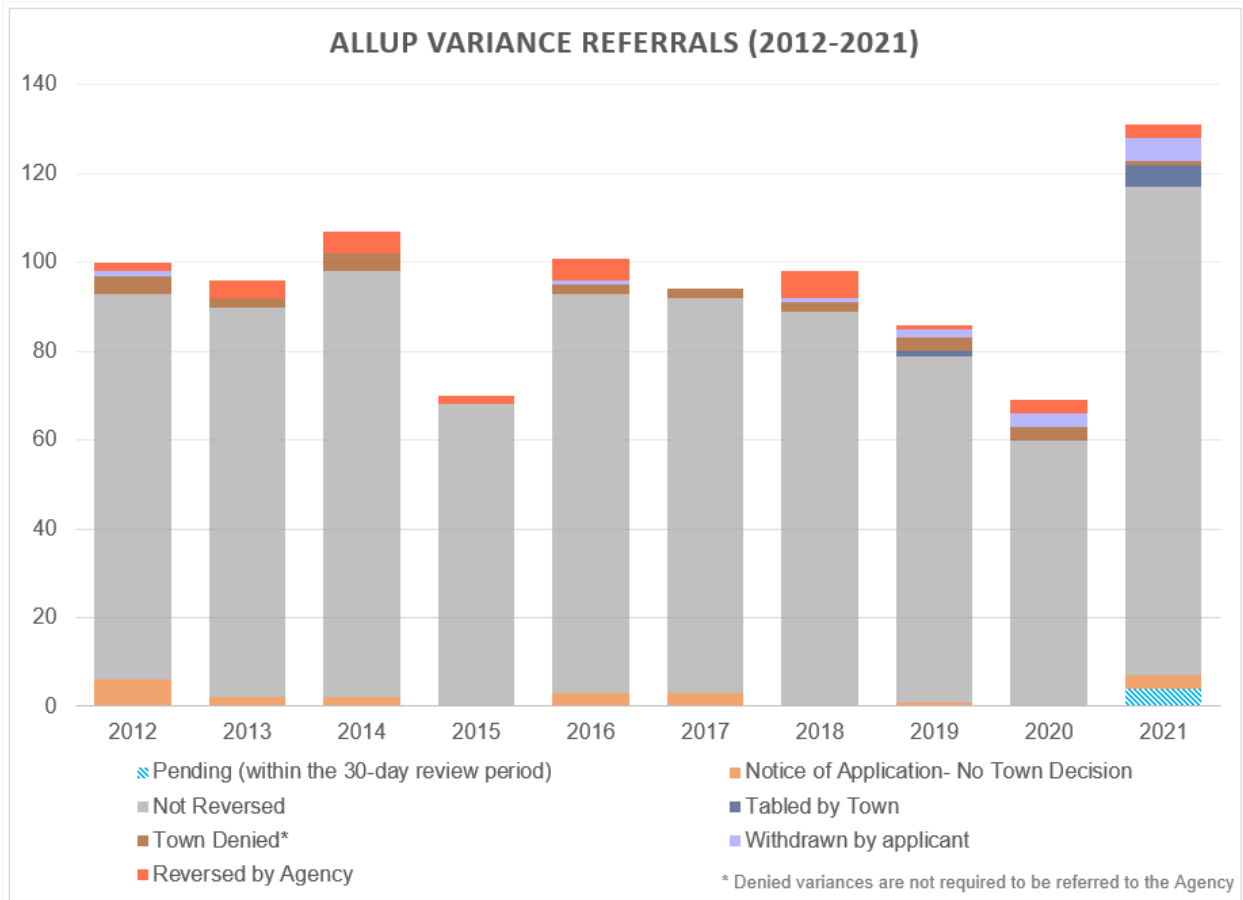
The Town of Queensbury, which received original approval in 1982, proposed an amendment to its program to add a newly defined use "Tree Service/Landscaping Company." This amendment was approved by staff in January.

The Town of Bolton, which received original approval in 1980, proposed to amend its definition of Guest Cottage. This amendment was approved by staff in July.

The Town of Chester, which received original approval in 2005, amended its use table to align the review of the different types of multiple family dwellings as defined by the Town. This amendment was approved by staff in July.

The Town of Lake George, which received original approval in 1978, proposed an amendment to its zoning code involving Planned Unit Developments. This amendment did not require Agency approval as the areas affected were Hamlet.

- ALLUP Variances - Towns with an ALLUP are required to refer certain locally approved variances (outside of Hamlet land use areas) to the Agency. The Agency has 30-days for review in which time it may reverse the local determination if it was not based upon the appropriate statutory basis. The Agency received 131 variance referrals during the year, an all-time high as documented in the following bar graph. The Agency reversed three of these variances: two involved density and one involved shoreline setbacks. Three referrals remain incomplete at this time pending a decision by the local ZBA, five have been tabled by the local ZBA, five were withdrawn by the applicant, and four are pending staff response.



- ALLUP Jurisdictional Determinations - Following several retirements in 2020 in the Jurisdiction Office, Local Government Services staff was assigned to review and process the JIFs from the 18 ALLUPs. During 2021, LGS staff issued 262 jurisdictional determinations making it possible for the JIF office to respond to inquiries in a timely fashion.
- Meetings with Municipal Officials - Staff regularly meet with elected and appointed officials to discuss Agency and local issues. These meetings occur with individual town representatives or with town boards in public meeting sessions. The COVID-19 Pandemic dramatically changed this aspect of staff's work. In 2021, staff conducted five in-person meetings and participated in three remote meetings with town officials. Staff also attended the monthly meetings of the Local Government Review Board and the December meeting of the Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages.
- Land Use Regulations Consulted/Reviewed - Staff are regularly asked to review and comment on local land use laws. Most of the local laws are from municipalities with ALLUPs where the Agency has a statutory requirement to review. Non-ALLUP communities also request review of their local laws to determine compliance with or to avoid conflicts with APA regulations. Staff try to comply with those requests on a

case-by-case basis as time permits. In 2021 staff reviewed land use laws from 10 communities in the Park.

- Responding to Land Use Planning Inquiries - Local Government Services staff routinely answer phone calls and respond to emails from local officials to offer both formal advisories and informal guidance. In 2021 staff continued to respond to inquiries from local officials.
- Training & Workshops Provided - Working cooperatively with other state agencies, Agency staff, and local officials, the local planning staff typically provide training for municipal officials. The largest outreach program, the Adirondack Park Local Government Day Conference, had to be cancelled due to the Pandemic. Agency staff relayed online training opportunities to local officials to allow for a continuation of educational information to local government officials. Agency staff sent out 24 emails to over 1600 local government officials informing them of webinars and trainings throughout the year. Staff attended 11 webinars in 2021. In addition, staff presented information to the Agency Board regarding local controls for solar regulation at the May meeting. Staff also assisted in the preparation of solar information for local governments and a survey which will be distributed in the new year.
- Intra-Agency Local Planning Assistance - Local Government Services staff regularly provide assistance to Agency staff working on projects in towns with an ALLUP and other towns where local laws or processes require clarification. In 2021 local government planning staff provided assistance to other Agency staff involving local zoning matters. The Agency reviewed 151 projects in municipalities with an ALLUP. Agency staff also represented the APA on Hazard Mitigation Planning initiatives in Fulton and Hamilton Counties.