

Seneca County Economic Development Plan



creating the right conditions for business



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Community Values

Public Engagement

Seneca County recognizes that one of its major responsibilities is to create the right conditions to support local businesses and to attract new economic opportunities. To this end, Seneca County is committed to planning and implementing economic development activities in a manner consistent with community needs and expectations.

Seneca County, like any government, can provide infrastructure and incentives. Businesses, for their part, provide goods and services. But neither of these is about the direction and purpose of development. The community is the major provider of the values which set the direction and purpose of economic development.

As part of the comprehensive planning process, Seneca County solicited citizen and business involvement by means of a countywide survey of residents, focus group discussions, and public meetings. Subsequent engagements between citizens, businesses, and local government officials garnered additional public input.

Three focus groups were dedicated specifically to economic development. Each group identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Their findings are summarized on the following page and discussed in more detail within this plan.

Table 1. Summary of Economic Development Focus Groups' SWOT Analyses

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 5 & 20 Corridor • Deer Run Industrial Park • Wineries/Wine Trails • Ag/Tourism • Thruway Access • Airport • Skilled Labor • Water Access • "Triangle" of Education (Rochester, Ithaca, Syracuse) • Fiber Optics/Broadband Partners • Cost of Living • Highway Grid • Natural Resources • Scenic Beauty • State/National Parks • Water Resources • Recreational Opportunities • Open Land • Cheap Land • Retail Opportunities/Outlet Center • History/Heritage Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of Youth • Landfill • High Taxes • High Cost of Energy • Lack of Distributed Broadband • Inconsistent Zoning • Redundant Municipal Services • Lack of Living Wage/Professional Jobs • Shortage of Housing • Limited Art/Cultural Amenities • Government Agency Disconnect • Lack of Collaboration • Viability of Downtowns • Demand for Social Services • Poverty • Lack of a Medical Facility • Seasonality of Tourism
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 318/414 Corridor • Depot • Tourism Development • Business Assistance Program • Power for Jobs Program • Downtowns • Green Industry • Small Business Development • Setting for Films • Collaboration in County • Focused Economic Development • Smart Business Growth • Industrial Parks/Warehousing • Foreign Trade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Employment Diversity • Resistance to Business Expansion • Aging Infrastructure • Decreasing Public Funding for Tourism • National/State Economy • American Indian Land Claim • Loss of Rural Atmosphere • Lack of Local Ownership of Major Businesses • Lack of Agricultural Workforce • Insufficient NYS Funds for Business Development

Guiding Principles

Public input comes from all directions, and distilling it into principles to guide the formulation of workable policies can be a challenge. Fortunately, Seneca County residents seem to agree on several important themes regarding economic development:

Table 2. Economic Development Guiding Principals

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GUIDING PRINCIPLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a strong, growing, diversified economy.• Integrate both short- and long-term economic, environmental, and social considerations into decision making.• Allow for broad community involvement on decisions and actions that affect them.• Avoid serious or irreversible damage to the environment.• Assess the risk-weighted consequences of various options.• Make those who generate pollution, waste, and damage bear the costs of containment, avoidance, abatement, or repair.• Build these principals into regulatory approaches.
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In essence, Seneca County residents want County government and County businesses to consider economic, environmental, and social factors together, and find a mutual benefit in all three areas. This is a sustainable approach to economic development. While sustainability is a relatively new trend globally, it has been a fact of life in Seneca County for generations. The agriculture-centered economy necessarily follows natural rhythms and fosters environmental integrity; modest population growth supports economic well-being without undue degradation of resources; and close-knit town, village, and rural communities engender a sense of interdependence and common good.

A robust local economy with sustainable economic growth is vital to residents and businesses. Sustainable economic growth is fundamental to the availability of community services, recreational opportunities, the work and services of nonprofits, and cultural amenities.

The foundation of sustainability is community values. Residents are clear they do not want to lose their cherished values, as expressed in the guiding principles. Rather, they want change and development to be considered in terms of these principles.

Economic Indicators: Workforce

Small businesses play a vital role in Seneca County by employing a majority of the workforce. All but one of the more than 700 private firms in the County have fewer than 500 employees and are categorized as small businesses by the U.S. Small Business Administration. Seneca County's diverse base of small businesses include health services, eating and drinking establishments, special trade contractors, boutique agricultural producers, small-scale specialty manufacturing, veterinary clinics, business services, retailers, automotive dealers, and service stations.

The New York State Department of Labor maintains an up-to-date economic profile of the County. Unless otherwise noted, the economic indicators in the Workforce section of this plan are from the NYSDOL.

Retail and Service Sectors

Typical of most of the country, growth in retail and service businesses has been a leading factor in local economic growth, and small businesses provide virtually all private sector retail and service based jobs. In 2012, retail trade and health care and social assistance accounted for more than 42% of total private jobs in Seneca County.

When examining the County's retail sector, it must be understood that the retail impact is far more extensive than the Waterloo Premium Outlets. Hotels, restaurants, winery stores, and many other specialty shops are supported by tourist dollars. Retail trade employed an estimated 2,100 workers in 2012. These same retailers paid local workers over \$43.4 million in wages and salaries. The accommodation and food services industry, meanwhile, paid \$12.3 million to about 850 workers in the County.

Government units are also major service providers. Collectively, they represent the largest employment and wage categories in the County, with nearly 3,000 local, state, and federal workers earning \$152.4 million in wages and salaries in 2012.

Industrial and Wholesale Sectors

Manufacturing continues to decrease both in total jobs and as a percentage of total employment, yet it remains a key part of Seneca County's industrial base.

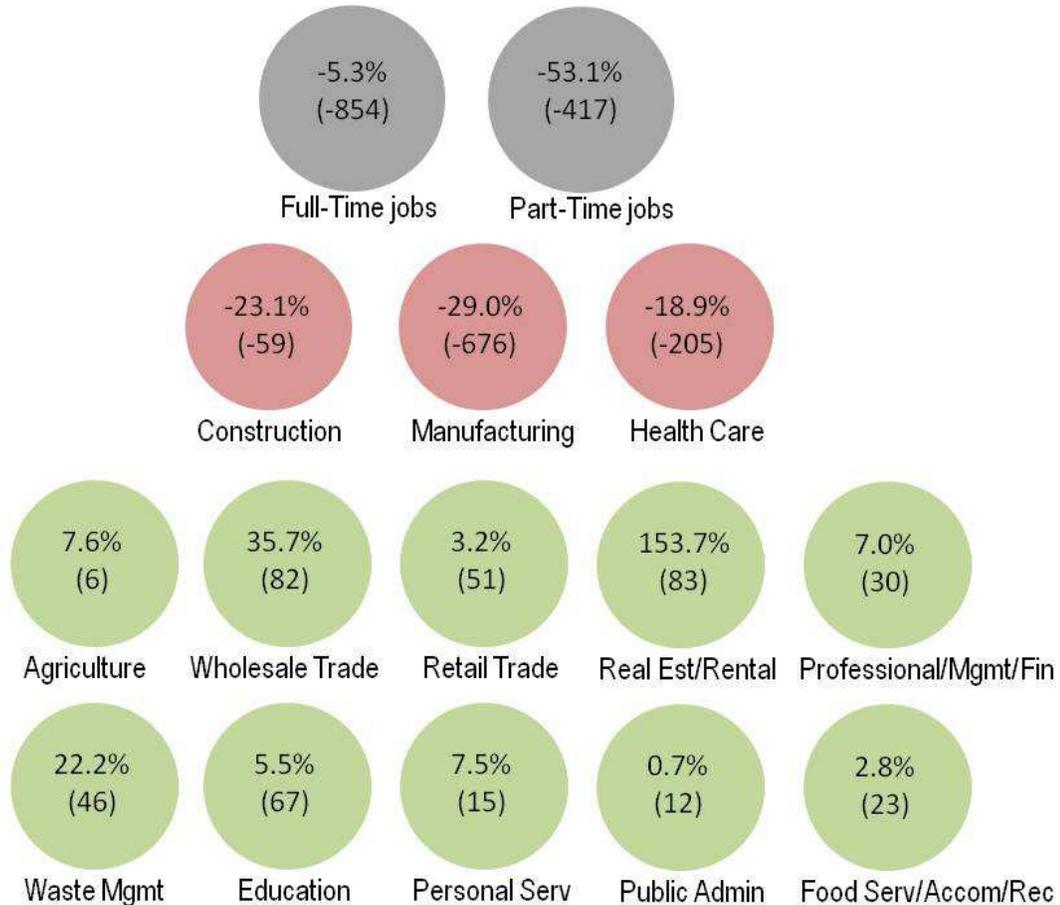
In 2012, manufacturers and wholesalers employed 2,350 workers and paid \$150.5 million in wages and salaries.



Workforce by Occupation

The following table looks at Seneca County's overall economic base in 2002 and 2012 in terms of changes in employment in major job categories. Employment changes are presented by percentages and absolute numbers (in parenthesis). Workforce increases in most categories were not enough to offset decreases in manufacturing, construction, and health care. Job changes in each of the categories reflect only full-time jobs.

Table 3. Seneca County Employment Change by Job Category, 2002-2012



Source: US Census Bureau. OnTheMapApplication

Workforce and Commuting

The Seneca County workforce includes residents of adjacent counties. The most recent available US Census Bureau statistics indicate that in 2011 the total workforce in Seneca County was 9,931. The number of workers who lived and worked in Seneca County was 4,399, while the number of workers who lived outside of the County but were employed in Seneca County was 5,532, or approximately 56% of the total workforce.

In 2002, the total workforce in Seneca County was 10,485. The number of workers who lived and worked in Seneca County was 5,722, while the number of workers who lived outside the County but were employed in Seneca County was 4,763, or approximately 45% of the total workforce.

Of Seneca County residents who worked outside the County in 2011, most were employed in Ontario County (16%), followed by Tompkins County (9%); Monroe County (7%); Cayuga County (6%); and Wayne County (4%).

In 2011, Seneca County workers who lived outside the County's boundaries often resided in neighboring counties, especially Ontario County (11%); Cayuga (7%); Wayne County (6%); Onondaga County (4%); Monroe County (3.4%); and Tompkins County (3%).

The numbers in this section refer to wage earners' primary jobs, but not second jobs. Almost all primary jobs are full-time. An additional 1,400 jobs in Seneca County were second or third jobs, and most of these were part-time.

Table 4. Seneca County Commuting Profile, 2011

Seneca County Commuting Profile 2011	
Workers	Primary Jobs
Number of people who live in Seneca County and are employed (implied resident labor force)	17,921
Number of people who live AND work in Seneca County	4,399
Total number of people who work in Seneca County (implied workforce)	9,931
Commuters	Primary Jobs
Number of people who live in Seneca County but work outside the County	13,522
Number of people who live in another county (or state) but work in Seneca County	5,532

Source: US Census Bureau. OnTheMapApplication

Income and Poverty

In 2012, the total per capita personal income for County residents was \$35,696. Total personal income tallies income received from all sources, including wages, dividends, interest, social security, pensions, etc. It is thus a good indicator of personal buying power and investment potential. Total personal income in Seneca County was slightly lower (1.5%) than the per capita figure of \$36,245 for the nonmetro (rural) areas of New York State. It was also lower than the figures for the Rochester metro area (18.5% lower), Syracuse metro area (14.5%), and Ithaca metro area (8.8%).

Table 5. Total Per Capita Personal Income, 2012

Total Per Capita Personal Income 2012				
Seneca County	Ithaca MSA	Rochester MSA	Syracuse MSA	NYS Nonmetro Counties
\$35,696	\$38,852	\$43,780	\$41,774	\$36,245

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

Coupled with personal income data is the percentage of Seneca County residents living at or below the poverty level. In 2012, 11.9% of the individuals residing in Seneca County were living at or below the poverty level, considerably below both the state and national rates.

Table 6. Seneca County Persons Below Poverty, 2012

Persons Living Below Poverty Level 2012		
Seneca County	New York State	USA
11.9%	14.9%	14.9%

Source: US Census Bureau



Education

Adult educational attainment lags behind the state and nation for both high school and college graduation rates. There are four public school districts in the County, and three are classified by the New York State Educational Department as High Needs Rural Districts. The County also has two BOCES services. The New York Chiropractic College is the sole higher education institution in Seneca County.

Most jobs in the County do not appear to require a college degree. According to Census data, 57% of all employed workers in Seneca County do not have a college degree and 20% have a Bachelor’s degree or higher. Educational attainment for the remaining 23% of workers is undetermined.

Table 7. Seneca County Adult Educational Attainment, 2012

Educational Attainment 2012, Persons Ages 25+			
	Seneca County	New York State	USA
High School or Higher	83.6%	84.9%	85.9%
Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	18.6%	32.8%	28.5%

Source: US Census Bureau

Employment Projections

The New York State Department of Labor projects occupation and industry growth for each region of the state. The following table identifies which occupations are expected to experience the most growth in the Finger Lakes Region, which includes Seneca County, between 2010 and 2020.

Table 8. Finger Lakes Region Occupational Growth, 2010-2020

Fastest Growing Occupations 2010-2020	Change
Personal Care Aides	50.5%
Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners	42.9%
Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	41.2%
Helpers--Brickmasons, Blockmasons, Stonemasons, Tile Setters	40.0%
Health Educators	39.3%
Marriage and Family Therapists	37.5%
Helpers--Carpenters	36.4%
Interpreters and Translators	33.3%
Prosthodontists	33.3%
Commercial Pilots	33.3%
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	32.0%
Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists	31.6%
Home Health Aides	30.8%
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	29.9%
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	29.8%
Hazardous Materials Removal Workers	29.0%
Athletic Trainers	28.6%
Automotive and Watercraft Service Attendants	28.6%
Security and Fire Alarm Systems Installers	27.3%
Nonfarm Animal Caretakers	27.0%
Fitness Trainers and Aerobics Instructors	26.9%
Coaches and Scouts	26.7%
Medical Secretaries	25.7%
Mental Health Counselors	25.0%
Political Science Teachers, Postsecondary	25.0%
Occupational Therapy Assistants	25.0%
Glaziers	25.0%
Farm Equipment Mechanics and Service Technicians	25.0%
Self-Enrichment Education Teachers	24.3%
Personal Financial Advisors	24.1%
Obstetricians and Gynecologists	23.1%
Outdoor Power Equipment and Other Small Engine Mechanics	23.1%
Veterinarians	22.9%
Database Administrators	22.7%
Physical Therapist Assistants	22.7%
Medical Equipment Repairers	22.7%



Economic Indicators: Infrastructure

In recent years, Seneca County has commissioned or participated in several significant economic development studies which identify transportation, land use, and environmental impacts, including the *Route 318 Corridor Study Sewer Study* (2013); *Route 318 Corridor Economic Impact Analysis* (2013); *Finger Lakes Regional Sustainability Plan* (2013); *CenterState Agenda for Economic Opportunity* (2013); *Finger Lakes Regional Airport Master Plan Update* (2012); *Routes 5 & 20/414 Corridors Management Plan* (2010); and the *Routes 96 & 318 Rural Corridor Study* (2009). Seneca County also contributes to the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region's annual *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy* and the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council's *Strategic Plan* and annual updates;

Most of the economic indicators in the Infrastructure section of this plan are from these studies.

Transportation

Roads. A well-planned and well-maintained transportation network is necessary to carry residents, visitors, and commercial traffic throughout the County. Despite increasingly limited resources, Seneca County has approximately 525 miles of local roads, maintained by the County and the Towns and Villages.

In addition to the locally-maintained roads, the State maintains about 160 miles of highways in Seneca County, including the main north-south Routes 96, 96A, 414, and 89. Interstate 90 crosses the northern section of Seneca County, providing access to Rochester and points west and Syracuse and points east. Exit 41 on State Route 414 connects the County to the Thruway.

The transportation corridor encompassing State Route 318, between SR 414 and the Waterloo Factory Outlet Center, and SR 414, from the Thruway to Waterloo, is identified by Seneca County as a location for potential major economic development.

Improving the Route 318/414 corridor is an economic development priority for the County. Enhancing economic development opportunities in the SR 5 & 20 corridor is also a priority, as are roadway improvements to increase access from the Thruway to the 10,500 acre Seneca Army Depot.

Hydrofracking. Horizontal drilling to extract natural gas from underground shale formations may create significant jobs and economic activity in Seneca County, if permitted by the State and unopposed by local governments. It could also have a major impact on surface transportation. Hydrofracking requires significant heavy truck traffic that can result in safety concerns and premature deterioration of road surfaces. Even if hydrofracking is prohibited, Seneca County could become a staging area for resource extraction in adjacent counties, with a potentially massive impact on existing infrastructure.

Rail. The Finger Lakes Railway operates in Seneca County. The mainline from Geneva to Syracuse parallels Route 5 & 20, and connects to Norfolk Southern and Canadian Pacific in Geneva and CSX in Syracuse. Rail infrastructure has recently been improved to the Seneca Army Depot. Further rail improvements could potentially facilitate the construction of an intermodal transportation hub at the Depot to ship regionally-produced agricultural products. Construction of a rail spur to the Seneca Meadows Landfill has also been proposed. The rail spur could potentially reduce truck traffic.

Air. The Finger Lakes Regional Airport is a general aviation airport, offering a 4,600 foot runway, automated weather observation system, and Global Positioning System (GPS) technology. The airport currently serves as a base for 28 aircraft. Most flights accommodate business travelers, tourists, and agricultural spraying.



The Federal Aviation Administration and New York State have funded significant capital improvements over the past decade and more are planned. The FAA and NYS consider the County-owned airport a key facility within the federal and state airport systems.

Walking and Bicycling. In an effort to provide transportation alternatives to the car and improve health outcomes, Seneca County supports the Genesee Transportation Council's Priority Trails Plan. This plan is a long range plan of interconnected bicycle and pedestrian trails throughout the region, including Seneca County. The County has also received, and continues to solicit, grant funds to promote the health benefits of active transportation, particularly in the villages, which generally have well-developed sidewalk networks. Seneca County is committed to coordinating intermunicipal efforts to make the area even more attractive for residents and visitors to utilize a county alternative transportation system, as local, state, and federal opportunities become available.

Transit. The Seneca Transit Service provides limited fixed-route, dial-a-ride, and para-transit services. Seneca County and nonprofit organizations provide transportation for elderly, disabled, and low-income County residents to get to work, medical appointments, banks, grocery shopping, visiting relatives in nursing homes or hospitals, etc. The County actively pursues opportunities to increase personal mobility and access to transportation options for those who do not own or operate a personal motor vehicle.

Utilities and Services

Energy Services. New York State Electric and Gas Corporation provides electricity and natural gas to homes and businesses in Seneca County.

The lack of sufficient electric capacity and distribution at the Seneca Army Depot inhibits its growth as a job and business center, and Seneca County is committed to supporting necessary upgrades. Renewable energy may offer at least a partial solution to the Depot's energy problems. Seneca County is committed to supporting the development and use of green energy sources. The Seneca County IDA helps promote green energy projects at the Depot. The IDA also is working with the owners of the Seneca Meadows Landfill to create a renewable energy industrial park to capture methane gas releases and convert them to low cost energy opportunities.

The County works with farmers to construct biodigesters to convert animal waste to biogas and then to electricity, which can be used on the farm or sold back to the power grid. A solar installation powers the County Law Enforcement Center, and more projects relying on alternative energy sources are under consideration throughout the County.

Sanitary Sewers. Although Seneca County is primarily rural, the villages and many rural areas are served by adequate public sanitary sewers. The existing wastewater treatment plants generally have excess capacity. However, any significant new economic development in the Route 318/414 corridor will require municipal sewer service improvements, including new sewer lines and pump stations, as well as treatment plant upgrades. The County is pursuing funds for these improvements. Portions of the infrastructure at the Seneca Army Depot are deteriorated, including sewers, and repairs and upgrades are a priority of the County.

On-Site Sewage Disposal Systems. The proper treatment and disposal of wastewater is vitally important to the health and well-being of the residents of Seneca County. Seneca County works with property owners to ensure the proper installation, maintenance, and replacement of septic systems. The County also promotes the use of "grey" water for irrigation to keep it out of treatment tanks, as well as the use of green septic systems.

Water Service. There are thirteen municipal water providers in the County, all of which draw their supplies from Seneca and Cayuga Lakes. Areas within and immediately surrounding the villages and Seneca Army Depot generally have potable water service and sufficient water

pressure for firefighting. Future development of both the Route 318/414 corridor and the Depot will depend on improving water service.

Fiber Optics / Broadband. High-speed internet access is available throughout the County for residences and businesses. National and countywide trends suggest that digital technology may soon become a bigger part of people’s lives, especially for health care and medicine, quality learning and workforce development, and banking and financial services. Seneca County will continue to look for opportunities to promote and support digital technologies that reduce dependency and increase independence, prosperity, and cooperation.

Protective Services. There are three village police forces in Seneca County; the balance of the County is served by the Sheriff’s Department and the New York State Police. Fire protection is provided by 14 volunteer fire departments. There are three volunteer ambulance companies. Recruiting an adequate number of volunteers is a challenge throughout the County.

There are no acute care medical facilities in the County. Residents are a 40 minute drive from the nearest hospital. Seneca County remains alert for, and supportive of, efforts to enhance medical care, including the use of telemedicine and other technologies.





Economic Indicators: Places

Development Patterns

Development, if not properly planned, can result in increased and unnecessary pressure on natural resources, environmental quality, public infrastructure, and public services. A balance must be struck to ensure a healthy economic and natural environment that will continue to attract employers and workers. Striking the proper balance demands that special attention is paid to the places in which people live, work, and play.

Villages and Hamlets. Seneca County supports the sensitive and appropriate redevelopment of existing properties, neighborhoods, and downtowns in historic villages and hamlets. The County believes such regeneration is inseparably linked with economic development, quality of life, waste reduction, lower infrastructure costs, lower taxes, and social cohesion.

Targeted Business Corridors. Seneca County recognizes the Route 318/414 Corridor, the Route 5 & 20 Corridor, and the Seneca Army Depot as areas for focused investment and development. Although they will require continued investments in roads, sewers, water service, and new communications technology, they offer the County's best locations for employment uses that require immediate, high-volume transportation access; visibility; large, flat sites; and high-capacity utilities. The potential economic opportunities in these areas will benefit the entire County, north and south, through the creation of jobs and a tax base to support public infrastructure and services countywide.

Vulnerable Lands. Vulnerable lands are sensitive to degradation and destruction by human activities. They include steep slopes, shorelines, riparian zones, public property devoted to tourism or timber, the best agricultural land, pastures, forests, and floodplains, as well as traditional and historic built sites. Seneca County supports using these lands in ways that protect and sustain their underlying vulnerable features in order to make sure they are not exploited in the future as they have sometimes in the past.

Tourist-Oriented Places. With its scenic beauty, two Finger Lakes, historic resources of national importance, and more than 30 wineries, Seneca County's tourism-related employment

is significant. Visitors enjoy a wide range of leisure and recreational activities. Hunting, hiking, camping, picnicking, snowmobiling, and touring wineries and historic places draw tens of thousands of visitors to Seneca County who contribute to the local economy. The new Samson Veterans Memorial Cemetery, which the County took the lead in developing, is expected to attract additional thousands of visitors each year. Sustaining a vibrant tourism sector requires thoughtful attention to the placement of economic development activities to avoid causing a decline in the County's high recreational, ecological, and visual quality.



Seneca County is committed to sustaining or enhancing the intrinsic beauty and tourism value of an area through proper design, landscaping, and buffering. The County will work with local, State, and Federal agencies to promote responsible economic development, taking into account the impacts on the surrounding ecology, residents, and existing tourism resources.

Community Cultural Places. Seneca County also supports the expansion of tourism-related activities, such as music festivals, art fairs, and sports tournaments. Such activities attract outside dollars to the County and provide more cultural and recreational options for residents. Seneca County recognizes that sports, art, and recreation are critical to creating networks and trust between business, government, and community, which are totally intermixed and integrated when people participate in cultural and recreational activities. Besides furnishing the glue of economic activity, such activities provide the physical and mental health that enables people to be economically active. Ill health is a major drain on an economy.

Home-Based Businesses. The biggest business incubator is the home. Throughout Seneca County, residents employ themselves in home-based businesses, such as child care, personal services, business services, and craft studios. A home workplace helps minimize business overhead expenses. According to Census data, two of the fastest growing population groups in Seneca County are married couples without children and single adults under the age of 55. These are the demographic groups most likely to start a business. The Affordable Care Act is also expected to encourage small business creation.

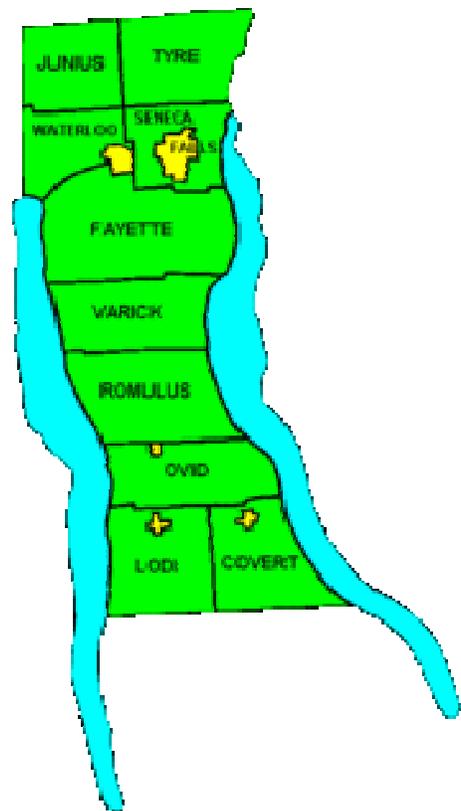
Home-based businesses are a vital component of a healthy local economy, and Seneca County will support home-based businesses. It will also work with local communities to limit the impact home-based businesses may have on their neighbors, and to help businesses relocate when they outgrow the home.

Indian Lands. In 2005, the Cayuga Indian Nation applied to the Bureau of Indian Affairs to transfer title of property it owned in Seneca County from the Nation to the U.S. Federal government, which would hold the land in trust for the Nation. This would effectively give the Nation the right to exercise sovereignty over the property. The land claim is still pending; if successful, the Cayuga Indian Nation has expressed interest in building a gaming casino on its properties. At the time of the 2005 land claim, the Cayuga Nation owned two parcels of land in the Town of Seneca Falls with a total area of just under 14 acres. Since 2005, the Nation has purchased other lands and now owns more than 50 properties in the Town of Seneca Falls and three in the Town of Varick, with a combined area of 1,136 acres.

North / South Perceptions. Some County residents perceive economic and cultural differences between the northern and southern parts of Seneca County. While there is no exact line between these two halves of the County, the generalization is that residents in the northern-most part of the County, with more convenient access to the New York State Thruway and the bulk of commercial development and jobs, have different concerns than residents of the balance of the County, which is primarily rural, agricultural, and oriented to tourism around the lakes and wineries. In addition, the southern and central parts of the County enjoy sizable and growing Amish and Mennonite populations.

Any generalization is highly dependent on the categories chosen for evaluation. Average home prices may be higher in the north, but overall land prices are higher in the south. Public and private investment in industrial infrastructure may be higher in the north, but total investment in tourism is higher in the south. Health and educational outcomes are generally even throughout the County. Different parts of the County may have different assets, but all are equally important to the County's well-being.

Even though perceptions may be the result of selective data, Seneca County government considers it a major responsibility to take any perceived differences seriously and prevent two counties from developing geographically and unevenly. The County is committed to improving social and economic mobility for all County residents.



Land Use Regulations

Economic development requires land and buildings, and land use and construction regulations guide development. This chapter of the comprehensive plan is not intended to recommend specific land uses or zoning ordinances. In keeping with the public's desire to encourage development in villages and hamlets where public services are readily available, to target major new development in strategic corridors, and to conserve vulnerable lands and rural lifestyles, Seneca County will work with local communities to draft and adopt regulations to:

- Promote, in villages and hamlets, relatively higher development densities, more intense uses, more housing choice, and designs that respect tradition.
- Preserve, in rural areas, large areas of sparse and low density residential.
- Protect and enhance vulnerable lands, throughout the County.

Seneca County will always consider individual property rights and individual private property values as it encourages the use of planning and zoning to maximize the utility of scarce public resources from which all residents and businesses benefit.





Economic Development Goals and Strategies

The dynamic context presented above raises several considerations for Seneca County planners and economic developers:

- While the County has produced several excellent studies related to infrastructure, there appears to be little information generated that is targeted to attracting or retaining specific businesses or business sectors.
- The New York State Thruway is an economic resource that Seneca County hasn't fully leveraged.
- When a County resident works in a neighboring county, the resident's wages are essentially a transfer payment from the neighboring county to Seneca County, and this is positive. In other words, it is not as important where residents work as long as they have decent-paying jobs and, vitally important, Seneca County remains their home of choice.
- Diversified economies tend to perform best, and, therefore, manufacturing cannot be ignored. However, trying to retain or attract manufacturing with low wages and tax incentives will likely have very limited overall economic benefits.
- Clearly, economic development efforts must also include identifying, generating, and supporting local entrepreneurs.

- The Seneca Army Depot is enormous, and it is questionable whether the entire facility can ever be developed exclusively for industrial or commercial purposes.
- Economic development is labor intensive, and a team effort will likely be necessary in Seneca County, requiring more coordination of the impressive capacities of the organizations in the County already devoted to economic development.
- Preparing the County workforce for employment in growing industries, both certain types of high-tech manufacturing and services, must be an ongoing effort.
- Small changes can diminish the long-term economic value of vulnerable lands, and restoration or recovery of what is lost can be costly.
- Because growth in one sector of the economy impacts other sectors, either positively or negatively, potential secondary economic impacts should be identified when making economic development policy decisions.

While there is no “one size fits all” approach to economic development for an area as large and diverse as Seneca County, the dynamic economic context in the County and the values expressed by the community suggest there are certain key goals and ways to attain them that can structure a prosperous and sustainable economic future.

Goal 1. Research, analyze, and publish data on County economic trends and economic indicators.

Strategy 1A: Collect and maintain business/economic data on the needs of County businesses of all sizes and types, including workforce, infrastructure, property, and financial needs, and on the requirements of businesses the County wants to attract.

Strategy 1B: Continue to administer economic development programs at the county level, and monitor the success of businesses utilizing the programs.

Strategy 1C: Maintain an itemization of economically significant natural resources and vulnerable lands including, but not limited to, prime farmland, forestland, shale deposits, waterways, ground water, and steep slopes.

Strategy 1D: Publish trend and indicator data in an annual report for use by elected and appointed officials, citizens, and business interests.

Strategy 1E: Develop programs to meet un- or under-served business needs.

Goal 2. Encourage greater collaboration with New York State, municipalities, economic development organizations, and private and nonprofit partners to advance the goals and strategies of this plan.

Strategy 2A: Strengthen connections between regional colleges and universities and County businesses to create vocational and professional programs—traditional and online—to meet Seneca County’s current and future workforce needs.

Strategy 2B: Encourage local communities to specialize in economic development approaches that take advantage of their respective assets.

Strategy 2C: Assist communities in creating energy/sustainability plans as frameworks for economic development.

Strategy 2D: Work with communities to ensure local zoning follows best practices and supports new economic development, ranging from small business incubator facilities to larger business organizations.

Strategy 2E: Work with local economic development organizations on short- and long-range programs of public works projects for the purpose of stabilizing industry and employment.

Strategy 2F: Investigate additional revenue sources and mechanisms, including private sector options, to provide for maintenance of County infrastructure.

Strategy 2G: Be an active and aggressive advocate for Seneca County’s interests in regional organizations devoted to economic development, environmental sustainability, workforce development, planning, tourism, and transportation.

Strategy 2H: Work with New York State and private real estate developers to develop shovel-ready industrial sites in the County.

Strategy 2I: Partner with profit and nonprofit developers to create more housing choice in the County, especially for seniors.

Strategy 2J: Coordinate and expand efforts with local and regional organizations to promote economic development successes and opportunities in the County.

Strategy 2K: Create a County water district to take advantage of a larger customer base to lower unit costs, improve customer service, and improve maintenance.

Goal 3. Seek and support local and nonlocal businesses that strengthen and diversify the economic base, expand and enhance the tax base, improve wage and salary levels, and utilize the resident workforce, without diminishing the quality of natural, historical, or cultural resources in the County.

Strategy 3A: Focus economic development to existing areas with adequate public facilities; specifically:

- Villages and hamlets.
- Existing business and industrial parks.
- Existing areas with adequate public facilities.

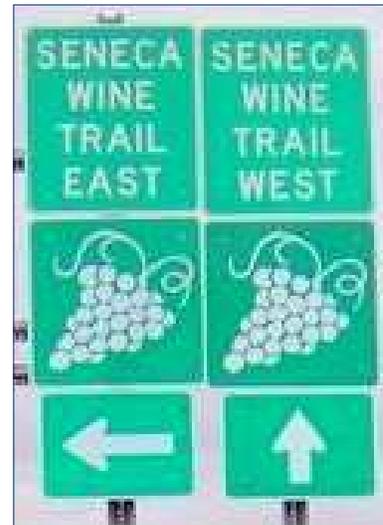
Strategy 3B: Support and coordinate efforts to provide adequate infrastructure and targeted County investment in areas best suited for future and unmet employment opportunities; specifically:

- Route 318/414 corridor.
- Route 5 & 20 corridor/Seneca Army Depot.

Strategy 3C: Maintain agriculture, agriculture-related businesses, cottage industries, and tourism as the major economic development industries in rural portions of the County.

Strategy 3D: Support new and existing businesses that utilize local agricultural products or that provide important agricultural inputs, such as farm equipment, new farm technologies, and so on.

Strategy 3E: Encourage the development of “niche” farm-based businesses focused on food for local and regional markets (small-scale food processing, specialty foods and beverages, organics, etc.).



Strategy 3F: Enhance connections with a variety of markets for Seneca County’s agricultural products, with a focus on markets that allow a greater portion of the profit from agricultural products to remain in the County.

Strategy 3G: Initiate a countywide “buy-local” program that focuses on purchasing products and materials from local businesses.

Strategy 3H: Enable alternative and renewable energy production, including, but not limited to, solar, hydro, biogas, and wind resources.

Strategy 3I: Adopt standards and seek funding to incorporate green infrastructure into new or renovated public facilities, including, at a minimum, low impact development and design elements.

Strategy 3J: Enable non-automotive and other transportation opportunities to expand options for personal and group travel, especially for those who cannot drive or afford to own a car.

Strategy 3K: Further increase opportunities for small business by introducing or enhancing home-based business zoning ordinance language, including standards to minimize noise, traffic, and other disturbances to adjacent land uses.

Strategy 3L: Identify strategies to continue providing access to financial capital for business retention and expansion.

Strategy 3M: Increase business attraction marketing outside of the County and State.

Strategy 3N: Invest in industrial parks, infrastructure, and business incubators in collaboration with the State and economic development associations.

Goal 4: Enhance tourism as a vital aspect of the County's economy and quality of life.

Strategy 4A: Maintain and enhance existing recreational and cultural activities, and help create new ones, to support both industry employers and quality of life.

Strategy 4B: Support the development of tourist-supportive businesses and events (hotels, specialty retail stores, historic buildings, conferences, festivals) as a means of increasing tourism.

Strategy 4C: Work in collaboration with the tourism bureaus and local businesses to market tourism by including more links to tourist events and attractions on the County's website.

Strategy 4D: Collaborate with the tourism industry and the State to position the County as a four season tourism experience and setting for films.

Strategy 4E: Encourage the establishment of use districts and environmental preservation requirements as necessary to preserve the County's existing tourism and cultural assets.

Strategy 4F: Encourage the establishment of use provisions, as necessary, to accommodate art, festivals, and other forms of tourist attractions.

Strategy 4G: Expand the system of recreational trails and greenways near, or serving, employment areas.

Strategy 4H: Protect and preserve scenic historic routes in Seneca County by creating a Scenic Roads program that preserves scenic and historic or rustic characteristics of such routes through rural landscapes and village streetscapes.

Strategy 4I: Design and install gateway treatments at the major entrances to the County, with special attention to signage, landscaping, setbacks, and orientation to main roads.

Strategy 4J: Require the landfill operator to submit a perimeter beautification plan, including fencing, landscaping, and public art, which must be implemented as a condition for expanded activities or closure.

Goal 5: Minimize land use conflicts.

Strategy 5A: Use the guiding principals of this plan as a basis for evaluating the merits of proposed developments and major land use changes.

Strategy 5B: Establish a mechanism for valuing both the direct cost of development to the developer and the direct and indirect costs to property owners in the vicinity of a proposal.

Strategy 5C: Make sure landfill tipping fees take into account all externalities.

Strategy 5D: Carefully consider whether proposals for commercial or industrial business development will interfere with surrounding existing uses and whether they can be supported with the existing road system, other infrastructure, and available services.

Strategy 5E: Ensure that new businesses do not detract from rural and/or village character.

Strategy 5F: Create an overlay district(s) for potential mineral extraction operations.

Strategy 5G: Protect the County's road network from unsafe conditions and premature wear by protecting the integrity and service of the current public infrastructure through the fair allocation of resources among vested users.

Strategy 5H: In conjunction with the villages, create site and building design guidelines for new developments and renovations to uphold property values and reinforce community character.

Strategy 5I: Create model design guidelines for businesses that address landscaping, aesthetics, lighting, noise, parking, and access in order to assure compatible, neighborly, high value, safe, and lasting developments.