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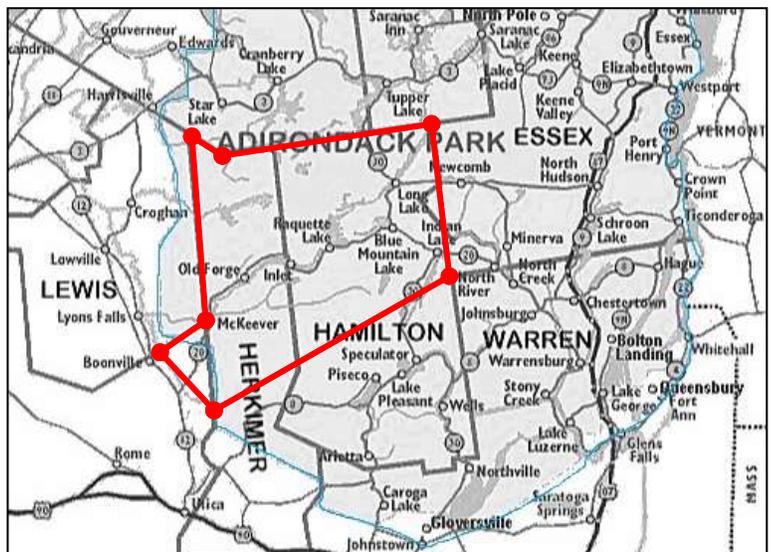
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## Stronger Economies Together Initiative

Launched in 2009 by USDA Rural Development in collaboration with the nation's Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDC) and their land-grant university partners. The purpose of Stronger Economies Together (SET) is to strengthen the capacity of communities in rural America to work together in developing and implementing an economic development blueprint that strategically builds on the current and emerging economic strengths of their region. Important elements of the Stronger Economies Together program will build collaboration between communities in a region, provides economic analyses that is tailored to help capture the region's current or emerging clusters and comparative economic advantages and is supported by technical assistance provided by Land Grant University Extension Systems to the regions over a period of several months including the SET training.



## Introduction

### *Executive Summary*

This Collaborative Economic Plan will serve the Central Adirondack Marketing Partnership (CAMP) as the roadmap for future economic development efforts in the (West) Central Adirondack Region. Its objective is to direct and assist key stakeholders in embracing a spirit of regionalism to support local development projects. Implementing these approaches and actions will strengthen the ability of the Central Adirondack Region to attract and/or retain the types of businesses and workers that will secure its economic future and position it as a competitive region. This plan reflects a ten month planning process with input from business, civic, and community leaders. Significant research and discussions have led to this strategy.

### *Regional Vision*

The (West) Central Adirondack Region is a western gateway to the high peaks and the expansive Adirondack Park, stretching from Alder Creek to Indian Lake, offering a remarkable blend of seclusion and vibrant communities with local services, improved communication technology and transportation that allows small businesses and entrepreneurial endeavors to thrive in an area where residents can earn a fair and equitable living wage. The region has remained an authentic destination honoring the environment, culture, and history while providing an unparalleled quality of life that supports visitors, a growing population and long-time residents.

### *Acknowledgements*

The (West) Central Adirondack Region would like to thank the staff from the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development, the Southern Regional Development Center, Cornell University's Community and Regional Development Institute (CaRDI), and Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Oneida, Herkimer, and Hamilton Counties for support throughout the course of this project. We would also like to show our appreciation to CAP-21, the Central Adirondack Association (CAA), the distinguished individuals that took part in the planning group sessions, and numerous other individuals, for their invaluable insight and ideas that led to the creation of this plan.

### *Regional Collaboration*



- Develop active ongoing networks and working relationships with area communities, regions, and higher
- Create a regional approach that crosses Town and County boundaries
- Develop and implement a specific plan with regional ideas to benefit the Route 28 corridor
- Be an important partner in the economic development of the region
- Have a comprehensive knowledge about the communities in the three county region
- Open communication between / with communities in the region
- Identify projects that can bring us together, that can be worked on together for sustainable growth
- Collaborate with non-profit, for profit, and government entities

- Encourage cooperation within the region to coordinate activities and events
- Help municipal and regional partners identify new ways to work together
- Understand the commonalities in the communities (Same constraints...same benefits)

The plan has buy-in from several key decision makers in the region including Adirondack Economic Development Corporation (AEDC), Adirondack Lakes Center for the Arts, Adirondack Museum, Central Adirondack Association (CAA), Central Adirondack Partnership for the 21st Century (CAP-21), Community Bank N.A., Cornell Cooperative Extension Hamilton County, Cornell Cooperative Extension Herkimer County, Cornell Cooperative Extension Oneida County, Enchanted Forest Water Safari, NYS Tug Hill Commission, Northern Oneida County Council of Government (NOCCOG), Oneida County Tourism and the VIEW Art Center explicitly expressed commitment to support the plan's implementation. Representatives from the Town of Forestport, Town of Indian Lake Main Street Revitalization, Town of Inlet Information Office, Town of Long Lake Tourism, Town of Webb Health Center Fund, and Town of Webb Tourism & Publicity have participated in the planning process to ensure local support.

## Economic Development

### *Regional Definition*

To create a four season economy that balances the amenities to meet community needs while allowing business to profit and provide opportunities, services, and good living wages to the employees living in the (West) Central Adirondacks. Developing and driving the kind of private and public strategies that will have economic return while keeping our sense of place.

### *Regional Strategies*

**Regional Economic Development Councils**, representing 10 regions across New York State, demonstrates a fundamental shift in the state's approach to economic development, from a top-down development model to a community-based approach that emphasizes regions' unique assets, harnesses local expertise, and empowers each region to set plans and priorities. The Regional Councils bring together stakeholders in every region of the state to serve as a coordinated point of contact for economic development. The state will work with the Regional Councils to align state resources and policies, eliminate unnecessary barriers to growth and prosperity, and streamline the delivery of government services and programs to help the Regional Councils carry out their plans for development through a consolidated funding application (CFA).

**Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)** serves as a guide for economic development activities at a county level on an annual basis. It also provides a vehicle for local, state and federal officials to identify key projects that should be undertaken to support economic growth in Central New York.

The CAMP Collaborative Economic Plan for the (West) Central Adirondack Region will compliment other local and regional strategies in the following ways:

- Healthcare worker training
- Senior's home rehabilitation
- Micro enterprise with technical assistance
- Broadband / Fiber optic implementation / Last 10' / training / plug in
- Revitalization and marketing
- Low cost economic development training (ESD)
- Stormwater / infrastructure improvement
- Excelsior jobs program (tax credits)



and include actions, not specifically identified in other local and regional strategies, that can connect the Northern New York and Mohawk Valley regions:

- Main Street Grants for Webb / Inlet / Indian Lake
- Community reinvestment / Angel funds
- Child care / Senior Care
- Housing - Work force housing / Assisted living / new affordable housing
- Water / sewer systems / infrastructure improvement
- Transportation (shuttle)
- Manufacturing space / industrial buildings / tech facilities
- Interpretive centers / destination projects / Infrastructure for attractions / tourism fund in the (West) Central Adirondacks
- Corridor development for tourism /marketing
- Waterfront access / park / trail / railroad development
- Arts / Culture / Education / history (ADK Museum / Indian Lake Theater / VIEW)

**Regional Planning Board**, the Planning organization in Oneida County and Herkimer County, is a member of the New York State Association of Regional Councils. The combined staff serves the Oneida County Department of Planning, the Herkimer-Oneida Counties Comprehensive Planning Program, the Herkimer County Planning Board, and the Herkimer-Oneida Counties Transportation Study. Planning activities are conducted at both the county and regional levels with extensive local assistance provided to the area's cities, towns & villages with the most reliable up-to-date and comprehensive information needed to make critical decisions which ultimately affect the area's land development, natural environment, transportation systems, human services, criminal justice, and economic development potential.

**Workforce Investment Boards** utilize a 'One-Stop' approach in connecting businesses and job seekers using personal and high-tech delivery of information and services through Working Solutions, a collaborative effort among many agencies and programs assisting job seekers, workers and businesses in Herkimer, Madison and Oneida counties. The Workforce

Investment Board can provide expert guidance, quality resources and up-to-date information on who is hiring and what types of jobs are in demand.

**U.S. Small Business Administration** provides premier business assistance offering expert management and technical assistance through 24 campus-based regional Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) and 50 outreach offices, that can apply the resources of university, private sector, and government to solve business problems and foster entrepreneurship. SBDC services are responsive to a constantly changing small business environment. The SBDC emphasizes counseling and training services to women, veterans, people with special needs, and minority entrepreneurs. The SBDC also focuses on manufacturers, exporters, technology oriented firms, government contractors, and projects that advance the job development, investment, and economic growth priorities of New York State.

**Other Economic Development Organizations such as** Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA), Central Adirondack Association (CAA), Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), Adirondack Economic Development Corporation (AEDC), Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), County Industrial Development Agencies, EDA Economic Development Districts, North Country Alliance, Tug Hill Commission, and County Planning Departments can provide data, technical assistance, and training.

## *Regional Characteristics*

The (West) Central Adirondacks, including Hamilton County, is one of the most rural and least populated regions in New York State. Its rugged majestic landscapes, the changing seasons, natural resources, extensive cultural heritage, and independent character fosters an outstanding way of life, a leading economic asset for the region. There is a history and love for the people and land in the Adirondacks that allows us to attract new people to the region, welcoming individuals and families seeking a rural, self-sufficient lifestyle.

The West Central Adirondack region is comprised of five (5) towns covering approximately 1,344 square miles. The Region rests within three (3) counties that comprise the larger regional economy: Hamilton, Northern Herkimer and Northeastern Oneida. The Region is primarily rural with fewer than 5 people per square mile. There is a healthy interdependency with the southern portions of Oneida, Herkimer and Lewis Counties which includes the more urban population centers of Utica, Rome, Herkimer, and Lowville. There is no Metropolitan Statistical Area within this region, attesting to its truly rural nature.

Major transportation routes within the region include US Routes 12, 28 and 30. The region is a short drive to Interstate I-90 and I-81 connecting to important urban markets such as Albany, Boston, Buffalo, Montreal, and New York City.

Today's land uses show more of a trend toward subdivision of agricultural and forest land, resulting in single or multiple home development geared toward middle and upper income buyers. The towns of the region celebrate their remoteness but are still concerned about the lack of local services and full-time, four season employment. Many town plans state that they would like increased economic activity so long as it did not adversely affect their rural character, natural resources, or local services.

Most towns have remained rural because they are remote. They are accessible by 2-lane roads from existing economic centers, and they have no high speed internet access. While growth is possible, it's unlikely to be substantial in any way without increased access to technology. In the meantime, home based and small scale businesses that have access to transportation and/or high-speed internet will be most likely to succeed. Clearly the economic future of these towns depends largely on increasing access to technology infrastructure, affordable housing and support services.



Occupations common to the region now include forestry, tourism, retail, sales, office support, and related activities. People in the region hold multiple jobs which points to an income problem in the region and a continued problem with unemployment and seasonal layoffs. Wages are low in this region as compared with other parts of the New York. Families in the (West) Central Adirondacks have been forced by necessity to send wage-earners into the workforce to bring home additional paychecks or to supplement their primary jobs with part time work on the side. Data show that there are more and more households with two or more wage earners. This trend of underemployment is likely to continue.

The region's tourism industry currently affords a reasonably good match between jobs and the population. While the West Central Adirondack region's economic health depends primary on external factors such as weather and the overall national economy, diligently maintaining and enhancing existing support resources, such as housing, healthcare, infrastructure and continuing to develop new economic resources that increase the potential for greater wages and job diversity.

One of the main economic challenges for the Region is to increase wages and quality of jobs through various means, rather than to increase the number of jobs. It is in the Region's long-term economic interest to foster a business climate

that will encourage the growth of businesses appropriately scaled to their communities and that provide higher-paying, high satisfaction jobs. Further, the region should provide and expand training for the workforce that's already here. To complement these efforts, additional workforce housing and expanded technology infrastructure must be added.

The West Central Adirondack is a region experiencing economic distress:

- Population in the (West) Central Adirondacks region is declining, a possible marker of the lack growth in productivity. There is a substantial gap between wages and housing costs and the discrepancy between college degrees conferred and jobs available is likely to be driving workers out of the region.
- The (West) Central Adirondacks region is looking to increase full-time four season employment.
- An average of 56% of (West) Central Adirondacks participates in the region's workforce. 44% of the population in the region is not working (39% of the population is not in the labor force and 5% is unemployed) which is of concern because it is a likely signal of a low income and an aging population.
- Many people in the region have 2-3 part-time/seasonal low paying jobs to make a living often without insurance or benefits. In some cases multiple incomes sources may disqualify them from getting some services during gaps in employment when they are in need.
- Workers 16 years and over commuting to work: 79% drove alone, 6% carpooled, 0% public transportation, 10% walked, 5% Worked at home, and 1% used other means of transportation.
- The mean travel time to work in the region is 19 minutes indicating that the working population of (West) Central Adirondacks is employed within the region. The exception may be Forestport, based on location and a mean travel time of 29.2 minutes, employment is possible in other larger metropolitan areas like Utica, Rome, and Lowville that are outside the region, but within the mean travel time.
- There is very poor access to high-speed internet, and limited, spotty cell phone service. Telecommunications technology is needed to support workers and businesses, without universal high-speed internet access, the economy of our rural region will continue to suffer.
- The (West) Central Adirondacks region is prone to weather conditions that can cause power loss and disruption in transportation affecting businesses and commerce.
- A number of people employed in (West) Central Adirondacks are in natural resources-dependent occupations.
- Land uses trending toward subdivision of forest land for recreational/second homes drives up the value of land and makes workforce housing increasingly unaffordable.

## Population

People & Income Overview (By Place of Residence)	New York	Oneida County	Hamilton County	Herkimer County
Population (2011)	19,465,197	234,287	4,793	64,160
Growth/Loss (%) Since 2000	2.6%	-0.5%	-10.9%	-0.4%
Growth/Loss (%) Since 1990	8.2%	-6.6%	-9.2%	-2.5%
Land Area (in sq. miles)	47,126.4	1,212.4	1,717.4	1,411.5
Population Density (2011)	413.0	193.2	2.8	45.5
% Reporting One Race Only (ACS 5 year est.)	97.0%	97.9%	98.9%	98.8%
% Reporting Only African American (ACS 5 year est.)	15.9%	6.3%	0.7%	1.1%
% Reporting Hispanic (of any race) (ACS 5 year est.)	17.6%	4.6%	1.1%	1.6%
Households (ACS 5 year est.)	7,317,755	93,028	2,262	26,324
Labor Force (2011)	9,504,239	107,753	2,999	30,880
Unemployment Rate (2011)	8.2	8.1	7.8	8.4
Per Capita Personal Income (PCPI) (2010)	\$48,596	\$34,560	\$39,105	\$32,082
10 Year PCPI Growth (%) adj. for inflation	10.0%	13.2%	32.3%	18.5%
Poverty Rate (2010)	15.0	15.1	10.6	15.6
H.S. Diploma or More - % of Adults 25+ (ACS 5 year est.)	84.4%	86.0%	88.6%	86.4%
Bachelor's Deg. or More - % of Adults 25+ (ACS 5 year est.)	32.1%	21.5%	25.9%	18.2%

The 2010 population of the West Central Adirondack region was 5,738 persons, as estimated by the US Census. New

York's population was 19,378,102 according to the first set of data released from the 2010 Census. This represents an increase in the state population of about 1% from the count in 2000. The region lost about 595 residents from 2000-2010 or 13% of the region's population, with some towns within the region losing nearly 20%. NY State's median age of 38 years old is more than a decade younger than the average regional median age of 48.5 years old.

### 2010 Profile of General Population Characteristics

Age & Gender	Town of Forestport		Town of Indian Lake		Town of Inlet		Town of Long Lake		Town of Webb		Total Region	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Land Area - Sq. Miles	79	5.9	266.2	19.8	66.4	4.9	449.9	33.5	482.9	35.9	1344	100%
Total population 2010	1535	100.0	1352	100.0	333	100	711	100	1,807	100	5738	100%
Loss Since 2000	(157)	(10.2)	(119)	(8.8)	(73)	(21.9)	(141)	(19.8)	(105)	(5.8)	(595)	(13%)
16 years and over	1,287	83.8	1,191	88.1	275	82.6	634	89.2	1,574	87.10	4961	86.16%
18 years and over	1,247	81.2	1,152	85.2	267	80.2	627	88.2	1,537	85.10	4830	83.98%
21 years and over	1,213	79	1,124	83.1	258	77.5	618	86.9	1,498	82.90	4711	81.88%
62 years and over	374	24.4	411	30.4	85	25.5	224	31.5	549	30.40	1643	28.44%
65 years and over	275	17.9	346	25.6	70	21	179	25.2	437	24.20	1307	22.78%
Median age (years)	48.5	( X )	52.7	( X )	46.9	( X )	53.5	( X )	51.8	( X )	50.7	( X )
Male population	789	51.4	675	49.9	172	51.7	377	53	909	50.30	2922	51.26%
Median age (years)	49.1	( X )	52.7	( X )	48.3	( X )	52.1	( X )	51.7	( X )	50.8	( X )
Female population	746	48.6	677	50.1	161	48.3	334	47	898	49.70	2816	48.74%
Median age (years)	47.9	( X )	52.8	( X )	45.5	( X )	54.6	( X )	52	( X )	50.6	( X )
One Race	1,516	98.8	1,339	99	333	100	704	99	1,785	98.8	5677	99.12%
White	1,502	97.9	1,322	97.8	329	98.8	689	96.9	1,764	97.6	5606	97.80%
African American	3	0.2	8	0.6	0	0	11	1.5	9	0.5	31	0.56%
Native American	5	0.3	3	0.2	2	0.6	1	0.1	6	0.3	17	0.30%
Asian	2	0.1	4	0.3	1	0.3	3	0.4	4	0.2	14	0.26%
Some Other Race	4	0.3	2	0.1	1	0.3	0	0	2	0.1	9	0.16%
Multiple Races	4	0.3	7	0.5	1	0.3	1	0.1	3	0.2	16	0.28%
Total households	687	100	662	100	158	100	350	100	876	100	2733	100%
In labor force	737	51.%	624	56.8%	220	55.7%	366	56.1%	881	61.7%	2,828	56%
Unemployed	91	6.40%	30	2.70%	5	1.30%	10	1.50%	14	1.00%	150	3%
Per capita income	\$22,062	( X )	\$26,630	( X )	\$30,172	( X )	\$33,530	( X )	\$29,153	( X )	\$28,309	( X )
High school or higher	1179	93.3%	951	90.4%	338	93.1%	608	97.0%	1184	93.1%	4,260	93%
Bachelor's or higher	209	16.5%	277	26.3%	147	40.5%	250	39.9%	445	35.0%	1,328	32%

Source: US Census / American Community Survey (ACS). See appendix for full US Census / ACS Data Tables or visit <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

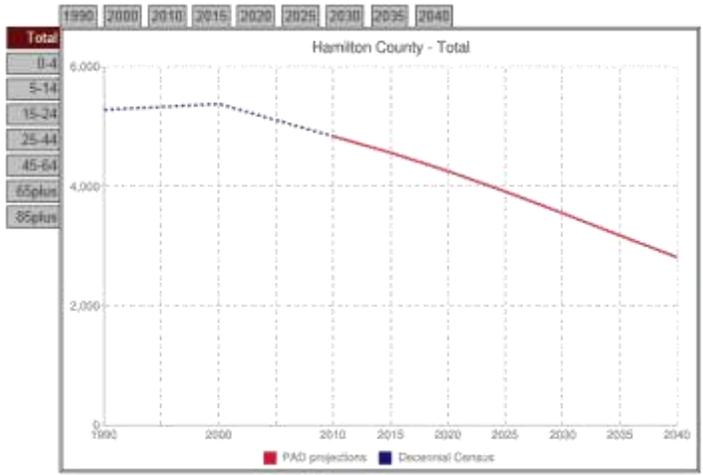
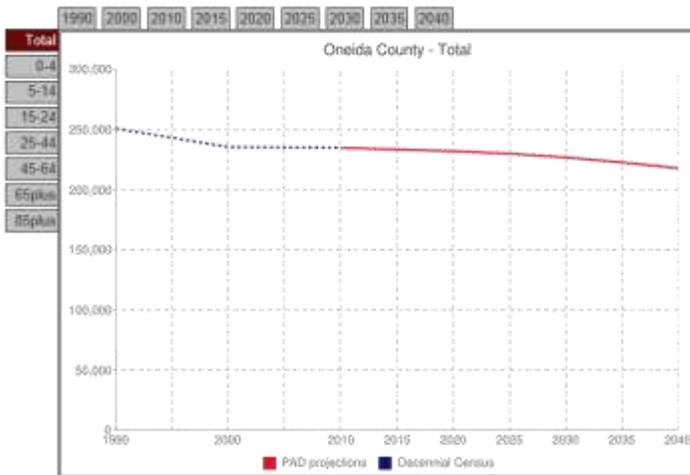
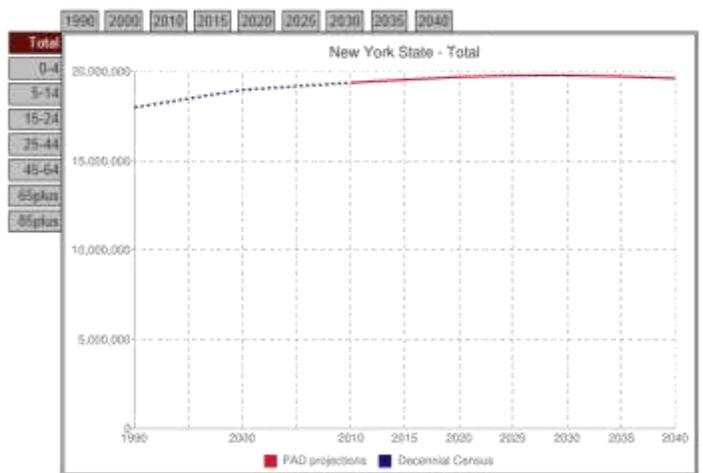
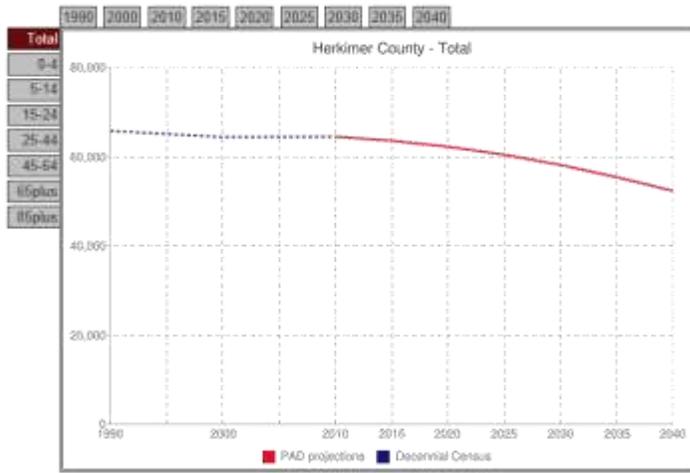
The region's population is declining, losing more than 500 residents between 2000 and 2010, due to declining birth rates, increasing older population and out migration. It is important to understand this because population and economic growth rate (GDP) are correlated. New York has had some population growth and GDP growth.

Other states like Florida, Arizona and Nevada were building new infrastructure and houses, and they were showing high growth rates of both population and GDP until the recession started. These states are now feeling greater effects from the economy down turn, while our region is holding steady, and will be poised for growth in housing, education, and infrastructure.

Components of Population Change in 2011	New York	Oneida County	Hamilton County	Herkimer County
Net Domestic Migration (chg 2010/2011)	-90,342	-936	-2	-331
Net International Migration (chg 2010/2011)	64,716	211	1	25
Natural Increase (births minus deaths)	96,108	142	-39	-7
Births	242,972	2,563	35	652
Deaths	146,864	2,421	74	659

Source: STATS America / US Census Bureau

### Regional Population Projections: 2000-2040

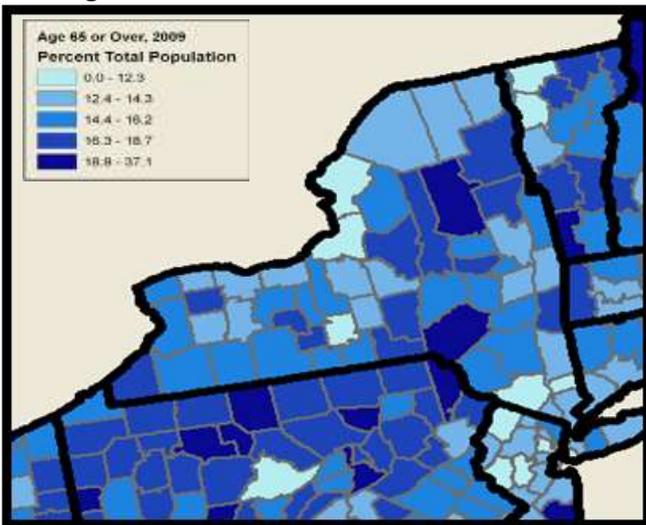


Source: U.S. Census at <http://pad.human.cornell.edu>

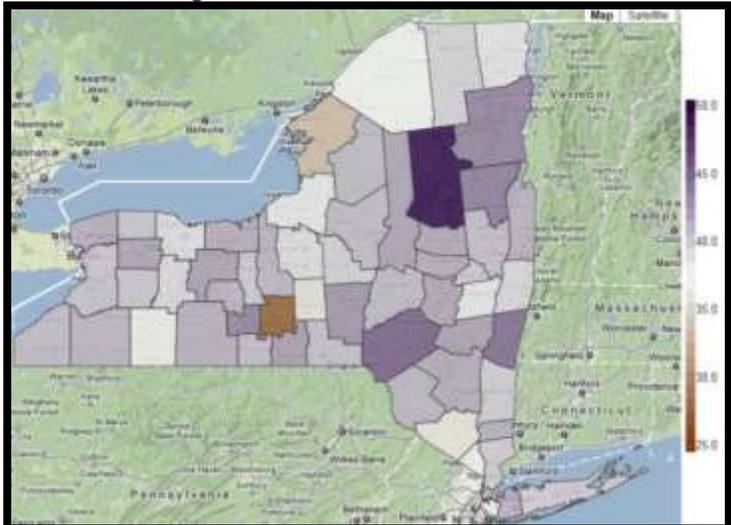
### Age, Gender and Poverty

The (West) Central Adirondacks' gender distribution is similar regionally and state-wide with 48% men and 51% women. The age distribution will have a far greater impact on the creation of economic development policies and programs for the region. In general, the West Central Adirondack Region has an older population and has a lower percentage of teenagers and young adults than the rest of the state, particularly Hamilton County.

### U.S. Age 65 Years and Over: 2009



### NYS Median Age: 2009



Source: U.S. Census / ACS / <http://pad.human.cornell.edu>

There is a hole in the population of people aged 25-34. Younger people are leaving the region and are not being replaced through domestic in-migration. These facts are significant for several reasons:

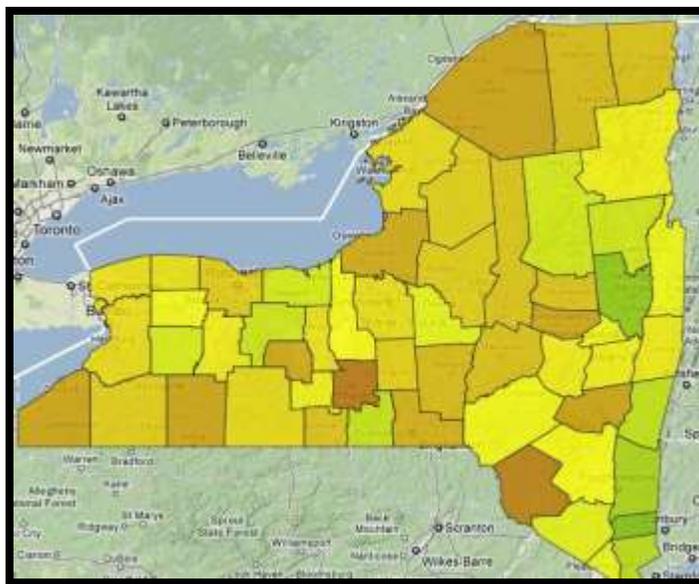
- Fewer young people will mean fewer primary, skilled or trainable workers.
- A shortage of skilled workers could hurt the region's competitiveness, particularly in technology and other industries that rely on workers with college degrees.
- A larger number of retirement-aged residents will mean that the region must provide more health and social services without the income generating worker base to support these services. If this middle-aged group prolongs their retirement due to economic conditions, there will be fewer available jobs.
- A smaller number of young individuals and more aging residents may lead to a shortage of young workers in senior support programs and future services for this large group of older residents.

Poverty data offers a clearer picture of income inequities that affect the West Central Adirondack region. The state's younger population and its elderly residents are most affected. Since people in deep poverty often lack transportation, connection to government benefits or support systems, the most effective measures to reduce deep poverty might involve programs designed to alleviate transportation issues associated with living in rural areas. These programs will likely increase productivity and self-sufficiency.

It is difficult to determine the true extent of the need throughout the region because many residents in the area assume there aren't any services locally and they cannot access the County services and offices located outside the region. Many community populations that are in need get help through churches and mission driven sites/services that offer resources to the (West) Central Adirondacks. There is need for the community to assist people in the region with better ways to allocate their limited resources.

- Establishing community centers (or satellite offices) in some parts of the region that could offer educational programs, access to County services, congregate sites and meal programs (Meals on Wheels or summer feeding programs), senior services, and/or food bank distribution.

### NYS Poverty All Ages, 2010



### NYS Poverty under 17 years old, 2010



Source: U.S. Census at <http://pad.human.cornell.edu>

Geography Name	Year	Median household income	Total Poverty Rate	Poverty rate under 18	Poverty rate Children 5 to 17 (living in families)
Hamilton County, NY	2010	\$45,474	10.6	17.4	14.1
Herkimer County, NY	2010	\$42,876	15.6	22.7	20.1
Oneida County, NY	2010	\$46,409	15.1	23.7	21.3

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau / Bureau of Economic Analysis

### Education

Although the (West) Central Adirondacks have few institutions of higher learning, the surrounding areas are home to several Colleges, Universities, Community Colleges and Technical Career Centers, which offer excellent training resources and degrees for high-skill jobs. In the Counties of Oneida, Herkimer, and Hamilton there are several to choose from including the State University of New York (SUNY) Institute of Technology, Empire State College, Utica College,

Hamilton College and the Pratt Institute at MWPI that offer innovative 4 year degree programs while Mohawk Valley Community College, Herkimer County Community College and the Utica School of Commerce offer certificate programs and two year degrees. There are also Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) Technical Career Centers located in New Hartford, Herkimer, Glenfield, and Saranac Lake that offer vocational education and training.

Clarkson University, St. Lawrence University, SUNY Canton, SUNY Potsdam and SUNY Plattsburgh are just outside the region in Northern New York and offer several 4 year and graduate programs, as well as Jefferson Community College, Clinton Community College and North Country Community College. Morrisville State College and Paul Smith's College offer hospitality programs in Upstate and Northern New York.

Educational Attainment	Town of Forestport		Town of Indian Lake		Town of Inlet		Town of Long Lake		Town of Webb		Total Region	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Population over 25 years	1,264	(X)	1,052	(X)	363	(X)	627	(X)	1,272	(X)	4,578	(X)
Less than 9th grade	23	1.80%	46	4.40%	3	0.80%	3	0.50%	0	0.00%	75	2%
High school, no diploma	62	4.90%	55	5.20%	22	6.10%	16	2.60%	88	6.90%	243	5%
High school graduate/GED	591	46.8%	408	38.8%	103	28.4%	188	30.0%	367	28.%	1,657	35%
Some college, no degree	234	18.5%	171	16.3%	47	12.9%	115	18.3%	200	15.7%	767	16%
Associate's degree	145	11.5%	95	9.0%	41	11.3%	55	8.8%	172	13.5%	508	11%
Bachelor's degree	135	10.7%	150	14.3%	81	22.3%	113	18.0%	272	21.4%	751	17%
Graduate or prof. degree	74	5.9%	127	12.1%	66	18.2%	137	21.9%	173	13.6%	577	14%
High school graduate or higher	1179	93.3%	951	90.4%	338	93.1%	608	97.0%	1184	93.1%	4,260	93%
Bachelor's or higher	209	16.5%	277	26.3%	147	40.5%	250	39.9%	445	35.0%	1,328	32%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau / ACS

Among the occupations that currently employ people in the (West) Central Adirondacks, only a few segments such as Health Care, Education, Administrative and Professional Services require an Associate's Degree or higher. Yet more people are getting degrees in business and social sciences than in the fields in which jobs are available in the region. This mismatch between college degrees conferred and jobs available is believed by economic development practitioners to be driving younger workers out of the state.

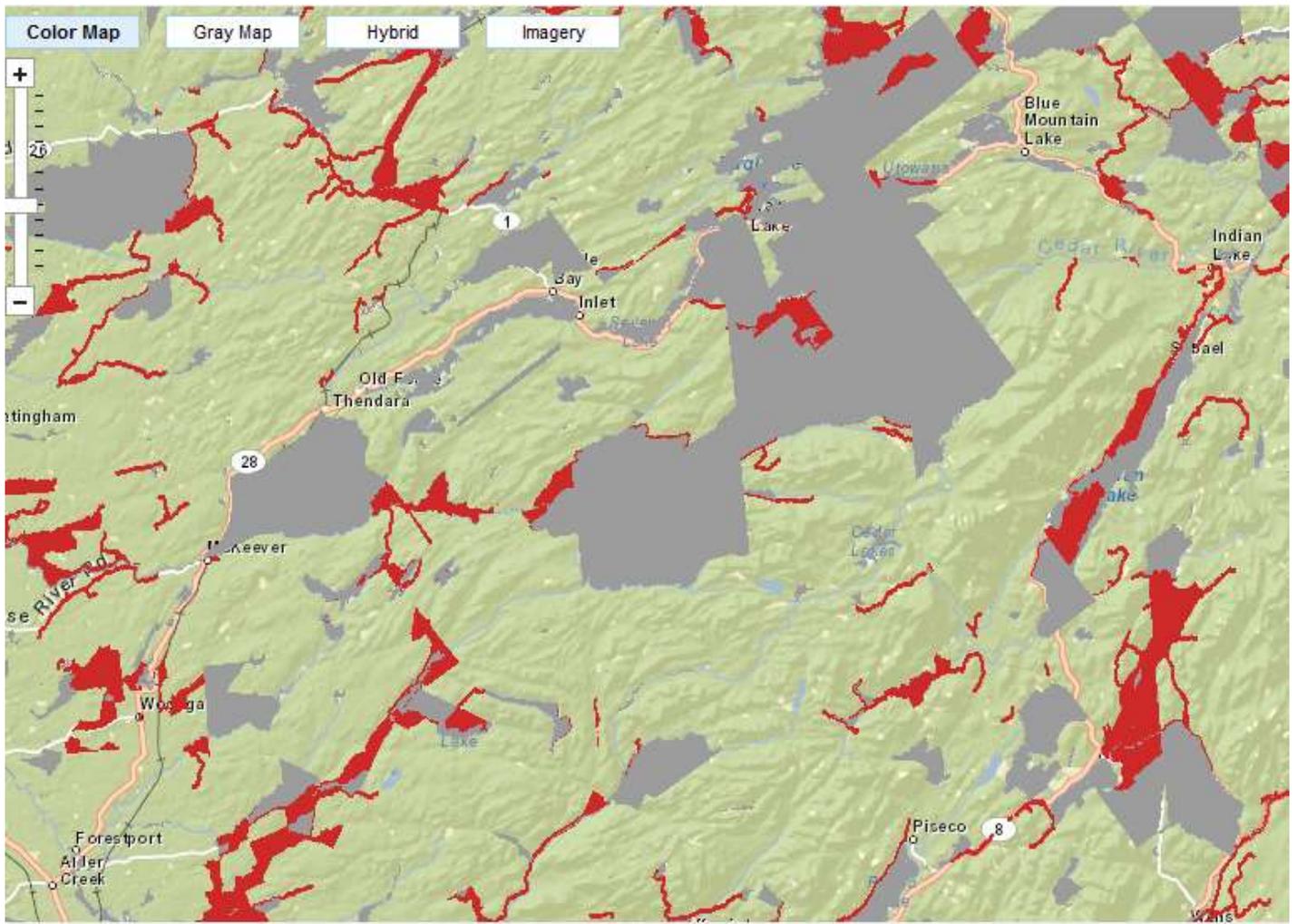
### Telephone and Telecommunications

NY State Broadband mapping indicates that areas within the region have access to wired connections through Frontier Communications DSL and Time Warner Cable or with cellular providers AT&T Mobility and Verizon Wireless or by using satellite services Hughes, StarBand, and Wildblue Communications.

Localized telephone and telecommunications may also be available in some areas through Dreamscape Online, Northland Communications, Newport Telephone, NTCNet, PrimeLink, Slic Network Solutions, AT&T, Oneida County Rural Telephone Company, Comcast, Sprint Communications, and TDS Telecom who lease lines and then resell these to ISPs or service customers directly.

The region's high speed internet service varies widely with several rural areas having only dial-up service available as telephone customers. The map below may overestimate the coverage and areas actually served. Large gaps in coverage are obvious. Most areas that are not along Route 28 do not receive any broadband service, and other towns throughout the region are only partially covered. For the homes located in these areas, dial-up or satellite service that are unpredictable, slow and unreliable are the only options.

## Basic Broadband Adoption, 2009



 *No Wired Coverage; cellular or satellite may be available*       *No coverage of any kind*

Source: <http://www.broadbandmap.ny.gov/map/>

### Housing

The region's primary housing issues are its affordability and its availability. Housing is considered affordable if it does not cost more than 30% of their income. Finding decent rental housing that is actually available and at a price that does not exceed an affordable rate is not simply a matter of income. Then add the high costs of commuting, not to mention heating any residence in this unforgiving climate, and the situation become clearer.

Employment projections for 2008 to 2018, using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data, tell us that 21 of the top 50 occupations that are expected to grow in the coming years pay less than these affordable housing wage rates. Of the top 10 growing occupations, only four pay an affordable housing wage.

With the increased population of older and aging residents in the region, there is an increased need for more elderly housing today that will only grow over time.

According to 2010 US Census Bureau, new house construction dropped by an estimated 44% to 594 homes built from 2004-2010 compared to 1,060 homes during the previous decade from 1990-1999. Most of the new housing consists of single family detached homes or mobile homes with 2-3 bedrooms. The estimated household size is 2 persons typically owning 1-2 vehicles per household.

The median home value in the region is \$221,820 and the typical rent in the area costs between \$500 and \$750 per month with an estimated median rent of \$616. The median selected monthly owner costs for housing units with a mortgage is \$1,312 and for housing units without a mortgage is substantially less at \$486.

# Regional Economy

## Workforce

At 56% participation, the region is similar to other developed countries, 63% is the highest rate typically seen (Sweden). Switzerland and the UK have participation rates at 60%, this region is similar to most other EU countries (<55%).

More women have begun working outside the home and with declining birth rates; there are more women available to enter the workforce. There are more two-income households, both regionally and nationally. In the 1960s and 1970s, this was viewed as a positive sign of more choices for women and improved economic conditions. Today, however, experts believe this is evidence of reduced earnings, limited job opportunities and poor wage growth, which has forced women (and others) to enter the work force so that households can meet their obligations. While it may be good news that there are employment opportunities in the region that are open to our residents, it also portends the lack of jobs providing a living wage so that more people are forced by necessity to participate.

## Employment, Occupations & Wages

By definition, a person is unemployed if they are more than 16 years age, available to work (that is, not institutionalized), eligible to take a job, and have been looking for work during the four weeks prior to the time at which they were surveyed by the labor department. Employment in the region stayed the same from 2000 to 2010 at 53.76%, lower than the U.S. rate of 59.4% and the New York State rate of 58.8%.

Rising employment can reflect greater numbers of job opportunities in the region, a shift toward later household formation and child bearing by women, a healthy economy that offers rewarding work, or weakened earning and lower incomes in the labor market, as demonstrated by a higher proportion of the population participating in the workforce to compensate for lower wages received. Experiencing low wage rates and weak income growth has pushed many residents into work they otherwise might not do.

The region had an unemployment rate of 4.74% in 2010 that was lower than both the national of 7.9% and state of 7.5%. Average income for a worker in the region of \$29,410 in 2010, was 99% of what the average national worker earns \$29,701, but was 9.3% lower than the state average of \$32,436. The anemic growth in wage rates in this region and low wages themselves are serious signs of economic distress that must be addressed in order to improve the West Central Adirondack regional economy.

According to occupation-specific employment estimates, jobs held in these five occupational groups amounts to more than half of the West Central Adirondack region's total employment.

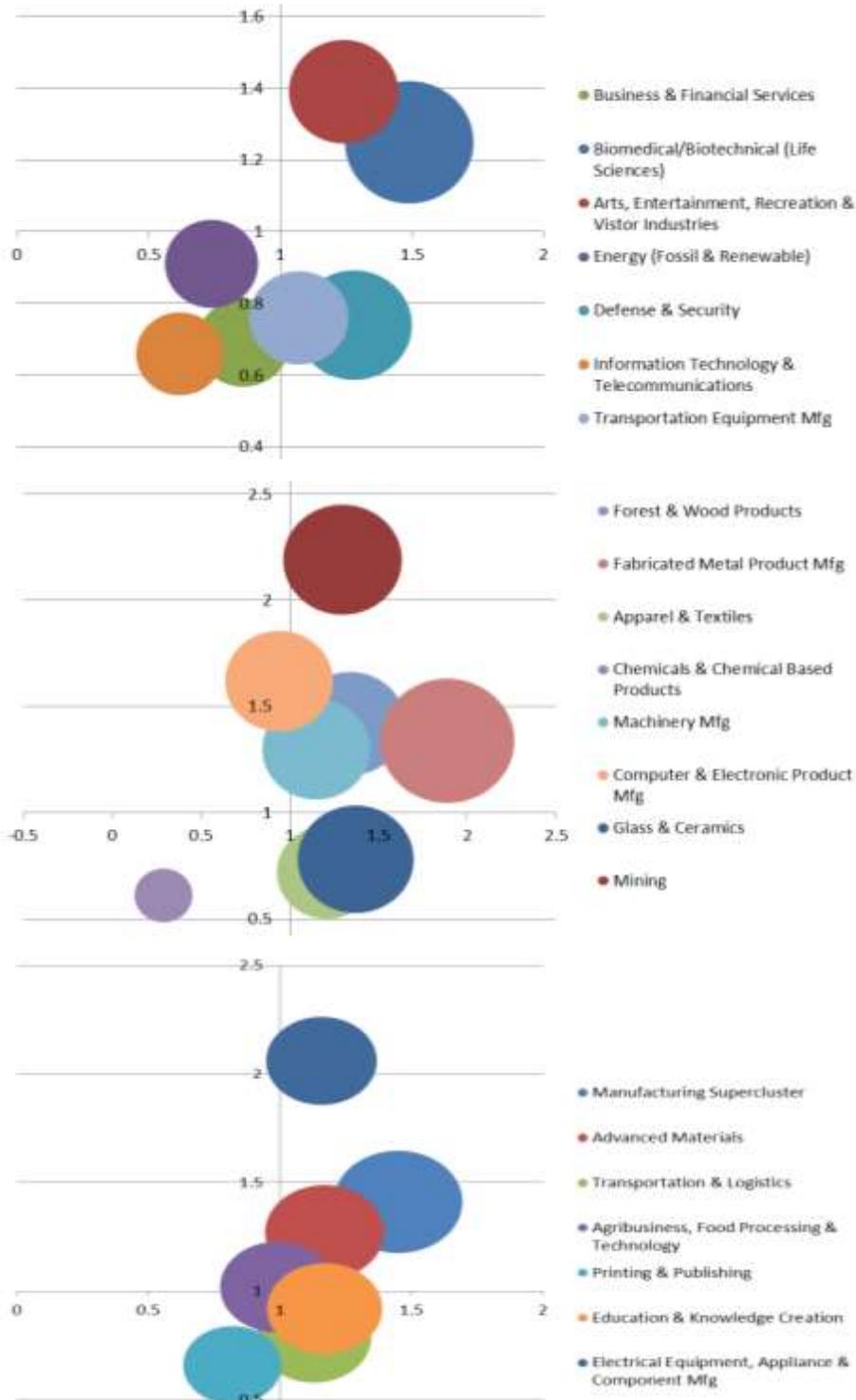
- Arts, entertainment, recreation, food & accommodation
- Educational services, health care and social assistance
- Retail Trade
- Construction
- Information

INDUSTRY BY OCCUPATION FOR THE CIVILIAN EMPLOYED POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER	Indian Lake	Inlet	Long Lake	Webb	Forestport	Region
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	594	215	356	867	646	2084
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	25	3	0	22	12	37
Construction	87	27	46	86	30	189
Manufacturing	6	0	3	21	78	102
Wholesale trade	30	0	6	40	14	60
Retail trade	33	27	40	76	79	222
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	14	4	14	8	62	88
Information	0	5	12	123	9	149
Finance and insurance, real estate and rental and leasing	4	19	3	80	27	129
Professional, scientific, management, administrative	71	4	13	4	23	44
Educational services, health care and social assistance	149	37	77	192	128	434
Arts, entertainment, recreation, food & accommodation	88	60	95	187	119	461
Other services, except public administration	29	16	2	0	27	45
Public administration	58	13	45	28	38	124

## Economic Composition of the West Central Adirondack Economy

The concentration of economic activity in (West) Central Adirondacks is an indicator of the region's natural resource assets, access to markets, participation in the larger economy (state, regional, national), and investments in infrastructure and human capital. However, the region is dependent on other outside metropolitan areas for a large share of services.

The economic performance in the region derives, in part, from its economic composition of clusters. Clusters in the upper right quadrant such as Forest & Wood Products, Mining, Manufacturing (advanced materials / primary & fabricated metal mfg. / electronic component mfg. / machinery mfg.), Biomedical (health / life sciences), Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, and Tourism have the strongest competitive position in the (West) Central Adirondacks. The competitive strength and size of these clusters affect a region's overall economic performance, and in particular, its wage levels. Net business creation, or new business formation minus business closures, is another measure of economic performance of any region. Factor conditions, related and supporting industries, demand conditions and context for firm strategy and rivalry all play integral roles in the competitiveness of a business environment



The overall business environment and that for individual clusters can be improved by working on Workforce Quality and Training, Innovation and Differentiation, Infrastructure, and Regionalism. The following are our priorities for addressing the region's economic distress and creating a climate of growth and competitiveness that will stimulate the regional economy and allow all of its residents to share in prosperity.

- The opportunity to “connect when you want to” and the exceptional quality of life here are key assets in the region. Without access to high speed internet and cell phone service, entrepreneurs will not locate in the (West) Central Adirondacks. The first and perhaps most urgent priority in this region is to secure an expanded, comprehensive internet and cell phone services throughout the region using innovative technology.
- Look for opportunities to expand on the emerging or potential clusters here. Promoting one or more clusters may make a business more efficient to operate, creating some amount of density in supporting suppliers and customers.
- Promote the sectors that have been traditionally strong here, such as tourism, manufacturing, and natural resources based industries. We should also cultivate cottage industry and home-based businesses.
- Regional partners must work more closely with WIBs to tailor the workforce development system to our regional strengths and opportunities.

## Goals

### *Community and Private Sector Participation*

An essential aspect of creation of this Plan was participation by stakeholders in the region, recognizing that a bottom up approach is the most effective method for achieving meaningful results, and we not only used this approach in developing this plan but aim to continue with this approach in its implementation.

### *Competitive Advantage*

The competitive advantage of the West Central Adirondack Region is that it can supply businesses wishing to take advantage of the region's accessibility to markets along the I-90 corridor, Utica/Rome, New York City, Montreal, and beyond; supported by superior natural environment and high quality of life with sufficient land, labor, and transportation.

### *Goals and Objectives*

#### **Amenities + Quality of Life**

- Endorse the creation of a cross-county recreation strategy.
- Support the revitalization of key downtown (hamlet) areas; addressing vacant / rundown buildings and facades.
- Provide diverse housing options that are affordable and attractive for existing residents and those relocating.
- Stabilize and reverse the loss of population in the Central Adirondack Region by attracting key populations / demographic groups (e.g., younger population, families, 'creative crunchies')
- To provide basic health & care needs of the community to support economic prosperity

#### **Sites + Infrastructure**

- Provide the infrastructure needed to attract and retain companies and a workforce.
- Create and support facilities that nurture and develop entrepreneurs and accelerate small business formation.

#### **Workforce + Education**

- Expand efforts to attract young professionals and retain staff to building a robust workforce and strengthen economic development efforts.
- Develop a long-term education (K-12 through College) program to provide workforce business training locally that will connect regional needs and bring students back to regional opportunities.

#### **Business Climate + Economic Strength**

- Spearhead a regional approach to economic development and develop a system for seamless collaboration.
- Expand efforts that support the expansion and retention of existing industries. Create new ones where appropriate including opportunities for entrepreneurs and small businesses.

#### **Marketing + Promotion**

- Work with regional partners to develop and adopt a regional brand for the (West) Central Adirondacks
- Use the regional brand to coordinate data and streamline marketing efforts to better target gaps within the region.
- Create and initiate a marketing campaign to attract target industries, populations and lifestyles.

#### **Policy + Administration**

- Provide an environment that recognizes the quality investment in each of the towns and counties to support incentives & projects in keeping with the region's development vision.
- Connect with various agencies and levels of government to recognize the needs and assets of the region.
- Support regional cluster activation, build networks, identify institutions for collaboration, and actively pursue funding to meet regional needs.

## Target Areas

Goals and Objectives are based on this input from the community coupled with Southern Rural Development Center Data, we recommend the following 6 target areas for the CAMP Region:



These Strategic Priorities will require a joint effort that spans county lines and governments, utilizes the resources of various organizations, and embraces the private sector. Many groups and individuals have a strong desire to play an enhanced role in the future of the region. These Priority Actions and the resulting detailed recommendations will provide these willing participants with ample opportunity to play a vital role in the region's successful future development.

### *Amenities + Quality of Life*

Traditionally, the location decisions for development have been driven primarily by factors such as land costs, labor costs, and access to materials and markets. Today, however, location decisions are often driven by the need to succeed in this knowledge-based economy where people are the key to success.

Therefore, firms are seeking locations that will attract and retain a well-educated work force, and quality of life factors are increasingly important. Communities that offer cultural and recreational amenities have competitive advantages over those that do not. While the (West) Central Adirondacks offers a good quality of life, recreational amenities, and proximity to a larger metropolitan area with even greater assets, the region must give serious consideration to its shortcomings in commuting, year round employment, health care, and technology amenities. Higher prices and limited access to goods and services will cause (West) Central Adirondacks to lose population, become unattractive to new population, and increase discontent among those residents who have chosen to live within the community. Regarding quality of life issues, the most successful competitive communities provide an abundance of recreational and natural assets in the community. Outdoor recreation is an important factor impacting the location decisions of young professionals and can enhance the lives of all citizens. While this is strength for the region, it should continue to be treated with great emphasis in order to keep it as a top selling point.

#### **Quality of Life Strategy: Endorse the creation of a cross-county recreation strategy.**

A certain degree of political tension exists across county lines based on competitive funding structures and the boundaries used for the distribution of aid. However, the residents and businesses in the area see the region as a self-reliant and contiguous populace. A joint effort at a more localized level, between the towns within the region, would focus on the assessment of current recreational facilities and open spaces, the feasibility of future recreational growth opportunities, and projected recreation based business growth.

Arguably the region's most valuable quality of life feature is its open spaces. One solution in ensuring that the West Central Adirondack region maintains its treasured natural resources would be to develop a comprehensive Recreational and Open Spaces System. This effort would represent a joint effort that would be driven by each of the townships with support from County and State agencies. The system would collect and maintain a comprehensive database of the current recreational facilities and open spaces, gather input regarding future recreational growth opportunities, provide business ideas to entrepreneurs in the region and facilitate an overall recreation development strategy for the (West) Central Adirondacks, which would be comprised of county-by-county action items.

#### **Approaches & Actions:**

##### **Regional Cooperation**

- Compile the Parks and Recreation section of each Town's Master Plan to identify common goals to address as a region. Identify regional projects that could best be implemented through phased development and/or through designated responsibilities for each municipality and/or organization.
- Develop a regional system of recreation access, waterfront development, parks and trails including a natural amenities map or guide.



- CAP-21 and regional partners should begin to build buy-in and support of these initiatives from each of the three County Tourism & Visitor Convention Bureaus.
- Determine joint funding mechanisms that may include public/private partnerships. Establish annual cross-county audit meetings to ensure that each county is meeting any financial obligations.
- Develop a shared system to collect and share recreation, entertainment, and cultural data for each community that could be used for cross promotion. Data collection via GIS and MS Access.
  - An effort should be made to go to other neighboring communities in the region to learn about what is generally happening not just to go to specific events or meetings.
  - Better access to weather reports, tourist information, and local resources in the region by linking between webpages, blogs, conversation boards, municipal websites (digital towpath)
  - An inventory of the items the individual Towns, View and CAA can provide for pavilions, tents, chairs linens, china and AV equipment could be included in the shared system since Regional venues can easily hold small gatherings, but communities, organizations, and venues need to come together to organize large events. Items are usually rented / available from Big top, Winslow services, Woods Inn and hotels for small or catered events.
- Need to look at getting laundry and processing that are limited due to sewage and waste restrictions. The closest services available for laundry are in Warrensburg, Utica, Rome and Boonville.
- Joint printing and purchasing of promotional materials, four season guides and local booklets. Most design, marketing and printing is done in-house by individual towns (Inlet 50% and Webb up to 80%) and expensive 4 color printing is sent out through online services or Sun Mount.
- Since food comes in from outside the blue line (approx. 100 miles) coordination and inventory of food resources should address the lack of access, feeding programs, emergency services and the large food service industry in the region. The West Central region of the Adirondack Park has very few agricultural operations limiting local food production so most vendors come in for the farmers market and are considered local if food is grown in New York or neighboring states such as Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut, or Pennsylvania.
- Transportation within the region for residents and visitors should address the need for cabs, shuttles (buses), commuting (carpooling), senior transport that supports employment, appointments, and shopping.
  - Residents, hotel guests, and camp counselors would support more local bars and restaurants, if they can go out and enjoy then get home safe without getting a DWI. Especially during holidays like Fourth of July and New Year's Eve (school buses could be available during summer vacations and school breaks).
  - Barriers include finding a reliable driver, not enough clients to support the business, insurance coverage, the populations in need often can't afford transportation, and drivers don't like to drive intoxicated people around.
  - Max safe ride and the (SS Minnow?) no are both nonprofits raise money by fund raising events and, as needed on Friday and Saturday's. Some drivers under 21 will drive as a side job.

### **Accessibility and Affordability**

- Take advantage of the Thruway access to Western NY State, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, for many of these visitors using the Route 12/28 corridor the region is their first stop within the Adirondack Park.
  - Most visitors are drawn to the region to experience the environment, natural amenities, and scenic beauty, the region should maintain its position as a place for hiking, trails, historic sites, waterways, but once they are here the region needs to realize that economic opportunity by getting them to take part in part in local events and use local services.
  - Promote recreational resources to attract target audiences like dog owners, baby boomers, and young families. Encourage clustering amenities that appeal to target demographics – extend an individual invitation to experience the area with a local resident with similar interests.
    - Target an ecological niche market by using eco-tourism to raise awareness of environmentally friendly heating systems, green construction, alternative cooking oil systems, recycling practices, and local products that are used in the area. (example: toiletries and lodging kits from Boonville)
  - Need to minimize the competition by keeping guests local for activities that are similar to what is offered nearby like recreation, hiking, boating, shopping and restaurants focus on promoting your own in this region. Need to invest in raising the bar to get people that are already coming to the Adirondacks to stay here instead of high peaks.
  - Use interpretive centers / Kiosks for the (West) Central Adirondacks to promote education, culture, and history.

- Since telecommunications in the region are unpredictable using Wi-Fi and cell phone boosters in more populated areas, at tourist attractions and in the villages and hamlets would allow visitors to remain connected. Use signage, logos, or visual identifiers to direct people to locations with strong cellular service and available internet connections.
- Find ways for guests on extended visits (or to extend their visit) by using the (West) Central Adirondacks as a hub to access all Upstate NY has to offer. Know the best unique activities in the region and areas that are within a 2-3 hour drive like Utica, Syracuse, Cooperstown, Lake George, Glens Falls, Alex Bay and other upstate NY regions
  - Send guests out on day trips or tag on to special opportunities in neighboring regions including historic venues, SPAC, Stanley Theater, Baseball Hall of Fame, and Olympic venues; specifically the activities that this region doesn't have.
  - Identify iconic 'things to do in' the Adirondacks and sponsor events that are unique to the area. Something no one else does in Upstate NY (i.e. Welsh heritage in Remsen or fiddling in Osceola).
  - Need to offer a variety of experiences since weekenders want to do things and second homeowners want to relax and high-end experience.
  - Find or train more guides so the region could promote more custom experiences (i.e. paddling, fishing, birding, long hikes, cross-country skiing, horseback riding and ice fishing) since most urban guests are not comfortable going out alone. There could be opportunities for additional rental outlets for snowmobiles in Long Lake, bike rentals in Long Lake and Inlet to support outbound excursions.
- Infrastructure and skills need to support internet reservations; this is the preferred method of booking accommodations by visitors outside the region. Longtime local proprietors refuse to change, they still expect drive-by traffic to meet their needs, but as the online booking expands they will need to acknowledge that and embrace technology.
- The variety of types and styles of accommodations should be promoted and built on in the region to address the lack of high-quality hotels and accommodations. 100 standard rooms are needed in Inlet, more high-end rooms are needed in Blue Mountain Lake, cabins and multi-rooms are needed in Town of Webb. Old Forge has a camping resort, but the region needs 50 to 60 motorhome hookups on good sites with water and sewer.
  - Locals say the region doesn't need any more hotels, but the hotels are usually booked, with no vacancies. First-class accommodations are not always available (Mirror Lake Inn and the Point) and wealthy parents dropping kids off at summer camps want high-end accommodations.
  - Marketing should include promoting extended weekends since hospitality is now seeing more Tuesday guests. A two-night minimum is acceptable, but a three-night or full week/weekend minimums prohibit people from coming.
  - Peak times are winter or summer, but the spring and late fall should be seen as "value" seasons with similar recreation opportunities when cheaper rooms are available.
  - Provide information and marketing in places where the cost of living and expendable income are moderate to high to emphasize the affordability and value of the region so they feel like they got the most out of the trip.
  - People and families want to be next to each other on the same property and long wait for properties to open up looking for very specific place or subdivision



**Quality of Life Strategy: Support the revitalization of key downtown (hamlet) areas; addressing vacant / rundown buildings and facades.**

The potential exists for each county in the region to support one (in some cases more than one) vibrant, unique, and attractive downtown center. This will provide numerous benefits. First, it will act as a draw to encourage regional tourism and create regional brand identity. Second, it will improve the look and feel of the community and make each county more attractive to new relocating companies and skilled workers. Finally, it will give the residents in each community an added sense of community pride and act as an anchor help to retain young residents.

**Approaches & Actions:**

**Character**

The effort to enhance and revitalize downtown areas is already underway in most of the communities in the region. However, some communities are a little ahead of others in their progress. This presents an excellent opportunity to

increase the overall attractiveness of the (West) Central Adirondacks and enhance the quality of life through cross-collaboration and sharing best practices.

Downtown revitalization strategies must focus on targeting pivotal properties that will offer the greatest improvement, multi-property sections to leverage visual impact, and enhancement of the streetscape character through lighting, signage, sidewalks, and landscaping.

- Look at existing town development and building guidelines, to develop a regional development guide for building facades, lighting, signage etc., so all communities within the West Central Adirondack region are reflecting a similar Adirondack character and style of community downtown areas.



- Key downtowns in each of the communities (Otter Lake, Old Forge, Inlet, Eagle Bay, Racquet Lake, Indian Lake, and Long Lake) should create and execute a revitalization plan that captures the unique qualities of each village/hamlet while connecting the identity of the region.
  - Hold quarterly meetings between planning boards from each of the towns and villages to share best practices and learn from each other. Present regular progress updates to create a healthy competitiveness and to ensure that all communities are staying on track
  - Explore incentive options for downtown infill including tax incentives, public funding, low interest loans, Public/Private partnerships, fundraising, CDBG grant awards, etc.
- Work to create downtown “destinations” that appeal to the entire community including downtown public gathering and recreational spaces
  - Enhance and enlarged public squares for events, festivals, and farmers markets. Provide public/private gathering spaces so coffee shops, bookstores, and food venues can offer outdoor seating or sidewalk dining.

### Vacant store fronts

Create “Destination Retail and Entertainment” centers in downtown areas that include restaurants and shopping venues to enhance tourism and economic development opportunities. More will need to be done to build the quality of life infrastructure needed to appease current residents and appeal to new ones.

- Consider developing a regional strategy that would allow for collaboration to attract retailers, rather than competing. Identify or clarify new targets for retail and other “home grown” business.
- Consider tax revenue sharing agreements between towns for retail and small business developments that serve a regional population base. Provide incentives and/or fast track permitting for downtown projects that meet the region’s “vision” or businesses that meet guidelines and façade plans.
  - Towns should be working on business attraction with IDAs particularly for vacant properties.
  - Continue determining specific locations within each county’s downtown area(s) that would be excellent sites for retail and entertainment activity. Then develop high quality, specifically designed electronic or printed materials to promote the region’s available properties to selected retailers and development companies to attract new targets.
  - Encourage live-work-play developments in appropriate downtowns that will act as a draw for working young professionals.
- Target specific retail opportunities to fill regional gaps (a grocery store in Indian Lake) when possible the adaptive-reuse of existing building should be encouraged for complementary uses. Adaptive reuses for the former Old Forge Arts center as a senior community center.
- Provide technical assistance, regional design standards, and façade guideline to property owners to direct Main Street improvements and provided suggestions to businesses to make them more welcoming to visitors.
- Work with property owners to use the vacant buildings to promote area events, “window dressing” to ‘fill’ all the windows in the community to promote events, history, civic organizations etc.
  - Embrace the development of Adirondack heritage in appropriate downtowns, and explore other opportunities to capture each community’s uniqueness throughout the region.
- Earmark a certain percentage of all capital improvement projects for public improvements downtown. NYS Real Property Law, exemptions for \$10,000 investment in new buildings, but most towns opt out.

## Activities

Downtown development plans should aim to expand the diversity of offerings in the area like vibrant night-life amenities, events, festivals, outdoor concerts. More diverse offerings should be available that appeal to a variety of age groups with a variety and diverse menu of cultural options. These offerings should also aim at attracting new sets of visitors to the region who are not already coming to the area and an expanded group of local community members.

- Develop a survey to determine what types of activities might most interest the community and prepare an annual plan to offer a variety of events that appeal to diverse groups of people.
  - Work with local artists to develop a public art plan include events like First Fridays Old Forge Art Walk or art work on display at local businesses (that aren't galleries) where people can view and purchase the pieces.
- Strengthening local businesses by tying events, marketing efforts and strategies to include buying local. It is tough to buy locally since shelves are stocked with visitor items that are marketed to tourists. This drives the prices up so buying by local residents is forced outside the area.
  - Local/area coupons, 'frequent buyers' cards or local resident discount with their driver's license. Enchanted Forest Local Days draws both local and non-locals portion of admission goes for scholarships for the local school, introduces people to Water Safari.
  - Coordinate a regional "Holiday Time" that offers a Guys Night, personal shoppers and free gift wrap schedule for the same week/day. Connect with a bus tour and/or Scenic Railroad.
- Review of local procurement policy by government departments and agencies, encourage that they purchase a % of their supplies needed locally first over other sources. Procurement policy checklist to evaluate bids for supplies.

## Best Practices & Resources:

- National Trust Main Street Program  
<http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/>
- NY Main Street Program  
<http://www.nyshcr.org/Programs/NYMainStreet/>
- Herkimer Now Main Street Revitalization  
<http://www.herkimernow.com/>
- Dryden, NY Design Guidelines  
<http://dryden.ny.us/departments/planning-department/planning/design-guidelines>
- Route 28 Corridor Revitalization Plan LWRP  
<http://offices.colgate.edu/bselleck/ENST%20480/Files%20for%20Riverstreet/Landuse%20final.pdf>
- BALLE ([www.livingeconomies.org](http://www.livingeconomies.org)); Sustainable Connections (Think Local First)  
<http://www.livingeconomies.org>
- Empire Passport – state park discount Program  
<http://nysparks.com/admission/empire-passport/>



## Quality of Life Strategy: Provide diverse housing options that are affordable and attractive to young professionals, year-round workers, seasonal workers, seniors, and those relocating to the area.

The affordability of housing remains the biggest challenge to the region's quality of life. Ideally there should be regional collaboration to secure funding in these housing types. Inflated housing costs are being driven by the seasonal and second home market makes it hard for local residents to carry mortgage. Year round workers in particular are being priced out of the towns and communities where they are employed; forcing them out of the area and prohibiting young professional from returning to the region. There is a need for more diverse and affordable housing options; specifically those that provide opportunities to workers, young professionals and/or seniors.

Research consistently shows that developing affordable housing creates jobs; both during construction and through new consumer spending after the homes have been occupied. The impacts of building certain kinds of affordable rental housing are on par with the impacts of comparable market-rate units. Input/output models measure economic activity that includes not only the direct spending of the construction itself, indirect effects of spending by suppliers and builder's wages in the local economy, and the taxes that can be expected to flow to various levels of government.

With the demand for household goods and services, ongoing economic activities would increase employment in wholesale/retail trade, health services, education, and food establishments.

100 Housing Units	Family Low-Income Housing	Senior Low-income Housing	Market-Rate Apartments
Jobs Created Directly and Indirectly by New Construction	80	75	80
Jobs Supported by Spending Locally Earned Wages (Induced)	42	39	42
Jobs Supported by Households Occupying New Homes (Ongoing)	30	32	32

Source: National Association of Home Builders, 2010 and 2009a

Housing seasonal student workers and interns has also proven to be a challenge for the region. Most businesses offer very modest pay because they need to take into account the cost of providing housing to their employees.

The Adirondack Arts Center, Adirondack Museum and VIEW Arts Center can provide adequate housing and have seen students interns return for multiple seasons. Blue Mountain Lake also has provided housing in the past for other entities (Voting stewards and TEC Tower employees) that were unable to find housing for their staff. Hedges have provided housing to put up international students during peak season and Enchanted Forest built housing for their summer staff that they rent out in the winter to snowmobilers.

The Adirondack Council ([www.adirondackcouncil.org](http://www.adirondackcouncil.org)) Common Ground Alliance identified actions around workforce and community housing in its report the "Blueprint for the Blue Line" February 2008 included the following suggested action related to the SET strategies and actions:

*"Create long-term support for the Adirondack Community Housing Trust to establish "forever affordable" year-round housing in the Adirondacks"*

*"Explore local Adirondack systems to construct affordable housing using in-Park material and workforce."*

The "Guiding the Boat" document was finalized for Indian Lake in 2011. One of the objectives identified was to look at property purchasing patterns in the area. The full report is available at (<http://indianlake.files.wordpress.com>)

In 2012, the "West Central Adirondacks (WCA) Housing Needs Assessment" was completed. Copies of the complete report are available through CAP- 21 (<http://cap-21.org/>). There are seven goals outlined in the assessment; listed below are selected actions that are relevant when looking at the economic development strategies in this plan:

*"1.1 Review current land-use regulations and building codes in the town and revise, if necessary, to allow for mixed-use opportunities in the Hamlet centers."*

*"2.1 Install new public water and sewer and extend public water and sewer systems and appropriate areas to encourage new affordable housing development and commercial development"*

*"3.2 Investigate feasibility to develop seasonal worker housing"*

*"3.7 Encourage major employers to provide homeownership assistance. This can include but is not limited to low-interest financing down payment subsidies or closing cost assistance to employees who purchase homes in the targeted areas"*

*"4.3 Assess the feasibility of developing an assisted living facility for seniors"*

*"4.6 Identify types of services that are needed to allow seniors to age in place and work for organizations such as the County office for the aging to assist with senior needs"*

*"7.1 Encourage the development of small businesses / new job opportunities in the towns"*

## Approaches & Actions:

### Workforce Housing

- Work more closely with Adirondack Housing Trust to provide apartments that are efficiency apartments (not dorm style) and that focus on price of investment, ecological footprint, cost of living, quality of life.
- Use a non-profit to set up a workforce housing program where housing is offered to an income qualified buyer at a formula price that gives owners a fair return on their investment, while keeping the homes affordable for future buyers.
  - Low cost housing for younger people working in the area; rentals that are designated for rented year-round and not rented seasonally (rentals specifically for people who are living and working in the area).
  - Affordable single family houses for local professionals and service workers. This type of housing would also support young professionals that want to start families, participation in regional events, and enrollment in local schools.
  - Embrace the "Shotgun", "Tiny" or "Not so big House" trends that could provide affordable homes the residents could buy or rent.

- To encourage the development of a mix of housing, the region should promote the use of Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreements or Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts, which have been useful for incentivizing developers to build affordable, higher density, or senior housing in the region.
  - Provide incentives to companies that create affordable housing for each job created. Many companies understand the limitation that is caused by unaffordable workforce housing and recognize the benefit to their business.
  - Consider establishing requirements to set aside a percentage of new residential developments for affordable housing for public service workers such as teachers, nurses, and police/fire.
- Work with Town Planning Boards or private developers to determine the feasibility of building small scale houses, high density housing, and mixed-use development attractive to young professionals in key areas in the region.
- An income survey may be required to determine the actual amount that local workers earn over the course of the year with multiple jobs and what they can afford to pay for housing. The available data regarding income and housing costs may be skewed by seasonal residents and may not distinguish between permanent housing and second homes. May be able to get property class by different housing types: number of 2nd homes from assessors or housing classification via GIS.

### **Senior Housing, senior care and assisted-living**

The (West) Central Adirondacks has one of the highest percentages of elderly in New York State and needs housing to meet the needs of its growing elderly population. Senior citizens are most affected by rising housing costs because of their fixed income, it's imperative that the region provide affordable housing solutions to this growing segment of the population.

Support services for this group can provide well-paying jobs that fill a need in the community. Having local senior related services where people could have independent living, move into assisted living then full service nursing care would allow these individuals and their families remain in the community. Services could include skilled nursing care, home health aides and rehabilitation services for "recovery" from serious illnesses.

Senior type facilities and housing could employ financial management, service providers, or other persons who would support residents including administrators, accountants, facility workers, service managers or case planners, therapists, licensed nurses, personal care staff - assistants, aides and technicians.

For the local businesses in the region, the construction of 100 independent living senior units could mean creating approximately 30 jobs in response to new consumer demand.

- Work to provide senior housing that targets those 62 years or older earning less than 50 percent of the area's median income and preferably located in areas that are within walking distance or have access to retail shopping, support services, and health-related businesses.
  - In addition to senior housing, assisted living facilities should be constructed that seniors can transition into as needed.
  - Provide incentives like Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreements to developers that construct senior housing.
- The need for senior care services will increase as the population ages and there will be economic development opportunities surround for seniors and their families that need to care and want to remain in the region
  - Facilities including, but not limited to nursing homes, physical rehabilitation centers, independent living and assisted living should be constructed so seniors can remain close to their families and community.
  - Create a common resource to connect for those individual caregivers that offer in home senior or personal care and seniors that would like to remain in their homes or age in place.
  - Similar services and needs exist for individuals with disabilities in the region. Construction of residential group housing, day habilitation centers or a joint facility that includes a senior day or memory care program should be considered.

### **'Green' Building**

Green is more than just an environmentally friendly way of building; it can be an economic engine that strives to balance environmental, economic and social factors. Green projects and innovative green-building techniques benefit the regional economy by sourcing a high percentage of building materials locally.

By using materials that minimize life-cycle costs, lower utility bills and increase energy savings reduce the need for residents to have to choose between heat or electricity and other basic necessities. Proximity to area services

reduces transportation costs, provides better access to local jobs, and allows residents greater interaction with their community. These factors allow residents to spend more of their income in the community.

Given the importance of the environment on the region's economy having eco-friendly construction contribute to climate change solutions, conservation of natural resources, improved water, quality, better energy efficiency, and reduction of pollution and sprawl of vacation homes.

- Develop a niche eco-market by promoting the small footprint, low impact construction that APA supports, but with very high end building materials that are attractive to the second home audience that want to be in the region.
- Capitalize on opportunities for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified structures, NYSERDA, environmentally conscious building and development that could be a model for the region, state etc.
- Incorporate the sustainability principles and goals identified in the regional cleaner greener sustainability plans.



### Best Practices & Resources:

- Comlinks Housing Services in the Northern New York  
<http://www.comlinkscaa.org>
- USDA Housing and Community Facilities Program  
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/>
- HUD Rural Housing and Economic Development (RHED)  
[www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/economicdevelopment/programs/rhed/Cached](http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/economicdevelopment/programs/rhed/Cached)
- Center for Housing Policy Report  
<http://www.nhc.org/media/files/Housing-and-Economic-Development-Report-2011.pdf>
- IMPLAN (Impact Analysis and PLANning) multiplier calculator  
<http://implan.com>
- US Green Building Council / LEED Certification  
<https://www.leedonline.com>
- NYSERDA Cleaner Greener Communities Program  
<http://www.nyserda.ny.gov/Cleaner-Greener>
- Calistoga Ranch high end eco-construction in Napa Valley  
<http://www.calistogaranch.com/>

### Quality of Life Strategy: Stabilize and reverse the loss of population in the Central Adirondack Region by attracting key populations / demographic groups (e.g., younger population, families, and 'creative crunchies')

It has been recognized that West Central Adirondack region is losing population. Unfortunately, much of the population loss is among younger, educated and higher paid individuals that are leaving and taking their paychecks with them. The region will need to come together to try to reclaim the population they are losing and attract specific demographics that can support the local economy.

The way of life in the region can be wearing. Gas prices here are always \$.10-\$.15 higher than those outside the region, even with a once a week discount. In order to reduce the cost of living multi-tasked trips to more urban areas for shopping and services are common. People in the region are accustomed to traveling an hour or more on a regular basis, many drive to Utica daily. Workers will travel 60-90 miles to get to work or to take advantage of better employment opportunities.

### Approaches & Actions:

- Hamilton County has a very small population this paired with its high population decline across all age groups has led some to wonder if the County will be dissolved/consolidated by 2020. In general Hamilton County information is more similar to the West Central Adirondack Region than the county wide data for Herkimer and Oneida which include more urban populations.
- There are some Shared Services Agreements in place for Social Services among Counties, but there are areas/services where a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) could be used to allow non-residents access to the closest service location, even if it's in a neighboring municipality or services by a different government entity. A centrally located multi-county office could also support localized service for residents.

- Organize a community volunteer pool to help meet the needs in the community that could utilize the underemployed, retirees and civically minded members of the community as a resource for volunteering.
  - Identify community service and stewardship programs so people can get involved and identify an agency to manage the volunteers for specific projects like grooming snowmobile trails, repair lean-tos, rebuild boat launches, blood drive, etc.



- Contact youth groups to come and do projects in and around town (paint benches, etc.), with the goal that they will connect with the place and possibly want to live here year round.
  - Church groups have volunteer based services for members of the community in need. A list could be shared with the groups coming into the area, and they can contact organizations who need the man power.
  - Work with AmeriCorps or other agencies to coordinate the efforts being done in the communities.
- Market the assets of the region to attract families, the creative class, and groups that have common interests that are compatible with what the region has to offer.

- Develop a plan to attract 50 new families with kids that can support the regional economy without being a burden to services and schools; staying within the current scope and scale of the community. The objective is to even out the age distribution of the local population.
  - This should also address the need to keep class enrollment up and the school districts open. Schools in these rural areas play a vital role for vital community education, youth services and civic engagement.
- Attract the creative class and groups of families with a like mindset. “Creative Crunchies” is term that local organizations in the (West) Central Adirondacks use to describe individuals in the creative class that highly value the natural environment or are driven by an ecological sensibly. This target market is very compatible with the amenities the region has to offer. Many qualities that this group is attracted to are similar to the needs and desires of the young professionals (See Workforce & Education).
- Early Childhood Opportunities (Full Time – Year Round) Daycare / Child care will need to be addressed in order for young professionals and parents to be employed in the region. Look at building resources or facilities to address the community need including a role for Grandparents to participate in care giving. Single moms are in-home caregivers.
- Online learning should be coordinated to support local secondary education, promote higher education or vocational training that enhances the regional workforce.

### Best Practices & Resources:

- Brain drain 1: New York tries to cling to young professionals  
<http://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/story/17417/20110405/brain-drain-1-new-york-tries-to-cling-to-young-professionals>
- Upstate New York at a Glance  
[http://www.newyorkfed.org/research/regional\\_economy/glance/upstate\\_glance1\\_07.pdf](http://www.newyorkfed.org/research/regional_economy/glance/upstate_glance1_07.pdf)
- Appalachian Regional Commission - General & Tourism Data  
[www.arc.gov](http://www.arc.gov)

### Quality of Life Strategy: To provide basic health & care needs of the community to support economic prosperity

Health care is critical for a thriving community. The remote location, low salaries and high cost of living have contributed to the regions difficulty retaining physicians that provide consistent care. Primary and urgent care is necessary to support local residents and the extensive number of visitors that come to the region.

The medical clinic in Old Forge is usually staffed with 2 physicians, but they are both leaving by the end of the year. The town council is looking to contract with one of the large medical facilities in the Mohawk Valley to provide physicians to cover primary care. Nurses & clerical staff are town employees and the facilities are owned and maintained by the Town of Webb.

The Adirondack Council ([www.adirondackcouncil.org](http://www.adirondackcouncil.org)) Common Ground Alliance has identified similar economic barriers and actions facing primary healthcare in its report the “Blueprint for the Blue Line” February 2008:

*“Should the system collapse, there is no other option for health care and the outmigration of year-round residents will escalate.”*

*“Create a State pilot program that emphasizes cost-based reimbursement in rural areas to preserve access to primary health care.”*

### **Approaches & Actions:**

- Bring affordable, accessible health programs, urgent care and medical facilities to the region. Take advantage of telemedicine at local facilities to access to specialty care. By using video conferencing and electronic access to medical and blood tests patients can be “seen” by a specialist for analysis and consultation.
- Connect medical facilities that offer temporary positions and professionals that are nearing the end of their careers with transition planning, allowing young professionals to enter the practice to learn about the business before the doctor/dentist position becomes vacant.
- Work with the refugee center in Utica to find international doctors that need employment to meet citizenship criteria. This could be a very effective incentive to get doctors to the area.
- Find ways or connect with programs to offer incentives like loan forgiveness, affordable housing and other benefits to offset lower wages.
- To provide long term jobs for residents that want to stay in the area offer job training in health fields, Use a time commitment working in areas of need in exchange for offsetting/forgiving the cost of the training or as a requirement for acceptance into the program.
- Work with colleges, universities and AmeriCorps to develop an intern or rotation placement program for medical students at local facilities.

### **Best Practices & Resources:**

- Telemedicine Funding - Elizabethtown hospital received a grant for telemedicine through USDA  
[http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/utp\\_dlt.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/utp_dlt.html)
- Herkimer Community Health Assessment –health, lifestyle, nutrition  
<http://www.herkimercounty.org/content/Generic/View/39:field=documents;/content/Documents/File/1593.pdf>
- Cornell Assisted Living Industry Guide  
<http://guides.library.cornell.edu/assistedliving>
- New York State Association for Rural Health  
[www.nysarh.org/ruralhealthresources.htm](http://www.nysarh.org/ruralhealthresources.htm)
- AmeriCorps: Rural Health Service Corps  
<https://sites.google.com/a/rhnsny.org/ameriCorps-rhsc/>

## *Sites & Infrastructure*

Land, buildings, and infrastructure are the basic facilities needed to support any type of development and community, therefore, vital to economic growth. Communities that cannot provide adequate infrastructure for business expansion or relocation will not be able to recruit and retain businesses.

Today, many are increasingly looking past “basic” infrastructure and toward regions that can provide an infrastructure where innovation thrives. Businesses and entrepreneurs look at strong telecommunications and wireless communications infrastructure. The presence of business incubators and business support networks are now having a much stronger emphasis in location decisions. To be a competitive community of the future, the (West) Central Adirondacks should aim to excel in these select areas.

Make the (West) Central Adirondacks a competitive location for use of new technologies and knowledge-based economy.

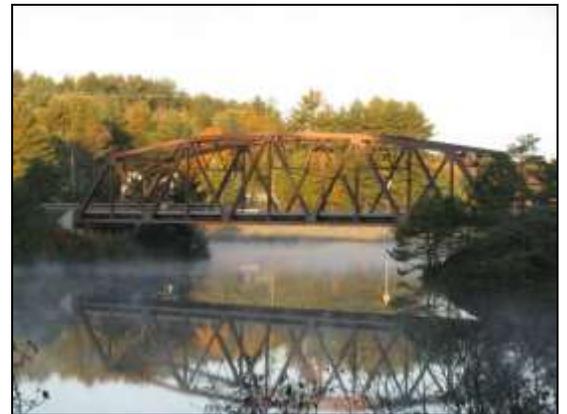
### **Infrastructure Strategy: Provide the infrastructure needed to attract and retain companies and a workforce.**

Although the (West) Central Adirondacks has transportation access through the Route 28 corridor, the restrictions within the Adirondack Park boundaries may limit suitable sites for target industries and may hold the region back from attracting the types of companies that it wants to drive future growth. It is also critical that existing sites be “shovel ready” for immediate development by a prospective company by being hooked into utilities, has required telecommunications infrastructure, has access to transportation routes and is zoned appropriately.

### **Approaches & Actions:**

#### **Locations, Buildings, and Sites**

- Regional partners should compile an inventory of significant vacant parcels and potential sites that might be used for a business location and to help “fill in any gaps” that may exist in the region’s current site and building offerings. APA regulations limit the space available for siting new development, therefore small companies may be better served to be sited in existing buildings or previously developed locations.
  - Note the parcel size, structures, and how the parcel is zoned.
  - Determine whether the site is capable of being connected to basic infrastructure, including water, sewer, electricity, telecommunications, and any other basic services.
    - If a site cannot readily be connected to basic infrastructure, then provide information about service providers in the area that can hook up services.
  - Make local Economic Development Corporations and County Industrial Development Agencies aware of the inventory of sites and promote using each regional EDC/IDA websites.
- Allow zoning for multi-use or mixed use building in the hamlets that allow for business and housing to occupy the same structure (work–live space or upper level housing in commercial buildings); takes advantage of complimentary parking availability for downtown areas.
- Look for opportunities and space at existing locations to foster business development that could utilize office space, conference rooms, meeting spaces based on a fee for service schedule. Business incubators or business/office hub locations could have telecommunication equipment and infrastructure to support business development or training.
- Improve (develop) facilities with upgraded technology infrastructure and install other amenities to create a better communication capabilities
- Electrical outages are common and the lack of built-in duplication causes numerous / severe disruptions. In order to operate during power outages many businesses have generators. Local companies are being approached and asked to run their generators to be a back-up to the system. The lack of consistent electrical service could provide opportunities for electricity generation through solar, wind, water.
- Build capacity (space) for light manufacturing and product assembly.



#### **Public Utilities**

Water and sewer utilities will be a significant problem for all West Central Adirondack communities in the future. Most communities that have not already built good functioning sewer systems will be mandated to meet DEC regulations and Orders of Consent in the future with limited funding to address system construction. Blue Mountain Lake Town

Board is working to address the lack of sewers and the need for a new water system. USDA Pre-planning grants are available for preliminary engineering reports for water and sewer systems.

Utility Services should support Hamlet areas, commercial improvements, affordable housing, laundry service and to expand processing. Cost of this infrastructure that benefits the (West) Central Adirondacks could be shared throughout the region by using debt service models.

- Determine locations where basic infrastructure including water, sewer, and stormwater system can be expanded to accommodate development of business and industry, then zone and market these areas appropriately to attract new industry. Prepare information about providers that service these sites.
- New businesses are limited by the lack of capacity at this time. Work with the Common Ground Alliance, Adirondack Park Agency, Department of Health and local municipalities to pursue opportunities as a test site or pilot program for alternative technology for processing waste water and sewage; that includes small-scale on-site or composting systems that would meet the user's needs.

### **Roads, Railways, and Transportation**

Limited transportation funds are often allocated to other parts of New York State with a greater number of permanent residents. Transportation infrastructure is critical to support the tourism industry and economic development opportunities throughout the region.

Multi-modal connections and transfer points linking air, rail, bus, and vehicle transportation must be examined to strengthen regional access and to create community connections for visitors and the workforce.

- Attend HOTCCP meetings to open dialogue with DOT regarding upcoming project and programs that will improve transportation infrastructure and road conditions for the region.
  - Coordinate DOT improvements to look for parallel installations including pathways, bikeways, access points, trail ways, and sidewalks. The West Central Adirondack towns are within the same DOT region.
  - Install or upgrade utility Infrastructure in conjunction with DOT projects to repair the roads.
- Transportation services are needed such as taxicabs, buses, and shuttles to go out and enjoy regional entertainment then get home safe without DWI. Encounters with law enforcement deter people from going out or visitors from returning to the region.
- Upgraded rail service for tourists, excursions and freight. Expand trails to connect railroads / tourist trains.



### **Technology Infrastructure**

The map of Basic Broadband Adoption 2009 is not representative of actual conditions, 90% of region doesn't actually have coverage and the service, when available, may not be reliable or good quality.

Inadequate advanced telecommunications in the region severely limits the ability to attract businesses to the (West) Central Adirondacks. Much of the necessary equipment (for example: cell towers over 40' high) is regulated/restricted by the Adirondack Park Agency (APA). The lack broadband, consistent cellular coverage, data connections, and wireless service restricts the region's ability to be competitive in an age where online sales, reservation and electronic payments are required; affecting day to day operations. Telecommuting opportunities would be possible if the infrastructure could support it. Visitors and guest also have high expectations regarding their ability to remain connected while away from home. Cell service, high-speed internet and Wi-Fi used by personal devices are now considered a basic amenity.

- There is an immediate need to raise awareness at the state and federal level that cellular and broadband technology is critical to this region's economy. The current technology may not be practical based on the rugged terrain of the region so new advanced wireless or satellite technologies should be researched. This region wants to embrace cutting edge innovation and should welcome the opportunity to be a pilot site.
- Work with Common Ground Alliance and Development Association of the North Country (DANC) to coordinate communication technology for areas of the West Central Adirondack region that are outside the Adirondack Park Blue Line to pursue joint funding, inventory current providers, build capacity, provide education and training, and expand wholesale or municipal carriers.

- Look to provide server space or regional technology services as a niche for this area. A location to collect old technology for recycling may also be possible. The small footprint, low impact aligns with the requirement by the Adirondack Park Agency (APA).
- Identify the facilities throughout the region that have T lines (T1 is single uplink; T3 is better with multiple uplinks) that can serve as connection hubs for the community. T1/T3 lines at schools, libraries, and town offices; consider internet transmitters (Wi-Fi) and cell phone boosters to expand or feed service out in a hub & spoke manner.
- Use markers and signage to indicate Wi-Fi hot spots and location with strong cell coverage to people in the region. Create a logo that is easily recognizable in the area then promote these venues
- Due to system overload during severe weather events and emergencies there needs to be an alternative to cellular communication called out in Town emergency plans.
- Steps should be taken to interconnect neighboring Broadband systems. Improvements to the Broadband network have been made in Hamilton County and Northern Oneida County; look to connect the areas of Herkimer County that are located in between.
- Pursue funding from USDA including loans only for technology, loan/grant funds for feasibility and planning, loan/grant funds for distance learning.



### **Best Practices & Resources:**

- NYSERDA alternative energy  
<http://www.nyserda.ny.gov/>
- Forever Wired – Clarkson  
<http://www.clarkson.edu/ADK/>
- USDA Rural Utilities Program  
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/RUStelecomprograms.html>

## *Workforce & Education*

Workforce development and education should be a primary cornerstone of any economic development initiative. The workforce (labor availability, costs, productivity) has become a much more critical factor in site selection decisions over the past few years as today's jobs demand more skills and education.

Since human capital and innovation are keys to success in the new economy, skilled, flexible workers are primary assets. No community can be competitive without an educated workforce. Without focus on a seamless system between workforce providers, educators, and business leaders, the (West) Central Adirondacks could lose ground in its ability to attract quality companies, retain a strong existing industry base, and maintain a supply of available, quality workers.

Innovative thinking, increased collaboration, and more integrated processes and systems within workforce and economic development are now required to position each of the communities in the region competitively for future growth and prosperity.

### **Workforce and Education Strategy: Expand efforts to attract young professionals and retain staff to building a robust workforce and strengthen economic development efforts.**

The low percentage of young professionals (those ages was demonstrated in the 2010 Census Demographic Profile Data for the region. This is a significant challenge for the region as these young professionals represent the early stage workforce that is critical to a region's economic vitality. Increasingly, companies making expansion or location decisions base their choice on the availability of this age demographic.

The efforts of the region to attract and retain the coveted demographic of young professionals should be expanded. It is recommended that a focused effort be undertaken to specifically make the region a more desirable place for young professionals. A younger, talented workforce will make the region more competitive for attracting, retaining, and growing target industry companies.

- Better housing and technology needs to be a priority in order to entice more young people and businesses to relocate to this area. (*See quality of life and infrastructure sections*)

### **Approaches & Actions:**

#### **Young Professionals**

One of the significant attractions for young professionals is a location specifically geared to their desires and needs. Young professionals are more likely than other age groups to prefer living near other things that attract them – in locations that require a minimal commute to get to work and that are close to entertainment options, restaurants, night spots, and other amenities. To begin to attract and retain young professionals, it is important to expose them to the amenities offered in the region.

- Offer ways to reduce and/or share cost of living for single young professionals.
  - Use Craig's list or a similar type forum to connect young professionals in the area with roommates, carpooling, and bulk purchasing.
- Change the perception from being forced to move home "you came back because you failed in real world" to choosing to move home "you moved back because this is where you want to be".
  - Ask young people that enjoy living in the area to promote the region's benefits to friends by sharing stories of how this region compares to their experiences in other places and how their contributions here have a greater impact.
  - Provide a "reality checklist" so young professionals can assess the value of coming to and/or moving back to the region.
  - Encourage retirees, specifically those that have relocated to the region, expose younger members of their family to local attractions and assets.
- Need to provide more good jobs and more opportunities for upward mobility using the talent and skills that youth & educated have acquired. Ideally, so they can stay in the region until retirement.
  - Post job openings in geographic areas with strong young professional populations to attract the best prospective employees. When quality full-time positions are announced within the region the pool of applicants is often not as qualified as the employer expects.



- Market job opportunities to young people who have relocated to other places specifically the alumni of the local school system. Create or use a Facebook page for local graduates to advertise job opportunities. Host an annual alumni event that has a day of events and evening banquet to bring alumni back to the community.
- Acknowledge the challenges of the shoulder season for young people and identify the types of people/industries that those challenges would appeal to.
- Make it easier to find social events and cultural opportunities with people of a similar age and family commitments.
  - Promote centralized location to recreation, sports, events, entertainment, bars and restaurants including larger venues in neighboring regions within a 1-2 hour drive.
  - Deliver information in locations and formats that a younger demographic prefers like the flyers, take away cards, QR tags, internet, twitter, and social media.
  - Ask local businesses to support “interest” events such as a group activities, specialized outdoor recreation, dining clubs, wine tasting or beer making particularly during the off season.
- Using social media to reconnect with people who grew up in the region or are currently living here
- Identify activities and events that young professionals experienced elsewhere and start those in the region.



### **Professional Network**

- Support the formation of a Working Professionals Group or planned social events will allow individuals to connect, share ideas, learn from one another, establish business and client relationships, and advance in their careers.
  - Have a “special topic” breakfast or mixer and invite local business leaders, potential mentors, young professionals, entrepreneurs, investors, and others to speak. Special topics may include entrepreneur success stories, startup ideas, business tips, local resources, etc.
  - Have various organizations in the region offer the Working Professionals Group use of meeting space and occasions for joint marketing.
- Empower young professions to become involved in local activities and serve on committees and boards that have a significant say in the direction the region is heading. By opening up the doors to positions of leadership, young professionals will feel stronger roots in the region will be less likely to leave.
  - Recruit young professionals to sit on the board of commerce, business, civic, or cultural organization and/or committees within those type organizations.
  - Young professionals should be tasked with taking the charge in implementing many of these recommendations or volunteering their time in other community improvement activities.
  - Meet with other successful Professional Groups to determine how to develop best practices.

### **Student Workers**

Many students are employed as part of the seasonal and part-time workforce. The tourism industry and family businesses rely on this workforce segment during peak recreation seasons. Students in our region are often exposed to international visitors or people from different ethnic backgrounds and are more cosmopolitan than adults give them credit for. Assistance should be provided for this segment of the workforce.

Local students are over committed; involved in school, events, sports, and numerous activities which can cause conflicts with shifts that local employers are trying to fill or with school wide events such as prom, graduation, etc. limiting the staff that is available to work. Many local students with the best skillsets work at their family’s business and they don’t often have time for another job. Students with specific interests may travel outside this area to gain desired experience or skills. Fewer summer homeowners are having their children work at local businesses during school vacations.

International students are often preferred since they can be employed the entire season, but they require housing. The college academic calendar keeps moving forward into July forcing American students return to college / school before Labor Day.

- There is a need to be more realistic and flexible about time commitments of students based on school activities and Town-wide events. The pool of workers should be expanded to overcome issues regarding the limited number of students available for an extended timeframe or during specific times.
  - Create a work ethic training course for students and youth coming into the workforce so employer expectations can be met. Student workers need to learn and better understand the obligations and commitments of holding a job.
  - A portion of the workforce is filled by residents and students from lower income levels that hold multiple jobs or travel into the region for employment from surrounding areas and provide a fixed schedule to meet numerous commitments. Setting up a benefits cooperative to allow small business to contribute together to offer insurance, retirement, and paid leave to individuals working for them. Each business would only need to cover a portion of one individual's benefits.
- Internships can provide short-term staffing with good effort and enthusiasm, but it has been difficult to translate a six-week internship timeframe into a multiple year experience or for interns to be hired on as a full-time employee.
  - Specifically contact previous interns when job opportunities are advertised.

### **Workforce and Business Training**

Residents often need to have multiple jobs to survive and /or need to keep both people in a two income household employed to make ends meet. Employees are locked into the position they currently hold with no upward mobility. Opportunities are limited so they operating in survival mode from paycheck to paycheck. When advanced training is provided, employees often look for better opportunities outside the region and if available they will often leave within a year.

Businesses are forced to employ seasonal employees year round in order to keep qualified staff. Businesses are losing experienced people because salary or payroll costs become too high. The region is not keeping up with the salary offered in other areas.

In the past, sessions did not get enough response and/or interest to offer certain courses or multiple sessions. There is a culture of self-reliance and resistance to change here that will need to see the specific benefits or outcomes of using/attending a program.

- Form a Business and Education Council comprised of CAP-21, CAA, workforce development agencies, business leaders, human resource professionals, community colleges and BOCES to establish a stronger connection between education and career opportunities in the region.



- Discuss the types of workforces programs that are needed, address any changes that should be made in current programs, the delivery of programs relevant to target industries, and the role each can play in the workforce preparedness efforts.
  - Develop an awareness campaign to inform employers and potential workers of workforce development programs created or offered.
  - Provide outreach to increase knowledge about economic development efforts for local municipal, school and non-profit boards.
- Work with Adirondack Economic Development Corporation (AEDC), Empire State Development (ESD), and Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to help fund or provide education sessions, entrepreneurial courses, economic development training, distance learning classes, and transition planning that will build professional development skills for regional economic sustainability
    - Encourage young people to stay in the area by taking over the family business. Offer succession planning for existing businesses so they can move to the next generation.
    - Help new business make changes to business and staffing without upsetting locals to avoid getting bad word-of-mouth.
  - New business owner start out energetic, but fall behind with business practices because there is limited access to workshops and training that address new methods and trends. Training should be developed that allows existing business owners and workers to retool more often and build their skills.

- Help small business owners “work smarter not harder” through use of technology and collaboration
- Provide social media training for businesses and communities to encourage the increased use of this media to help capitalize on opportunities.

### Target Industries

- Tourism, hospitality and recreation are the center of the current economy; additional training would allow the region to become a premiere destination known for its outstanding hospitality skills, excellent concierge services and countless guided excursions.
  - Use ambassador programs, familiarity tours and in-service training to bring hospitality skills to all staff levels. Service providers, front of house staff, back of house staff and owners should all be in attendance. Ambassador program should share the ‘best things about’ other businesses so others can share the best things about your business with visitors.
  - Compile a supplementary ambassador guide for front end staff. The guide would include a basic description of the local business, a list of the services they offer, and 3-5 quotes from local residents and organizations recommending that business. In addition, coupons or room card keys could be used to offer discounts at the businesses that a concierge or front end staff recommends to guests or patrons.
  - Sessions on conflict resolution to address tension between visitor personalities, tourist demands and front end employees should be held to reduce unpleasant encounters and public spectacles.
  - Gap analysis should be used to identify industries where skills can translate into “Off Season” Job Opportunities
  - Work with hospitality programs at Paul Smith's College and Morrisville State College to have students work on projects in the region not just on campus. Provide students with rationale for why they should use their skills within the region rather than looking for bigger opportunities like in Florida, Nevada and California.
- Healthcare workers and homecare providers will be needed as the population in the region ages. Specific training in these areas would help fill a growing gap by providing employment opportunities and care services.
  - Provide healthcare support worker or Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) training
  - Develop an Adult Care facility or in-home elder care program
- Region has many small businesses that are positioned to thrive and grow. There are also many services that are not available in the region since the typical model for providing these services are larger than the regional demand could support.
  - Look for innovative ways to scale these services to fit the region could provide opportunities for new startups.
  - Support job sharing, temporary staffing agency and/or a joint human resources system.
  - Training and technology should address telecommuting, sole proprietorships and cottage industry
  - Offer guidance on how to start a part-time or side business and how to expand a side business into a company that can support full-time employment



### Best Practices & Resources:

- Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education for economic development leaders  
<http://www.entre-ed.org>
- Kauffman Foundation for funding opportunities  
<http://www.kauffman.org>
- National Business Incubator Association  
<http://www.nbia.org>
- McClellan Technology Incubator in Sacramento, California  
<http://www.mtisac.com/>
- Center for Entrepreneurial Growth and Technology Innovation (CEGTI)  
<http://www.lanecollege.edu>
- Austin Technology Incubator in Austin, Texas

- Workforce Housing Ventures in West Central Florida  
[workforcehousingventures.org/](http://workforcehousingventures.org/)
- National Association of Realtors® supports Workforce Housing Grants. U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) and U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) might also have some funding as well.
- Stickmen – Edmonton Alberta (advertising in other areas to get companies to invest or relocate to Edmonton).

**Workforce and Education Strategy: Develop a long-term education (K-12 through College) program to provide workforce business training locally that will connect regional needs and bring students back to regional opportunities.**

The nation's public school systems are under ever-increasing pressure to do a more effective job in preparing students to succeed in the working world and in higher education. The ability of public school systems to prepare students is an important factor when businesses decide where to locate. Political leaders, educators, and parents are recognizing the need for public schools to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to survive after high school graduation and succeed in the business world. The public K-12 system should challenge students in a way that encourages them to attain at the highest level possible.

In order to compete in the global economy, attract new workers to the region, and excel in attracting industry, the (West) Central Adirondacks will need to have an exceptionally focused strategy in place to develop a targeted workforce.

**Approaches & Actions:**

**Business and Education Council**

- Establish a Business and Education Council with representatives from BOCES, Herkimer County Community College (HCCC), Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC), K-12 school systems, area workforce development providers, local economic development authorities, and business leaders (including human resource directors/recruiters) to develop a long-term workforce plan. All of these entities are key players in the workforce development system, and they should play an even more central and highly visible role in both workforce and economic development. By creating a cross-disciplinary Council, the region can proactively create a strategy to combat this ongoing challenge.



The purpose of this council will be to connect the private sector more closely with programming in the region's education institutions and workforce development system. This Business and Education Council should also be closely connected to education and workforce efforts underway in all three Counties.

- Determine the type of companies (existing companies already part of one of the recommended target industries) that have an interest in creating a "pipeline" to potential workers for their industry.
- Begin discussions with specific companies in the target industries to determine the types of skills their workers need. Give this group the responsibility for developing a curriculum that should be offered in a "school to work" type program for one target industry as a pilot project. Identify a school system and location(s) in the 3-County region that could host the initial pilot project. Once that program is in operation and working well, begin development of curriculum for other target industries with the assistance of companies representing those industries.
- Identify private sector funding opportunities among major local employers, local foundations, or the regional economic development councils.
- Regional economic development partners must learn the skill requirements of target industries and develop new programs and curriculum or modify existing ones to meet the training needs of target industry employers.
  - Business and Education Council should organize and conduct a Workforce Summit with employers to find out what types of training they need for their employees and find out what types of new skills are required for work in their industries. Local employers, community colleges, other workforce development providers, and K-12 officials should all take part in the Workforce Summit.
    - Summarize the results of the Summit by industry category. Consider using software programs that correlate with other business retention efforts for gathering information.

- Follow up with target industry employers to determine any changes to employee training needs due to changing industry requirements should take place on a regular basis.
- Share information with the Working Professionals Group to assist with overall strategy and a campaign to inform employers and potential workers of workforce development training programs available in the region.

### **Secondary Education**

The region has excellent schools with great graduation rates and a good teacher pool, but the size of the districts and the decreasing number of students is resulting in fewer class offerings for advanced placement, language courses, and electives with certain classes only being offered every other year. The region struggles to be competitive in terms of the subjects offered. BOCES services provide support with culinary arts, nursing, cosmetology, mechanical trades, office administration, environmental conservation, etc.

In some areas of the region closures & redistricting have occurred or are being considered.

- Create an environment that allows young people to leave and experience other locations while encouraging them to return to the area with new skills. Focus on positive messaging and mitigating negative dialogue when discussing the region with youth ages 10-18.
- Evaluate the need for more vocational technical programs offered within the high school to prepare students for certain segments of the workforce.
  - Explore different options for community based internships, apprenticeships and technical education for local students in high school. Programs currently exist but face challenges that need to be addressed.
  - Explore offering a high school track that drives students into target industries. Work with the BOCES School and Business Alliance (SABA) program to develop or bring Certification program to the area that could support industry clusters located here.

### **Post-Secondary Education**

Community Colleges represent a tremendous asset for the region. These institutions have the capability and desire to be the primary workforce development and advanced education provider in the region. Efforts should be enhanced to closely connect the capabilities of HCCC & MVCC with the local economic development efforts, especially as it pertains to preparing the region's workforce for jobs in targeted industries. More can and should be done to closely align the curriculum and training provided to the specific needs of the area's employers and to the projected needs of new employers in the region's target industries.

- Access to local courses due to the long distances to campuses is needed. Area Community Colleges that are unable to support a satellite office would be willing to offer classes in the community using other facilities with access to internet (Wi-Fi) and meeting space. The region should find venues to host specific courses or distance learning labs tied to higher education campuses.
- There is a considerable need for business related trainings – i.e. accounting, marketing, funding, and contracts, etc. Organizations that can offer or provide trainings include CCE, Adirondack Economic Development Corporation (AEDC), Southern Adirondack / Mid-York Library System, Small business Development Centers (SBDC), and institutions of higher learning.

### **Best Practices & Resources:**

- Cornell's program for applied demographics allows you to make school district projections  
<http://pad.human.cornell.edu/schools/projections.cfm>
- SUNY CAP Stone project  
[www.geneseo.edu/edgarfellows/capstone-experience](http://www.geneseo.edu/edgarfellows/capstone-experience)
- Forestry & stewardship program or projects through AmeriCorps on a more long-term basis.  
[www.americorps.gov/](http://www.americorps.gov/)
- The Center for Advanced Research and Technology (CART)

## *Business Climate + Economic Strength*

Business climate can be defined as the capacity of the community to support business expansion and development opportunities. Since most jobs are created through small businesses, competitive communities must also provide excellent support mechanisms to grow small businesses from within. People here are underemployed and the cost of living and worker housing is becoming a challenge to the region's workforce. In addition, there is room for improvement in its support for entrepreneurs and small businesses. Stronger entrepreneurial and venture capital networks must emerge as they are essential for healthy job growth, diversity, and sustainable economic competitiveness.

### **Economic Development Strategy: Spearhead a regional approach to economic development, and develop a system for seamless collaboration.**

It is imperative that economic development efforts be truly regional in scope. This involves collaboration across county lines and between regional organizations all with the goal of improving the larger region's attractiveness to businesses. Existing and prospective companies do not see town or county boundaries when choosing a location; they see a regional business climate, education assets, and workforce.

The towns in the region view themselves as small rural communities without a diversified four season economy and little power to direct economic growth or development within the former economic development structure. The recent formation of the Regional Economic Development Councils will provide an opportunity to include projects and initiatives that will have a direct impact on the West Central Adirondack region while complimenting larger strategic efforts by both the Mohawk Valley and North County Regional Economic Development Councils.

Current Town Plans Comprehensive Plans have few if any joint policies to guide coordinated growth specific to multi-county economic development or services. The two Regional Councils, by contrast, have the ability to included recommendations, goals, and actions from the (West) Central Adirondacks in their Regional Council Plans that directly address the economic conditions in their respective regions, identifying issues and opportunities, citing goals, policies and recommendations for economic growth and development.

Both planning processes have the ability to move forward in tandem, addressing common directives and to further several goals, including considering the use of resources and the consequences of growth and development for the community, the region, the Adirondack Park, and New York State. In addition, Town and Regional strategies must plan development to preserve the area's authentic character and scenic natural beauty. The goal then is to develop and implement smart growth policies and practices relating to land use, conserving land value and quality of life. This is essential in maintaining our tourism and forestry sectors.

### **Approaches & Actions:**



- Create an organizational structure that can pursue long-term funding to implement actions identified in this plan and other related regional initiatives. Have a unified basic approach to economic development/marketing, know the regional economic overview and the role each agency / organization plays and how they are expected to contribute.
  - Personally meet with county or municipal governments to discuss the specific items you need or want them to support. Discuss in detailed terms how various organizations will be involved and how they will be accountable for the success of this economic development effort.
- Look at economic development and business as a system. Find out how our Towns can help local businesses and create better communication between government, businesses, and members of the communities throughout the region.
- Obtain regional level economic information and use similar data collection methods and datasets so information can be shared more easily.
  - Use the data from SET process to leverage funding requests in future CFA applications, Microenterprise funds, MVEDGE or More-Co loans and local investments.
- In order to enhance the spirit of regionalism and implement this plan, an Annual Regional Summit should be held in a different location each year, rotating through each of the three counties. This is a great venue to discuss top

priority projects for the coming year and get buy-in across county lines. This activity will improve dialogue between counties, economic development-related organizations, and private sector businesses.

- Build wealth regionally by allocating scarce resources for collective action

### Best Practices & Resources:

- Tug Hill Commission – regional collaboration  
[www.tughill.org](http://www.tughill.org)
- Adirondack Teleworks  
<http://www.adirondackteleworks.com/>

### **Economic Development Strategy: Expand efforts that support the expansion and retention of existing industries, and create new ones where appropriate including opportunities for entrepreneurs and small businesses.**

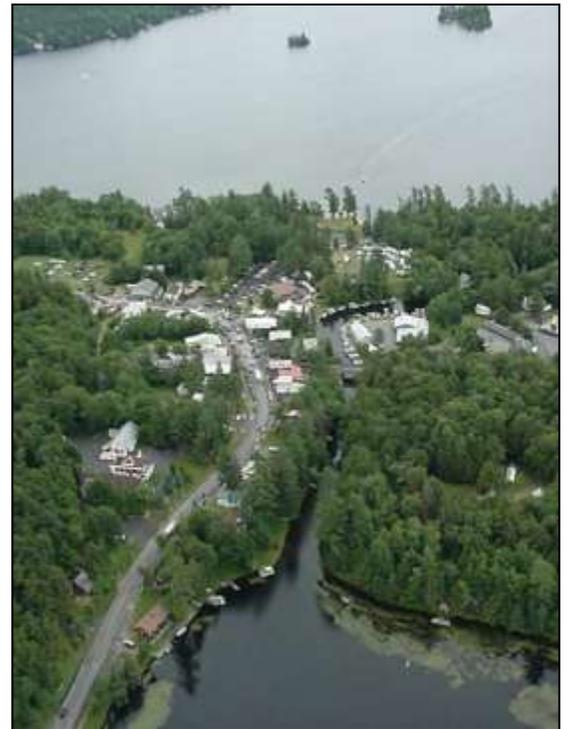
Entrepreneurs and small businesses are the economic engines of a community. Efforts directed toward existing businesses should come in the form of a joint effort and meetings between the County IDAs, economic development agencies and the existing businesses in the community. Meetings should focus on learning more about the company and its future plans, determining what the company needs from local economic developers, and informing the company of what the community can offer them, from workforce development training to expansion incentives.

The (West) Central Adirondacks should focus on the importance of entrepreneurs for the region's economic future and actively recruit them. A critical aspect of building economic competitiveness is a strong support system that will encourage entrepreneurs to create new businesses and help small businesses thrive. Encouraging and rewarding risk-taking that is crucial to start up efforts, it will also serve as an important signal to outside individuals that entrepreneurship is valued and supported which may draw more small business owners to the area.

Entrepreneurs create jobs at relatively low capital cost (especially in the fast growing service sector), they serve as a source of innovation in products, services, and techniques and they fill an important social function by fostering fast upward social mobility.

### Approaches & Actions:

- Establish a forum (economic partnership work group) for entrepreneurs to share ideas and develop resources on how to improve their businesses. Works with local units of government to promote a business climate that supports entrepreneurship, small businesses and other start-up ventures
- Throughout the (West) Central Adirondacks there is a wealth of knowledge and experience of individuals (many retirees) who have had extremely successful and fulfilling careers. Assess how active adults/retirees within the community could utilize their experience and intellectual capital as mentors to entrepreneurs and small businesses.
- Assist entrepreneurs with calculating the benefit of pursuing their venture full time and leaving their other employment (giving up their day job).
- Develop presentations for business, civic, and non-profit organizations for small business owners and entrepreneurs to share their success stories to communicate the importance of this segment of the economy.
  - Recognize the impact of small business job creation. Five jobs with benefits would have a big impact on the region
- Support the “Entrepreneurs Week” that allows area high school students to learn the benefits of establishing and owning businesses. Also, allow students the opportunity to visit the business location of their choice to learn more about a particular company.
- Alleviate the disconnect between those who have the money (government and foundations) and those who need the funds (businesses and communities). Work with CAP-21 to provide grant assistance to improve the region's economy.



- Improve access to early-stage venture capital by supporting the formation of a new angel investor network in the region. Work with the region's banks to market existing regional loan programs and development agencies to promote revolving loan funds and resources.
- Work on financial assistance with AEDC to help local businesses prepare good financial statements before approaching banks. Lending may be difficult for cash businesses since it is based on reported income. Offer classes or trainings through the banks for businesses who are considering expansion to gather the necessary financial information together.
- There needs to better communicate available opportunities to business community through banks, and what is available through IDAs, AEDC and other programs; grants, loans, microenterprise funding, energy efficiency incentives.
- Grant applications support for profit businesses; understanding the terminology, match and in-kind, reimbursement schedules, and bridge loans.
- Compiling documentation needed in order to complete grant applications; engineering, legal and consulting costs related to grant funded projects

### **Mentors & Incubators**

The West Central Adirondack region will greatly benefit by having a mentorship program and a business incubator that would encourage and assist citizens in starting their own businesses. The mentorship program should have connections to the Professional Network's events, educational programs, and training sessions. Mentors would support young startup companies and can hasten the development of emerging technologies. The business incubator would serve all three counties in the region as a strong asset for the acceleration of local entrepreneurship and small businesses.

Stakeholders in each area would work together to share best practices and get each project off the ground. They should have access to similar shared resources including networking events, office space, computer equipment, and labs as needed. Facilities can be community based buildings made available after-hours. By having locations in different parts of the region, entrepreneurs in each locale can have a better understanding what is occurring throughout the (West) Central Adirondacks.

- Create and support facilities that nurture and develop entrepreneurs and accelerate small business formation.
  - Identify locations which will be most appropriate to develop a business incubator(s) in the region with access to technology. An incubator should serve a broad range of entrepreneurs and small businesses. It should also connect with SUNY IT and Clarkson, to look at innovation connected to the nanotechnology cluster that is being developed in Upstate NY. USDA funds may be available to purchase the equipment to furnish an incubator, office hub or hot spots. This is also an ideal project for requesting EDA funding.
  - Use support services offered through the Small Business Development Centers (SBDC).
  - CAP-21, CAA, business leaders, and other community partners should research, visit, and collaborate with other incubator facilities and mentorship programs (i.e. Tech Garden in Syracuse or Pipeline for Progress in the Southern Tier of NY).
- Campaign to obtain private and public funding and lobby the state for funding support. This could be the next major public / private funded project.
  - Use federal funding opportunities available for start-up business support. The Economic Development Administration (EDA) currently has expressed interest in funding Incubator feasibility studies across the U.S.
  - Identify facility tools, support systems, and equipment needs to create desired activity.
- Begin to build community support, and identify and attract local experts who would be willing to provide their expertise teach a session or be a mentor. Use a 501c3 non-profit organization to set up the mentorship with a separate sub-committee.
  - These individuals should include local accounting and financial professionals, marketing, management, lawyers, scientists and technologists, retired executives, and entrepreneurs with successful track records.
  - Build and launch a mentor / entrepreneurial resources webpage. The information and resources should also be linked / included on local websites.
  - Promote locally and throughout the region.
  - Identify an individual or group to serve as a "fundraiser", working primarily with angel investors and venture capital firms to regularly update them as to findings, etc. to work for additional funding.

- Offer internet training and/or provide a plug in template to create websites for start-ups

**Economic Development Strategy: Establish teams for each of the targeted industries.**

Based on data and location quotients specific target industries for the (West) Central Adirondacks have been identified. The region should focus on these industries/clusters to achieve the maximum results for economic development and the creation of high quality jobs. The regional target industries identified are: Natural Resources (mining, forestry, wood products); Manufacturing (advanced materials, primary & fabricated metal, electronic components, machinery); Biomedical (health / life sciences); Arts, Entertainment, Recreation and Tourism. It is important to fully focus on the target industries. The development of target industry teams pulls resources together with the overall goals of attempting to build each target industry in (West) Central Adirondacks. This type of effort also demonstrates the community's commitment to business development and its support of a positive business climate in their respective industry.

**Approaches & Actions:**

- Form Target Industry teams of 8-12 members that lend their expertise regarding specific issues, policies, concerns, or opportunities facing the representative industries.
  - Each team should be comprised of 4-6 private sector leaders in each industry, 1-2 economic development leaders, and 3-4 local governmental officials.
  - These Target Industry teams should be in contact with each other to coordinate related activities (e.g. Energy, Logistics, etc.)
  - Have business leaders within the target industry teams supply trend information and any other pertinent industry details and information for the main purpose of developing strategies for attracting industry.
    - The team should meet quarterly to discuss industry strategies while focusing on specific outcomes for targeted industry initiatives.
    - Explore new business development activities through members' various contacts within these industries.
    - Members of each Target Industry team should be available to assist economic development leaders in prospect visits and site selection inquiries for their respective industries.

## Marketing + Promotion

The efforts of an effective marketing program, positions the region for economic success. Marketing improves awareness, creates demand, and drives growth. In this time of fierce economic competition, coordinated, regional economic development and marketing efforts are of paramount importance.

While the (West) Central Adirondacks has had some success in its economic development efforts, it could be far more effective by developing key messages for its targeted audiences including young professionals, targeted industries, and tourism prospects while promoting activities, events, programs, and initiatives from throughout the community. All efforts should continue to embrace a spirit of regionalism. This includes close cooperation and an aligned vision from each of the towns and their respective villages and hamlets. It also includes a close working relationship among the region's promotional organizations like the Central Adirondack Association (CAA), the Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) and Chambers of Commerce to create a model for working together in their economic and development efforts.

It is critically important for this effort that a single brand that captures the essence of the Central Adirondack region be developed and that all stakeholders are utilizing the brand in their external marketing efforts. A consistent brand and message can be critically important in establishing and launching a competitive community.

### **Marketing Strategy: Work with regional partners to develop and adopt a regional brand for the (West) Central Adirondacks**



Perhaps the most important stride the area can make to build a true spirit of regionalism would be to develop and adopt a single brand. Currently, the "High Peaks" and "Lake George" are identifiable areas in the Adirondack park; this geographic area would like to be recognized as distinct area: the "(West) Central Adirondacks". It is unclear how the regional branding will tie into the regional tourism councils. There are 11 regional tourism councils in the state; the High Peaks is one region and Central New York (CNY) is another region; this region is split between the High Peaks and CNY, but we aren't suitably covered by I Love NY funds. The (West) Central Adirondacks in terms of planning and branding is its own distinct region.

The brand should creatively and succinctly captures the essence of the (West) Central Adirondacks, and its strategy for business development. This tells the world that the region acts as one concise, collaborative unit. It will take a diligent broad-based effort to develop and agree on a regional brand that still allows for unique customizations for the counties, cities, and towns to maintain their individual identities. The branding process should just be a part of an overall marketing plan and strategy.

### **Approaches & Actions:**

- Evaluate regional tourism plans and strategies to identify commonalities (Same constraints...same benefits) throughout the region that can be addressed by joint marketing
  - Identify trends and emerging markets targeted by other like regions
- Establish a designed fund for joint marketing to promote the (West) Central Adirondacks' common assets while recognizing access to neighboring resources.
  - \$6000 for CAA to do marketing and promotion for this region to encourage visitors from our primary markets that are south and west of the region.
    - Working on a regional vacation planner in a turnable page PDF version with links to local businesses.
    - Vacation guides are distributes from Buffalo to NYC, in Vermont, 2 locations in Canada; and by request (associated mailing cost). CAA works to make sure distribution isn't overlapping
    - Financially there is very little money going to Oneida County to direct people up Route 28, but the vacation planner is available at the visitor information center at Thruway Exit 31.



- Funds should be invested in tourism promotion (\$2.7M investment brought \$6.8 Billion into the region using last year's figures of return).
- The Adirondack Community Trust and the Oneida-Herkimer Community Foundation have been tremendous assets to fund specific tourism and community related projects (usually requires a local match)
- Coordinate with other agencies that are involved in similar branding activities
  - Adirondack Partnership sponsored by Common Ground Alliance is working on Adirondack Branding centered around Lake Placid and Tri-Lakes
  - Work with other regional organizations to coin "Made in the (West) Central Adirondacks". Adirondack North County Association (ANCA) has the "Made in the Adirondack North Country" brand.
    - Use forest itself for promotional purposes (wood products)
- Work together to develop a comprehensive marketing campaign for the brand
  - Build buy-in to support conducting a branding process for the entire region by holding branding workshops throughout the region and working with other regional organizations to coordinate branding efforts currently underway.
  - Ensure this brand promotes a consistent message and design for the entire region.
  - Conduct some perception surveys and test market new brand names to see which might most effectively promote the region.
- Work with ANCA Scenic Byway Comprehensive Management Plan (promotion and marketing) to establish regional brand signage for cultural, recreational and historic sites to capitalize on the region's resources including DOT signage
- Create a regional App for marketing and promotion of the area (i.e. Lake Placid app); use QR Codes to link to website information - advertising restrooms, safe parking and other amenities.
  - Create additional video postcards for communities and venues in the region. They can be sent to 3 friends, the sender is able to address it and include a 200 word message then e-send it off to friends.
- Target specific tourism types (eco, agri, cultural, culinary, etc.) and implement cross-promotions to get visitors to stay longer in the area and enjoy more of the region's offerings. Oneida County specifically markets to golfers, young families, and sports enthusiasts.

**Marketing Strategy: Use the regional brand to coordinate data and streamline marketing efforts to better target gaps within the region.**

- Need to have a consistent method of collecting data across different agencies in the region. Select a method of collection to share between communities in the region.
  - Identify the kind of baseline information is needed for the purposes of marketing for economic development and collect / track the following:
    - Information requests made by tourists and potential visitors (used to predict trends)
    - Activities (snowmobilers, kayaking, annual event, etc.)
    - Age group (youth, middle age, retirees, etc.)
    - Sales tax revenue (shows spikes - related to weather, events etc.)
    - Zip codes (target places based on where visitors are coming from)
    - How much was spent per visit
    - Accommodation availability and occupancy rates (also track how many people were sent to other communities)
    - Number of businesses
    - Number of people working in those businesses (seasonally, year-round, full-time, and part-time). Track job retention and creation for grant applications; use a multiplier to calculate the effects in the communities.
  - Comparing access to online marketing with Google analytics
  - Work with realtors to learn where second homebuyers are coming from and target that market with advertising.



- Work with CAA or other website to act as clearing house for links and/or information.
  - Connecting locals to common calendar in order to avoid duplicate or overlap of events.
  - Need to be able to manage marketing / online access / reservations
- Individual community contributions to marketing vary. State funds go to the Counties and a portion of the county funds are matched with town contributions. Different arrangements are made depending on the town's resources; some are 50/50 matches between county and town.
  - Herkimer County's tourism budget is essentially the same as Town of Webb's budget.
  - Hamilton County's tourism budget is smaller than the Town of Inlet's tourism budget
  - Oneida County utilizes a bed tax, to help municipalities encourage visitors from outside the county / area. These funds have been used to make their tourism offerings (offices and materials) more user and 'consumer' friendly. The County offers funding to individual communities through competitive grants.
- There are currently two visitor center outside the region along Route 12/28 leading into the Adirondacks and the St. Lawrence Seaway. One is located at NYS Thruway Exit 31 and the other is in the Town of Trenton. Several years ago there was a plan to have an information center further north on Route 28 focused on the (West) Central Adirondacks, but funds were not available. There is a continued effort by the Town of Forestport to pursue this project that would benefit the entire region.
- Use email list-serves and e-newsletter for promotional purposes (CAA list-serve has about 8800 people on it). Facebook, twitter, and other social media could also be used. YouTube videos of fishing, weigh points on the water etc. would promote services, businesses, and venues.

**Marketing Strategy: Create and initiate a marketing campaign to attract target industries, populations and lifestyles.**

### **Approaches & Actions:**

- Market to residents, specifically seasonal residents
  - Work to encourage the seasonal residents to spend more in the area. Seasonal residents come in with everything they need for their stay, and generally only buy small items in local towns. There is an opportunity to tap into the unspent dollars;
  - Region wide newsletter to tell them about new businesses, and connect the back to the communities, volunteer opportunities etc.
  - Flash Mob a business to highlight and encourage people to stop at businesses
- Draw on events in neighboring regions (Mohawk Valley, Lake George, High Peaks and Alex Bay) that bring people to Upstate New York such as SPAC, the Stanley, Olympic venues, Living History events and Boilermaker Roadrace
  - Need to keep the excitement up if following the events or the interest and the people attending go elsewhere.
- Use corridor development as a regional approach to Tourism. The region needs to have individual towns working together in order to service one trip.
  - At events that draw people to the region, then promote similar activities at the events with the intention that a percentage of the participants will return to do other things in the region.
  - Group complementary activities, suggest 5-6 other things visitors can do in addition to the activity they came to the area for.
  - Give distance in both measure of miles & time (15 miles / 20 mins) to better convey location or proximity to visitors from outside the region.
- Plan to cater to target demographics (women, dog owners, baby boomers, youth, paddlers, hikers, bikers, etc.)
  - Attract younger (youthful) people by promoting the connections/centralized location near theaters, sporting events, airport, skiing, etc.
  - Target people that enjoy coming to the area for their vacation each year. Promote the multi-generation enjoyment to entice them to move to this area.
  - Embrace culinary tourism that involves restaurants and local producers. Create a cultural trail with different museums, art venues, historic sites, etc. that you can visit along the corridor. Offer drive yourself tours and tastings during off peak times.



- Promote environmentally friendly Eco-Recreation
- Marketing to paddling and cyclists. NYS DOT and NYS DOS coordinate the waterways for the scenic byway regions; ANCA coordinates “Bike the Byways”, but the towns maintain their portion of the site)
- Get visitors and recreational enthusiasts connected to the related business in the communities (cyclists to the bike shop)



- Market as a “place where you can be connected, but can unplug when you want to”.
  - The perception of the region’s lifestyle is not aggressive so marketing in that fashion doesn’t ring true in relation to the image of the area.
  - Many people come to area to escape or get away from hustle and bustle of their primary community or they want to retire to a smaller, quieter location.
  - Promote the (West) Central Adirondacks as a region with an active and healthy lifestyle; massage therapists, nutrition, health and wellness, restorative amenities (i.e. Cure cottages of Saranac Lake).

Use cable shows to do a feature, work with agents

- and celebrity to act as attractions.
- Market toward community service, stewardship programs, youth groups, church groups. Create a list of volunteers and organizations in the region that would/could use help, this list would be shared with the groups coming into the area and work with AmeriCorps or other agencies to coordinate the efforts being done in the communities.
- Market to entrepreneurs to create niche businesses and small business owners to fill opportunities. True entrepreneurs will build out an idea knowing that people will come to the region specifically for it (i.e. Mountain Man). Small businesses will build to the market, so if the region creates the need, businesses will build to meet that need.
- The region should work to target both public and private companies, including small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures, important to economic vitality. A common message should be conveyed to target industry companies. The development of a mailing and email contact list is imperative as well as collecting other materials specifically designed for each particular industry. Key association events, specialized trade shows, symposiums, or events should be identified to personally promote the area to prospects and site selectors.
  - Identify target industry companies and contacts, design then distribute promotional materials, target selected industry events, and promote the (West) Central Adirondacks as a possible business location.
  - Develop marketing and distribution channels for locally produced manufactured and artisan goods.
  - Support more E-Commerce

### Best Practices & Resources:

- 1 square mile of Hope funds to support technology  
[www.onesquaremileofhope.org/](http://www.onesquaremileofhope.org/)
- Saranac Thursday Nights –a number of small bars and restaurants have ‘grown up’ around the Brewery  
[www.saranac.com/section/saranac-thursdays-events](http://www.saranac.com/section/saranac-thursdays-events)
- Wine & Dine Alberta and Chomp around Alberta (Food tours of higher end restaurants and more casual dining)

## *Policy + Administration*

Communities must promote regulations that improve their region while allowing the flexibility to respond to business needs.

**Policy Strategy: Provide an environment that recognizes the quality investment in each of the towns and counties to support incentives & projects in keeping with the region's development vision.**

A public event should take place to endorse the West Central Adirondack Collaborative Economic Plan that identifies new opportunities for sustainable growth in the region, actions to create jobs, and funding opportunities for major initiatives. Having a collective compact agreement and signing an official Memorandum of Understanding will strengthen the network of economic development partners in the region.

### **Approaches & Actions:**

- Unify the region's stakeholders inviting residents, businesses, and media to attend.
- Develop key metrics for accountability and follow up quarterly to assess progress. Benchmark data to provide effective measurement of strategies.
- Establish regular quarterly meetings to be attended by cross-county officials (Economic Partnership Work Group) in order to develop working relationships based on the strategies and action items to be implemented in the region.
- Conduct an annual session to assess the progress made in improving economic development efforts in the region, pledge continued activities, and celebrate successes



**Policy Strategy: Connect to county, regional, state or higher governments and agencies to recognize the needs and assets of the Central Adirondack Region**

The region is governed at the local, county and state level; in addition there are further parameters that regulate land uses and development densities through the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) Act and Land Use Plan and other governmental agencies with Adirondack Park oversight responsibilities.

Throughout the planning process, the observation that resonated among participants was the need for better communication between governmental entities within the same county and throughout the region. Local agencies and organization frequently work well together (local citizens disregard county lines, they prefer to see themselves as one region), but the interactions at the County level and higher have a tendency to become more difficult due to conflicting interests, overlapping service areas and various administrative policies resulting in fragmented oversight, inconsistent enforcement, and bureaucratic inefficiencies at multiple levels.

### **Approaches & Actions:**

- Form a task force to study ways that units of governments can streamline processes and decrease duplicative efforts.
  - Engage a regional public process regarding economic, community, and environmental issues and work at the local, county and regional level to address conflicts that can arise due to inconsistencies between units of government.
  - Support planning efforts to address future infrastructure and development capacity with necessary coordination at the local, county and state levels.
  - Standardize the basic online information that should be included on regional and municipal webpages to support economic development (possible digital towpath module)
  - Establish shared services agreements to provide social and governmental services that cross county boundaries to cover the region.
- Emphasize the critical need for communication services and advanced technology infrastructure to support economic development and basic quality of life in the region

- Need to show that the rural nature (small population) of the region is of great value to the natural resources/ tourism based economy. Make County and State government aware of the direct impact this revenue has on their budgets.
  - Towns in the region contribute significantly to the tax base of their County through property taxes on second homes and sales tax. Identify specific programs and projects in the region that the Counties can financially support to get a good return of their investment.
  - Make County and State level decision makers aware of the region's contributions and needs. Utilize the public comment period during caucuses and Board meetings to point out the economic drivers in the region that the County is benefitting from. Request support and funding for high priority regional projects.
  - Invite local officials to events in the area to see the results for themselves.
  - Have more people from the region hold elected and appointed position in government to represent the West Central Adirondack's interests.
  - Recognize the impact of Public Land on the local tax base. A policy change (If NYS decides public land is no longer taxable) could have serious implications for places where 90% of the township is public land
- Need to support zoning and planning policies that protect the character of the community. Reclassification of Parcels to support smaller ecologically friendly construction that appeals to a niche market.
  - Use educational campaign to influence the building trend. People from outside the region generally feel that they are entitled to build as large as they want where they want, even if it isn't in the best interest of the region as a whole.
  - Energy demand and inconsistent electrical service may require the region to investigate some alternative methods and policies including carbon trading, the use of biomass and biofuel, solar, and geothermal.



**Policy Strategy: Support regional cluster activation, build networking organizations and assist in funding needs**

- Competitive communities should provide a structure in which businesses can be profitable and community organizations productive.

**Approaches & Actions:**

- CAP-21 is the regional organization that functions most like a Community Services Corporation /Local Development Corporation working in the (West) Central Adirondacks. The region will be looking for funding to support economic development by:
  - Providing technical assistance and access to resources that improve quality of life to attract target demographics
  - Offering assistance to obtain funding that stimulates entrepreneurship and encourages the development of small businesses and that encourages business expansion and job creation.
  - Leveraging resources for community facilities, healthcare, and housing to increase economic capacity and production.
- Use multi-county regional applications to secure competitive grant funding for economic development projects
  - NYS consolidated funding application (CFA)
    - Reimbursement funding may require a bridge loan
    - Often funding comes in the form of an excelsior jobs program (tax credit) former empire zones
    - Leverage resources from not-for-profit organizations and tourist attractions
- Set up an economic development revolving loan funds, angel funds Transitional tourism fund or establish a fund with a local foundation to support regional projects



- Identify and apply for competitive grant funding to implement new technology and communication infrastructure upgrades. Funding available through the USDA Rural Utilities program
- Coordinate main street revitalization efforts through the region to pool resources and acquire assistance for Community Development Block Grants / Main Street funding
- Work with banks and lending institutions to identify projects in the region that would qualify for Community Reinvestment Act Funds
- Business owners, developers, and even the public at large reported that the relationships between counties (and even within counties) were disconnected. Development regulations are not always clear and the approval process can be brutal. The lack of coordination among these entities is harmful to the economic fabric of the region, increases costs for residents and businesses, and inhibits a pro-business environment.
  - Identify best practices that are currently being utilized throughout the region to streamline and standardize county, town, and village government processes to decrease duplicative efforts and to make conducting business in the region less ambiguous. Be the champion for spreading the adoption of these practices across each of the counties.
  - Consider methods and practices that find opportunities to share scarce resources. Connect to regional organizations such as ANCA, The Genesis Group, etc.
- The region should actively support providing incentives for projects that support the region's vision, such as companies in the target industries. Incentives can be important tools that can be offered to potential investors with the idea of further enhancing the region's overall economic attractiveness for businesses and quality of life for residents.
  - Actively support incentive policies for the region's targeted industries to demonstrate the communities' eagerness to further the development of those industries. Incentives should be selective and only offered to projects that create a predetermined number of jobs, meet a predetermined wage level, or are of strategic importance.
  - Develop a list of potential enticements that would help incentivize businesses, investors, or developers for projects that benefit the region's vision. These incentives could include low-interest loans, density bonuses, and other benefits for entrepreneurs seeking to establish target industry businesses.
- Develop a transparent business development process that helps move target business through the planning and permitting procedures. These are initiatives that local government entities in each county can spearhead to further the growth of the target industries.
  - Offer fee reimbursements to new businesses that are in target industries and meet defined regional economic impacts.
  - Similar benefits should also be offered to other desirable developments such as the construction of affordable housing.
  - Automate the permitting process in each of towns and villages to the greatest extent possible. Use the same application, allow applicants can apply online and pay for permits electronically. This will help speed up the process and make it easier for applicants to navigate the development process.

### **Best Practices & Resources:**

- Grants Action News - Information on Available State and Federal Grants (from the NYS Assembly)  
*<http://assembly.state.ny.us/gan/>*
- NYSEDA alternative energy / New York Energy Smart Program / Public Service Commission (PSC).  
*<http://www.nyserda.ny.gov/>*  
*<http://www.getenergysmart.org/>*
- NYS Education Department /NYS HESC  
*<http://usny.nysed.gov/grants/>*  
*<http://www.hesc.com/>*
- NYS Archives  
*<http://www.archives.nysed.gov/a/grants/index.shtml>*
- NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets:  
*<http://www.agriculture.ny.gov/RFPS.html>*
- NYS Division of Local Government Shared Services  
*[www.dos.ny.gov/lg/](http://www.dos.ny.gov/lg/)*
- NYS Council on the Arts  
*<http://www.nysca.org/home.html>*

- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation  
<http://www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/grants.html>
- NYS Health Department Funding and Grants  
<http://www.health.state.ny.us/funding/index.htm>
- Division of Housing and Community Renewal  
<http://www.nyshcr.org/Funding/>
- New York State Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation  
<http://www.nysparks.state.ny.us/grants/>
- Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance Contracts & Grants  
<http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/cgo/default.asp>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA)  
[www.rurdev.usda.gov/RD\\_Grants.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/RD_Grants.html)
- U.S. Department of Economic Development Administration (EDA)  
[www.eda.gov/grants.htm](http://www.eda.gov/grants.htm)
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)  
[portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD/topics/grants](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD/topics/grants)
- U.S. Department of Small Business Administration (SBA)  
[www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/loans-grants/grants](http://www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/loans-grants/grants)
- The Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties  
[www.foundationhoc.org/](http://www.foundationhoc.org/)
- Kauffman Foundation for Entrepreneurship and Education  
[www.kauffman.org/](http://www.kauffman.org/)

## Evaluation Plan

Several datasets have identified sets that will be good measures of economic performance. This data are easily found at state and national sources, are available at the county level, and should be considered good indicators of the overall economic health of the community and its citizens. The first step will be to apply threshold levels for each of the categories listed below.

### Amenities & Quality of Life

- New establishments and new beautification projects completed in downtown areas
- Housing affordability, with focus on median home price and the availability of diverse housing options
- Number of facilities that provide health and care services

### Sites & Infrastructure

- Inventory of sites and facilities for business (fewer vacant sites)
- Areas with telecommunication availability, including access to high-speed telecommunications
- Transportation services and access
- Number of water and sewer improvement projects
- Progress on the creation of a regional business Incubator

### Workforce & Education

- Percentage of population in the 25-44 year-old demographic
- Participation rates in the Professional Network group
- Percentage of skilled / educated workers
- Use and quality of workforce development programs / training
- Employer satisfaction of worker skills and availability

### Marketing & Promotion

- Increase in number of (new) visitors
- Percent increase in sales
- Occupancy rates
- Local, state and national media mentions relating to the region

### Policy & Administration

- Zoning Changes in the region
- County appropriation and town budget allocations
- Number and types of investments undertaken in the region

### Business Climate & Economic Strength

- Net new firm creation
- Average wage growth
- Number of jobs created and retained in the region
- Increase in venture capital funding or angel funding
- Obtains and utilizes adequate funds and other resources

## Appendix



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension