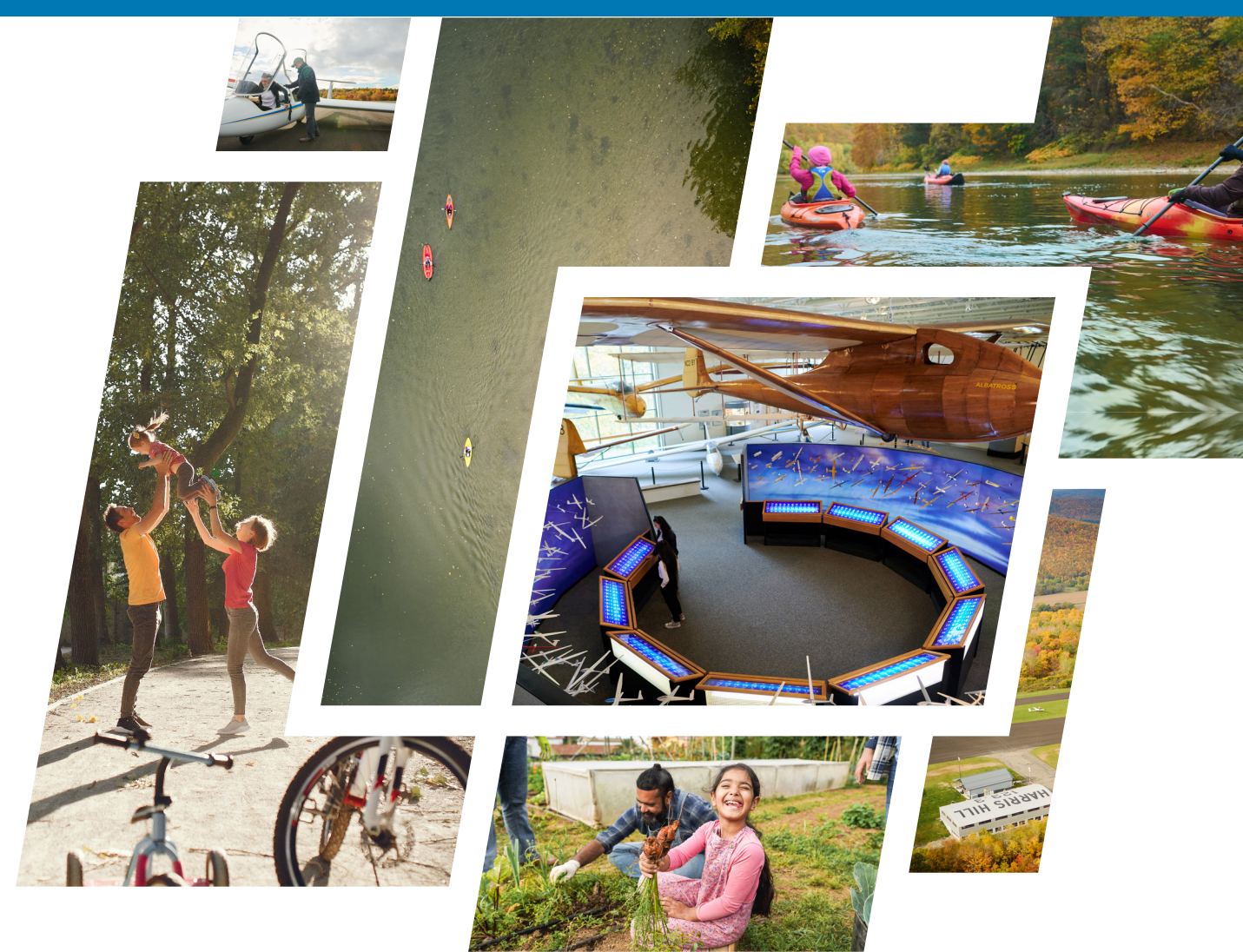




THE
**CHEMUNG
COUNTY**
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**JOIN US IN
MOVING
CHEMUNG
COUNTY
FORWARD.**
Together, we
can create
a brighter
future for our
community.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The development of the Chemung County Comprehensive Plan was made possible through the collective efforts of the Chemung County Planning Department staff, steering committee, focus group participants, stakeholders, and community members who participated throughout the planning process.

The dedicated staff and volunteers who comprise the County's departments and committees, and the steering committee members for the project, provided essential guidance, technical input, and oversight throughout the planning process.

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- ✓ *David C. McCormick*
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THE
**CHEMUNG
COUNTY**
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Chapter 1

Introduction



INTRODUCTION

1.1 What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a wide-ranging and all-inclusive planning document which guides the direction of future development, land use, legislative priorities, and funding decisions. Comprehensive plans are intended to provide long-term goals and guidance, and are generally updated every five to ten years. A comprehensive plan can be developed at the municipal level or county-wide level. The legal precedents for comprehensive planning in the US were set in the 1920s by the Standard State Zoning Enabling Act and Standard City Planning Enabling Act. Comprehensive Plans have evolved significantly from these early roots – initially, comprehensive plans were focused narrowly on land use decisions and setting the precedent for zoning code changes. Today, comprehensive planning is much broader and far reaching.

Comprehensive plans are developed to engage citizens in the planning process and give residents a voice for the future of where they live; to help communities develop fiscal plans and identify priorities for capital improvements; to identify key issues and opportunities for improvement across multiple sectors of life in the county; and to create strengthened opportunities for collaboration among stakeholders, community groups, and different levels of government.

Vargas, Silvia, and O'Neill, Nancy, "21st Century Comprehensive Plan: Role," American Planning Association, March 2016, <https://www.planning.org/planning/2016/mar/role/> 2 Ibid.

In New York State, county comprehensive plans are governed by General Municipal ("GMU") Chapter 24, Article 12-B, § 239-c and § 239-d ("GMU 239-c" and "GMU 239-d," respectively).



"Following the global recession, budget cuts, the increasing need for cities to operate efficiently, and an upward tick in partnership development, the function of the comprehensive plan changed in significant ways. Indeed, cities, counties, and regions are now not only using comprehensive plans for new purposes, they are also increasingly recognizing the intrinsic value of the planning process itself."

American Planning Association, 2016

GMU 239-c states that comprehensive planning is a vehicle for county planning boards to identify "opportunities and issues best handled at a county-wide scale," and to improve inter-agency cooperation to implement capital projects and provide public services. GMU 239-d provides a framework for the information that a comprehensive plan should include (but shall not be limited to) such as:

1. Goals, Objectives, and Principles
2. Regional Needs and Plans of Other Government Agencies
3. Existing and Proposed Location and Intensity of Land Uses
4. Existing Conditions including Environmental, Socioeconomic, Transportation, Infrastructure, and others
5. Implementation Strategies
6. State Environmental Quality Review Act ("SEQRA") review

This first ever Chemung County Comprehensive Plan will act as a detailed guide for the county to pursue planning and capital improvements projects and funding strategies to create long-lasting, beneficial, and strategic growth and opportunities. It will encourage new in-migration and retention of the county's existing population, by aiming to create a thriving environment for its residents to live, work, play, and farm.

1.2 Benefits of a Comprehensive Plan

Comprehensive plans have numerous benefits, impacting many levels of county government and decision-making by:

1. Developing a unified vision for the growth, development, protection, and future of the County.
2. Creating a roadmap for a variety of infrastructural, economic, and community-oriented projects.
3. Guiding future land use decisions and development with the needs and desires of the community at the forefront.
4. Identifying opportunities for additional studies and planning efforts.
5. Providing a framework for future budget decisions.
6. Allocating funding towards priority projects and initiatives.
7. Supporting communities and municipalities in pursuing grant funding opportunities.

1.3 How Was the Comprehensive Plan Developed?

The 2025 Chemung County Comprehensive Plan is the first comprehensive plan developed for the county. This comprehensive plan is the product of two years of planning, collaboration among stakeholders and community organizations, technical data collection, intensive public outreach, and innovative problem-solving. The Comprehensive Plan was developed with a focus on the integration of past and present planning efforts across the county. It recognizes fiscal and other resource constraints faced by Chemung County, and offers creative solutions address current and future issues through efficient use of available resources. The Chemung County Comprehensive Plan will act as a model for other counties in the region which face similar constraints and planning challenges.

Chemung County initiated the Comprehensive Planning process by issuing a Request for Proposals in April 2023. The County selected a project team and entered into an agreement in August 2023. The consultant team consisted of urban planners, public engagement specialists, marketing and branding experts, and engineering and transportation professionals.

The comprehensive planning process formally began in September 2023. Early planning action items included formation of a project Steering Committee (see Chapter 2), creation of a brand and identity for the project to make it easily recognizable at public events, development of a public engagement plan (see Chapter 2), and a review of relevant plans and studies throughout the county (see Chapter 3).

COMMUNITY INPUT
During early conversations with county residents, the community voiced the following priorities:

- ✓ Protecting the county's small-town, tight knit community atmosphere
- ✓ Prioritizing economic development and growth
- ✓ Elevating diverse narratives
- ✓ Protecting outdoor space for wellness, inspiration, and quality of life
- ✓ Celebrating the unique characteristics of each municipality

After these early reviews were completed, the project team catalogued existing environmental, historical, agricultural, demographic, and socio-economic trends in Chemung County through a series of technical memorandums (see Chapter 3). The memorandums were reviewed by the Chemung County Planning Department, the project steering committee, and local subject matter experts.

Concurrently, the team engaged with the public and local experts through public meetings, pop-up events, focus groups, and board and committee meetings. The team also created a series of educational materials to help explain planning concepts relevant to the county's future. Public and stakeholder outreach efforts are further detailed in Chapter 2. Once the inventory and analysis, public outreach, and stakeholder engagement processes were well underway, the project team began to identify common themes related to pressing issues, opportunities for growth, and a vision for the future. Issues and opportunities were organized into nine "Guiding Principles" (see Chapter 2) to act as the core tenets of the Comprehensive Plan. Chapters 4-12 explore each guiding principle in greater depth, including relevant background data, key takeaways from the inventory and public/stakeholder engagement, and a series of goals and strategies related to each guiding principle.

Finally, the project team developed an implementation matrix of actionable strategies for Chemung County to realize its vision for the future and enact the Guiding Principles over the next several years. Implementation strategies are explored in detail in Chapter 13. After the comprehensive plan was developed and the SEQRA process was complete, the plan was referred by the county's legislature to the County and regional planning boards and the planning boards of each municipality in the county for review and recommendation. The county legislature held a hearing on the comprehensive plan on [INSERT DATE], at which point the comprehensive plan was adopted. [THIS PARAGRAPH TO BE UPDATED UPON ADOPTION]

1.4 Related Planning Processes

The development of the Chemung County Comprehensive Plan was part of a larger effort that included two additional plans: the five-year update of the Long Range Transportation Plan (“LRTP”) and an updated Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan (“AFPP”). To streamline the efforts between the Chemung County Comprehensive Plan, the Long Range Transportation Plan, and the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, the project team developed a detailed transportation and agriculture inventory that could be used for both plans, conducted a coordinate public engagement effort, and combined board, committee, and focus group meetings to collect feedback for all three plans.

LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Long Range Transportation Plans are documents mandated by the U.S. Department of Transportation (“USDOT”) Federal Highway Administration (“FHWA”). LRTPs provide a 20-year horizon for transportation goals and priorities for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (“MPOs”) and inform funding allocation decisions through documents including Transportation Improvement Programs (“TIPs”). The MPO in Chemung County is the Elmira Chemung Transportation Council (“ECTC”).

LRTPs are required to be updated every five years. ECTC’s last LRTP, the “2040 Long Range Transportation Plan,” was published in 2019. The 2025 update to the LRTP included an analysis of existing transportation system conditions and the infrastructure / natural / cultural systems that influence the system; identification of strategies to make transportation investments over the next twenty years; creation of a financial plan; and listing of implementation strategies and strategies for short-, medium- and long-term projects, programs, and initiatives.

AGRICULTURAL AND FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

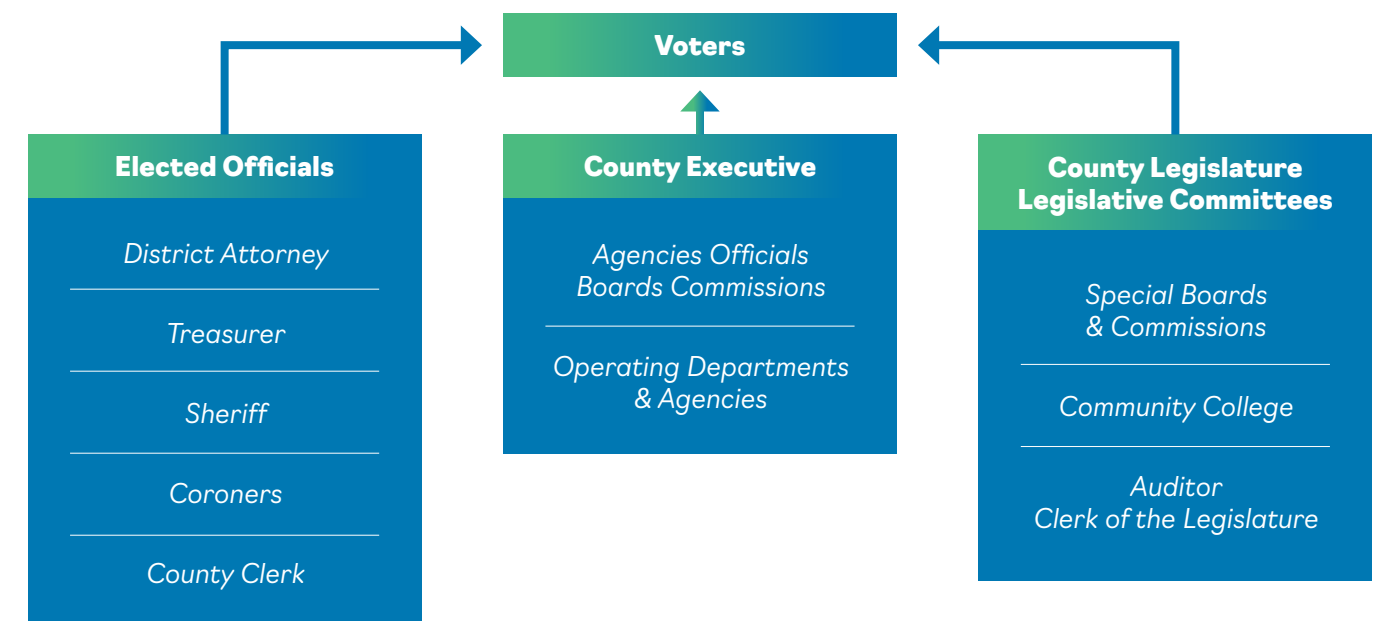
Chemung County adopted its Agricultural Economic Development Plan (Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan) in 2011. The AFPP was developed by the county’s Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board in collaboration with the Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Chemung County Department of Planning. The 2011 AFPP summarized the importance of agriculture to the county; inventoried existing conditions related to the agricultural market, natural resources, and land use and development patterns; and outlined five recommendations with a detailed action plan for the implementation of each recommendation.

The 2025 AFPP included an inventory and analysis of local conditions related to the agricultural market; identification of potentially viable farmland; updated implementation strategies and recommendations for supporting the county’s agricultural industry over the next ten years; and an analysis of the existing regulatory framework governing the county’s agricultural economy.

1.5 What Role Does the County Play?

In New York State, counties are municipal corporations with geographical jurisdiction, home rule powers and have the fiscal capacity to provide a wide range of services to their residents. According to the New York State Department of State Local Government Handbook, “[e]very county has power to enact laws, adopt resolutions, and take other actions having the force of law within its jurisdiction. This power, along with the related authority to make policy determinations, is vested in a legislative body.” Four organizational elements exist in some form and in varying degrees among all counties, both charter and non-charter. These are: (1) a form of executive or administrative authority, either separate from or as a part of legislative authority; (2) a legislative body; (3) an administrative structure; and (4) certain elective or appointed officers who carry out specific optional duties and functions. There are nuanced differences among counties. As a charter county, Chemung County provides for an executive or administrator, independent of the legislature, who administers the day-to-day affairs of county government. Figure 1-1 presents a typical Charter County Organizational Chart. More detailed information regarding the responsibilities and functions of the Chemung County government are provided in Chapter 4.

FIGURE 1-1: COUNTY EXECUTIVE FORM ORGANIZATION CHART, NYS DOS LOCAL GOVERNMENT HANDBOOK



Most county governments in New York State, and nationwide, implement performance metrics and measures. These metrics can be used to:

1. Evaluate financial performance and improve budgeting
2. Identify demands for services
3. Inform county residents of progress and the success of various initiatives
4. Compare performance with surrounding counties

Performance metrics can vary widely between counties. Some county governments will organize performance metrics through a dedicated data and analytics department in the county. Others organize performance evaluations by integrating performance metrics into the annual budgeting process, while other counties will create planning documents and/or interactive dashboards to set performance goals and track progress.

Istrate, Dr. Emilia, et al, "Building Trust, Performance Metrics in Counties," NaCo Counties Futures Lab, National Association of Counties, February 2018, <https://www.naco.org/sites/default/files/documents/Building%20Trust%20-%20Performance%20Metrics%20in%20Counties.pdf> Ibid.

Certain sectors of county government may also track and publish performance measures that are highly specific to that department's function. For instance, in Chemung County the Department of Public Health coordinates with other local stakeholders to publish a Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan ("CHA/CHIP"). The CHA/CHIP tracks broad county trends that relate to numerous aspects of quality

of life, such as poverty, unemployment, and transportation access. It also tracks highly specific measurements that are directly related to public health such as life expectancy, and obesity rates. The plan also uses the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute's County Health Rankings & Roadmaps to rank the county's performance in various health metrics. This is one example of a narrowly focused set of performance metrics that can be used to better understand one aspect of the county's success and quality of life for residents.

In comprehensive planning, performance metrics/measurements are developed by the county or municipality as part of the planning process. Performance metrics for the Chemung County Comprehensive Plan, are listed in Chapter 13 (Implementation Matrix). The performance metrics typically assess the following:

1. Has the County taken concrete action, such as pursuing grant funding, creating planning documents, or initiating capital improvements programs to pursue the goals and strategies outlined in the document?
2. Are there specific, measurable improvements in the county that can be tied to enacting the comprehensive plan (e.g. population growth, specific programs and policies that have resulted from enacting a strategy, a measurable increase or decrease in cost, acreage of improvements, number of successful plans or projects, and others)?

"Comprehensive Regional Community Health Assessment," Common Ground Health, December 2022, https://www.chemungcountyny.gov/DocumentCenter/View/11199/Chemung-CHA_CHIP-2022-Final

1.6 How To Use This Planning Document

This planning document is intended to act as a framework for the actions that Chemung County will need to take to achieve its vision for the county's future in the next twenty years. The framework is supported by a detailed inventory of the existing conditions in the county, a thorough record of the public's hopes for the future of the county, and a step-by-step implementation plan for making measurable improvements.

Chapter 2 of this plan provides an overview of the stakeholder and public outreach conducted as part of the planning process. It summarizes the themes that emerged from the outreach and outlines the vision statement and nine guiding principles that serve as the foundation for the rest of the plan.

Chapter 3 summarizes the existing state of the county overall, including population and demographic trends, the relationship of the county to the broader region, and a brief history of previous planning efforts that have influenced development over time.

Chapters 4-12 are each based on one of the nine guiding principles. Each chapter consists of an overview of the guiding principle, a summary of relevant inventory data, key takeaways from the inventory and analysis and community outreach, and goals and strategies specific to that guiding principle.

Chapter 13 consists of a detailed implementation plan for the goals and strategies stated in Chapters 4-12. The implementation plan in Chapter 13 will serve as the county's framework for actionable steps to be taken in the next several years to bring the vision of the county to life.

DID YOU KNOW?

The New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC)

is an organization that represents New York's 62 counties to state, federal, and local officials. The organization's mission statement is "to foster excellence in county government and unite the voice of New York's county leaders." NYSAC maintains a list of 101 ways that county government serves New Yorkers and their communities. These services include:

1. Protecting the health, safety, and welfare of New Yorkers
2. Managing public health, healthcare, and human services programs
3. Pursuing environmental protection and economic development initiatives
4. Upholding judicial processes and investing in public safety

The full list is available on NYSAC's website at: <https://www.nysac.org/media/pgofyptj/2023-101-ways-counties-serve.pdf>



THE
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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Chapter 2

Public Engagement Summary



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

2.1 Public Engagement Plan

In soliciting project teams for the comprehensive planning process, Chemung County emphasized the importance of inclusive public engagement, broad participation, and planning transparency. The development of the plan was expected to include a variety of stakeholders, including the Chemung County Legislature and other elected officials, community leaders, and other partners. The project team facilitated stakeholder discussions, interviews, focus group meetings and workshops, and other activities to assist the county in working towards gaining consensus. The County emphasized the importance of stakeholder communication, coordination, and facilitation, and the promotion of active participation in the planning process.

With these ambitions in mind, the project team conducted a rigorous public engagement effort, tailoring different public participation formats to different audiences throughout the planning process.

A Public Engagement Plan was developed for the Comprehensive Plan in early 2024 (see Appendix P1: Public Engagement Plan). The Public Engagement Plan outlined methods and strategies to actively engage the community at key points throughout the planning process. The plan included six goals for the public engagement, including:

1. Educate the public on the purpose and components of a Comprehensive Plan.
2. Gather input on key issues, challenges, opportunities, and priorities for the county's future.
3. Build consensus on a vision for the future of the county.
4. Ensure transparency in the planning process.
5. Generate awareness, understanding, and buy-in for the final Comprehensive Plan.

The public engagement plan included a Decision Statement outlining the adoption process for the Comprehensive Plan, as well as for the two plans that were developed concurrently (the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan and Long Range Transportation Plan).

The Decision: *The Chemung County Planning Department is leading the development of three planning initiatives: (1) a County Comprehensive Plan, (2) an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, and (3) a Long Range Transportation Plan. In 2025, the County Executive will send the Comprehensive Plan to the Chemung County Legislature to adopt the County Comprehensive Plan and the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan after recommendation by the County Planning Board and Ag and Farmland Protection Board. The Elmira-Chemung Transportation Committee will adopt the Long Range Transportation Plan. The plans will be used to establish and define a long-range vision with broad community support and buy-in, coordinate various county efforts, enhance transparency, and direct investment and program activities in Chemung County.*

Statement Read: *The public engagement plan identified several methods of engagement with the public and subject matter experts in Chemung County, including steering committee engagement; County Planning Board, Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, and Elmira Chemung Transportation Council input; community surveys; pop-up events at community festivals; public workshops; a project website; social media, print, and other media engagement; and key stakeholder engagement through focus group meetings. These methods are described in greater detail below and in the Public Engagement Plan (Appendix P1).*

2.2 Steering Committee

The Steering Committee was composed of eight members of the county's government, representing the county's executive and legislative branches as well as representatives from the County Department of Public Works, County Office of the Aging and Long-Term Care, and County Department of Planning.

The steering committee met six times over the duration of the project. The meetings are summarized below, and a complete summary of the meetings, with meeting materials, are available in Appendix P2: Steering Committee Meetings. Emerging themes and key takeaways from the meetings are discussed in greater detail at the end of Chapter 2.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Christopher Moss
County Executive

Jen Furman
Deputy County Executive

Nick Vosburg
County DPW Commissioner

David C. McCormick,
County Planning Commissioner

Beth Stranges
County Office of the Aging Director

Mark Margeson
County Legislature Chairman

Mike Saglibene
County Legislature

Brent Stermer
County Legislature

**FEBRUARY 13, 2024:
STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING #1**

The first steering committee meeting for the Comprehensive Plan was held on February 13, 2024. The purpose of the meeting was to give an overview of the three concurrent planning projects (Comprehensive Plan, Long Range Transportation Plan, and Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan) to the steering committee, introduce the project team and steering committee, review the role of the steering committee in the project, and discuss branding and public engagement. The project team discussed the legal requirements, process, purpose and potential benefits of a comprehensive plan. The project team also reviewed the goals of the Chemung County Comprehensive Plan, including establishing a unified vision for the county's future growth and development, creating an actionable roadmap to guide infrastructure and investments, fostering cooperation across municipalities, and supporting grant funding opportunities.

**APRIL 24, 2024:
STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING #2**

The second steering committee meeting was predominantly focused on providing an overview of the inventory and analysis findings related to: municipal comprehensive plans; mobility; land use; demographics; housing; cultural resources; natural/scenic resources; environmental resiliency; parks and open space; utilities and infrastructure; educational and community facilities; economy; agriculture; and public health. Following the discussion on the inventory and analysis findings, the project team discussed the public engagement plan for the project and plans for the first public meeting.

**AUGUST 12, 2024:
STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING #3**

The third steering committee meeting included an update on the project team's efforts to date, with a focus on public engagement activities including the first public meeting, the Juneteenth and county fair pop-ups, the four surveys developed for the project, educational materials, a social media campaign strategy, focus groups, and attendance at committee meetings. The second part of the meeting was a steering committee workshop to discuss the potential goals and objectives to explore during the next stage of Plan development. Topics included workforce development, outdoor recreation, tourism, youth and senior programs, transportation, arts and culture, historic resources, and homelessness.

**JANUARY 22, 2024:
STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING #4**

In addition to updating the steering committee on ongoing public engagement efforts, technical memorandums, and conceptual renderings, the project team presented the draft Guiding Principles for the Comprehensive Plan to the steering committee. The steering committee concurred with the proposed Guiding Principles and locations of conceptual renderings and provided additional feedback for the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations. The Committee discussed the importance of expanded housing choices, including supportive housing, and the need to invest in walking trails and outdoor activities. There was also an extensive discussion of the importance of encouraging active lifestyles and socialization through streetscape and public open space design. The Committee also considered the possibility of shared planning services, which would enable the County to further support planning activities and initiatives in Chemung County municipalities.

**MAY 19, 2025:
STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING #5**

The project team discussed the draft Comprehensive Plan with the steering committee, with an emphasis on reviewing the draft goals and strategies for the draft plan. The structure of the Comprehensive Plan was presented to the steering committee, and the project team reviewed each draft goal and strategy with the steering committee across nine chapters to solicit feedback. The steering committee provided initial thoughts and comments during the meeting and had the opportunity to ask questions, and the steering committee was provided with a follow-up draft of the comprehensive plan after the meeting to provide more detailed comments.

**AUGUST 25, 2025, 2024:
STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING #6**

The project team presented the draft Implementation Matrix and draft chapters. Steering Committee members were asked to review the draft and provide feedback.

2.3 Public Meeting

Four public meetings were conducted over the course of the comprehensive planning process. The meetings were held at different locations throughout Chemung County to ensure that they were accessible to all residents, including the Ernie Davis Community Center, Arnot Mall, Broadway Academy, and (LOCATION 4 TBD). and consisted of various formats including presentation, open houses, and workshops. A summary of each meeting is provided below, and meeting summaries and full meeting materials are available in Appendix P3: Public Meetings.



MAY 30, 2024: PUBLIC MEETING #1

The first public meeting began with a presentation by the project team followed by a public workshop. The presentation introduced the project team and the three planning initiatives (Comprehensive Plan, Long Range Transportation Plan, and Agricultural and Farmland protection Plan), then summarized the inventory findings and the project schedule. The small group activity that followed the presentation consisted of table groups working together to discuss and document their ideas about the strengths, challenges, and opportunities for Chemung County. After the groups discussed these topics, each group reported back to the meeting attendees with their findings. Thirty-three participants signed in at the meeting: these included members of the county government, local business owners, nonprofit organizations, municipal government representatives, and county residents. Meeting participants highlighted the importance of open space and agriculture in the county, a strong desire to increase services for youth and aging populations, the importance of economic and workforce development, better transportation infrastructure, and improved healthcare, among other priorities.

SEPTEMBER 17, 2024: PUBLIC MEETING #2

The second public meeting consisted of a presentation followed by a small-group activity focused on identifying goals and objectives for the Comprehensive Plan. The presentation provided attendees with an update on the progress made on the comprehensive plan to date, including public outreach activities and technical work, and concluded with an updated project schedule and review of the next steps. The attendees discussed goals and objectives within the following categories: Arts and Culture, Historic Resources, Outdoor Recreation, Youth and Senior Services, Workforce Development, Transportation Services, Tourism, Natural Resource Protection, and Agriculture and Farmland. Participants were also given an option to add comments in an "Other" category for recommendations that did not fit into the categories listed above. Ten in-person participants signed in at the meeting, and six participants attended the workshop virtually. The participants included residents, representatives of the county government and the Elmira Chemung Transportation Council, and local business representatives. The small group discussions reflected the community's desire to invest heavily in its future, from strengthening its cultural and natural resources, focusing on its economic development and taking care of its workforce, and emphasizing the importance of creating services and programs for its youth, aging populations, and vulnerable members of the community.

DECEMBER 10, 2024: PUBLIC MEETING #3

The project team began with a presentation summarizing the three planning projects, including progress to date and previous public outreach activities. The project team provided an in-depth review of the results of the four surveys (see “Surveys” section of Chapter 2), and a summary of the feedback received during the first two public meetings and pop-up events held over the summer of 2024. Most of the public input related to aspects of the county that residents most appreciate, like the county’s natural resources and cultural activities. The team also received community input related to strengthening the county’s supportive services for residents, improved transportation system, and expanded recreational opportunities.

An open-house style forum followed the presentation. Participants were invited to provide feedback on the draft guiding principles and recommendations across nine topic areas: County Governance & Administration, Land Use & Infrastructure/ Services, Environment, Agriculture, Cultural & Historic Resources, Economy & Tourism, Transportation, Housing, and Community Health. Facilitators were stationed at boards providing information on each topic to discuss ideas and collect feedback. Online participants were able to provide input through a dedicated facilitator or via an online survey. At the end of the session, facilitators reported back on key discussion points. Twenty-two participants signed in at the workshop, and two participants participated virtually.

MONTH DAY, 2025: PUBLIC MEETING #4

To be filled in after meeting.

2.4 Focus Group Meeting

Focus group meetings provided the project team with an opportunity to engage experts working at the forefront of the county’s most pressing issues. The focus groups provided a unique chance for these experts to congregate and provide targeted feedback, experiences, and suggestions for how to improve the county. Five focus groups were conducted in the late summer and early fall of 2024, which focused on transportation, municipal government, economic development, agriculture, and housing. Each focus group meeting is summarized below, with full summaries in Appendix P4: Focus Groups.

AUGUST 29, 2024: TRANSPORTATION FOCUS GROUP

The Transportation Focus Group was combined with an Elmira-Chemung Transportation Council (“ECTC”) meeting (see “Board Meetings” below). Meeting attendees included representatives from the county government, New York State Department of Transportation, municipal representatives, and the Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board.

The project team began the meeting by providing an overview on the planning process to date, highlighting the extensive public engagement that had occurred in the summer 2024 and the findings of the transportation inventory and analysis. The discussion then turned to the previous Long Range Transportation Plan and was structured as a round-table review of the goals and objectives from the previous plan as a basis for creating goals and objectives for the comprehensive plan. The transportation focus group provided in-depth feedback during the meeting.

Following the meeting, a survey was shared with the meeting attendees and several key stakeholders that were unable to attend the meeting. The surveys included questions about existing transportation infrastructure and future transportation goals.

**OCTOBER 15, 2024:
MUNICIPALITIES
FOCUS GROUP**

Representatives from the City of Elmira and each of the towns and villages in Chemung County were asked to attend the Municipalities Focus Group. Representatives from the Town of Chemung, Town of Van Etten, Town of Horseheads, Village of Horseheads, Village of Elmira Heights, Chemung County, and the Elmira Heights Urban Renewal Agency were present. Participants were asked to answer six questions about the position of municipalities in the county, including intermunicipal collaboration, areas in which the county could best assist municipalities, the most pressing issues for the municipalities, and visions for the future of the municipalities and the county.

**OCTOBER 16, 2024:
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
FOCUS GROUP**

The Economic Development Focus Group included representatives from the City of Elmira, the Town of Big Flats, the Industrial Development Agency ("IDA"), the Economic Opportunity Program ("EOP"), the Chemung County Chamber of Commerce, the Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board, Southern Tier Economic Growth, Three Rivers Development, and Incubator Works. The participants were asked to describe the county's existing economic position, its strengths and existing barriers to growth, and the participants' vision for the future of the county's economy. They also shared specific strategies and initiatives that are likely to successfully create that vision.

**OCTOBER 16, 2024:
AGRICULTURE
FOCUS GROUP**

The Agriculture Focus Group included representatives from the Board of Cooperative Educational Services ("BOCES"), Future Farmers of America ("FFA"), the County DPW, and several local farming operations (Reese Ranch Rodeo, The Hop Guild/Crooked Creek Hops, Honey BeeMade, CalmUnity Farms, Smithome Farms, Lloyds USA Development, and Finger Lakes Beekeeping LLC). The participants were asked to describe the existing agricultural landscape in the county, including strengths and barriers to agriculture, ideas and opportunities for improvement, the vision for the future of agriculture, and potential strategies to implement that vision.

**NOVEMBER 13, 2024:
HOUSING
FOCUS GROUP**

The Housing Focus Group included representatives from EOP, Arbor Housing and Development, Habitat for Humanity, the City of Elmira, the Chemung County Department of Social Services, the Chemung County Department of Aging and Long-Term Care, the Chemung County Planning Board, and a NYS Licensed Interior Designer. The participants were asked to discuss the existing state of housing in the county, including affordability, housing types, strengths in the county's housing market, and opportunities for improvement. The participants shared their ideas for improving the housing market in the county and shared their vision for the future of housing in the county and potential strategies to implement the vision.



2.5 Pop-Up Events



JUNE 15, 2024: JUNETEENTH POP-UP

Chemung County hosted a Juneteenth event on June 15, 2024. During the event, the project team set up a pop-up booth to engage with residents and introduce the comprehensive plan and other planning initiatives. The booth included a free “ring toss” game with prizes, a discussion board, and project informational handouts. Over ninety visitors stopped at the pop-up booth. Visitors were asked to answer two questions: “What makes our county a great place to live and work, and what special qualities should we value as we plan for the future?” and “What would you like our county to be like in twenty years?”. Visitors highlighted the beautiful cultural, historic, and natural resources in the county, strong sense of community, and opportunities to make a positive impact as great aspects of living in the county. Visitors also shared a desire for improved quality of life for all residents of all ages, abilities, and income levels, and improved services and activities for residents to enjoy.

AUGUST 3, 2024: COUNTY FAIR POP-UP

The Chemung County Fair is an annual event held at the County Fairgrounds in Horseheads. The Fair includes 4-H livestock shows, science demonstrations, public presentations, live music and shows, and more. The project team engaged with Fair attendees at a pop-up booth similar to the one used at the Juneteenth event. It included the free “ring toss” game with prizes, a discussion board with the same two questions, and project informational materials. Additionally, paper copies of the project surveys were available for participants to fill out on site. Over sixty residents were engaged in conversation with the project team. Visitors shared a strong interest in investment in new and improved parks and recreational activities and additional support for farmers and small farms. They also noted changing demographics due to young people leaving the county.

WHAT WE HEARD (JUNETEENTH): “What would you like our county to be like in twenty years?”

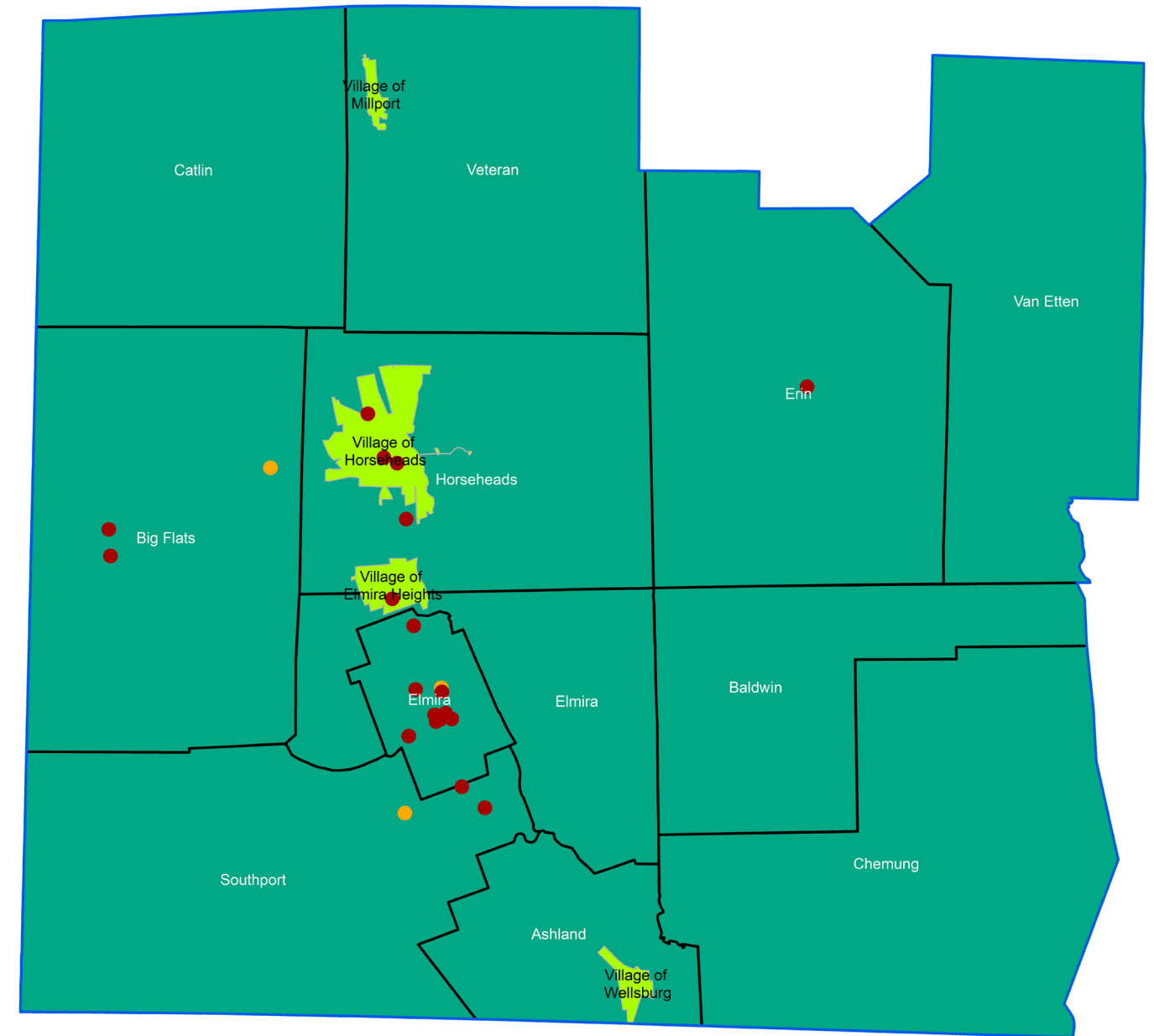
- ✓ Improved education
- ✓ Affordable housing & reduced homelessness
- ✓ Improved healthcare
- ✓ Cleaner environment & green energy
- ✓ Reduced crime
- ✓ Technological advancements
- ✓ Inclusive
- ✓ More arts and cultural activities
- ✓ Growing economy

2.6 Other Community Events

The Chemung County Planning Department attended various events during 2024 to advertise the ongoing comprehensive planning process, engage residents in conversation, and facilitate community input and participation in the project survey. The events/ organizations attended and visited by the county, in addition to those listed above, included:

- ✓ **Erin Wood Fest**, May – June 2024
- ✓ **Elmira Pride**, June 2024
- ✓ **Wisner Market**, June 2024 – September 2024
- ✓ **Elmira Street Painting Festival**, June 2024
- ✓ **Riverfest**, June 2024
- ✓ **Mural Fest**, June 2024
- ✓ **Summer Cohesion**, June 2024
- ✓ **Horseheads Family Days**, July 2024
- ✓ **Minier Brothers**, July 2024
- ✓ **Jubilee Foods**, July 2024
- ✓ **Jazz Fest**, August 2024
- ✓ **Strong Kids/Safe Kids**, August 2024
- ✓ **Elk's Lodge Seafood Boil**, September 2024
- ✓ **Lake Street Lawn Fest**, September 2024
- ✓ **Town of Big Flats Community Days**, September 2024
- ✓ **Octagon Fair**, September 2024

In addition, the Planning Department visited several high schools, including Horseheads High School, Notre Dame High School, Elmira High School, and Thomas Edison High School to talk about the project and get the county's young community members involved in the planning process. A map of public meeting locations, and community events including pop-ups, is provided in the figure on the following page.



Legend

- Public Meeting Locations
- Community Event Locations

2.7 Stakeholder Interviews

Early in the planning process, the Chemung County Planning Department interviewed over 60 local nonprofit organizations, businesses, and government organizations to gather background information and testimonials about pressing issues for the county's organizations. These testimonials were used to guide the direction of the comprehensive planning process and were communicated to the project team by Chemung County Planning Department staff. These interviews together paint a picture of a collaborative, resilient community working with constrained resources. Common themes for perceived county needs included: **affordable housing, workforce development and childcare access, downtown revitalization, improved communications, and outlets for youth programming.**

2.8 Board Meetings

PLANNING BOARD

Regular check-in meetings with the Chemung County Planning Board provided valuable insight into the most pressing issues and most promising opportunities to improve the County's services and infrastructure. The project team first met with the Planning Board in September 2023 to introduce the project and the project team and provide an overview of the upcoming planning process. The team subsequently met with the planning board eight times to provide updates on the planning process and collect feedback. The planning board was asked to provide comments on the project Decision Statement for the public engagement plan and participated in multiple visioning and goal setting exercises.



CHEMUNG COUNTY PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS

Frank Pierce
Chair

Elisabeth Corveleyn

Emma Miran

Mark Watts

Michelle Podolec

Marilyn Paulo

Nick Vosburg



Elmira-Chemung Transportation Council

ELMIRA-CHEMUNG TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL ("ECTC")

ECTC is the Metropolitan Planning Organization ("MPO") for the Elmira urbanized area. ECTC consists of a Planning Committee and a Policy Committee which collaborate on the planning and programming of transportation projects within the MPO boundary that include Federal Highway Administration ("FHWA") or Federal Transit Administration ("FTA") funding. ECTC is responsible for maintaining several transportation plans, including the Unified Planning Work Program ("UPWP"), the Long Range Transportation Plan ("LRTP"), and the Transportation Improvement Program ("TIP"), among others.

The project team met with ECTC three times. ECTC provided crucial insight into the current state of transportation infrastructure in the county and upcoming capital improvements and planning projects. They also aided in developing specific goals and strategies to create a more equitable and accessible transportation system in the county.

ECTC POLICY COMMITTEE

Christopher Moss
County Executive, Chair

Tammy Kocak
Empire State Development

Brian Kelly
Regional Director, New York State Department of Transportation, Region 6

Rodney Strange
Chemung County Legislature

Daniel Mandell
Mayor, City of Elmira

Chelsea Robertson
Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board

ECTC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Nicolas Vosburg
Public Works Commissioner, Chemung County/City of Elmira, Chair

David C. McCormick
Commissioner of Planning, Director of ECTC

Adam Moore
General Manager, CTRAN (TransDev)

Tammy Kocak
Empire State Development

Chelsea Robertson
Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board

Todd Stauring
Regional Planning and Program Manager, New York State Department of Transportation, Region 6

AGRICULTURAL AND FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

The county's Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board is responsible for overseeing the preservation and protection of agricultural lands and products in the county, by advising the county legislature on any proposed establishment or modification of an agricultural district; reviewing notice of intent filings relevant to the agricultural district; and reviewing land classifications established by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets at the request of landowners. The Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board is composed of County staff, staff of the Cornell Cooperative Extension, and local agricultural operators. During the planning process, the project team met with the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board three times to provide updates on the Comprehensive Plan and the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, which were being developed concurrently (see Chapter 1). The Board was asked to provide feedback on the project related to agriculture and to assist with goalsetting for the future of agriculture in the county.



2.9 Outreach Materials

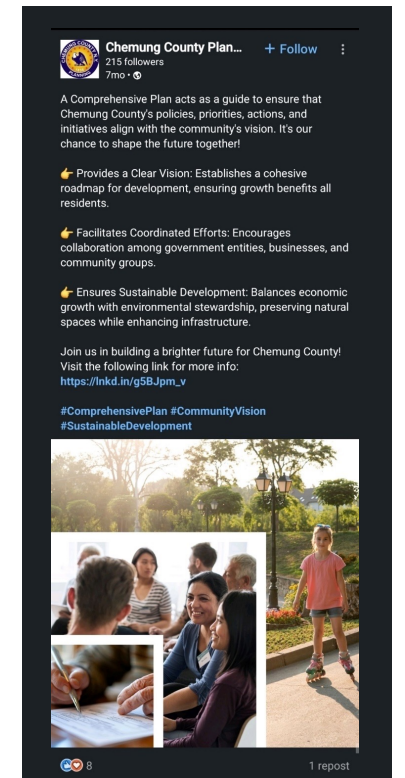
PROJECT WEBPAGE

The project webpage was hosted on the County's website as part of the County Planning Department's webpage. The project webpage served as a central location for meeting announcements and project documents throughout the planning process, as well as providing an overview of the comprehensive plan and importance of the plan for shaping the future of the county. The community was directed to reference the project webpage for updates and information throughout the planning process, and the final Chemung County Comprehensive Plan document will be posted on the project webpage upon the plan's completion.



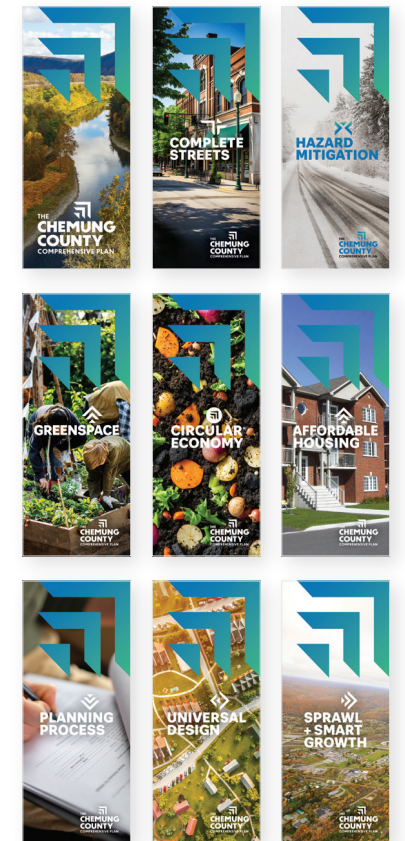
SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

In addition to the in-person engagement strategies described above, the project team launched a two-month long strategic social media campaign to enhance community engagement, awareness, and support for the comprehensive plan; to provide educational resources about basic urban planning concepts that are featured in the comprehensive plan; and to encourage participation at in-person engagement events. The social media strategy included the County Planning Department posting on its LinkedIn and Facebook social media pages multiple times per week over two months. To improve engagement, some posts were posted by other County departments (e.g., County Health Department). Additionally, many of the posts in weeks 6, 7, and 8 included advertisements for the second public meeting on December 10, 2024.



EDUCATIONAL BROCHURES

As part of the county's commitment to thoroughly engaging the public in the comprehensive planning process, the project team developed nine educational brochures describing common urban planning concepts, terms, and ideas. The purpose of these brochures was to make the language that might be commonly used during the planning process more accessible and to help inspire the community's vision for the county by illustrating the possible outcomes of the comprehensive plan. The nine educational brochures focused on the following subjects: Comprehensive Planning, Complete Streets, Greenspace, Hazard Mitigation, Affordable Housing, Circular Economy, the Planning Process, Sprawl and Smart Growth, and Universal Design. The brochures are available in print form at the Chemung County Planning Department's offices, the county's public libraries, and various community facilities (e.g. transit center, Clemens Center, the county's food bank, and several municipal centers). The brochures are available online on the comprehensive plan webpage of the county website.



2.10 Surveys

Multiple surveys were developed to support the planning process and ensure that all residents of the county, including its youngest residents, had the opportunity to shape the county's future. Four surveys were posted on the county's Comprehensive Plan webpage (see above). The surveys were available online through Survey Monkey from May 2024 through January 2025. Surveys were promoted through email, social media, press releases, at public meetings and pop-up events, and through various engagement events throughout the County. Between the four surveys, 1,397 responses were received. The full survey analyses are available in Appendix P5: Surveys.

LONG SURVEY

The long survey was divided into four sections for a total of 24 questions taking approximately 25 minutes to complete: "Priorities and Opportunities" (10 questions), "Overall Community Satisfaction" (3 questions), "Visioning the Future" (5 questions) and "Help Us Understand Our Community" (6 questions). The "Priorities and Opportunities" section asked respondents to score several facets of life in the county (e.g. agriculture, housing, transportation, public health, etc.) on a scale from 1 (not at all a priority) to 5 (highest priority), to help the project team understand which issues are generally the most significant to the community. The "Overall Community Satisfaction" section asked respondents to provide more detailed information about how satisfied they feel with various facets of life in the county, how much they feel different issues are prevalent in the county, and to elaborate on what they feel are the top 3 biggest challenges facing the county. The "Visioning the Future" section asked respondents to provide more detailed information about what they like about living in the county, what opportunities they see for improvements in the county, and how they envision the future of the county. "Help Us Understand Our Community" consisted of demographic questions to help the project team better understand which populations in the community were responding to the survey.

The long survey received a total of 201 responses. The responses indicated that the community is heavily invested in:

- ✓ Protecting agricultural land.
- ✓ Advancing workforce development, attracting new employers and supporting existing businesses.
- ✓ Protecting watersheds.
- ✓ Supporting aging and youth populations, and vulnerable community members.
- ✓ Enhancing recreational and arts/cultural opportunities.
- ✓ Promoting equity and improved access to services.
- ✓ Improving transportation infrastructure.
- ✓ Prioritizing public safety and emergency response capabilities.

Respondents also expressed appreciation for a strong sense of community in the county and its existing natural resources and rural character.

SHORT SURVEY

The short survey was available as a time-efficient alternative to the long survey. The short survey consisted of 8 questions, 2 of which were dedicated to identifying opportunities and visioning for the future of the county, and 6 of which were dedicated to similar demographic questions as those found in the long survey. 947 community members responded to the short survey. The major themes from the responses are summarized below:

- ✓ Respondents appreciate the county's natural beauty, sense of community, cultural sites, affordability, quality of life, and agricultural/rural character.
- ✓ Respondents would like the Comprehensive Plan to prioritize economic development, supporting local businesses, improving housing and affordability, public safety, transportation infrastructure, environmental preservation and outdoor recreational opportunities, workforce development, and improved government efficiency.

TEEN SURVEY

The teen survey consisted of five questions and received a total of 46 responses. The questions focused on learning more about what teenagers in the county love about living in Chemung County, what they envision for the future of the county, what challenges or issues they face, and what kind of role they'd like to play in shaping the county's future.

Overall, the responses generally focused on the following key points:

- ✓ Respondents love the tight-knit sense of community in the county, access to outdoor and recreational spaces, access to community centers like the library, and the county's historic landmarks.
- ✓ Respondents want more activities for young people and teenagers in the county, more places to gather, and more job opportunities for young people. They would also like to see reductions in violence, bullying, and drug abuse, and efforts to protect natural areas and introduce more environmentally friendly transportation options.
- ✓ Many of the respondents expressed a desire to be civically engaged and help their neighbors in need.

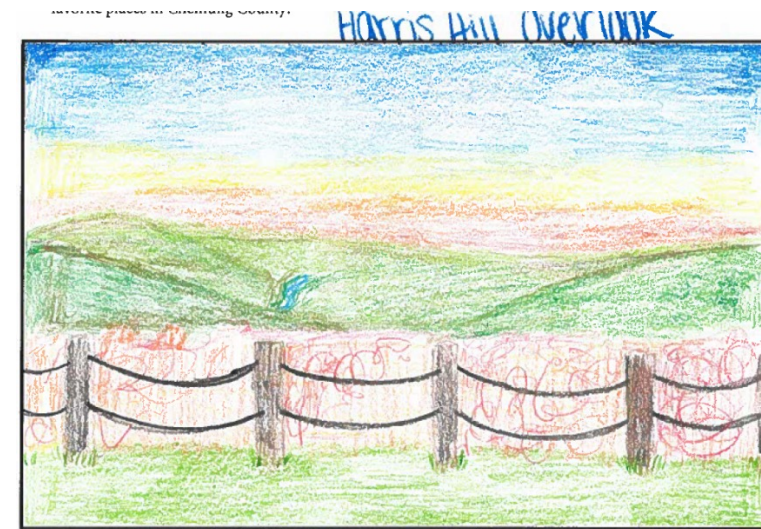
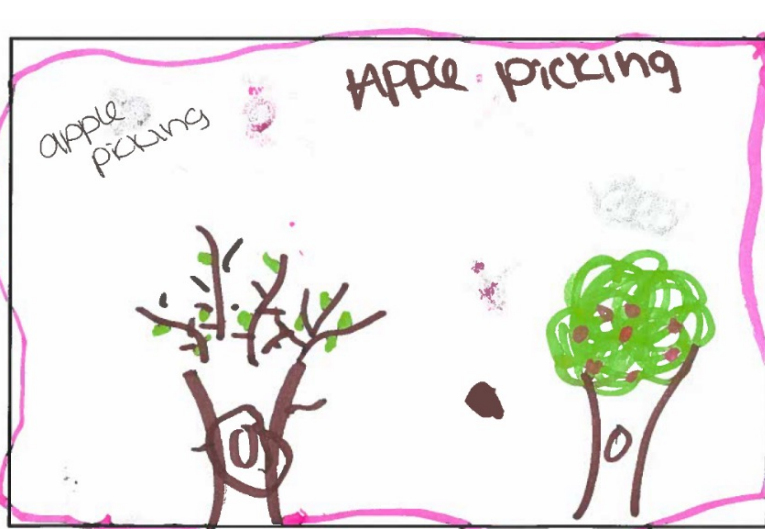
"A lot of people try to help one another. I think we should celebrate how the community can come together"

Teen survey response

YOUTH SURVEY

The youth survey was available to residents 12 and under to share what they love most about living in Chemung County and what they'd like to see the county look like in the future. The youth survey received a total of 203 responses. The young respondents indicated that they love the outdoor parks, pools, and playgrounds; going to school and the library; going out to eat; going shopping; playing sports and bicycle riding; going to local parades, the County fair, and festivals; going apple picking; and being surrounded by kind people, family, and friends. The young respondents also said they want improved parks and new playground equipment, more events and team sports, less homelessness, and a higher level of appreciation for nature in the county's future. Our county's young artists also contributed their skills to show us exactly what they love about Chemung County – thank you to all our participants!

Youth Artwork:



2.11 Emerging Themes

Throughout the steering committee, stakeholder, focus group, and public engagement process, several themes repeatedly emerged which helped to guide the development of the guiding principles that serve as the basis of the Comprehensive Plan. The emerging themes are described in greater detail below.

1. Residents highly value the sense of community, small-town feeling, and strong neighborly bonds throughout the county.

The community frequently emphasized their appreciation for the county's sense of community and tight-knit, small town feel. This sense of community forms the bedrock of the county, and the recommendations that emerge from the comprehensive plan should be aimed at strengthening the community's interconnectedness and care for its residents.

2. The community is dedicated to ensuring young people, the elderly, and vulnerable populations have a good quality of life, access to engaging activities, and extensive services.

The county's residents expressed a keen interest in ensuring that the aging population, young people, and other vulnerable populations (e.g. those seeking mental healthcare, treatment for substance use disorders, the unhoused population, people living below the poverty line, and differently-abled populations) are able to access appropriate healthcare, housing, food, and other necessities, as well as engaging activities and connections with the community.

3. Key, strategic improvements have the potential to catalyze spinoff benefits across different facets of life in the county.

For example, improved access to diverse transportation options, such as micro transit, bicycle and pedestrian trails, public transportation, and enhanced roadways have the potential to help:

1. Young people become more independent and able to access jobs and youth-friendly activities.
2. Aging residents access healthcare appointments and programs at community centers, increasing their health outcomes and reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness.
3. Improve access to employment centers and workforce training programs, making employment opportunities more accessible to residents regardless of car-ownership.
4. Reduce emissions from over-reliance on single-occupancy vehicles, which improves air quality and health outcomes, protects natural resources from pollution, reduces noise pollution, and preserves the county's valuable agricultural and eco-tourism assets.
5. Encourage residents to use active transportation methods such as walking and bicycling, leading to greater health outcomes and improved quality of life.

4. There is a strong desire to promote Smart Growth policies, balancing vibrant downtowns and existing urban centers with maintaining the rural character of the county.

Much of Chemung County is dedicated to rural and agricultural land, and the county's residents would like to protect and preserve its rural and agricultural spaces. At the same time, many residents expressed a desire to increase the diversity of activities and infrastructure in more metropolitan centers such the City of Elmira. Additionally, the community identified opportunities to improve and create new centers of activities by revitalizing underutilized sites such as Arnot Mall.

5. The community values its natural, scenic, and recreational resources, and strongly advocates for increased recreational opportunities and access to natural resources.

During the public engagement process and coordination with local stakeholders, the importance of the county's natural, scenic, and recreational resources was frequently repeated. The community would like the county to work to preserve and protect open space and natural resources while creating interconnected recreational networks including trails and multimodal connections between parks.

6. Attracting medium- and large-scale employers, in addition to supporting small businesses, and investing heavily in workforce development and training is vital to improving the county's economy and encouraging population growth.

Many residents expressed the need for additional employment opportunities and the need to match opportunities with training programs to ensure the workforce has the necessary skills to take advantage of new job creation. Workforce training can help match the workforce with existing and future employment opportunities that are challenging to fill. Concurrently the county should invest heavily in the small businesses that support the local economy and create a vibrant, close-knit community. Investing in the workforce and the local economy will attract new residents, such as families and young people, to the county, while offering incentives for residents to remain in the county. These efforts will attract employers to relocate to the county, all of which will expand the county's tax base and create a better quality of life.

7. Chemung County has ample attractions and benefits that make the county well-positioned to expand its tourism industry.

The county is ideally positioned between major metropolitan areas – including New York City, Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, and Toronto– which acts as a major draw for tourism. The county is also in the southern portion of the Finger Lakes, representing an opportunity to attract tourists from the Finger Lakes wine country to enjoy the county’s historic and natural features. The county’s abundant open spaces are a huge draw for eco-tourism and recreational tourists looking to explore the outdoors. Additionally, the county has unique historical and cultural attractions, including its connection to Mark Twain, its many historic districts, the Arnot Art Museum, the Woodlawn National Cemetery and more. Continued investment in tourism will be important in continuing to grow this sector of the county’s economy.

2.12 Vision Statement

Chemung County is a community of farmers, families, young people, aging populations, outdoor enthusiasts, and visionaries with a common goal of elevating their community with additional resources, activities, and services to ensure everyone has access to a great quality of life. The Chemung County Comprehensive Plan will pave the way for the county to spearhead projects– from improving the county’s housing, to making life more comfortable and exciting for its youth and aging populations, to protecting its environment and natural resources, supporting its farmers, creating an interconnected transportation system, and strategically encouraging growth in its metropolitan centers. Through robust planning processes, strategic intermunicipal and community engagement, and industrious pursuit of funding opportunities, Chemung County will continue to grow and develop into a place that people of all ages and abilities want to live, work, play, and farm.

8. Developing affordable, diverse, and quality housing is instrumental to attracting and retaining the county’s population.

The county has an aging housing stock of predominantly single-family homes, many of which are not affordable for young people or accessible for aging populations. A multifaceted approach to updating the county’s housing stock will be necessary to ensure diverse housing options (e.g., townhouses, multifamily housing, single-family housing, etc.), accessible affordable housing, and adequate senior housing.

2.13 Guiding Principles

Using the vision statement as an anchor and based on the data collected during the inventory and analysis, the public engagement process, and collaboration with countywide stakeholders, nine guiding principles were developed for the Comprehensive Plan, each based on a different topic area. The guiding principles are listed below and are explored in greater detail in Chapters 4 – 12 of this Comprehensive Plan.

County Governance & Administration	Ensure government officials are good fiscal stewards and provide adequate support, funding, administration, and regulation of County processes and facilities.
Land Use and Infrastructure / Services	Promote intentional growth that meets the needs of a changing demographic and enhances quality of life without straining existing infrastructure capacity.
Environment	Preserve and protect existing natural resources and enhance passive and active recreational opportunities, while protecting communities from natural hazards.
Agriculture	Preserve the agricultural character of the County, support farming, and plan for a changing agricultural future.
Cultural & Historic Resources	Celebrate history and culture by preserving and enhancing historic and cultural resources and protecting the unique character of Chemung County.
Economy & Tourism	Promote economic growth and development by supporting existing businesses and an evolving workforce, capitalizing on tourism assets, and embracing emerging industries.
Transportation	Maintain existing transportation infrastructure, enhance transportation network connectivity, and promote safe and efficient multi-modal mobility.
Housing	Provide a range of housing choices and neighborhood densities for people with a variety of household types, income levels, phases of life, and living preferences.
Community Health	Invest in improving health outcomes for all residents by ensuring access to healthcare services and prioritizing community health in broader decision-making.

Chapter 3

County Overview



COUNTY OVERVIEW

3.1 Chemung County's Place in the Region

Chemung County is one of eight counties that comprise New York's Southern Tier Region: Steuben, Schuyler, Chemung, Tompkins, Tioga, Broome, Chenango, and Delaware. According to the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council ("REDC"), the City of Elmira in Chemung County is one of the region's four major metropolitan areas (along with the City of Binghamton, City of Corning, and City of Ithaca). Chemung County has taken place in several regional revitalization efforts, including several of its towns and villages joining the statewide Pro Housing Communities program and driving investment by taking advantage of programs like FAST-NY to support the development of shovel-ready sites.

Chemung County is also within the geographical boundary of the Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board ("STC"), which includes Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben Counties. STC works with the counties to provide grant assistance and technical support on a variety of projects, and also connects the three counties with the Northern Tier of Pennsylvania (comprised of Tioga, Bradford, Susquehanna, Sullivan, and Wyoming Counties). STC supports various initiatives for the three counties, including its Climate Support Communities program municipal support, broadband development and expansion support, technical assistance and grant writing assistance, training opportunities for municipalities, and more. STC also receives funding through the Appalachian Regional Commission ("ARC"), which STC disperses throughout the three counties for various projects, including the Chemung Canal Connector Trail Project, among others. STC's latest "Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2025-2030" ("CEDS 2025-2030") report identifies the importance of collaboration between the three counties to improve economic development throughout the region, and notes the importance of sharing resources, metrics for success, and collaborative efforts.

According to the CEDS 2025-2030 report, the City of Elmira (Chemung), City of Corning (Steuben) and City of Hornell (Steuben) have a higher population density in the region, as well as the land surrounding major roads and in some more developed hamlets. Per capita income is highest in the Town of Elmira (not the City of Elmira, which has among the lowest per capita income in the region), Town of Big Flats, Town of Catlin, and Town of Baldwin in Chemung County; City of Corning, Town of Erwin, Town of Urbana, Town of Wayne, Town of Fremont, Village of Painted Post, Village of South Corning, and North Hornell Village in Steuben County; and Town of Reading and Town of Hector in Schuyler County. Unemployment, meanwhile, is highest in the Village of Wellsburg (Chemung), the Town of West Union (Steuben), and Village of Burdett (Schuyler).

In terms of its economic/retail industries, Chemung County is similar to its surrounding counties of Steuben and Schuyler counties in Department Stores garnering the highest amount of money in each county through taxable sales and purchases. Taxable sales through department sales and purchases garnered approximately \$56.5 million in Chemung County; \$66 million in Steuben County; and \$15.75 million in Schuyler County. Automobile dealers and gasoline stations garner the second and third highest taxables sales and purchases in Chemung and Schuyler counties, and third and second respectively in Steuben County. The data indicates that retail sales and purchases throughout the three counties are similar to each other and does not necessarily indicate on sector of the retail economy that supersedes the surrounding area.

"Southern Tier Annual Report (2024)" Southern Tier REDC, 2024, https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/REDC%20Southern%20Tier%20Progress%20Report%202024_FINAL.pdf
"STC Annual Report" Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board, 2024, https://www.stcplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/2024-Annual-Report_FINAL_PDF_v3.pdf

CHEMUNG RIVER & FLOODING

Chemung County saw its first significant wave of settlers in 1784, marking the beginning of its development into a thriving community. The Chemung River was a vital resource to the county's early economy, propagating the development and growth in population of Elmira and other towns along the river. Elmira, now the County's seat, became a hub for trade and transportation, with highways, railroads, and canals connecting Elmira to Rochester, Buffalo, and Southern Pennsylvania.

Although the Chemung River has been a vital source of economic growth and prosperity in the County's history, it has also resulted in several large flooding events that have shaped the evolution of the county's built environment. One of the first recorded major flooding events in the county was the Big Flood of 1889, which caused widespread destruction on Elmira's south and east sides, including on the Erie Railroad tracks along what is now Erie Street (see Figure 3-1). The total damage exceeded \$1 million, equivalent to approximately \$31 million today.

FIGURE 3-1: THE BIG FLOOD OF 1889 IN ELMIRA, (Source: Chemung County Library District)



In March 1902, rainfall and ice jams caused the Chemung River and Newtown Creek to overflow (see Figure 3-2). Catastrophic flooding was reported in Elmira, Horseheads, Big Flats, Corning, Painted Post, Ithaca, and Montour Falls.

FIGURE 3-2: FLOODING IN MARCH 1902,
(Source: Chemung County Library District)



A devastating flood struck the region in 1972, devastating parts of Elmira and neighboring Corning. Many bridges, homes, and businesses were destroyed by the flood. If a similar flood were to occur today, damages would be estimated to exceed \$2 billion. The 1972 flood started many urban renewal efforts along the Chemung River waterfront in Elmira and Corning. Because of the severe damage from the flood, many blocks in the most severely affected areas were demolished, with plans to replace the development with more flood resistant uses including parks and parking lots. As a result, over 40% of the commercial space in Elmira was lost, creating lasting economic impacts, many of which are still being experienced by the community and the county at large today.

In the last decade, economic development efforts have resulted in several key initiatives and projects in areas previously impacted by urban renewal, especially in Elmira, including new and enhanced public spaces and parks, job growth and creation, and new development. This new development has placed the county in a position to plan for growth and development in a way that celebrates its historic character.

3.2 Municipal Snapshots

See Appendix M3a: Municipal Comprehensive Plans Memo for more information about each municipality's comprehensive plan goals and strategies.

CITY OF ELMIRA

The City of Elmira (2020 Census population: 26,523) is in the south-central part of Chemung County and is surrounded by the Town of Elmira on the west, north, and east, and the Town of Southport to the south. Its southern borders encompass parts of the Chemung River, and a stretch of the Southern Tier Expressway (I-86/NY-17). The eastern edge of the city roughly corresponds to I-86 and Newtown Creek. The City of Elmira, along with the Town of Elmira and the municipalities of Big Flats, Southport, Elmira Heights, and Horseheads, form the major population and commercial center of Chemung County.



Downtown Elmira stretches approximately ten blocks north from the Chemung River to Elmira College. The downtown area is urban in character, with most buildings between 3 and 5 stories, though some, like the Mark Twain Building, reach as high as 8 stories. Downtown Elmira has been shaped by decades of development, changes to transportation infrastructure, and natural disasters. The 1972 flood caused by Hurricane Agnes was catastrophic, damaging buildings, destroying physical infrastructure, and leading to widespread business closures and eventual economic decline. The city underwent urban renewal efforts between the 1960s and 1980s, resulting in the loss of much of the historic urban fabric downtown. The construction of Clemens Center Parkway further fragmented the downtown area, disrupting pedestrian activity and negatively impacting the viability of downtown businesses. Though Downtown Elmira still bears the lasting impact of these 20th century disruptions, the City has undertaken recent revitalization efforts to preserve historic architecture, improve pedestrian connectivity, and attract residents and businesses back to downtown.

West of downtown, the City of Elmira is primarily single-family residential in character, with tree-lined blocks interspersed with parks, schools, churches, and small pockets of commercial activity. The northwest corner of the city includes the historic Woodlawn Cemetery (known for being the final resting place of Mark Twain / Samuel Clemens), the Elmira Correctional Facility (operated by the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS)), and Eldridge Park, which includes Eldridge Lake and a seasonal amusement park featuring a historic carousel.

East of downtown and along Clemens Center Parkway, the character of the City is somewhat fragmented, with some traditional residential neighborhoods mixed with apartment complexes and public housing, commercial and industrial properties, and a large medical complex including St. Joseph's Hospital and the Chemung County Nursing Facility. The east side includes several parks: Ernie Davis Park, Brick Pond Park, and Parker Field, along with smaller pocket parks in residential neighborhoods.

Approximately one-third of the City of Elmira is south of the Chemung River, with a similar, primarily residential development pattern as the west side of the City. The south side

includes Brand Park and Dunn Field (home of the Elmira Pioneers baseball team) along the Chemung River. There are additional neighborhood-serving parks throughout, along with churches, schools, and some multi-family development. Commercial uses are concentrated primarily along S. Main Street and Pennsylvania Avenue.

The City of Elmira is also the cultural hub of Chemung County, with history and art museums, a performing arts center, two locally designated historic districts (the Near Westside Historic District and the Elmira Civic Historic District) and the historic baseball field.

TOWN OF ASHLAND & VILLAGE OF WELLSBURG

The Town of Ashland (2020 Census population: 1,510) is in the south-central part of Chemung County, bordering Pennsylvania and encompassing portions of the Chemung River including the mile-long Baldwin Island and Big Island. The Town of Ashland includes the Village of Wellsburg (2020 Census population: 490). The Town and Village are easily accessed from the Southern Tier Expressway (I-86/NY-17) via Lowman Crossover Road, which crosses the Chemung River near Front Street. The Town also includes a portion of the hamlet of Lowman, just north of I-86 at Lowman Crossover Road.



Ashland was the last town formed in Chemung County in 1867. It is perhaps best known for being the site of the 1779 Battle of Newtown (further described in Chapter 8, Cultural and Historic Resources). A portion of Newtown Battlefield State Park is located within the Town of Ashland. Another key feature is Comfort Hill, a prominent elevation on the west side of Ashland with scenic views of the surrounding area. The 2018 Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Ashland identified a need to expand open space and recreational opportunities.

The Village of Wellsburg is the primary settlement in the town, which has several historic churches and cemeteries and a dispersed commercial center at the north end of Main Street at Front Street. The Village has a traditional residential development pattern with a mix of early 20th century homes along Main Street and some newer infill on side streets. There are three manufactured housing communities, and more rural housing is located throughout the town, though most land is undeveloped. One of the issues identified by the 2018 Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Ashland was the need to meet changing housing needs.

Wellsburg has a volunteer fire department located on Main Street just south of the river, and the Town of Ashland Town Hall is located on 6th Street in Wellsburg. There is a post office in the hamlet of Lowman.

TOWN OF BALDWIN

The Town of Baldwin (2020 Census population: 818) is in the east central part of Chemung County, and is characterized by its hilly terrain, steep roads, farmland, and waterways including Baldwin Creek and Wynkoop Creek. The Town includes the hamlet of North Chemung, which, due to its high elevation, has historically experienced colder temperatures than the surrounding area, earning it the nickname "Icebox of Chemung County." Though the Town has its roots in family farming, the number of active farms has declined in recent decades.



The hamlet of North Chemung is Baldwin's population center, with a very low-density residential development pattern. More rural homes and farmsteads are dispersed throughout the Town, many of which include significant acreage. Most roads are rural in character, and some are unpaved and/or seasonal. There are several churches at key intersections throughout the town and a few commercial businesses and services on Breesport N Chemung Road including a self-storage facility and the Baldwin Volunteer Fire Company.

TOWN OF BIG FLATS

The Town of Big Flats (2020 Census population for the Big Flats Census-Designated Place: 5,555) is in the west central part of Chemung County, bordering Steuben County. The town landscape is characterized by alluvial flatland created by the Chemung River to the south. These wide, fertile floodplains made the area ideal for farming, which spurred the first settlements in the mid-19th century. Though significant development has occurred and active farming has declined, much of the land in the town remains undeveloped. Some areas are actively conserved, including the Big Flats Wildlife Management Area.



Most of the commercial and suburban residential development in Big Flats occurred in the mid-20th century, due to its proximity to Elmira and Corning. The town is a regional transportation hub, bisected by the Southern Tier Expressway (I-86/NY-17) and home to the Elmira Corning Regional Airport. The National Soaring Museum (further discussed in Chapter 6, Environment) is located atop Harris Hill in Big Flats.

The third largest municipality in Chemung County, Big Flats, is a major employment, lodging, and retail center for the region, with multiple big-box stores, auto dealerships and other auto-oriented businesses, hotels, and the region's only mall. There are several light industrial, warehousing, and manufacturing businesses conveniently located near the airport and the expressway.

Housing in Big Flats is primarily low-density single-family homes in traditional and suburban development patterns. There isn't a discernible "downtown" or "Main Street," but its residential neighborhoods are relatively walkable. Housing affordability is a noted concern in the Town's 2021 Comprehensive Plan, with median home values far exceeding that of the county overall.

The Town of Big Flats prides itself on quality of life and small-town amenities, and its Comprehensive Plan aims to encourage sustainable growth while prioritizing regional connectivity, economic development, tourism, and a range of housing and employment choices.

TOWN OF CATLIN

The Town of Catlin (2020 Census population: 2,541) is located in the northwest corner of Chemung County, bordering Steuben County and Schuyler County. This rural portion of the county is characterized by rolling hills, scenic vistas, and farmland. Much of the land is forested, including the 613-acre Catlin State Forest, which is used for hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing, and primitive camping.



The Town of Catlin is sparsely settled, with most development along NYS 414 to the west and in the hamlets of Pine Valley to the southeast and Tompkins Corners to the south. More rural homes and farms are located throughout the Town. There are a handful of commercial businesses, along NYS 414 south of the hamlet of Beaver Dams (Schuyler County). In Tompkins Corners, the main intersection at Chambers Road and Murphy Hill Road includes a church and a volunteer fire department. Along Watkins Road in Pine Valley are several churches, gas stations, small manufacturing facilities, and retail shops.

TOWN OF CHEMUNG

The Town of Chemung (2020 Census population: 2,358) is in the southeast corner of Chemung County, bordering Pennsylvania to the south and Tioga County to the east. The Town encompasses portions of the Chemung River and the Southern Tier Expressway (I-86/NY-17). The Town of Chemung is home to Nucor Vulcraft, a steel joist plant that employs over 70 people and recently expanded its manufacturing facility. Chemung has its own volunteer fire company, several churches, and an elementary school.



There is a cluster of development along Main Street east of Wyncoop Creek Road near the Vulcraft plant. It includes several vacant commercial buildings and a mix of pre- and post-WWII housing. Otherwise, housing and farms are dispersed across the town. The County landfill is located on County Rd 60.

The Town is known for its natural springs, known as Never Failing Springs, which were commercialized in 1880 with the founding of Chemung Spring Water Co. The spring supplied water to residential customers in the region and was used to produce local soft drinks until the time of WWII.

The town has several recreational offerings, including fishing and boating in the Chemung River and a boat launch at White Wagon Road. Farmland Animal Park is a family-owned zoo with farm animals, and a golf club. There is also a par-3 golf course and driving range. The Chemung Speedrome, at the intersection of Main Street and Wyncoop Creek Road, hosts stock car races from April to August. While the park itself is in neighboring Waverly (Tioga County), residents enjoy access to Two Rivers State Park Recreation Area.

TOWN OF ELMIRA

The Town of Elmira (2020 Census population: 6,848) is in the south-central part of Chemung County, and surrounds the City of Elmira on the west, north, and east. Its southern borders encompass parts of the Chemung River, and a stretch of the Southern Tier Expressway (I-86/NY-17). The Town includes the southern portion of the Village of Elmira Heights, while the northern portion of the Village is within the Town of Horseheads (See "Village of Elmira Heights").



The Town of Elmira includes the suburban census-designated hamlet of West Elmira, which is comprised of mostly single-family residential neighborhoods. There is no commercial center of West Elmira, but there are some businesses along W. Water Street and W. Church Street, along with several churches and several schools. West Elmira is home to Pirozzolo Park, which includes walking trails, sports fields and courts, playgrounds, and a pool. The park hosts a "Music in the Park" summer concert series. Other recreational amenities include the private Elmira County Club, and further north, Elmira Reservoir, a popular spot for fishing.

In contrast to West Elmira, the eastern portion of the Town of Elmira is much more rural, comprised mostly of working farmland, forests, and large residential properties. NYSEG operates a substation on Watercure Hill Road, and transmission lines traverse the town from northwest to southeast. A portion of Newtown Battlefield State Park is in the southeast corner of the town. The hamlet of East Elmira is located near the intersection of Jerusalem Hill Road, Breesport N Chemung Road, and Lowman Road.

TOWN OF ERIN

The Town of Erin (2020 Census population: 1,806) is in the north central part of Chemung County, bordering Schuyler County to the north. The Town is known for its Irish roots, having been named by early settlers from Ireland.



Erin is largely rural, with a small settlement near the intersections of Laurel Hill Road and Breesport Road. This is the location of the volunteer fire department, two mobile home parks, a post office, a church, and a few blocks of single-family housing. Like most rural communities in Chemung County, Erin is characterized by working and hobby farms, large residential properties, forests, and rolling hills.

The Town's biggest draw is Park Station Campground, a county-owned recreation center popular for camping, picnicking, hiking, fishing, swimming, and motorless boating. The park remains open through the winter for cross country skiing, ice fishing, and ice skating on a designated portion of the lake.

TOWN OF HORSEHEADS, VILLAGE OF HORSEHEADS, AND VILLAGE OF ELMIRA HEIGHTS



The Town of Horseheads (2020 Census population: 19,374) is in the center of Chemung County, north of the Town and City of Elmira. It includes the Village of Horseheads (2020 Census population: 6,606) and the northern portion of the Village of Elmira Heights (2020 Census population: 3,916).

Together, the municipalities of Big Flats, Elmira, and Horseheads form the commercial center of the county, benefiting from convenient access to the Southern Tier Expressway (I-86/NY-17), NY Route 13, NY Route 14, Norfolk Southern rail lines, and the Elmira Corning Regional Airport. The Horseheads Industrial Center or "Holding Point" is in the northeast corner of the Village of Horseheads and served as a logistics hub during World War II. It now contains a mix of manufacturing, freight, and other industrial uses. It is also the location of the Holding Point Recreation Complex, which includes baseball and softball fields and a BMX track.

The Village of Horseheads evolved from a 19th century canal town to a modern suburban community. The Hanover Square Historic District and adjacent 1855 Extension Historic District are both listed in the National Register of Historic Places for distinctive Romanesque and Colonial Revival architectural styles. Hanover Square is a mixed-use business district with bars, restaurants, retail shops, and services. The surrounding neighborhoods were developed in a traditional walkable block pattern and have a mix of architectural styles from the late 1800s and early 1900s. Teal Park is located within the 1855 Extension District, and features a historic bandstand that hosts a summer concert series. Another historic feature is the Queen Anne style Zimmerman House, former home of renowned political cartoonist Eugene Zimmerman ("Zim"), which now serves as a museum of his works. The Horseheads Historical Society has its office in the former Chemung Railway Depot, a single-story Italianate-style building built in 1866. Horseheads is also home to the Chemung County Fairgrounds.

Outside the Village center, neighborhoods take on a more suburban residential pattern, with most homes built in the second half of the 20th century. Outside the Village, in the Town of Horseheads, the character is more rural, with farms, large residential properties, and forests typical of most of Chemung County. East of the Village is the hamlet of Breesport, on Newtown Creek. Like other hamlets in the County, Breesport has a post office, a volunteer fire station, a church, and a handful of retail and service businesses.

TOWN OF SOUTHPORT

The Town of Southport (2020 Census population: 9,691) is in the southwest corner of Chemung County, bordering Pennsylvania to the south and Steuben County to the east. The Town encompasses portions of the Chemung River to the north and east. It is bisected by NY-14 and NY-328. Southport is rural in character, made up mostly of forested hills. Settlement patterns follow stream and river valleys, and farmland is primarily concentrated in the flatter northwest corner.



The most developed part of Southport is the northeast corner, where traditional residential neighborhoods are seamless extensions of City of Elmira blocks. Commercial corridors are found along Pennsylvania Avenue and Cedar Street, with neighborhood-serving businesses like grocery stores, drug stores, banks, and auto repair shops. There are also some small manufacturing facilities located close to Clemens Center Parkway. The Town of Southport includes the hamlets of Pine City and Webb Mills. Pine City has an elementary school, a post office, a handful of churches and businesses, and Draxler Park, a large open space with a playground and picnic area.

TOWN OF VAN ETTEN

The Town of Van Etten (2020 Census population: 1,539) is in the northeast corner of Chemung County, Tioga County to the east and Tompkins County to the north. Van Etten is one of the smaller municipalities in Chemung County, with a broad, relatively flat valley following the path of Cayuta Creek. The gentle topography lends itself to large swaths of farmland.



The residential and commercial center of Van Etten is at the intersection of NY-224 and NY-34, which was once the intersection of the Lehigh Valley Railroad and Southern Central Railroad. The Town of Van Etten merged with the former Village of Van Etten in 2018. Several blocks of residential homes are punctuated by churches, an elementary school, a bank, a post office, and a few retail businesses. North and south of the former village, land character is very rural, with farms, large residential properties, and a handful of rural camps and retreats.

TOWN OF VETERAN & VILLAGE OF MILLPORT

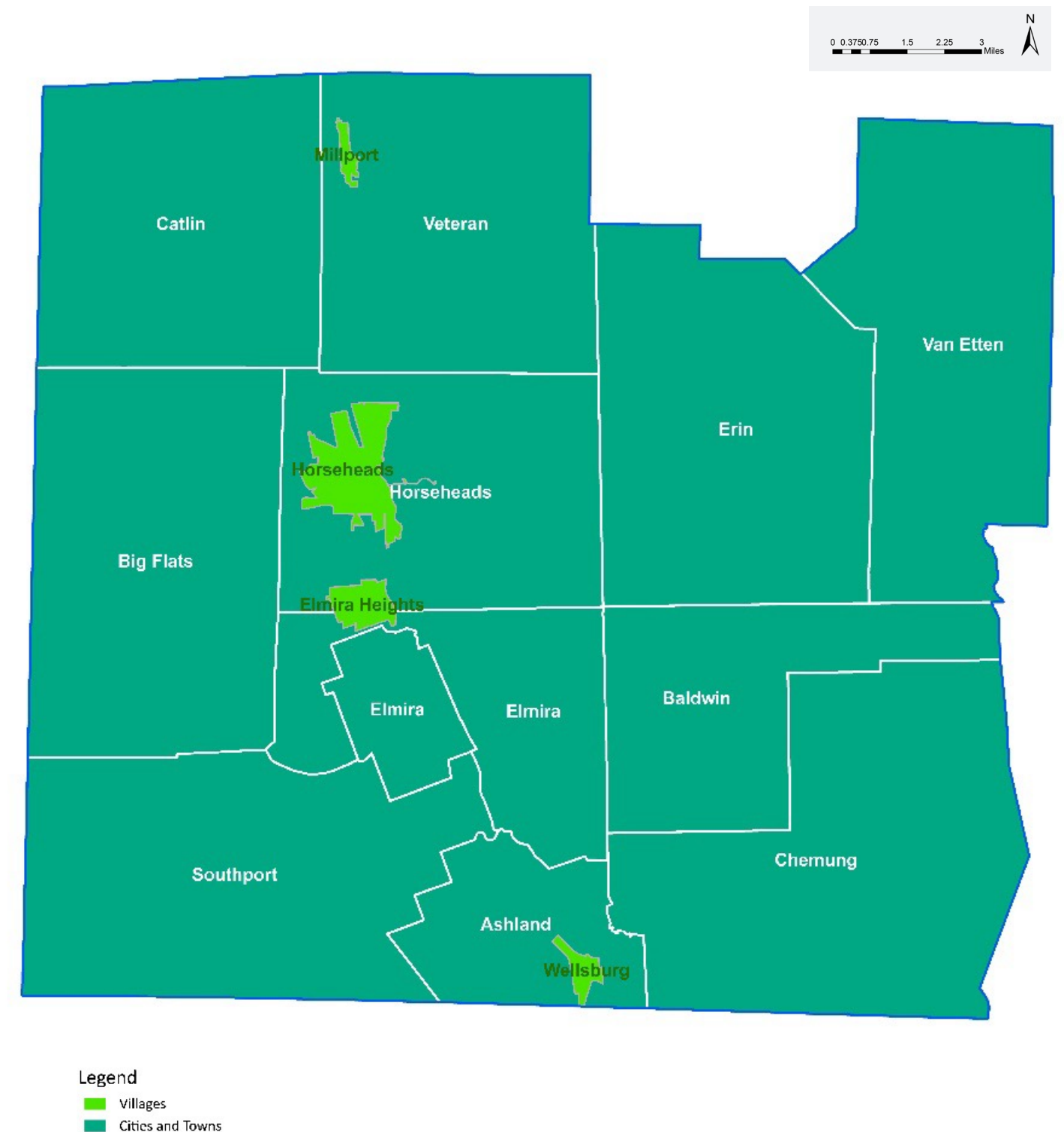
The Town of Veteran (2020 Census population: 3,355) is located in the north central portion of Chemung County, bordering Schuyler County. Veteran lies in a broad, relatively flat part of the county, and is comprised primarily of farmland.



Most development occurs along NY Route 14 on the west side of the town, including the Village of Millport (2020 Census population: 301) and part of the census-designated hamlet of Pine Valley. Millport is primarily residential, with a few retail shops, Village Hall, volunteer fire station, and church. The Village was once a canal port on the former Chemung Canal. It has several historic buildings including a Greek Revival home and a former mill building. There are limited retail, dining, small manufacturing, and neighborhood services in Pine Valley. Some residential development can also be found along NY Route 13, in the hamlet of Sullivanville. Otherwise, the town is rural in character with dispersed farms and large residential properties.

Veteran has several popular recreation destinations for outdoor enthusiasts. NY Route 14 generally follows the path of Catharine Creek, and there are several trailheads providing access to the Catharine Valley Trail and Ek Birding Trail. Mark Twain State Park and Soaring Eagles Golf Course are located in the southwest corner of the Town, north of the neighboring Village of Horseheads.

FIGURE 3-3: CHEMUNG COUNTY'S MUNICIPALITIES



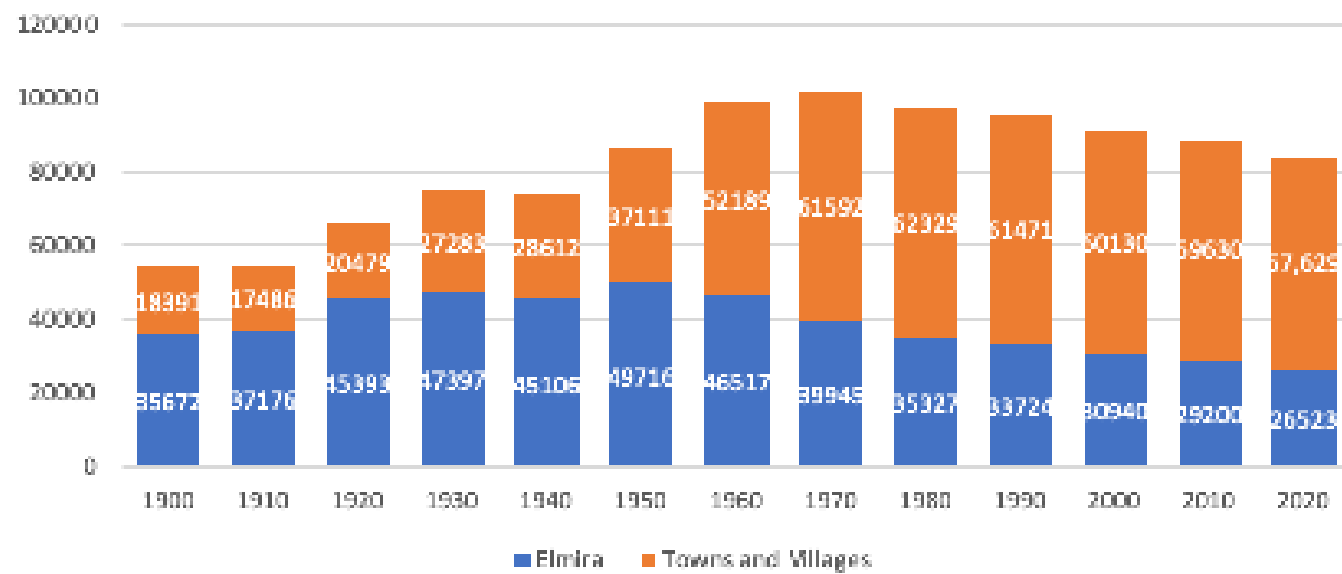
3.3 Key Population and Demographics Data

Understanding who lives in Chemung County, and how that demographic composition is changing, gives guidance on future needs for housing, social services, recreation, transportation, and other factors that contribute to a resident's quality of life. Attributes of a population that are important to consider include size, age, racial and ethnic background, household composition, income, and special needs. Shifts in these characteristics among the various communities and in the county as a whole can give insight into trends and changing preferences. See Appendix M3b: Population and Demographics Memo for more information.

POPULATION TRENDS

Chemung County's population peaked around 1970 at slightly over 101,000 residents and has steadily fallen through the present day, now just over 84,000 as of the 2020 Census. The City of Elmira, the main population center of the county, has lost population at an even faster rate, as indicated in Figure 3-4.

FIGURE 3-4: POPULATION CHANGE IN CHEMUNG COUNTY 1900-2020
(Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Census 1900-2020)



This trend of population loss differs from the surrounding counties. Since 1970, Schuyler, Tioga, and Tompkins Counties have all gained in population to varying degrees – Schuyler and Tioga have had slight dips in population over the past twenty years but are both trending upward. Tompkins County, which includes the City of Ithaca, continues to grow.

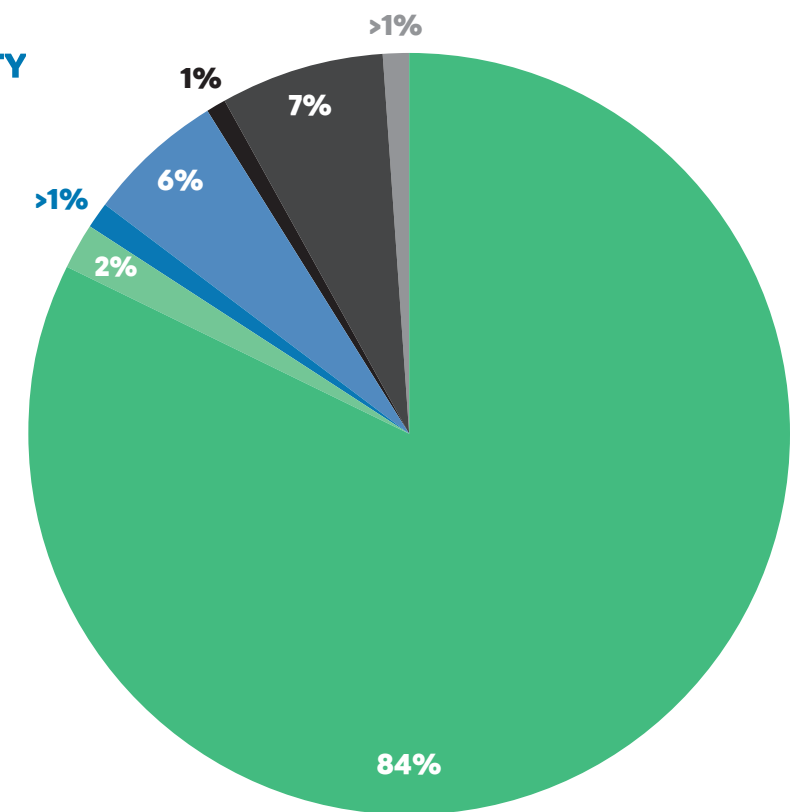
In 2000, youth and children (19 years and younger) comprised 27% of the County's population. This share has fallen over the past twenty years to 23%. Older residents (between the ages of 65 and 84) comprise a larger share of the population, which has risen from 14% to 17% between 2000 and 2020. Chemung County will likely continue to get older over the coming decade, as the largest change has been in the 50-64 age group (a 5% increase between 2000 to 2020) – by the next Census many within this group of population will be entering retirement.

RACE & ETHNICITY

Most residents of Chemung County identify themselves as one race, predominately white. The county's population has, however, been slowly diversifying. Between 2010 and 2020, residents identifying themselves as two or more races more than doubled. Although those identifying as Black has remained constant, those identifying as Hispanic or Latino increased from 2.5% to 3.5% of the county's population. The City of Elmira is the most diverse community in the county and has continued to diversify over the past decade.

CHEMUNG COUNTY PERCENTAGE POPULATION BY RACE & ETHNICITY (2020 Decennial Census)

- 84%** White
- 2%** Asian
- >1%** American Indian & Alaska Native
- 6%** Black or African American
- 1%** Some Other Race
- 7%** Two or More Races
- >1%** Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander



EDUCATION

According to most recent estimates, nearly a quarter of Chemung County residents have a Bachelor's degree or higher. The vast majority of residents have at least graduated high school, and 11% of Chemung County residents have a graduate degree. The City of Elmira tends to have a lower overall level of educational attainment compared to other communities in the county. Overall, the county is lower than the state average for higher education, which enforces the need for supportive measures to bolster accessibility of higher education.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AND INCOME

During the 1990s Chemung County's unemployment rate was lower than the state as a whole but shifted slightly around 2000 when the unemployment rate rose slightly higher than that of the state. Over the last several years the trend has changed course again, with Chemung County having a lower unemployment rate than that of the state. Reference Chapter 9 (Economy and Tourism) for more information.

POVERTY

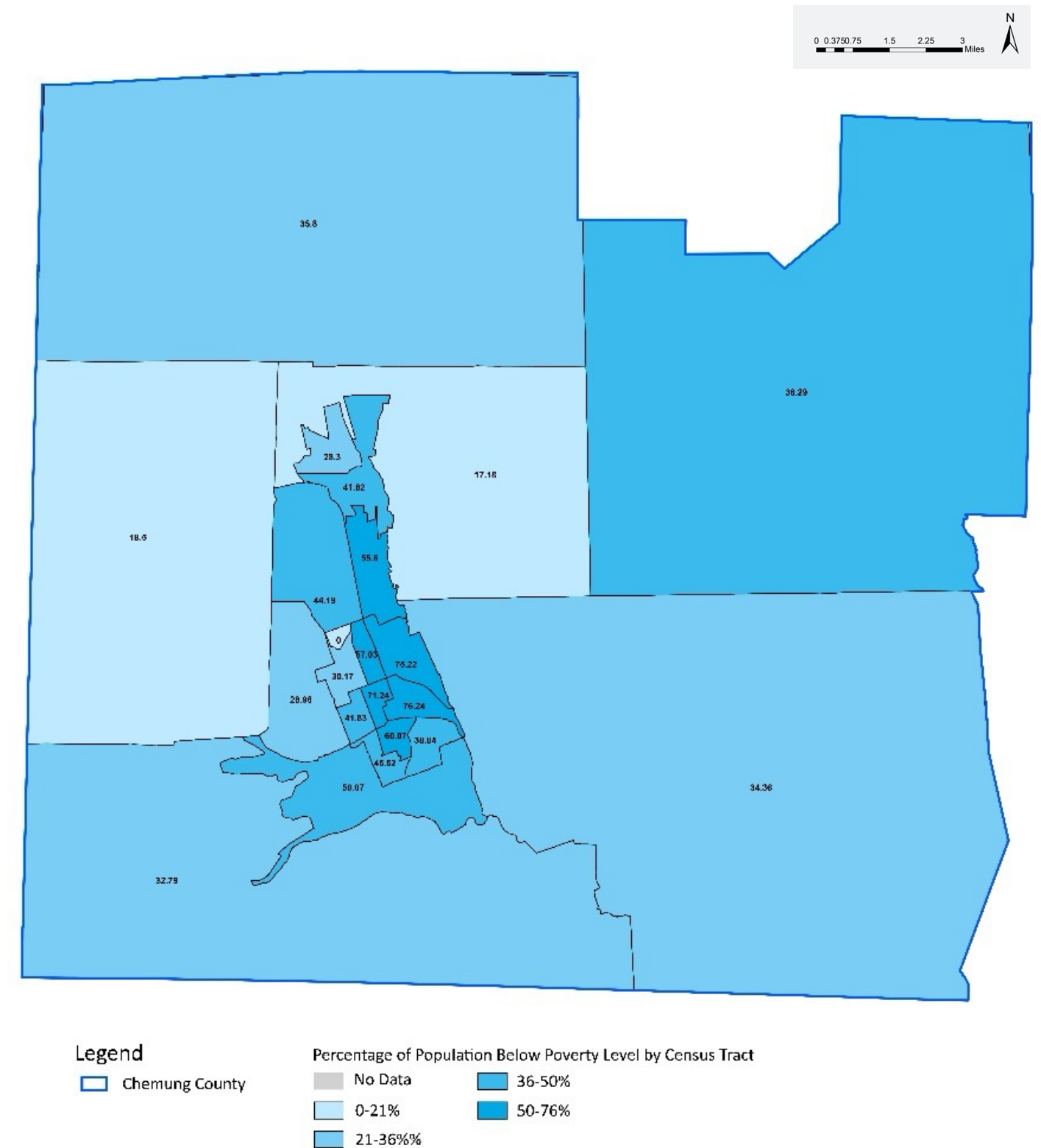
Chemung County has a poverty rate of 15.2%, slightly higher than the statewide rate of 14.3%. The poverty rate varied greatly across county census tracts, the lowest of which is in Horseheads and the highest of which is on the east side of Elmira. Figure 3-5 displays the percentage of the population below the poverty line by census tract in Chemung County, according to the 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year estimate.

U.S. Census Bureau, "Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months," 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S1701), American FactFinder, accessed July 10, 2024, [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSS15Y2022.S1701?t=Poverty&g=050XX00US36015,36015\\$1400000&moe=false](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSS15Y2022.S1701?t=Poverty&g=050XX00US36015,36015$1400000&moe=false)

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development maintains data of Low to Moderate Income Populations by Census Tract in the United States. According to the HUD data, census tracts in the City of Elmira, especially the eastern portion of the City of Elmira, and the northeastern census tract in the Town of Southport have the highest percentage of residents considered low to moderate income. More information is available in Appendix M11: Housing Memo and in Chapter 11 (Housing).

FIGURE 3-5: PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LEVEL BY CENSUS TRACT

(Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5 Year Estimate 2018-2022)

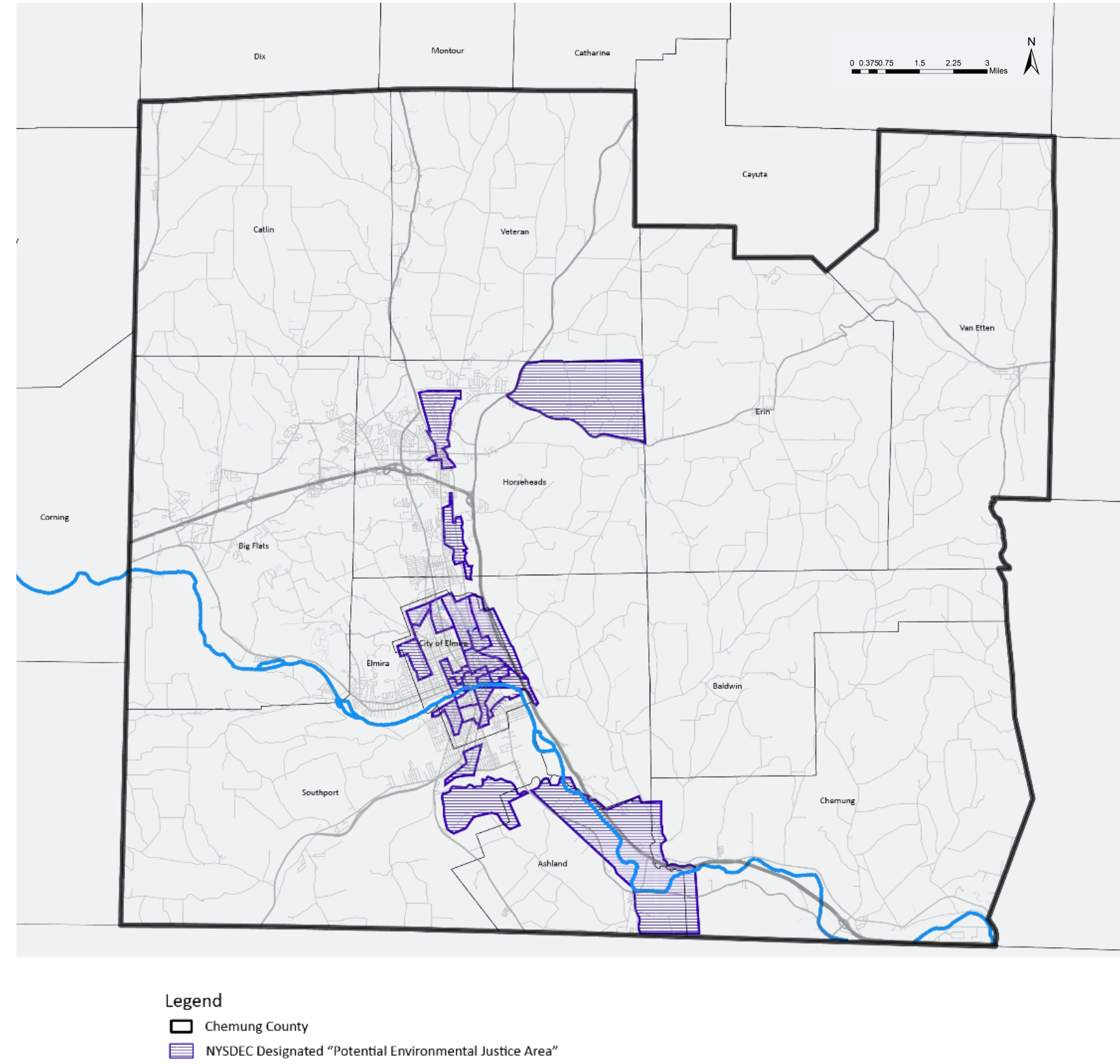


ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POPULATIONS

Environmental Justice (“EJ”) is the fair and meaningful treatment of all people, regardless of race, income, national origin or color, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. Environmental Justice allows for disproportionately impacted residents to access the tools to address environmental concerns across all of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s (“NYSDEC”) operations. In spring 2023, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul signed the strongest environmental justice law in the nation, which provides that the NYSDEC “shall not issue an applicable permit for a new project if it determines that the project will cause or contribute more than a de minimis amount of pollution to a disproportionate pollution burden on the disadvantaged community.”

Chemung County has several EJ communities, mostly concentrated in the City of Elmira with other pockets in the Towns of Horseheads, Southport and Ashland.

FIGURE 3-6 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POPULATIONS



3.4 Planning History

Chemung County was first incorporated on March 29, 1836. Since its incorporation, the County's government has grown to include a 15-seat legislature, thirty-two departments, and ten boards (reference Chapter 4, County Governance and Administration, for more information). The Chemung County Planning Board was founded in 1973 to advise the Planning Commissioner on planning matters, and has provided decades of land use guidance and decision making for the county. A selection of plans that have been published by and for the County are summarized below.

AGRICULTURAL AND FARMLAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN (AGRICULTURAL AND FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN) (2011)

The Chemung County Agricultural and Farmland Development Plan was developed to inventory the existing state of agriculture in the county and set a series of goals and strategies for improving the county's agricultural economy. The plan included five recommendations, and each recommendation included a detailed action plan for implementation. The county is currently updating the AFPP as part of the comprehensive planning effort (see Chapter 1, Introduction, for more information).

CHEMUNG COUNTY AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN EVALUATION (2018)

The initial Age Friendly Community Action Plan was published by the county in 2015. An evaluation was conducted in 2018 to review the implementation measures in the plan based on several categories: outdoor spaces and buildings; transportation; housing; social participation; respect and social inclusion; civic participation and employment; communication and information; and community support and health services. Each category includes several action plans, and the Evaluation provides an overview of the work completed between the Plan's initial publication and the Evaluation's publication.

LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (2025)

The Long Range Transportation Plan ("LRTP") is a federally-required document that must be updated by ECTC every five years. The LRTP outlines the current conditions of the County's transportation system and provides a set of goals, recommendations, and action items to implement the goals and recommendations to improve the county's transportation system. More information about the LRTP and the process by which it was updated is available in Chapter 1 (Introduction).

ELMIRA-CHEMUNG 2045 BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN TRAIL PLAN (2025)

The Elmira-Chemung 2045 Bicycle Pedestrian Trail Plan is a focused planning effort supported by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)'s Clean Mobility Program, designed to help communities identify practical, affordable, zero-emission transportation options. The goal of this plan is to assess bicycle and pedestrian needs and recommend mobility solutions to shift from an automobile centered transportation system and instead embrace a multi-modal approach to meeting community transit needs.

CHEMUNG COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN (2019)

In 2019, Chemung County and participating local jurisdictions created a hazard mitigation plan to address a variety of hazards the County could face, including winter storms, thunderstorms, flooding, tornados, and landslides. The plan highlights risks and existing actions communities have taken to mitigate hazards and prioritizes actions communities can take to further protect themselves from impacts of hazards. Seven hazards were identified in the risk assessment portion of the plan including hail, lightning, tornados, thunderstorm wind, winter storms, landslide, and flood. The plan also identified climate change as a long-term hazard. The County's Hazard Mitigation Plan is currently being updated, and updates are available on the county's website.

CHEMUNG COUNTY COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION PLAN (2022)

The Chemung County Coordinated Transportation Plan (2022) was published by ECTC to identify transportation services and needs, both met and unmet by single-passenger vehicles, in Chemung County. The plan identifies local and intercity transit service providers (including CTRAN, Birnie Transportation Services, Inc., Terp's Enterprises, Inc., New York Trailways, OurBus, and Coach USA, among others), and transportation service purchasers (including Medical Answering Services, Chemung County DSS, Elcor Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, and the Chemung County Department of Aging and Long-Term Care). The plan provides an overview of existing transportation needs in the county and identifies existing transportation barriers. Finally, the plan identifies eight goals, each of which includes several strategies to achieve that goal, to improve transit and transportation accessibility in the county.

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (“CEDS”) (2023)

A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a plan for regional economic development designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resilience of an area or region. The CEDS for the three-county region of Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben counties is prepared annually by the Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board (“STC”). The CEDS provides a detailed look at existing economic conditions, an analysis of opportunities and constraints, outlines locally developed strategies, and sets forth goals to help improve economic conditions in the region. The CEDS also includes recommendations for agencies in the region and insights into forthcoming trends. The document also outlines priority projects, programs, and activities for funding through Economic Development Administration (EDA). Priority projects listed in the most recent CEDS are grouped into categories.

The CEDS identified several key issues affecting economic development in the region. These include workforce development, a region-wide labor shortage, inadequate workforce housing, childcare options for the workforce, and meeting renewable energy goals. More information is available in Appendix M9: Economy and Tourism Memo and in Chapter 9 (Economy and Tourism).

SOUTHERN TIER ECONOMIC GROWTH (“STEG”): CHEMUNG COUNTY STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2023)

In partnership with the Chemung County Industrial Development Agency (“CCIDA”) and with the assistance of MRB Group, STEG published a Strategic Plan in 2023 to align local and regional agencies and economic development partners to advance goals for economic growth and related community development. The plan consisted of four Goals Areas in (1) Business Development, (2) Built Environment / Infrastructure, (3) Human Capital, and (4) Creating Vibrant Communities. The Action Plan Matrix identifies various strategies and actions in each of the four Goal Areas including priority level, timing, relative cost level, and important resources and partners to help achieve each strategy.

“Chemung County Strategic Economic Development Plan,” Southern Tier Economic Growth, 2023

CHEMUNG COUNTY AND CITY OF ELMIRA HOUSING MARKET STUDY (2023)

The Housing Market Study was developed for ECTC and Chemung County. The Housing Market Study analyzed local housing market conditions to create a framework for improving affordability, addressing housing challenges, and identifying opportunities for new housing development in the County, with a focus on the City of Elmira. The report includes a detailed analysis of the existing housing conditions in the county and outlines a resilient growth strategy for the county’s housing stock.

CTRAN ROUTE PLANNING STUDY (2025)

The CTRAN Route Planning Study provided an overview of the existing state of Chemung County’s transit services and provider, CTRAN, and provided recommendations for improving the transit system. The study included an overview of the transit service’s existing structure, ridership trends, system coverage and performance, equity considerations, and finances; a summary of public outreach conducted during the study; and development of alternative transit line options and implementation planning for updated routes.

3.5 Key Takeaways

Chemung County’s communities span urbanized, historic downtowns and rural areas surrounded by rolling valleys. Despite the challenges it has faced with population decline and the impacts of environmental hazards, the county has a rich cultural legacy and vibrant agricultural basis, and its residents care deeply about the future of its community. A selection of key takeaways from the county profile are listed below:

1. The City of Elmira is the county’s largest urbanized area, which connects the county to other urbanized areas of the region. As noted above, Elmira is one of four major urbanized areas in the Southern Tier.
2. The County’s more rural communities are equally as dynamic, vibrant, and essential to the county’s development and community character. From civil war history to a rich agricultural legacy, all of the county’s towns and villages play a unique role in shaping Chemung County.
3. Outdoor recreation is a major draw for existing and new residents and visitors to experience. Experiences like Harris Hill and the National Soaring Museum and Park Station Campgrounds draw in visitors and are an important source of recreation for residents.
4. The County’s population loss has recovered more slowly than that of surrounding counties. As noted above, Schuyler, Tioga, and Tompkins Counties all have populations that are trending upwards.
5. Chemung County has published several previous plans upon which to build the Comprehensive Plan, including plans focused on transportation, age friendly communities, housing, and agriculture. The County is well versed in creating a vision and strategies to improve various sectors of life for its residents.



THE
**CHEMUNG
COUNTY**
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Chapter 4

County Governance & Administration



COUNTY GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATION

4.1 Guiding Principle

One of the foundations of successful urban planning is the ability of different government agencies to work collaboratively to progress planning projects and initiatives. While many land use planning decisions are made at the municipal level (e.g. zoning and site plan review), county governments in New York State are required to work with municipalities when development and planning projects are close to certain intermunicipal, county, and/or state resources (i.e., 239-M review). Meanwhile, County planning authority guides broader development and regulation patterns such as infrastructure (e.g., road networks and utility lines) and spearheads visioning exercises to guide future development. The county is also responsible for helping to identify potential funding sources to implement plans and studies at the municipal and county level. The county can function as a liaison between municipal planning departments and regional, state, or federal agencies by disbursing grants, supporting municipal planning efforts with staff time and resources, identifying collaborative opportunities, and more.

Considering the county's fundamental role in guiding planning and development projects for municipalities in its jurisdiction, the first guiding principle for the Chemung County Comprehensive Plan will be to:

By taking a broader view of the various communities in Chemung County, the Comprehensive Plan will create a shared vision with high level goals both within and beyond the jurisdiction of County government and create a framework to guide municipalities in achieving their future visions.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE:

Ensure government officials are good fiscal stewards and provide adequate support, funding, administration, and regulation of County processes and facilities.

4.2 Relevant Inventory Data

See Appendix M4: Educational and Community Facilities Memo for more information.

COUNTY GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

The County Executive is the County's chief elected official and the County government's administrative head. The County Executive serves as the Chief Budget Officer of the County, responsible for preparing County operating and capital budgets and presenting budgets to the Legislature for approval. The 15-seat Legislature is elected from single-member districts.

Beyond the functions common to all levels of local government – such as police protection and road maintenance – counties are responsible for a wide range of human services that are delegated by the State (counties were originally created as administrative subdivisions of State government to carry out State functions). Chemung County has many departments, each vital to the provision of public services and infrastructure. These departments provide guidance and assistance for aging residents and long-term care resources; civil services; law enforcement and legal services; fire and emergency management; physical and mental health and social services departments; planning; parks and recreation; public records; public infrastructure; various budget, finance, and real property/tax services; youth services; and motor vehicle services. A full list of the County's 32 departments is available on the county website.

In addition to the professional staff who comprise the County's departments, boards and committees are a crucial component of properly functioning County governance. The County has 10 boards and committees, including: Agricultural & Farmland Protection Board; Board of Ethics; Chemung County Land Bank; Chemung County Planning Board; Civil Services Commission; Elmira Chemung Transportation Council; Environmental Management Council; Human Relations Commission; Police Reform Reinvention; and the Transit Board.

MUNICIPALITIES

Chemung County includes one city, eleven towns, and four villages. As noted above, the county often works collaboratively with municipalities to progress local planning and development projects through assistance with purchasing/procurement, grant administration, planning, and implementation strategies. The basis of many of these projects are embedded in municipal comprehensive plans. Among these municipalities, eight have completed comprehensive plans as presented below.

The available comprehensive plans varied widely in detail. For example, the Town of Chemung's plan contains 25 pages; the Town of Veteran's plan is 170 pages; and the rest fall somewhere in between (generally around 100 pages). As shown in Table 1, the years that the comprehensive plans were completed/adopted also varies by municipality. As the county looks towards its long-term goals, it will be important for each municipality to update existing or adopt new comprehensive plans. The County can serve an important role in providing guidance and planning support to the municipalities as they undergo their comprehensive planning processes.

The common themes taken from each of the municipal comprehensive plans provides an indication of which issues were identified as the most important to municipalities to address. While most of these topics will be covered in greater detail in later chapters of the Chemung County Comprehensive Plan, they are summarized below:

- ✓ Strengthening the Economy (also reference Chapter 9)
- ✓ Implementing Smart Growth Principles (also reference Chapter 5)
- ✓ Meeting Changing Housing Needs (also reference Chapter 11)
- ✓ Enhancing Environmental Resiliency (also reference Chapter 6)
- ✓ Expanding Open Space and Recreational Opportunities (also reference Chapter 6)
- ✓ Increasing Options for Getting Around (also reference Chapter 10)
- ✓ Managing Vehicular Transportation (also reference Chapter 10)
- ✓ Improving Administration and Government Functions (see Goals and Strategies below)
- ✓ Ensuring Infrastructure Keeps Up with Growth (also reference Chapter 5)
- ✓ Improving Well-Being (also reference Chapter 12)

TABLE 1: MUNICIPALITIES IN CHEMUNG COUNTY WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

Community	Comprehensive Plan	Year of Completion / Adoption
City of Elmira	Yes	2016
Town of Ashland	Yes	2018
Town of Baldwin	No	N/A
Town of Big Flats	Yes	2021
Town of Catlin	No	N/A
Town of Chemung	Yes	2018
Town of Elmira	No	N/A
Town of Erin	Yes	2024
Town of Horseheads	No	N/A
Town of Southport	Yes	2014
Town of Van Etten	No	N/A
Town of Veteran	Yes	2004
Village of Elmira Heights	No	N/A
Village of Horseheads	Yes	2010
Village of Millport	No	N/A
Village of Wellsburg	No	N/A

REGIONAL PARTNERS

In addition to partnering with municipal entities, the county works collaboratively with regional partners to progress planning and implementation projects across the Southern Tier to the benefit of the county's residents.

The Elmira-Chemung Transportation Council ("ECTC") is the Metropolitan Planning Organization ("MPO") for the Elmira Urbanized Area which was established by the Governor of New York in December 1974. ECTC is responsible for the planning and programming of any transportation project that includes Federal Highway Administration ("FHWA") or Federal Transit Administration ("FTA") funding. Reference Chapter 10 for a more in-depth review of ECTC's role in the county.

The Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board ("STC") is a regional partner to Chemung, Steuben, and Schuyler counties. As noted on their website, STC "works with local governments, economic and community development organizations, and human services agencies to identify issues and provide solutions that will improve the economy, the environment, and quality of life" for residents of the three counties, while also acting as the local development agency for the Appalachian Regional Commission ("ARC") and the Economic Development Administration ("EDA").

4.3 Key Takeaways

COUNTY GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

The county has a robust framework to fulfill a variety of roles to support municipalities and county residents. These include maintaining and improving infrastructure (e.g. transportation, utilities, outdoor recreation space), maintaining public records, providing social services, and planning for the future of the county. The county has a large staff and facilitates coordination with other municipalities and local community members through its various boards and committees. The Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, for example, is comprised of local organizations committed to improving agriculture in the county, along with county staff, and local farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs. While these opportunities are beneficial for creating diverse collaborative networks, members of the public and municipal government have both expressed a desire for more formalized and streamlined channels of communications with county administration.



"Effective local government leadership is essential to meeting the challenges Chemung County faces, not only today, but in the future."

Chris Moss, County Executive

PLANNING BOARD CONSIDERATIONS: Insights For County & Municipal Planning Boards

Throughout the Chemung County Comprehensive Plan, there will be guidance incorporated on how the Chemung County Planning Board and municipal planning boards should seek to address and incorporate the information that is presented. Look out for the "Planning Board Considerations" guidance in chapters 5-12 for an overview of the most important facts and figures from each chapter, and how that should shape the planning boards' actions moving forward.

DID YOU KNOW?

Smart Growth Terms & Strategies

Smart Growth: a series of policies and development choices that supports community choice, efficient land development, revitalization of existing infrastructure, and preserves agricultural land and open spaces. Encourages affordability, mixed-uses, walkability, and preservation of natural resources.

Complete Streets: roadways that are designed to accommodate all users, not just cars. This includes cyclists, pedestrians, transit users, drivers, and anyone else who may use our streets. Might include sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, curb bump-outs, travel lane changes, bicycle and bus lanes, sidewalk amenities, and more.

Gentle Density: a pattern of development which encourages mixed-use development and various types of housing and development patterns which gradually increase the density of a neighborhood while fitting with the surrounding neighborhood's existing character.

Missing Middle Housing: a housing typology that is more dense than single-family homes, but less dense than multi-family apartment buildings. These may include townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, and some multi-family units. Reference Chapter 11 for more information.

MUNICIPALITIES

The common themes that are present in many of the municipal comprehensive plans, as described above, include pressing issues in economic growth; land development patterns, including preserving open space and agricultural land while balancing key infrastructure investments; improving housing and transportation accessibility; and striving for an overall improved quality of life. Each of these themes is described briefly below.

Strengthening the Economy

One of the most important and recurring themes in the municipal comprehensive plans. Most included goals of promoting small businesses and supporting existing ones through various methods. Many of the plans also identified the need to establish a cohesive brand identity, both within the county and regionally, to attract more visitors. Additionally, the promotion and retention of key industries (e.g. agriculture, renewable energy) and development of greater workforce opportunities were identified as essential to economic development.

Implementing Smart Growth Principles

Many municipalities identified a need to overhaul local zoning to reflect their visions for better-designed, more walkable neighborhoods, by including smart growth policies. These policies may include encouraging mixed-use, mixed-income, and infill development; complete streets, Transit Oriented Development, and other transportation patterns supporting multimodal transportation; infrastructure extension policies that support and preserve rural communities and rural landscapes; implementing gentle density and missing middle housing; equitable development strategies; and various placemaking strategies including preservation and enhancement of natural, cultural, and aesthetic resources.

Meeting Changing Housing Needs

Many of the county's municipalities are grappling with an aging population, an average household size that is smaller than previous generations, and a lack of diverse housing types to attract younger generations. Adaptation of current housing stock can play a vital role in meeting shifting housing demands, which may include expanding the supply and types of housing options available. Adapting housing for seniors and allowing seniors options to "age in place" is another successful potential strategy for the county's aging residents.

Enhancing Environmental Resiliency

Preservation of natural environments was a top concern among all the communities with comprehensive plans in Chemung County. Sustainability goals included the preservation of open spaces, sound stormwater management practices, discouraging development near sensitive lands (e.g. streams, ponds, and wetlands), limiting development in floodplains, and focusing development in "smart growth locations."

Expanding Open Space & Recreation Opportunities

Quality open spaces serve as a recreational amenity (especially for youth) and a protection for ecological systems. Some open spaces, including campgrounds and large parks, serve the entire county and often the broader region. Others serve the community at a municipal level, while small parks and playgrounds may serve individual neighborhoods. Chemung County's parks and open spaces fall under multiple maintenance jurisdictions and provide a wide range of amenities. While many are not directly managed by the County, it is important to consider the park system as a whole and ensure that the combined amenities they provide meet the needs of the community. Reference Chapter 6 for additional information about parks throughout the county.

Increasing Options for Getting Around

Improving multimodal mobility through policy improvements, increased services, "complete streets", safety enhancements, and off-road connections were all identified as potential transportation improvements in multiple municipalities. All of these improvements can help reduce vehicle dependency and ensure accessible and inclusive options for all users.

Managing Vehicular Transportation

Roadway maintenance, especially as it relates to protecting roadways from damage due to heavy truck traffic from local industry, and better parking management strategies, were both identified as major issues for vehicular users.

Ensure Infrastructure Keeps Up with Growth

Some municipalities identified the need to upgrade infrastructure (e.g. water, sewer, broadband) or expand infrastructure into new areas (i.e. capital improvements projects) for future growth.

Improving Administration & Government Functions

Municipal plans identified the need for improved decision-making, intermunicipal communication, and communication between municipalities and the County. They brought to light a need for working across municipal boundaries and tying into regional planning efforts, as well as continued maintenance and upgrades of municipal and community facilities.

Improving Well-Being

Municipalities identified the need to improve the health of residents in a multifaceted way, including better access to recreational amenities, environmental quality, and better access to food.

4.4 Goals & Strategies

A total of four goals and ten strategies have been developed in support of the “County and Local Governance” guiding principle.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE:

Ensure government officials are good fiscal stewards and provide adequate support, funding, administration, and regulation of County processes and facilities.

GOAL 4-A: FOSTER GREATER COORDINATION BETWEEN THE COUNTY, MUNICIPALITIES, AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS TO ACHIEVE COMMON GOALS AND ADDRESS REGIONAL ISSUES.

Focus group participants and local community members all agree that coordination between the County, municipalities, and local organizations will be the bedrock of successfully enacting the guiding principles, goals, and strategies of the Chemung County Comprehensive Plan. Continued and improved inter-municipal coordination will assist cities, towns, and villages in achieving their comprehensive plan goals and other planning efforts by expanding the resources that are available to municipal governments for projects (e.g. staff time, technological capacities, etc.).

STRATEGY 4-A1: Establish regular meeting schedules and communication channels between County, municipalities, and local organizations.

The County should create a flowchart of existing means of communication between the County, municipalities, and local organizations to identify potential areas of improvement. A visual representation of the existing communication channels can help the county identify where there are gaps in communication that can be improved upon.

The County currently maintains a schedule of its meetings (e.g. planning board meetings, legislative meetings, common council meetings, and others) on its website. To streamline meetings and improve communication the county should continue to regularly update this calendar. The County may also consider expanding the calendar to incorporate community meetings and municipal meetings where appropriate, as well as public meetings for various planning projects.

Regular “check-in” and/or collaboration meetings between local and county governments and departments can help ensure that officials are communicating regularly to identify priority projects, budget and infrastructure needs, and pressing community issues.

STRATEGY 4-A2: Continue to maintain adequate levels of services during emergencies and spearhead emergency planning and preparedness initiatives through the Office of Fire and Emergency Management.

Chemung County's Office of Fire and Emergency Management, serves as a liaison for the County during any emergency or disaster. The staff act as facilitators of training for first responders and emergency workers and provide emergency response information during an emergency for municipalities and their residents. The staff is responsible for the full cycle of emergency planning, including preparedness, prevention, response, mitigation and recovery from disasters and the damage they can cause. The office also administers federal and state grants, acts as the Fire Coordinator's Office for the County, acts in an administrative capacity for the 911 emergency communication center, acts as the Local Emergency Planning Committee (“LEPC”) Coordination Office, and acts as the Safety Coordinator's Office for the Occupational Health and Safety of County employees and visitors to County facilities.

In addition to maintaining existing adequate levels of service, the County should strive to continuously enhance and modernize its fire and emergency management facilities, training programs, and communications systems. The county should pursue grant opportunities and other funding sources to enhance its fire and emergency management infrastructure and should consider developing a study of the level of services for fire and EMS services to ensure they are functioning at an appropriate capacity. The Office of Fire and Emergency Management also has opportunities to increase its collaboration with surrounding counties and strengthen community relationships through social media and public events.



**GOAL 4-B:
FIND WAYS TO SUPPORT MUNICIPALITIES IN BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS AND SERVICES.**

Several of the municipalities in the county’s jurisdiction rely on the county to support the upkeep of their roadways and other infrastructure. Grant funding for infrastructure improvement projects is often limited and can take several steps to acquire. The county can support municipalities in basic infrastructure improvements and services by allocating staff time and resources to pursue grant funding, helping to coordinate allocation of resources between municipalities more effectively, and providing planning support to municipalities.

**STRATEGY 4-B1:
Support municipalities in pursuing and executing grant-funded projects.**

The county can support municipalities in implementing planning studies and capital projects by making staff time and resources available to write grant applications and solicit cost estimates for projects from local experts. Additionally, the county can be available to offer letters of support to municipalities that are pursuing grant funding.

**STRATEGY 4-B2:
Expand planning support to municipalities through formal agreements, grant support, and other shared services.**

The county submitted a Shared Services Agreement to the NYSDOS in 2020 which includes shared services using the county DPW, Central Services, IT Services, Purchasing and Contract Services, Planning, and Treasurer. A comprehensive overview of the shared services, participating municipalities, and estimated cost savings are available on the NYSDOS website. This agreement could benefit from a thorough review to assess necessary updates and expansion, as the County Executive, County Legislature, and local municipalities collaboratively determine. 239m non-referral agreements should also continue to be pursued with municipalities, to avoid administration labor for actions too minor to warrant county review under 239m.

The county will also pursue funding and support for municipal comprehensive planning and zoning updates. These are important and necessary updates on a 5-10 year schedule, but are also excessively burdensome for smaller communities to undertake alone. Grant funding pursued by the county, including the Local Government Efficiency program, would allow partnering municipalities to access funding for comprehensive planning at a greatly reduced cost.

**GOAL 4-C:
INCREASE TRANSPARENCY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND INCLUSIVITY OF COUNTY GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION.**

The county is responsible for ensuring that its community members are engaged, are able to participate in county planning processes and decision-making and have ample information about county news and updates. The County can improve its accessibility to its residents by pursuing the strategies listed below.

**STRATEGY 4-C1:
Use public meetings and hearings to communicate local initiatives and projects (e.g., development projects). The County will establish an annual symposium to update the community about current and planned initiatives and projects with the intent to publicize and celebrate achievements and services across all departments, with the potential to include non-profit participation to improve collaborate efforts and shared successes.**

Currently, the County uses a variety of tools to engage the public during planning projects, including public workshops and hearings, surveys, pop up events, and more. The county should continue to use public workshops and other engagement strategies to keep county residents informed about local initiatives and projects.

The County makes meetings available via livestream and archives meeting recordings in a database on its website. The Chemung County Planning Department maintains documentation of its public outreach strategies on project-specific webpages, which can be accessed through the Planning Department’s webpage.

Planning Board meetings are another existing strategy used by the county to keep members of the public informed about current projects, including development applications that go before the County Planning Board for 239-M review, and municipal requests to amend or create local laws. The County should establish an annual symposium to update the community about current and planned initiatives and projects. Additional strategies to consider include proactively engaging with different organizations and news sources to create stronger ties to the community, developing and enhancing its news release process, and exploring new and modern methods of engaging county residents and sharing information, such as through social media channels.

STRATEGY 4-C2:
A social media plan will be developed to include clear SMART goals for community engagement, a content calendar specifying key messages and posting frequency, and reviewing existing presence on social media platforms.

The social media plan should identify target audiences, engagement strategies (ex. polls, surveys), and methods for monitoring feedback and measuring success. Guidelines for tone, branding, and responding to public comments should be included in the plan to ensure consistent and effective communication.

STRATEGY 4-C3:
Establish a public engagement strategy to coordinate scheduling between County offices and to provide information to the community.

In New York State, some entities (such as Metropolitan Planning Organizations) are required to publish a public engagement strategy to ensure that the public is kept up to date about current planning initiatives and projects. County governments are not required to establish public engagement strategies; however, the establishment of a public engagement strategy and guidelines for public engagement across county projects would be a helpful tool to collaborate with local municipalities and between county offices to create efficient, engaging, and far-reaching public engagement campaigns.

STRATEGY 4-C4:
Proactively identify and engage underrepresented groups in all stages of County planning processes.

Equitable planning requires early, consistent, frequent, and intentional outreach to underrepresented groups in the community to ensure that all stages of planning and implementation of projects reflect the unique needs and challenges faced by those groups. Therefore, it is the county's responsibility to proactively identify opportunities to engage with all citizens during all stages of the county planning process, including visioning and identifying priority projects, completing outreach and engagement activities for planning projects, seeking funding opportunities for capital / infrastructure improvements, and developing implementation strategies to improve the county as a place to live, work, and play. Citizen involvement will be conducted responsibly, transparently, and across all geographic regions in the County.

GOAL 4-D:
STRENGTHEN COUNTY GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION.

To operate effectively, the County government must be cohesive and efficient in working towards common goals. To do so, the county needs to identify areas in which it can improve workflows and communication between its government officials and departments to complete work on time and within budget.

STRATEGY 4-D1:
Improve coordination between County Executive, legislators, and County offices.

Several committees, boards, and organizations in the county, such as the Rural Association of Mayors and Supervisors, the Planning Board, Common Council, and others work to improve interdepartmental collaboration in the county government. There are opportunities to make the county government more efficient and effective at serving its constituents. The County can improve cooperation between its Executive, Legislature, and County offices by creating common goals, creating guides for newly elected officials of the resources available to them for different types of issues (e.g. aging and long term care, agriculture, public works, etc.), identifying training opportunities for newly elected officials and new department staff to ensure all levels of government are operating smoothly and effectively, and proactively identifying current areas of conflict and inefficiency to enable proactive problem solving and decision making to address these issues.

STRATEGY 4-D2:
Enhance the content and availability of information on the County website.

The Chemung County website is a detailed repository of information on the county's departments, boards, councils, committees, programs, and opportunities. Due to the breadth and variety of information that is available on the website, information about public participation opportunities is often located in multiple locations on the county's website and may be difficult to find without pre-existing knowledge about the initiatives. There may be opportunities to streamline and modernize the website to make the information more accessible to the community, and to improve interdepartmental communication. Consider engaging county staff and community members to determine potential areas of improvement on the county website and consider working with a web designer to make enhancements, if needed.



THE
**CHEMUNG
COUNTY**
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Chapter 5

Land Use & Infrastructure



LAND USE & INFRASTRUCTURE

5.1 Guiding Principle

The way a community's land is developed and organized influences where residents live, shop, recreate, and work. What development looks like, how it impacts the natural environment, and how it influences future land use decisions are important questions to consider as the county plans for its future. Similarly, the distribution and availability of utilities and infrastructure reflect historic settlement and growth patterns and impact future development decisions. Some of these utilities are provided and maintained by the County, while others are the responsibility of individual municipalities or private companies. By assessing development trends and patterns, the community can identify assets to protect and determine areas suitable for development and redevelopment. The second guiding principle is for Chemung County to:

GUIDING PRINCIPLE:

Promote intentional growth that meets the needs of a changing demographic and enhances quality of life without straining existing infrastructure capacity.

5.2 Relevant Inventory Data

See Appendix M4: Educational and Community Facilities Memo for more information. See Appendix M5a: Land Use Memo and Appendix M5b: Utility Infrastructure Memo for more information.

"Land Use" is a term used to describe the primary use (or combination of uses) occurring on a parcel of land at any given time. Typical land uses include residential, retail, commercial, office, industrial, open space, transportation, mixed use, and others. It is important to note that land use is not static and that it can and does change over time.

EVOLUTION OF LAND USE PATTERNS IN CHEMUNG COUNTY

Chemung County has historically been an agricultural county. Maps from the early 1900s show the population centered around Elmira, with agricultural communities located in river and stream valleys. Starting in the early 1900s, the Erie Railroad traversed Chemung County, with stops in many of the rural communities in the Chemung River Valley, including Big Flats, Millport, Pine Valley, Horseheads, Elmira, Wellsburg, and Chemung. Railroads allowed for steady land development and industrial centers to form in the City of Elmira and Elmira Heights. By the 1950s, the urbanized area around Elmira grew north to Elmira Heights and west to West Elmira. By the 1960s the urbanized area had grown to encompass the Village of Horsehead and portions of Southport. After the 1960s, populations increasingly moved out of the City of Elmira to surrounding communities, aided by growing roadway infrastructure (including the construction of New York State Route 17, now Interstate 86, in the 1950s and 60s and the Clemens Center Parkway in 1979) combined with the impacts of the flood of 1972 and subsequent urban renewal efforts. The flood of 1972 resulted in large sections of the City of Elmira to the north and south of the Chemung River becoming submerged. These areas were demolished with the intention of constructing new, flood-resistant development as part of the City's urban renewal strategy, which largely did not come to fruition.

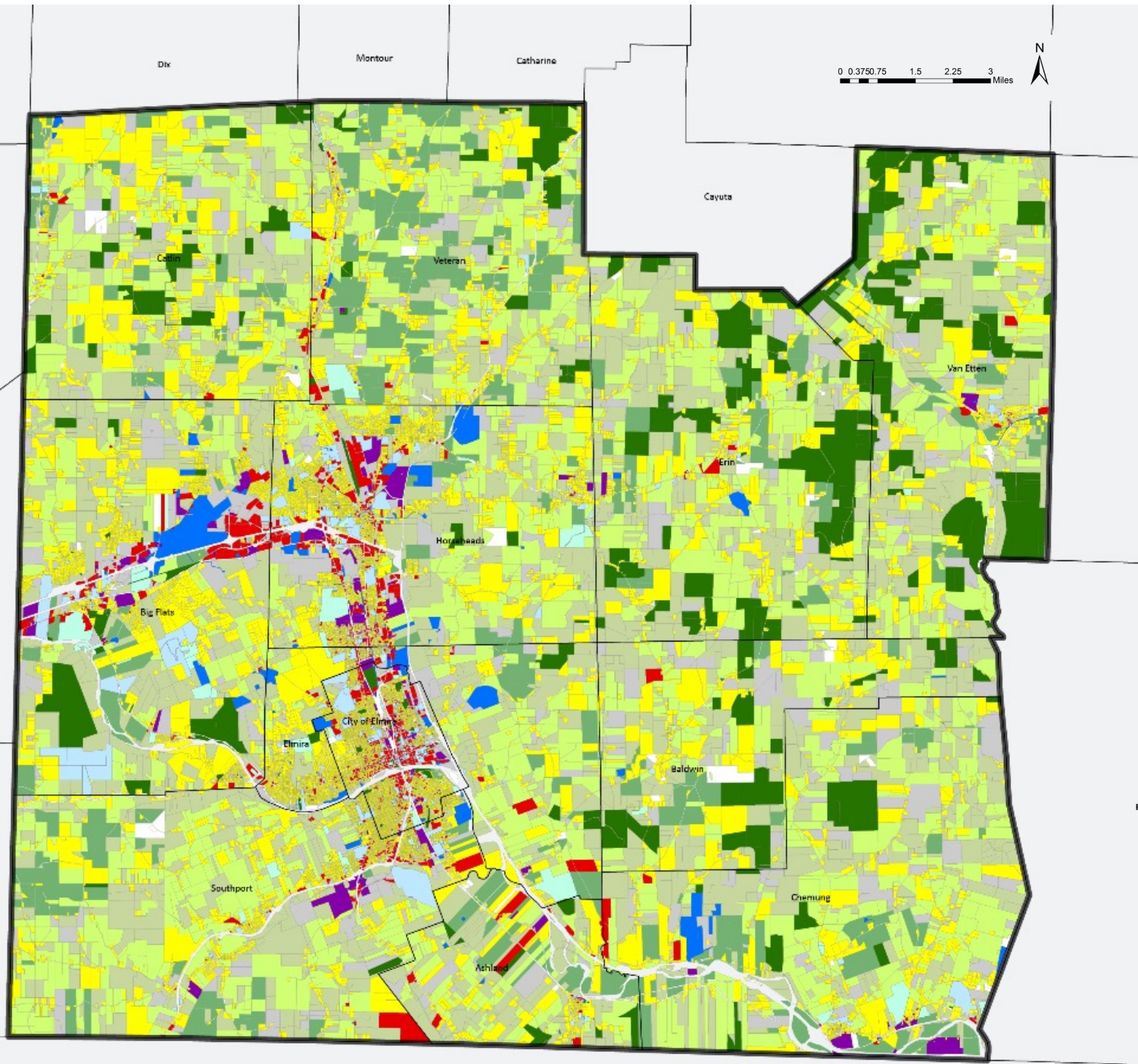
"Map of the Erie Railway and its connections," Railroad Maps, 1828 to 1900 (635), Library of Congress, 1869, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3711p.rr004040?r=0.648,0.067,0.104,0.066,0>
"topoView," United State Geological Survey, last accessed April 23, 2024, <https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/topoview/viewer/#13/42.1455/-76.9102>
"Project History," Route 17 (I-86) @ Exit 131 Stage 2, New York State Department of Transportation, last accessed April 23, 2024, <https://www.dot.ny.gov/regional-offices/region8/projects/rt17-i86-ex131-stg2/history>

Commercial development is concentrated around Horseheads and Big Flats along Interstate 86, located near the Arnot Mall, which opened in 1967. Industrial uses have been primarily concentrated along the Chemung valley. North of the City of Elmira, Elmira Heights is home to many of the region's largest employers, including Anchor Glass Container Corporation, CAF USA, and Hardinge Corporation. Further north, Horseheads and Big Flats have a variety of manufacturing centers, attributed to their proximity to the Elmira Corning Regional Airport and the HOST Business Park. Big Flats is also home to several of the area's largest manufacturing employers, including a facility for Corning Inc. The Town of Chemung, southeast of the City of Elmira near the Pennsylvania border, has seen industrial growth as well, including the construction of a new 750,000 square foot warehouse for CVS Caremark Corporation.

CURRENT LAND USE PATTERNS

Today, Chemung County's land use patterns reflect the evolution of its development and its predominance as an agricultural economy. The following map illustrates land use in the county. Most of the land is agricultural in nature (this may include a residence on the property but is distinguished from residential-only uses).

FIGURE 5-1: CHEMUNG COUNTY LAND USE MAP



- Legend**
- Chemung County
 - Agricultural
 - Residential
 - Rural Residence
 - Agricultural vacant land
 - Vacant land
 - Commercial
 - Recreation
 - Community service
 - Industrial
 - Public services
 - Wild, forested, conservation lands and public parks
 - Null/Missing data

TABLE 1: LAND USE ACREAGES & PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LAND COVER (Chemung County)

Land Use (by Property Class Code)	Total Area (Acres)	Percent of Total Land Cover
Agricultural	21,675	8.6%
Rural Residence	63,915	25.3%
Residential	44,607	17.7%
Agricultural Vacant	67,996	26.9%
Vacant Land	19,320	7.6%
Commercial	3,893	1.5%
Recreation and Entertainment	2,334	0.9%
Community Services	4,116	1.6%
Industrial	1,972	0.8%
Public Services	2,261	0.9%
Wild, forested, conservation lands and public parks	20,092	8.0%
Null or Missing Data	540	0.2%

EVOLUTION OF LAND USE PATTERNS IN CHEMUNG COUNTY

The City of Elmira and a large portion of Horseheads contain the most densely populated parts of the county, with the greatest concentration of commercial and residential uses. Overall, more than half of Chemung County’s land is devoted to agricultural uses (see Chapter 7 for a more detailed discussion of agriculture in the county).

ZONING

Zoning codes are the regulations that control land use and the characteristics of those uses. They are administered and enforced at the local level and are one of the strongest tools a municipality can use to regulate future growth. Traditionally, zoning codes divide communities into various districts based on uses (e.g. single family residential, commercial, etc.).

All municipalities in Chemung County have a zoning code in place. Given the rural and agricultural nature of much of Chemung County, most communities have relatively simple zoning districts that encourage agricultural use in most areas. At the other end of the spectrum, the City of Elmira has 16 zoning districts, befitting a more urban and suburban environment. This includes five different residential districts and seven different business districts. Reference Appendix M5a: Land Use Memo for zoning maps for each of the communities within Chemung County (if available) and for additional information about existing land use conditions.

Several communities in the county also have zoning overlay districts on top of the base zoning districts. An overlay district “applies an additional layer of standards to all areas within a defined overlay boundary, regardless of the underlying base zoning district.” For example, the Towns of Big Flats and Catlin each include a “Flood Damage Prevention Overlay District” in their respective municipal zoning codes to provide additional regulations addressing local flood risks.

Solar ordinances are another increasingly common zoning ordinance in municipalities across New York as the solar industry and demand for renewable energy sources proliferates. As noted by the Sustainable Development Code, the proliferation of solar farms requires a significant amount of land, which may decrease the amount and quality of agricultural land available as farmers seek to lease their land to raise additional income, and for other reasons. A solar ordinance provides a municipality the opportunity to precisely define solar energy systems (e.g. type, mounting, capacity, etc.). Ordinances can specify what is permitted and not permitted and where, and various other development standards like height requirements and setbacks, among others.

“Land Use Tool: Overlay Districts,” *Planning for Hazards*, last accessed September 5, 2024, [https://planningforhazards.com/overlay-zoning#:~:text=An%20overlay%20district%20\(or%20overlay,the%20underlying%20base%20zoning%20district.](https://planningforhazards.com/overlay-zoning#:~:text=An%20overlay%20district%20(or%20overlay,the%20underlying%20base%20zoning%20district.)
“Commercial Solar Development on Farmland,” *Sustainable Development Code*, last accessed July 3, 2025, <https://sustainablecitycode.org/brief/commercial-solar-development-on-farmlands-2/>
Ibid.

WATER

Chemung County has a well-developed water program for its residents to ensure that they are supplied with safe drinking water. According to county estimates, over 80% of Chemung County residents are served by public water supplies (note that, according to the NYS Department of Health, approximately 95% of the state's residents receive their water from public water supplies). The county regulates all public water supplies, including Community Water Systems, Non-Transient Non-Community Water Systems, and Non-Community Water Systems, in accordance with Subpart 5-1 of the NYS Sanitary Code. Additionally, the county offers guidance and support wherever necessary in the public water sector. As with all counties of NYS, public water supplies in the county follow New York Department of Health (“NYSDOH”) standards as well as the standards set forth by the Environmental Protection Agency. There are 25 community water systems in the county that are required to prepare and distribute an Annual Water Quality Report (“AWQR”), which are posted on the county’s website.

“Drinking Water Program,” *Chemung County New York*, last accessed September 5, 2024, <https://www.chemungcountyny.gov/905/Drinking-Water>
“Drinking Water Program: Facts and Figures,” *New York State Department of Health*, last accessed July 2, 2025, https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/facts_figures.htm
“Annual Water Quality Reports,” *Chemung County New York*, last accessed September 5, 2024, <https://www.chemungcountyny.gov/754/Annual-Water-Quality-Reports>

Private Water Supplies

Although most of the County’s population is served by public water, nearly 20% of residents are still served by private water supplies. The Chemung County Environmental Health Service bureau provides guidance and technical support on matters relating to private wells and other private water supplies. This includes information on well disinfection and water sampling as well as fact sheets with resources explaining regulations pertaining to private water supplies.

Chemung County Water Quality Strategy Committee (“WQSC”)

The Chemung County Water Quality Strategy Committee (“WQSC”) was formed to bring local, county, state, and federal organizations together to address nonpoint pollution problems. The WQSC aims to “protect public drinking water sources from potential contamination” through participation in the New York State Drinking Water Source Protection Program, and to “Monitor private drinking water quality and correct identified problems” by partnering with the Environmental Services Section of the Chemung County Health Department to encourage annual testing of private wells.

“Water Quality Strategy Committee,” *Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board*, last accessed December 13, 2024, <https://www.stcplanning.org/technical-assistance/chemung-county-water-quality-strategy-committee/#:~:text=The%20Chemung%20County%20Water%20Quality,to%20address%20nonpoint%20pollution%20problems.>
Ibid.

Elmira Water Board

The Elmira Water Board (“EWB”) maintains over 225 miles of public water mains in the City of Elmira, Village of Elmira Heights, and portions of the Towns of Elmira, Horseheads, and Southport. The EWB has treatment and distribution facilities throughout Chemung County and is responsible for all connecting waterlines, meters, meter connections, and remote-read devices. In its 2023 annual report the EWB estimated it distributed nearly 2 billion gallons of water a year to more than 54,000 people and nearly 1,300 fire hydrants. The EWB is also working diligently to update aging water mains and other infrastructure in the county, using grant funding from New York State and the American Rescue Plan.

“Elmira Water Board 2023 Annual Report,” the Elmira Water Board, April 30, 2024, <https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/ed9b89c3-9e23-4eb4-ad6b-a1e963e5918b/downloads/2023%20Annual%20Report.pdf?ver=1722968551811>

SANITARY SEWER

Chemung County’s wastewater collection system is run by two separate districts: the Chemung County Elmira Sewer District and Chemung County Sewer District 1. These systems contain over 280 miles of sewer mains with 12,000 manholes. This wastewater collection system serves nearly 80% of the 35,000 households and over 90% of all businesses throughout Chemung County.

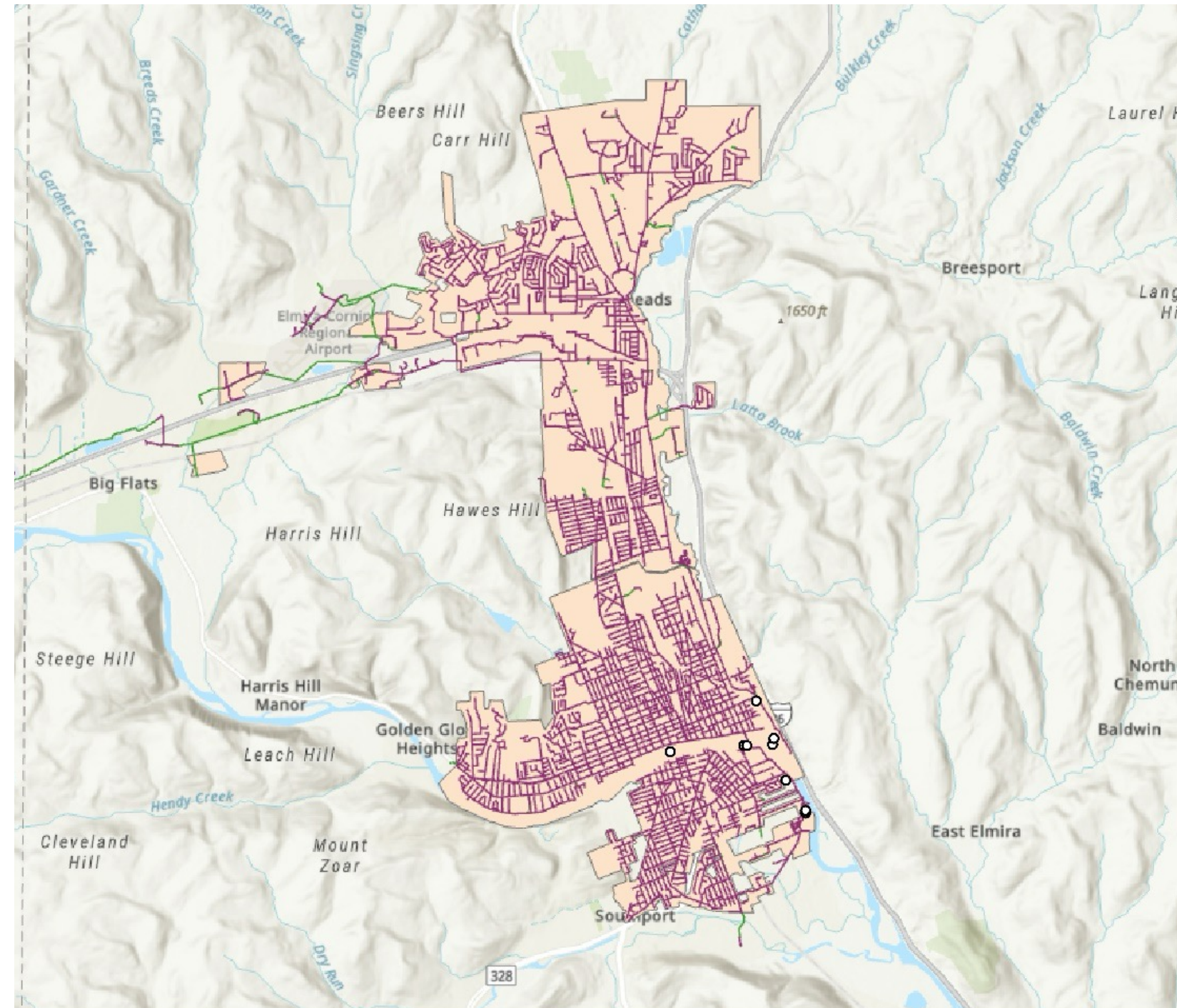
CHEMUNG COUNTY ELMIRA SEWER DISTRICT AND SEWER DISTRICT 1

The Chemung County Elmira Sewer District empties to a treatment facility located on Milton Street in the City of Elmira (“Milton Street WWTP”), and Sewer District 1 formerly emptied to the Lake Street Wastewater Treatment Plan in Horseheads (“Lake Street WWTP”).

The County is currently advancing a multi-year project to build a consolidated Sewer District Wastewater Treatment Plant system, combining all wastewater flows for treatment at the Milton Street WWTP and decommissioning the Lake Street WWTP. Chemung County has been pursuing a variety of state and federal funding sources to facilitate the project and lessen the cost burden on sewer users in the County. The decommissioned Lake Street WWTP will continue to house the sewer system field operations and maintenance crew along with current plans to construct a new composting facility at the site to expand upon the County’s current composting program.

Alexandra Rennie, “News Release – Chemung County Sewer Districts Consolidation Project Funding Statement,” Chemung County News, March 15, 2024, <https://www.chemungcountyny.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=172>

FIGURE 5-2: MAP OF CHEMUNG COUNTY’S SANITARY SEWER COLLECTION SYSTEM



- Legend**
- Combined Sewer Overflow Outfalls
 - Chemung Sewer Districts
 - Forced Sewer
 - Gravity Sewer

ELECTRICITY & NATURAL GAS

New York State Electric & Gas (“NYSEG”), a subsidiary of Avangrid, is the primary provider of electric and natural gas utility services in Chemung County. NYSEG delivers power to over 40,000 customers in Chemung County.

Table 2 provides a breakdown of the total number of customers served by NYSEG in each of the county’s municipalities.

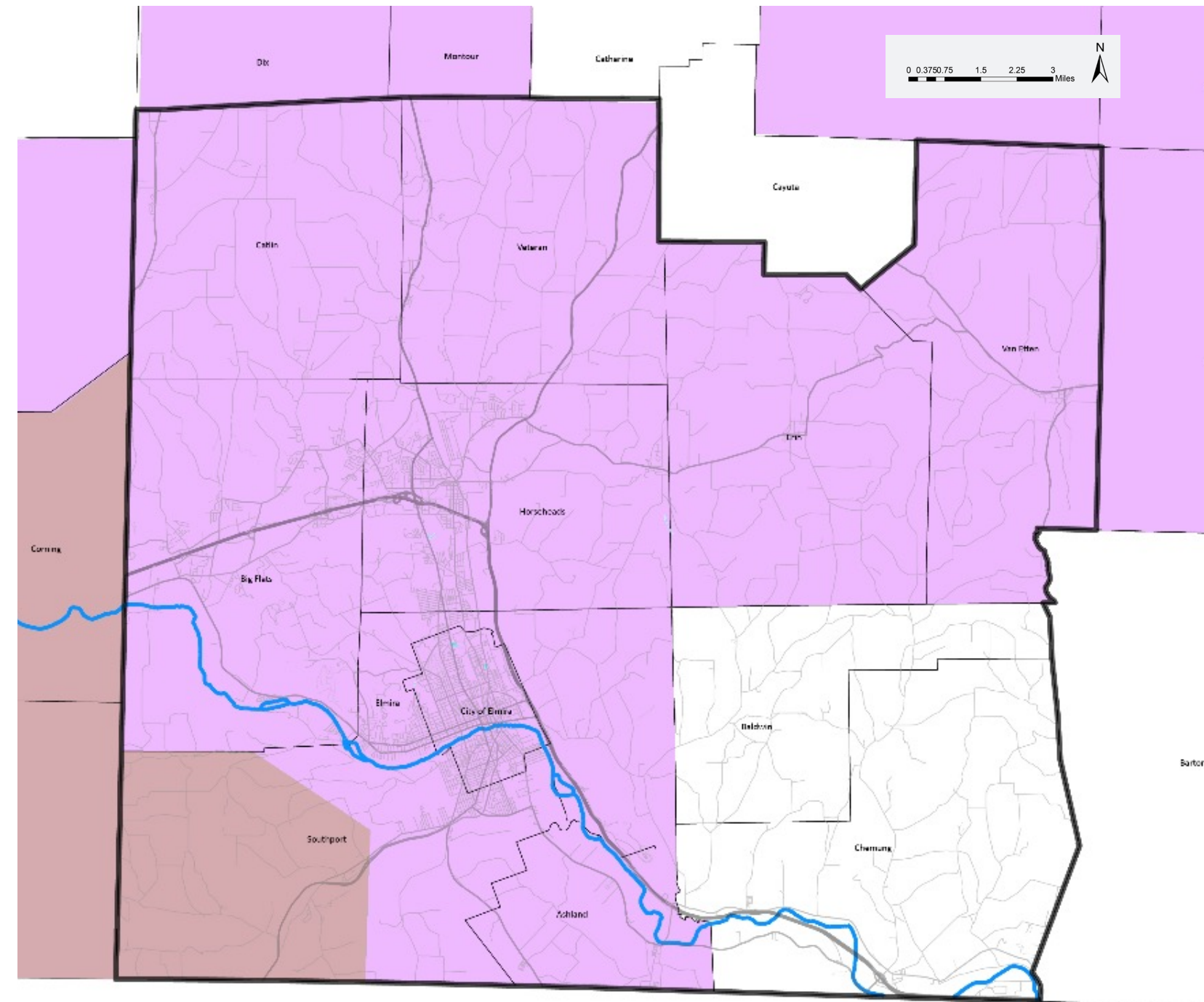
Additional natural gas utilities are provided by Corning Natural Gas (see Figure 5-3). Additional electric utilities are provided by FirstEnergy and the Tri-County Rural Electric Co-op, which account for less than 50 customers.

“Electric and Gas Utility Service Territory by County,” New York State Department of Public Service, last accessed September 25, 2024, <https://dps.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2022/10/nys-electric-and-gas-utilities-by-county.pdf>

TABLE 2: NYSEG CUSTOMERS BY MUNICIPALITY/TOWNSHIP
(Source: Carly Norton, Municipal & Community Relations Manager, NYSEG, OCTOBER 4, 2024.)

Municipality/Township	Total Customers by Municipality/Township
City of Elmira	11,507
Town of Ashland	563
Town of Baldwin	397
Town of Big Flats	4,145
Town of Catlin	1,211
Town of Chemung	1,112
Town of Elmira	2,899
Town of Erin	890
Town of Horseheads	4,775
Town of Southport	4,626
Town of Van Etten	693
Town of Veteran	1,371
Village of Elmira Heights	1,398
Village of Horseheads	3,472
Village of Millport	133
Village of Wellsburg	252

FIGURE 5-3: CHEMUNG COUNTY LAND USE MAP



Legend

- Chemung County
- NYS Electric and Gas
- Corning Natural Gas

The Municipal Electric & Gas Alliance

Since 2008, Chemung County has been a member of the Municipal Electric and Gas Alliance (“MEGA”), an aggregator of electricity, natural gas and renewable power. MEGA’s mission involves compiling the most competitive prices for electricity and natural gas for its members to minimize the cost of energy for everyday consumers. MEGA provides for more than 30 county governments in New York State and over 250 municipalities including school districts.

“Chemung County Energy Efficient Initiatives,” Chemung County, October 7, 2019, <https://www.chemungcountyny.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1070/Chemung-County-Green-Initiative-PDF>

Grid Capacity and Electric Vehicle Capacity in Chemung County

The “New York Power Grid Study” was published on January 19, 2021, to identify opportunities for distribution and local transmission upgrades, and bulk transmission investments to support the state’s power grid, identify opportunities to integrate offshore wind, and evaluate opportunities to support the “Zero-Emissions Electric Grid in New York by 2040” initiative. The report identifies several projects to conduct in the Elmira/Bath/Hornell/Montour Falls area, including transmission and power station upgrades and upgrades to renewable energy capacity. Subsequently, NYSERDA launched a Grid Modernization Program that provides funding under three opportunity programs: Distributed Energy Resource Integration, High Performing Grid, and Future Grid. Additionally, New York State was awarded \$24 million in 2023 through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Federal Funding, through which it is funding “PON 5737: Technical Assistance Funding to Develop Grid Modernization Projects.” PON 5737 is available to municipal electric utilities and rural electric cooperates for technical assistance awards of up to \$200,000 per applicant. These programs and grid upgrades will help all counties in New York State make essential upgrades for New York State to become a zero-emission grid in 2040. Reference Chapter 10 for additional discussion of transportation infrastructure.

“New York Power Grid Study,” NYSERDA, January 19, 2021, <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/About/Publications/Energy-Analysis-Reports-and-Studies/Electric-Power-Transmission-and-Distribution-Reports/Electric-Power-Transmission-and-Distribution-Reports---Archive/New-York-Power-Grid-Study>

“Grid Modernization Program,” NYSERDA, last accessed January 5, 2025, <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/Grid-Modernization-Program>

Ibid.

“Story of Our Grid,” NYSERDA, last accessed January 5, 2025, <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/About/Publications/Energy-Analysis-Reports-and-Studies/Electric-Power-Transmission-and-Distribution-Reports/Electric-Power-Transmission-and-Distribution-Reports---Archive/New-York-Power-Grid-Study/Story-of-Our-Grid>

BROADBAND

Broadband is provided in Chemung County by the Southern Tier Network (“STN”), a nonprofit 501(c) 3 local development corporation established in 2011 through the Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board in partnership with Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben Counties, ECC Technologies, Inc., and Corning Incorporated. STN leases fiber capacity to telecommunication carriers/internet service providers, government, educational institutions, healthcare organizations and commercial and industrial enterprises. In a 2018 broadband survey, the county conducted a survey of the current state of broadband in the county and the experiences that residents had with their providers. The responses indicated deficiencies with the extent of coverage and quality of broadband access in the County. In response to lack of satisfaction with broadband access, County Executive Chris Moss has prioritized expanding access to broadband and incentivizing providers to offer higher quality access to broadband. In 2023 alone, the county budgeted one million dollars to expand access to the more rural reaches of the county in towns like Baldwin and Chemung. Currently, 98% of county households now have access to broadband.

In 2024, STN was granted \$18.2 million from the ConnectALL’s Municipal Infrastructure Grant Program, part of the U.S. Department of Treasury American Rescue Plan’s Capital Projects fund. STN will use the funds to “build 223 miles of open-access fiber optic infrastructure in eight towns” across the Southern Tier, including Chemung County, benefiting over 4,200 homes and businesses. The program will target areas that experience extreme rural poverty, vulnerable gaining populations, and a high number of households with at least one person with a disability.

“FAQs,” Southern Tier Network, last accessed September 25, 2024, <https://southerntiernetwork.org/faqs/>

“Chemung County Broadband Assessment,” ECC Technologies, Inc., May 2018, <https://cms5.revize.com/revize/chemungcounty/IT/Chemung%20County%20BAAT%20Report%2005242018.pdf>

Gillian Friebeis, “Southern Tier gets \$18.2 million for high-speed internet,” My Twin Tiers Local News, WETM18, July 27, 2024, <https://www.mytwintiers.com/news-cat/local-news/southern-tier-gets-18-2-million-for-high-speed-internet/>

5.3 Key Takeaways

LAND USE AND ZONING

Chemung County has largely retained its rural character with concentrations of development in certain urbanized areas, such as the City of Elmira, the county's villages, and the Towns of Horseheads and Big Flats. Many communities throughout the state face development pressures that lead to sprawling suburban development patterns that can reduce rural areas and natural open spaces. Many of the county's residents, committee members, and board members expressed a keen interest in preserving agricultural land and natural resources while encouraging strategic population growth in higher-density areas in the county, such as the City of Elmira. As noted in Chapter 4, several of Chemung County's municipalities have also expressed a desire to implement Smart Growth principles to concentrate development in existing city, town, and village centers. The Chemung County Comprehensive Plan should prioritize the implementation of Smart Growth policies to help achieve community goals.

Although zoning is a tool administered by municipalities and is not directly under the jurisdiction of the county, Chemung County is well-positioned to provide guidance to municipalities that seek to amend their zoning codes to encourage development patterns that are aligned with the community's vision for their neighborhoods.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Chemung County's comprehensive network of utility and broadband access provide residents with stable services and incentivizes development in areas with existing access to utilities. The County has invested heavily in improving the quality and extent of its infrastructure over the past several years, including investment in consolidating its wastewater treatment plants, replacing lead water pipes, expanding broadband access, and more. Chemung County's ongoing collaboration with utility service providers will be instrumental in continuing to offer quality and comprehensive services to its residents. Maintaining updated and detailed databases of the location of utilities in the county will help drive development to appropriate areas while maintaining its rural character in other locations.

By assessing existing utility access and identifying areas for growth and improvement, Chemung County is well-positioned to ensure residents can obtain essential services. The County can promote development and implement energy efficiency upgrades to strengthen the safety and resilience of the community.

PLANNING BOARD CONSIDERATIONS: Land Use & Infrastructure

Planning Boards should favorably consider projects which implement Smart Growth principles, including missing middle housing, gentle density, and complete streets, among others (reference definitions found in Chapter 4). Plans and capital projects which seek to retain the county's agricultural land and rural character, while strategically developing greenfield and underutilized sites and redeveloping in existing urban centers, should be prioritized. Planning Boards should ensure proposed plans and developments provide prospective residents and users with access to essential services like public utilities and broadband.

5.4 Goals & Strategies

GOAL 5-A: FOCUS ON STRENGTHENING DOWNTOWNS AND CENTERS AND BALANCING DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH IN AREAS WITH EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE WITH STRATEGIC GREENFIELD DEVELOPMENT.

The County will align itself with the goals expressed by its residents, committee members, and boards, by prioritizing development and land use patterns that concentrate population growth in existing urban/metropolitan areas and minimize sprawl into its natural, scenic, and agricultural resources. The County should pursue funding for projects that prioritize adaptive reuse of buildings, infill of vacant parcels, expanding housing options, and enhancing walkability, accessibility, and multimodal mobility. Priority projects should contribute to improved quality of life in urban centers to attract and retain residents.

STRATEGY 5-A1: Work in partnership with local municipalities to prioritize investment in existing city, town, and village centers.

One of the County's greatest strengths in creating growth in its existing urban centers is its collaborative relationships with local municipalities. Municipalities have significant influence in shaping land use and development patterns, through zoning codes, relationships with local businesses and residents, and local laws and regulations. The county should work with municipalities to identify strategic investment opportunities in its existing municipal centers and to identify ways that the county can support municipalities in their planning projects, pursuit of funding, and other initiatives.

STRATEGY 5-A2: Encourage municipalities to update zoning codes to allow for mixed-use and infill development, walkable urban centers, and suburban retrofit.

Zoning is one of the best tools in a municipality's toolkit to shape development patterns and encourage Smart Growth principles such as mixed-use and infill development, walkability, and suburban retrofit (see Chapter 4 for details on Smart Growth). The county can assist municipalities in updating their zoning codes by providing technical assistance and staff time, and by helping the municipalities to pursue grant funding to update zoning codes. Municipalities should consider pilot overlays with community and market support.

STRATEGY 5-A3: Foster collaboration with municipalities and outside service providers to update and maintain infrastructure in existing city, town, and village centers.

As noted in the strategy above, there are certain land use and infrastructure regulations and actions that are under the jurisdiction of municipalities and/or outside service providers (e.g. National Grid, NYSEG, and STN). The county can help municipalities and service providers maintain and upgrade infrastructure by encouraging open communication and streamlining County regulations and review processes to reduce barriers.

STRATEGY 5-A4: Incentivize new housing development in and around existing downtowns and centers where appropriate to enhance walkability and reduce sprawl.

By prioritizing housing choice, accessibility, and affordability, especially in higher-density areas of the county, Chemung County can encourage strategic population growth in areas that are already developed, while maintaining natural and agricultural resources. Housing is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 11.

CASE STUDY City of Elmira City Center Form Based Code (2020)

In 2020, the City of Elmira published an updated Form Based Code for its City Center using Downtown Revitalization Initiative funding. The Form Based Code was developed to help the city promote infill development in vacant areas and rehabilitation of existing buildings, incentive economic development downtown, and improve placemaking and pedestrian accessibility to downtown. According to the Form Based Codes Institute, there are five main elements of form-based codes: (1) a plan regulating the code, (2) standards for the public realm, (3) building standards, (4) clear administrative and project review procedures, and (5) a glossary of precise technical terms.

The City of Elmira's Form Based Code includes six districts which focus on development in the city center, mixed-use development, and development around campuses. Additional information is available on the City of Elmira's website.

STRATEGY 5-A5:

Collaborate with partner organizations to identify areas for targeted new growth and development.

The county should work closely with its partner organizations, such as the Chemung County IDA, STEG, Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board, and others to identify target areas for new construction and development. Chemung County should complement efforts to identify rehabilitation and redevelopment opportunities in existing urban centers by identifying vacant or underutilized properties in its more suburban and rural areas. In particular, the County should work to identify existing commercial areas, such as the corridor along County Road 64 in the Town of Big Flats, and develop nearby housing and mixed-use development nearby to better capitalize upon existing resources.

For instance, the conceptual mixed-use development site on the following page illustrates the potential for the County, in coordination with local municipalities and the Chemung County IDA, to pursue targeted development to build new urban centers with various housing types. The proposed concept includes a main commercial and mixed-use node near existing on/off ramps, accompanied by smaller hamlets surrounding downtown. Residential development with a mix of housing types and mixed-use buildings are organized around public green spaces and are afforded views of the water. The proposed mixed-use development will offer additional housing opportunities while providing access to nearby retail and surrounding greenspaces. The enhanced accessibility of these features will be particularly beneficial for the county's aging and youth populations, both of which benefit from multimodal accessibility, reduced vehicle dependence, and mixed-use development.

STRATEGY 5-A6:

Support the efforts of the Chemung County Land Bank to achieve its mission statement to "acquire and return vacant, abandoned, and or tax delinquent properties within the City of Elmira and Chemung County to uses that support community revitalization, sustained economic development and improvement of the financial condition of the City and County."

As noted above, one of Chemung County's greatest assets in guiding development is in nurturing its relationships with partner organizations that work to identify, fund, and implement beneficial development opportunities. The Chemung County Land Bank is one such organization which has operated since 2016 to identify vacant or underutilized parcels in the City of Elmira and conduct rehabilitation projects, demolitions, and to resell parcels to responsible buyers. The county should continue to work with the Chemung County Land Bank to promote growth that benefits the community and infill development projects.

FIGURE 5-4: CONCEPTUAL MIXED-USE SITE DEVELOPMENT



**GOAL 5-B:
PRESERVE EXISTING OPEN SPACE & NATURAL RESOURCES.**

One of the county's primary assets is its abundant open space and natural resources. Not only is the county's open space an integral part of its community character and sense of place, Chemung County's tourism and economy are built heavily around its natural offerings. Abundant hiking opportunities attract tourists and provide recreation for residents alike, and the county's natural resources and agriculture are interwoven into the region's economy (reference Chapter 7, Agriculture, and Chapter 9, Economy and Tourism).

**STRATEGY 5-B1:
Work with municipalities to review and update existing ordinances to encourage smart growth and preserve prime agricultural lands, natural resources, and other environmentally sensitive areas.**

There are various tools that municipalities can use to preserve agricultural land and natural resources. For instance, agricultural zoning (which is already in place across the county) and agricultural buffers can be used to designate specific areas as agricultural land. Some municipalities in New York enact local Right-to-Farm laws, in addition to the Right-to-Farm clause in Article 25AA of the New York State Agriculture and Markets law, which helps municipalities to resolve disputes between farmers and non-farming neighbors. Transfer or purchase of development rights programs and farmland mitigation requirements also promote preservation of farmland. Reference the County's Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, and Chapter 6 (Environment) and Chapter 7 (Agriculture) of this plan for more information.

**STRATEGY 5-B2:
Develop a conservation plan to facilitate land acquisition and conservation easements to expand and manage conserved land resources.**

A conservation plan is a blueprint that communities can use to identify natural areas and sensitive environmental resources that would benefit from specific protections. Conservation plans may also include a list of specific parcels of land that warrant additional protection measures through the county or municipality. The county should consider involving key partners and stakeholders in the development of a conservation plan, including the Finger Lakes Land Trust, Chemung County Environmental Management Council, Chemung County Soil and Water Conservation District, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chemung County, and others.



"I would like to see the decaying buildings taken down and green space developed with community gardens and play space."

Survey Results

**STRATEGY 5-B3:
Create educational programs for property owners and municipal officials on best practices in caring for and managing open space and natural resources.**

The Chemung County Environmental Management Council has a "Public Education and Outreach Committee" which creates and participates in public education campaigns and events related to environmental preservation and appreciation. The Committee also maintains social media pages to help promote and educate the public on environmental concerns and achievements. The county should identify additional educational programs that may be beneficial to offer through the Environmental Management Council and coordinate with the Council to identify any resources that may assist with such programming.

**STRATEGY 5-B4:
Consider the impact of development on open space, viewsheds, and scenic views and plan for their protection.**

As part of the State Environmental Quality Review process, municipalities (and counties, when intermunicipal coordination is required), must consider the impact of development projects on scenic viewsheds and officially-designated scenic areas. Chemung County should consider creating a more formal database and/or map of scenic viewsheds throughout the county to help private developers and municipal officials easily identify scenic areas and evaluate impacts on them.

Additional tools to protect scenic viewsheds include zoning overlay districts, which would be developed by municipalities and could be supported by the county, and the creation of conservation easements and trails to improve access to scenic areas.

DID YOU KNOW?

Chemung County Land Bank

In July of 2016 the Chemung County Property Development Corporation ("CCPDC") was established by the Chemung County Legislature to acquire and return vacant, abandoned, and/or tax delinquent properties within the City of Elmira and Chemung County to uses that support community revitalization and help sustain economic development. The CCPDC partnered with Arbor Housing and Development in 2018 to help administer its Land Bank program, using Land Bank funds and with additional support from the City of Elmira through Downtown Revitalization Initiative funding and Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative funding. The Chemung County Land Bank has conducted several rehabilitations and demolitions of vacant properties in Elmira and also offers properties for sale. More information is available on the Land Bank's website.

Urban Planning & Farmland Protection

Urban planning is not all about the protection of densely populated areas! Urban planners have a vast array of strategies and tools use to protect farmland and natural resources. Planners recognize that a significant loss of farmland has occurred since the mid-twentieth century and that the benefits of farming are integral to everyone's quality of life. The American Planning Association has a large database of information about current threats to farming, potential strategies to protect agricultural land, and more on its website.

**GOAL 5-C:
MAINTAIN, ENHANCE AND STRATEGICALLY EXPAND INFRASTRUCTURE
TO ENSURE ALL CHEMUNG COUNTY RESIDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO
RELIABLE AND AFFORDABLE SERVICES.**

Access to utilities and public services/infrastructure are foundational to facilitate new developments and to maintain a high quality of life for Chemung County residents. The county should work closely with public and private partners to maintain quality services for county residents, while identifying and funding infrastructure upgrades and expansions when needed.

**STRATEGY 5-C1:
Coordinate with public and private
service providers to identify sites
suitable for future development.**

The county should coordinate with service providers to identify parcels that already have access to utilities such as public water and sewer, electricity, natural gas, and broadband and promote these parcels to private developers as prime development opportunities.

**STRATEGY 5-C2:
Continue working with the Southern
Tier Broadband Coalition and other
partners to pursue grant funding and
expand broadband access throughout
the county.**

As noted above, Chemung County has prioritized expanding access to broadband and incentivizing providers to offer higher quality access to broadband. In addition to funds budgeted by the county to expand broadband, the Southern Tier Broadband Coalition received funding in 2023 to help expand broadband access. Chemung County should continue pursuing funding to further implement broadband expansion programs. As of 2025, 98% of households have broadband access.

**STRATEGY 5-C3:
Implement the recommendations of
the Southern Tier Broadband Study.**

The Southern Tier Broadband Coalition was founded in 2020 as a multi-county effort to study existing broadband accessibility and to create a unified plan to expand access to expand affordable broadband services to residents and businesses in Schuyler, Steuben, Chemung, Tioga, and Yates. Chemung County should continue its participation in the Southern Tier Broadband Coalition and actively pursue opportunities to implement the Coalition's recommendations.

**STRATEGY 5C4:
Explore opportunities to combine
services and improved coordination
between the county and/or
municipalities to limit redundancy and
enhance efficiency.**

As noted in Chapter 4, there are opportunities for the county to work with municipalities to combine public services to reduce operating costs, costs to taxpayers, and improve efficiency. Chemung County should collaborate with municipalities to identify voluntary opportunities to partner on providing public services that yield cost savings and tax payer relief.

**STRATEGY 5-C3:
Continue to budget for and
implement upgrades to the county's
wastewater systems.**

Chemung County has successfully secured millions of dollars in the past decade to upgrade its wastewater treatment system. The county should continue its pursuit of funds to complete capital improvements projects to modernize its wastewater treatment system.

**STRATEGY 5-C4:
Continue to budget for and
implement upgrades to Chemung
County's water systems.**

As noted above, Chemung County regulates all public water supplies, in the county and offers guidance and support wherever necessary in the public water sector. There are 25 community water systems in the county. The county should work with community water systems to identify necessary capital improvements projects for its water systems, such as the Elmira Water Board's lead pipe replacement project (see above), and should work with municipalities to identify and pursue funding opportunities.

STRATEGY 5-C7:

Explore grant funding opportunities related to expanding clean energy systems in the county.

The county should work to identify grant funding opportunities at the county and municipal level to collectively achieve the goals of expanding clean energy, where landowners and businesses express interest.

STRATEGY 5-C8:

Establish a committee or task force to address proper siting and regulations around solar and battery storage.

The county should establish a committee or task force comprised of municipalities, local stakeholders, and industry experts to thoroughly weigh the risks and benefits of solar energy and battery storage facilities in Chemung County. The task force would help to research regulations around these facilities, such as NYS regulations for battery storage systems such as NYSERDA's guidance on battery storage and the Battery Energy Storage System Model Law; identify potential concerns with these facilities, including concerns about safety and questions of the benefit of the facilities; and identify appropriate locations for solar and battery storage. Priority focus areas will include farmland, emergency response, safety design standards, adequacy of decommissioning bonds.

STRATEGY 5-C9:

Engage in the update of the New York State Energy Plan by providing feedback to advocate for County energy goals, and to be informed on state direction.

New York State is updating its NYS Energy Plan which was initially published in 2015 and last updated in 2020. Chemung County should find ways to actively engage with the planning process and to advocate for the county's energy goals at the state level. Engagement should focus on affordability, reliability, and local control of land use decisions.

SOLAR DEVELOPMENT

Considerations & Regulations

Proposed solar development in the county should be carefully and intentionally balanced with the need to preserve the county's agricultural land and rural character. When municipal and county planning boards review solar farm referrals, they should consider the following:

1. Is this proposed development consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan?
2. Is the proposed development consistent with local town and village comprehensive plans, and solar ordinances (if applicable)?
3. What are the visual impacts of the proposed development?
4. Is there an emergency management plan in place?
5. Is there a decommissioning plan with a financial commitment?
6. Are there potentially adverse impacts to stormwater? How will stormwater be managed on the proposed development site?





THE
**CHEMUNG
COUNTY**
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Chapter 6

Environment



ENVIRONMENT

6.1 Guiding Principle

Chemung County's natural and scenic areas span rolling hills, winding river valleys, and lush state forests. Over 93% of the county's land is comprised of agriculture, forests, brushland, and other natural and open spaces. The county's wealth of outdoor resources welcomes visitors and residents alike to explore outside and connect with the natural world while providing valuable ecological benefits. There are around eighty outdoor recreation areas, both privately and publicly owned, throughout the county. These areas provide opportunities for boating, biking, hiking, camping, golfing, picnicking, swimming, horseback riding, winter sports, off-road motoring, hunting, and fishing. Understanding and preserving these natural resources for future generations of residents and visitors is an integral part of the county's continued success.

Concurrently, the county must manage ongoing threats to its natural environment and hazards caused by natural disasters. Environmental resilience is defined by the New York State Department of State ("NYS DOS") as "the capacity for a community and its ecosystem to withstand extreme events and other forces or risks; quickly recover the interconnected social, economic and ecological systems' structure and function in the aftermath of a disaster; and develop ongoing adaptability to rapidly changing environmental conditions and forces." Environmental resilience encompasses a variety of a resources and subjects, including natural and agricultural resource protection, climate policies, adaptability to extreme weather events, and green infrastructure and smart growth policies.

To greater protect its natural and scenic resources, expand and promote outdoor recreation, and address natural hazards, the third guiding principle for the Chemung County Comprehensive Plan is to:

"Resiliency Planning," New York State Department of State, last accessed August 16, 2024, <https://dos.ny.gov/resilience-planning>

GUIDING PRINCIPLE:

Preserve and protect existing natural resources and enhance passive and active recreational opportunities, while protecting communities from natural hazards.

6.2 Relevant Inventory Data

See Appendix M6a: Environmental Resiliency Memo, M6b: Parks and Open Space Memo, and M6c: Natural and Scenic Resources Memo for more information.

NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS

Topography

Situated in the Allegheny Plateau, Chemung County is dissected by streams and rivers that have created steep valleys and rolling topography. The county is underlain by Devonian age sedimentary rocks overlain by glacial deposits.

Soils

Understanding soil composition helps determine the quality of the soil for agricultural and development purposes. 64% of the soils found in the county are classified as suitable for farming (see "Did You Know? Soil Classification" for more information).

According to the Chemung County Environmental Management Council, there are seven major soil groupings in Chemung County. Soil groupings are generally characterized according to slopes, drainage, depth to water table and depth to bedrock. Additional information about natural features is available in the appendix.

"Soils," Chemung County Environmental Management Council, <https://www.chemungcountyny.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1092/Soils-PDF?bidId=>

DID YOU KNOW? Soil Classification

Soils that are ideal for farming are classified in three categories: Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Prime Farmland if Drained.

17% of the county's soils are classified as Prime Farmland. Prime Farmland is "land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, and is also available for these uses." They must meet specific criteria for various soil properties including temperature, moisture regime, erodibility, pH, water table, permeability, rock fragment content, and others.

46% of Chemung County's soils are classified as Farmland of Statewide Importance. In New York State, Farmland of Statewide Importance does not meet the criteria of Prime Farmland or Prime Farmland if Drained, but still meets certain classifications that are ideal for farming.

1% of the county's soils are classified as Prime Farmland if Drained (1%). "Prime Farmland if Drained" means that the soil meets all the criteria for Prime Farmland except for depth to seasonal high water table.

Watersheds & Major Streams

Nearly all of Chemung County falls with the Chemung Watershed, which drains into the Susquehanna River south of Chemung County's border with Pennsylvania, and eventually Chesapeake Bay. Some small portions of the county are within the Seneca Watershed and the Owego-Wappasening Watershed.

Major rivers and streams include the Chemung River, Sing Sing Creek, Catharine Creek, Newtown Creek, Baldwin Creek, Wynkoop Creek, Seeley Creek and Cayuta Creek.

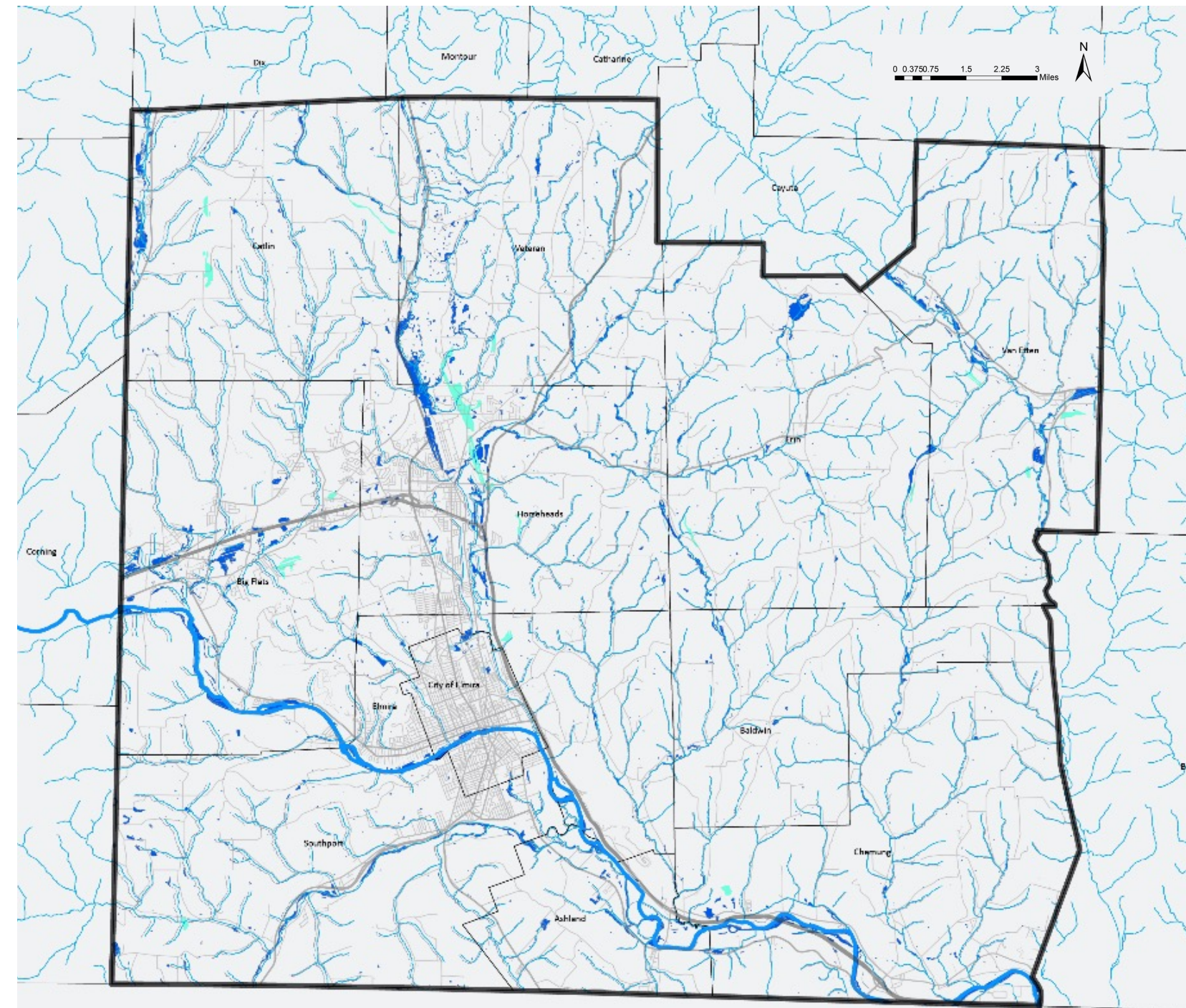
Aquifers

Chemung County has one large principal aquifer and a few smaller confined, unconfined, and unknown or unclassified aquifers. Public drinking water is generally sourced from two water supplies: surface water & ground water. Ground water supplies are drawn from aquifers. Surface water supplies include rivers, lakes, and reservoirs. Over 80% of the county's population is served by public water.

Wetlands

There are 5,460-acres of NWI mapped wetland in the county, as shown in Figure 6-1. The NYSDEC also regulates thousands of acres of wetlands and streams in the county.

FIGURE 6-1: NWI MAPPED WETLANDS



Legend

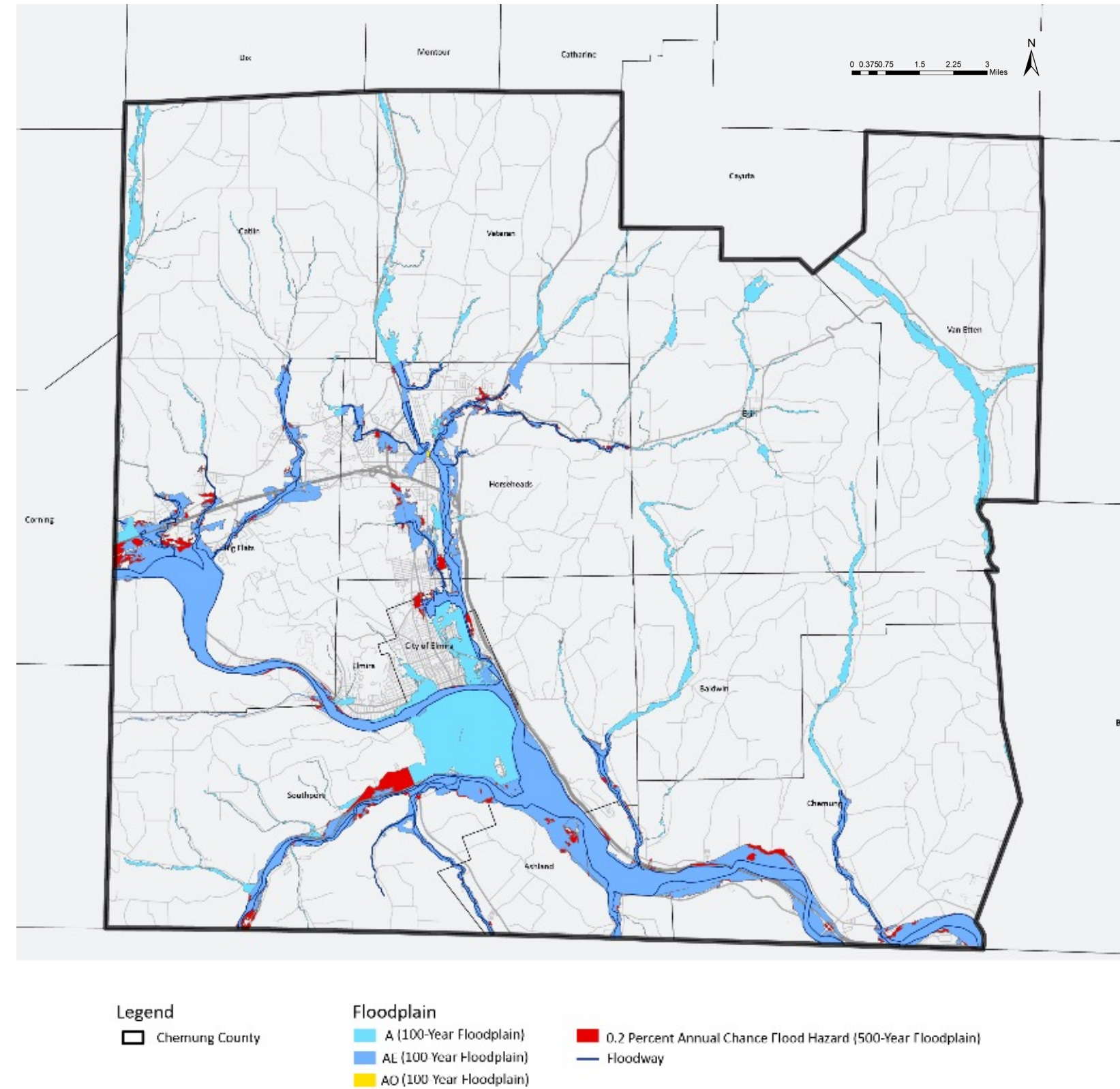
- | | |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| Chemung County | National Wetland Inventory |
| Lakes | State Regulated Wetland |
| Chemung River | Streams |

Floodplains, Floodways, and Special Flood Hazard Areas

In Chemung County, the major floodplain follows the Chemung River. The floodplain is distinct in the Big Flats valley and south of the Town of Ashland. Several other small floodplains are found along streams leading into the Chemung River including Seeley Creek, Newtown Creek, and Cayuta Creek (Figure 6-2).

There is a long history of flooding in Chemung County (see “Flooding” section below and in Chapter 8). In response to several extreme flood events, today there are earthen levees and floodwalls up to 23 feet high lining both sides of the Chemung River through the City of Elmira.

FIGURE 6-2: FLOODPLAINS IN CHEMUNG COUNTY



Protected Lands and Sensitive Natural Areas

The NYSDEC indicates that there are five “Significant Natural Communities” in Chemung County. These include Hemlock-northern Hardwood Forest, Cliff Community, Appalachian Oak-pine Forest, Appalachian Oak-hickory Forest, and Shale Talus Slope Woodland communities. These communities are protected because they have characteristics and features that are considered rare or of high quality.

Chemung County has two State Forests: the 604-acre Maple Hill State Forest and 613-acre Catlin State Forest (Figure 6-3). Both are open to hunting, trapping, fishing, bird watching, and primitive camping.

The Finger Lakes Land Trust owns more than 1,000 acres in Chemung County including Steege Hill, Plymouth Woods Nature Preserves, and the Houghton Land Preserve. The Steege Hill Nature Preserve is a 793 acre preserve in Chemung County with 7 miles of trails traversing diverse forests of oak, hickory, hemlock, maple, birch, and beech trees and a brook, with abundant wildlife and recreational opportunities.

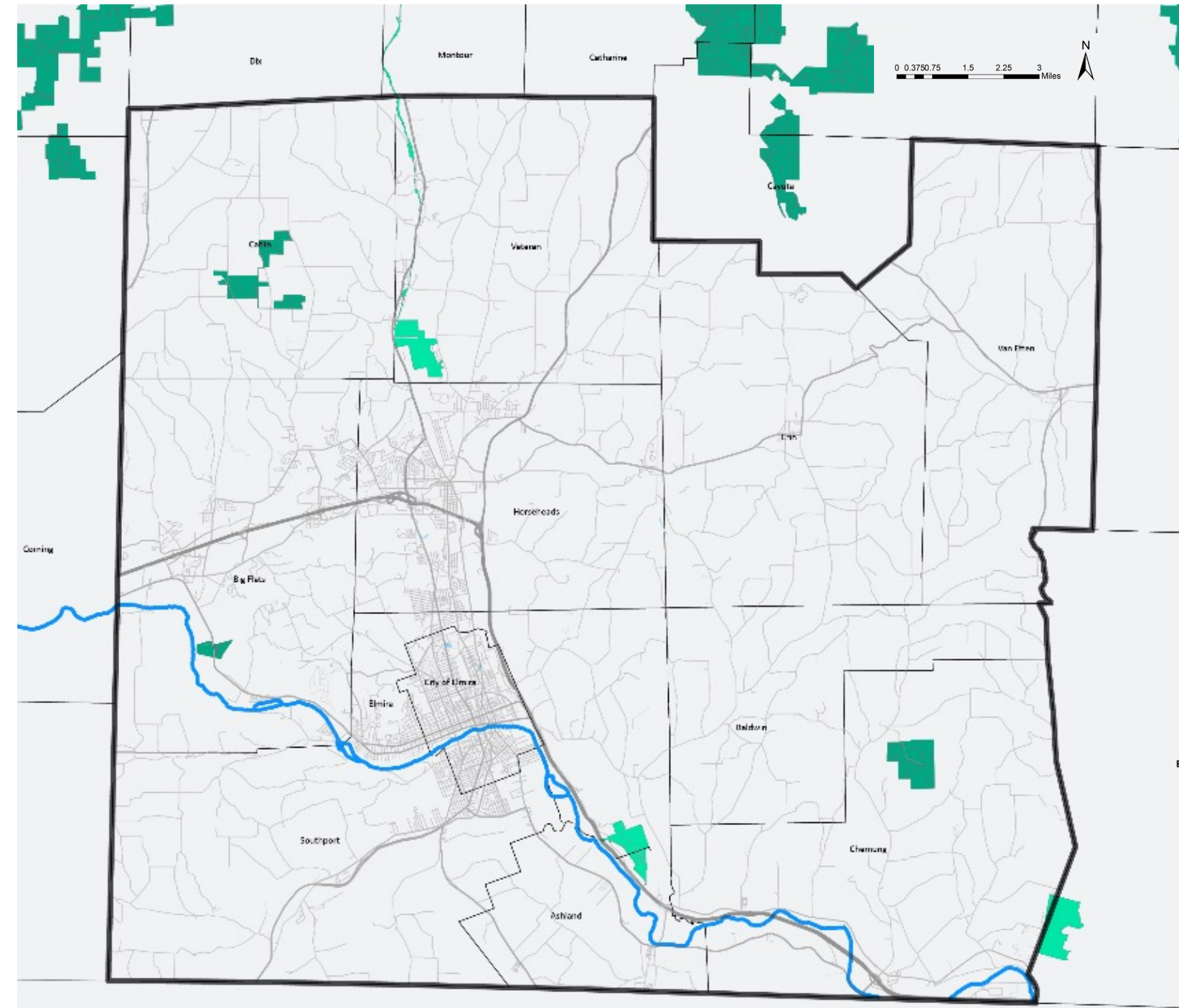
“Steege Hill Nature Preserve,” Finger Lakes Land Trust, last accessed October 22, 2024, <https://www.flit.org/preserves/steege-hill-nature-preserve/>

Vegetation

Most of the county’s rural area consists of forests and agricultural lands, while urban areas such as the City of Elmira consist primarily of intentional plantings. There are certain characteristics that make some trees, shrubs, and groundcovers more resilient and successful in urban environments than others. Urban areas also face concerns regarding trees aging, invasive species, and the possibility of becoming potential hazards during severe weather events, which is why the county implemented its Tree Mitigation Program to train municipal staff to inventory and assess publicly owned trees to determine if trees are at a high risk of failure.

*<https://www.flit.org/preserves/steege-hill-nature-preserve/>
“Tree Mitigation Program,” Chemung County, last accessed October 22, 2024, <https://www.chemungcountyny.gov/1057/Tree-Mitigation-Program>*

FIGURE 6-3: STATE FORESTS AND STATE PARKS IN CHEMUNG COUNTY



Legend

- Chemung County
- Lakes
- Chemung River
- State Forest
- State Park

Scenic Resources

Chemung County's greatest scenic resource is its namesake, the Chemung River. From the river valley, views of rolling hills, river islands, vast forests, farms, and villages are around every bend. Autumn "leaf peeping" in the county is popular among residents and visitors. Fall foliage is commonly viewed from some of the county's scenic outlooks, including the Harris Hill Overlook and the Newtown Battlefield Overlook.

NYS Route 352 is a NYSDOT-designated scenic touring route which encompasses portions of Steuben and Chemung Counties, including Riverside, Corning, east of Gibson, East Corning, Big Flats, West Elmira, and Elmira. The drive includes stunning views of the county's rolling hills and dense canopy cover.

"Official Description of Highway Touring Routes, Scenic Byways, & Bicycle Routes in New York State," New York State Department of Transportation, October 2004, https://www.dot.ny.gov/divisions/operating/oom/transportation-systems/repository/tour_route.pdf

WILDLIFE

According to the NYSDEC, there are 134 prevalent animal species in the county, many of which are birds, but also reptiles and amphibians. There is one area designated by the National Audubon Society as an "Important Bird Area" in Chemung County, located in Horseheads. An Important Bird Area is an area that has been recognized as a significant place for birds to survive and thrive and is protected by either the National Audubon Society, land trusts, and/or New York State.

The county has one NYSDEC Wildlife Management Area ("WMA"), the Big Flats WMA. The Big Flats WMA is a 136-acre upland area open to the public for hunting, trapping, stream fishing, and bird watching. The area does not include any official trails and is accessible via one short road for parking.

There are six streams in Chemung County that are considered high-quality trout streams: Sing Sing Creek, Catharine Creek, Sleeper Creek, Post Creek, Cayuta Creek, McCorn Creek. Catharine Creek is the most popular local trout stream, attracting anglers locally and regionally each year for its rainbow trout run. The NYSDEC also stocks streams and ponds and posts stocking data on its website each year.

There are two waterbodies in Chemung County, the Chemung River and Dry Brook, which are designated as "Mussel Screening Streams." These are streams which are known to contain mussels that are rare, endangered, or threatened in New York.



OUTDOOR RECREATION

County and State Parks

The Chemung County Department of Parks and Recreation operates three (3) parks including Park Station Campground and Recreation Center, Harris Hill Park, and the Robert S. Turner Chemung County Fairgrounds. These facilities include open space programming for children of all ages. Harris Hill includes a Youth Camp that runs through the Summer Season (May through September), as well as a pool and swimming lessons, and playground, as well as a privately owned miniature golf and three-hole golf course, an arcade, and rides for children. Harris Hill also runs a bow hunting permit lottery to allow bow hunting in Harris Hill Park for Chemung County residents. Park Station includes a campground, trails, and picnic sites, plus opportunities for fishing, swimming, boating, kayaking, and hiking. The Chemung County Fairgrounds hosts the annual Chemung County Fair, as well as animal shows, concerts, festivals, and exhibits.

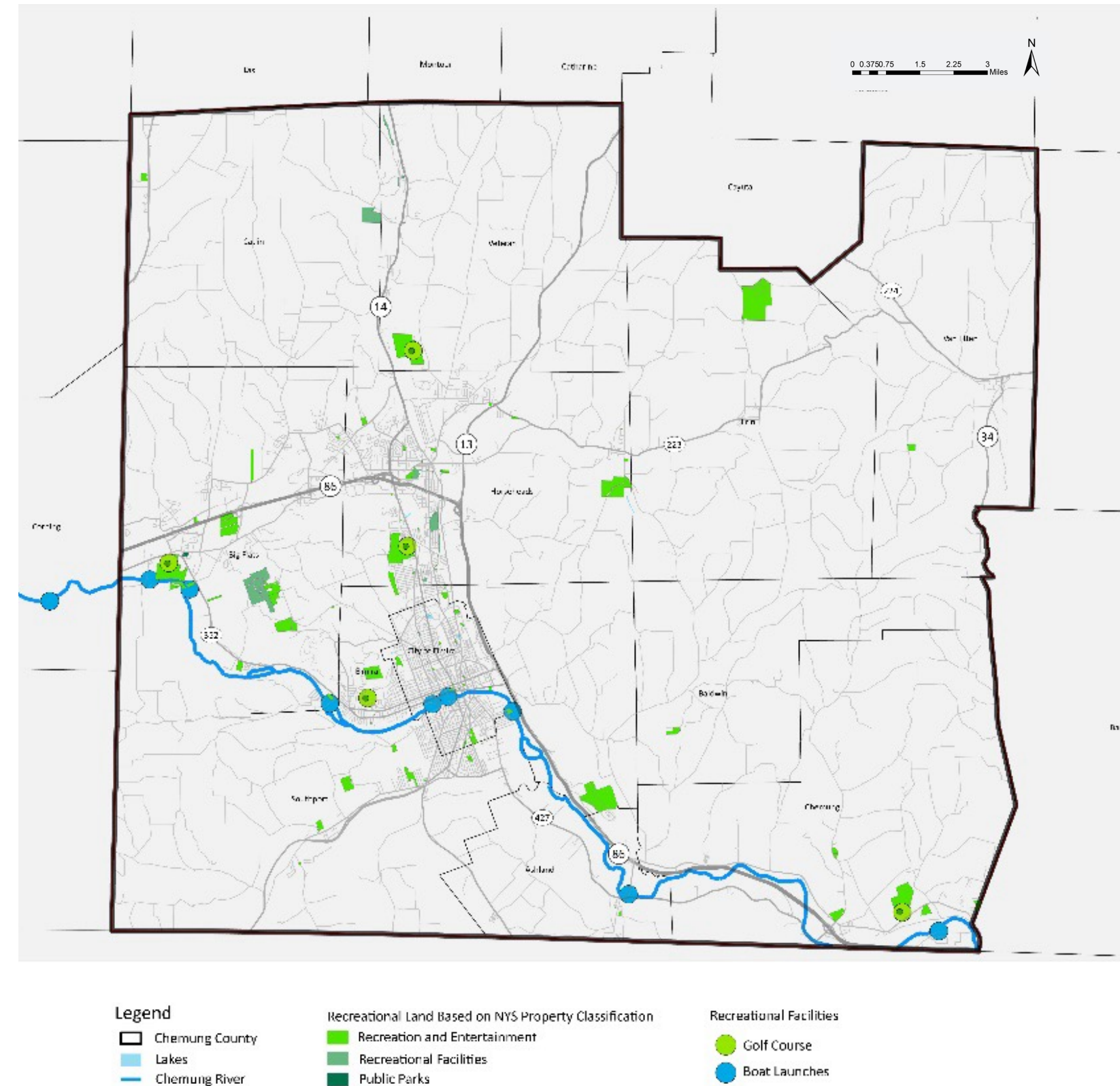
In addition to county parks, there are several State Parks including Newtown Battlefield State Park, Mark Twain State Park, a portion of Two Rivers State Park and Recreation Area, and Catlin and Maple Hill State Forests (reference Figure 6-3 earlier in this chapter).

Active Recreation

Outside of county and state parks, a large percentage of the county's open space consists of over 800-acres of golf courses, including Soaring Eagles Golf Course, the Mark Twain Golf Course, Willowcreek Country Club, and various smaller courses and driving ranges. There are also several athletic centers in the county including rollerblading and ice-skating rinks, athletic centers and recreation centers, and sports fields. Other unique recreation options offered in Chemung County include Horseheads BMX track at Holding Point Recreation Complex (a USA BMX sanctioned racetrack) and Farmland Animal Park, an 18-acre private animal park located in the Wyncoop Creek Valley in the Town of Chemung.

<https://www.filt.org/preserves/steege-hill-nature-preserve/> "Tree Mitigation Program," Chemung County, last accessed October 22, 2024, <https://www.chemungcountyny.gov/1057/Tree-Mitigation-Program>

FIGURE 6-4: ACTIVE RECREATION FACILITIES IN CHEMUNG COUNTY



Passive Recreation

Hiking, bicycling, bird watching, and picnicking opportunities are plentiful in the county. In addition to state parks and forests, there are publicly accessible walking trails at Sperr Memorial Park, Catharine Valley Trail, Personious Woods, Ek Birding Trail, Lackawanna Rail Trail, Plymouth Woods Nature Preserve, Steege Hill Nature Preserve and more. Many villages, town, and city parks include playgrounds and picnic areas. The Tanglewood Nature Center and Museum offer over 10 miles of trails, educational programming for children and adults, and exhibits with more than 40 native and exotic animals.

"2024-2025 Hunting & Trapping Season Summary," New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, last accessed October 22, 2024, <https://dec.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2024-07/htgsummarypullout.pdf>
"Youth Bureau," Chemung County, 2024, <https://www.chemungcountyny.gov/501/Youth-Bureau>

Hunting

There are three locations that allow hunting on NYSDEC-Managed Lands in Chemung County: the Big Flats Wildlife Management Area, Catlin State Forest, and Maple Hill State Forest. NYSDEC regulates seasons for hunting deer, black bears, wild turkeys, waterfowl, migratory game birds, small game, and furbearer, which are available on the NYSDEC's website. Hunters are required to purchase a sporting license and report their harvest when hunting on NYSDEC-Managed Lands.

"2024-2025 Hunting & Trapping Season Summary," New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, last accessed October 22, 2024, <https://dec.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2024-07/htgsummarypullout.pdf>

Youth & Recreation Departments

The Chemung County Youth Bureau was established in 1977 to "research the needs of the county's youth and to plan, coordinate, foster, and supplement the activities of public, private, and faith-based agencies devoted to the welfare and protection of youth." The Chemung County Youth Bureau merged with the County Recreation Department in 1993 and offers a variety of programs including Juvenile Assigned Work Services Program, Learn and Earn, The Spot, and Super Saturday, and Summer Cohesion, among others.

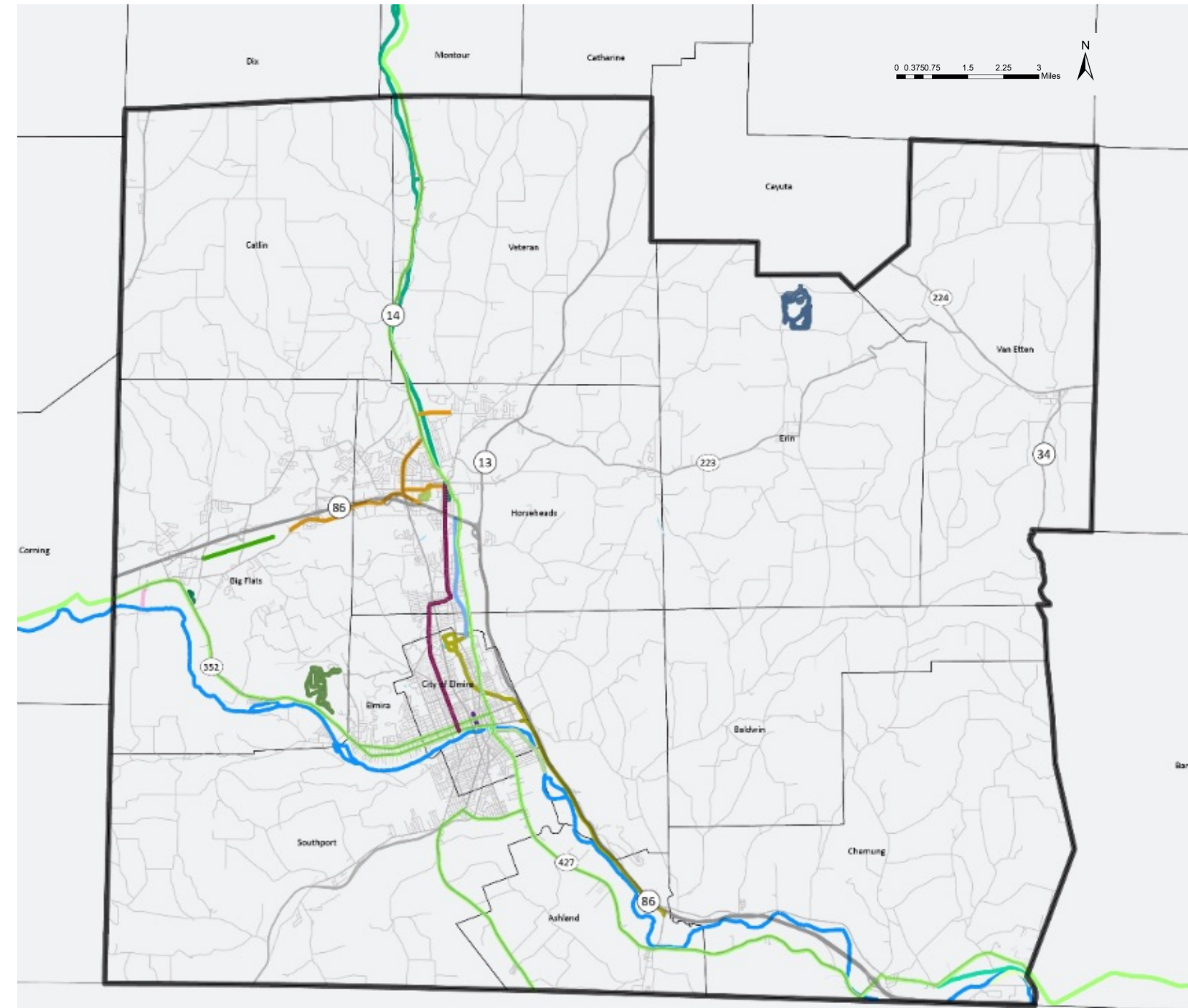
"Youth Bureau," Chemung County, 2024, <https://www.chemungcountyny.gov/501/Youth-Bureau>



"We strive to provide advocacy and support toward youth service goals and positive recreational development for the children and families of Chemung County."

David Ellis,
Chemung County Youth Bureau

FIGURE 6-5: PASSIVE RECREATION FACILITIES IN CHEMUNG COUNTY



Legend

- | | | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Chemung County | Tanglewood Trail | Lackawanna Trail |
| Lakes | White Wagon Trail | Elmira Promenade |
| Chemung River | Thorne Park Trail | Big Flats Trail |
| | Park Station Trail | Proposed Horseheads Trail |
| | Catharine Valley Trail | Proposed County Canal Trail |
| | Proposed South Elmira Riverview | North-South Bicycle Corridor |

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Solid Waste Disposal and Remediation Sites

Chemung County has five transfer stations (a facility where solid waste is received and transported for processing and disposal) located in the Town of Big Flats on Chamber Road, the Town of Erin on Hill Road, the Town of Southport on Institution Road, the City of Elmira on Lake Street and the Town of Chemung on County Road 60 (reference Figure 6-6). The Lowman Transfer Station on County Road 60 is located at the Chemung County Landfill. The county manages solid waste disposal according to its Final Local Solid Waste Management Plan (2015).

Chemung County has five transfer stations (a facility where solid waste is received and transported for processing and disposal) located in the Town of Big Flats on Chamber Road, the Town of Erin on Hill Road, the Town of Southport on Institution Road, the City of Elmira on Lake Street and the Town of Chemung on County Road 60 (reference Figure 6-6). The Lowman Transfer Station on County Road 60 is located at the Chemung County Landfill. The county manages solid waste disposal according to its Final Local Solid Waste Management Plan (2015).

Radon

Radon is a colorless, odorless naturally occurring radioactive gas that comes from the decay of uranium and radium. Indoor radon is believed to be the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. Radon can only be detected by testing. The average national indoor radon level is 1.3 pCi/L. The average indoor radon levels of Chemung County are higher than the national average, at 8.7 pCi/L. This also surpasses the EPA's recommended action level of 4 pCi/L. Big Flats, Southport, and Horseheads have the highest average radon levels in the county respectively. Additional information about radon in the County is available in Chapter 12.

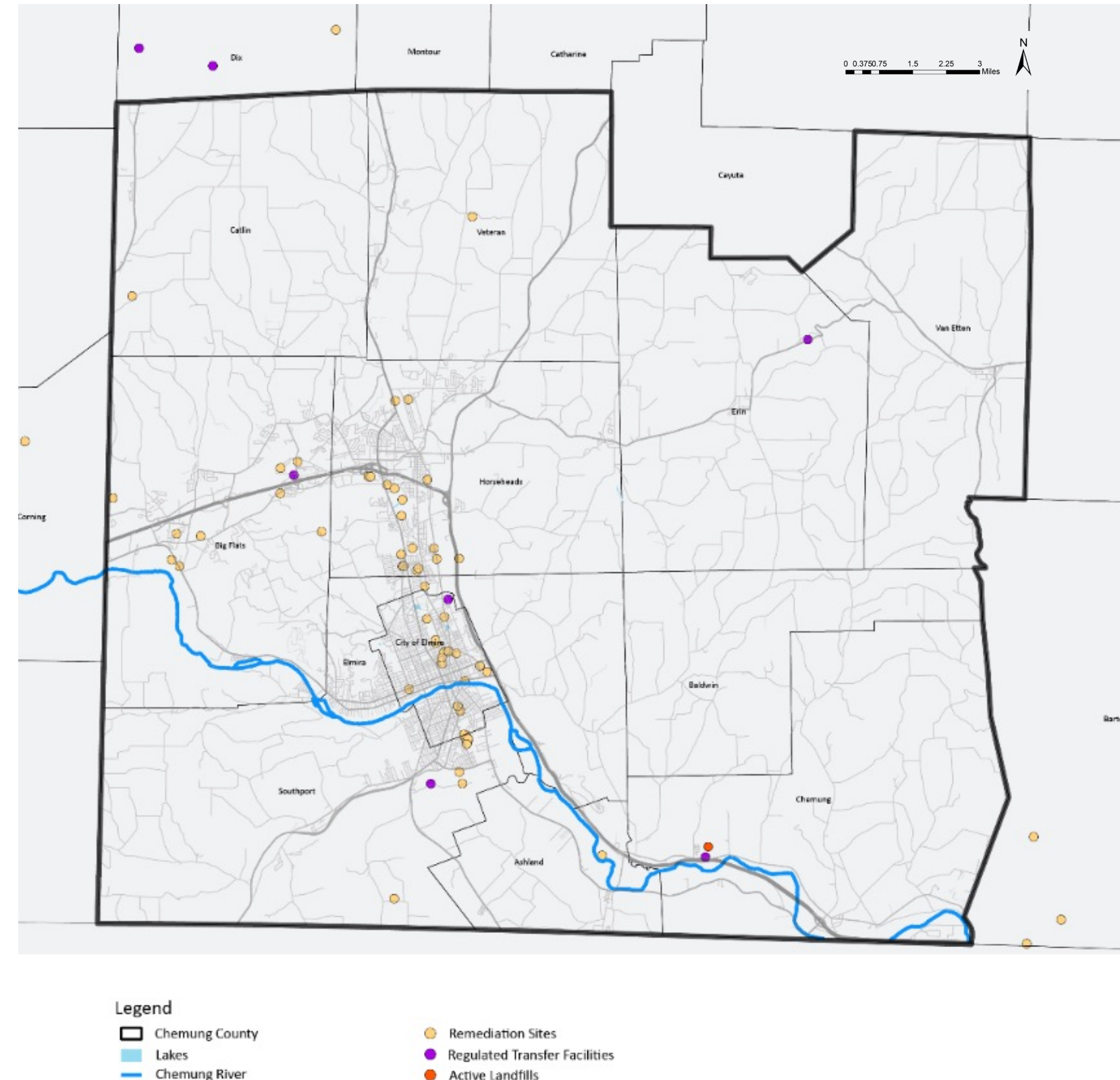
Tom Francis, "Average New York Radon in your Town," Best Inspection, April 3, 2014, <https://best-inspection.com/posts/average-new-york-radon-in-your-town/>

Flooding

Chemung County is prone to flooding, especially from the Chemung River, and particularly during large snowfall or rain events. The county is projected to see an increase in flooding due to climate change in the coming years. A history of major flood events in the county is available in Chapter 8. The Federal Emergency Management Agency ("FEMA") maps floodplains nationwide. The county has identified areas of flooding that are not identified on FEMA's floodplain maps. The county partnered with the Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board to develop estimated floodplain mapping for each municipality in the county which accounts for these unmapped floodplains.

*"Chemung County Hazard Mitigation Action Plan 2019," Chemung County, April 2019, <https://www.chemungcountyny.gov/DocumentCenter/View/183/2019-Chemung-County-Hazard-Mitigation-Plan-PDF>
*Ibid.**

FIGURE 6-6: TRANSFER FACILITIES, ACTIVE LANDFILLS, AND REMEDIATION SITES IN CHEMUNG COUNTY



Vulnerable Populations

Certain populations are more prone to experiencing the impacts of environmental hazards, including economic, safety, loss of property, and public health impacts. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation identifies these populations as “Environmental Justice Populations.” For additional information on Environmental Justice Populations in Chemung County, reference Chapter 3.

THREATS TO THE ENVIRONMENT

Invasive Species

Plant and animal species can be classified as native, nonnative, and invasive to an area. A native species is an organism that occurs naturally in an area. A nonnative species does not occur naturally in an area, and an invasive species is a type of nonnative species that specifically harms the surrounding environment and may also negatively impact the economy and human health. The Cornell Cooperative Extension (“CCE”) of Chemung County identifies 11 invasive plant species of concern in the county: Common Buckthorn, Common Reed, Exotic Bush Honeysuckles, Garlic Mustard, Giant Hogweed, Japanese Barberry, Japanese Knotweed, Japanese Stiltgrass, Oriental Bittersweet, Swallow-Worts, and Tree of Heaven. The CCE also identifies six common invasive pests: the Armyworm, Brown Marmorated Stink Bug, Deer Tick, Emerald Ash Borer, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, and Spotted Lantern Fly. Note that these lists represent a sample of common invasive plants in the county and are not comprehensive of all invasive plants and pests that occur in the county. The New York State Federation of Lake Associations identifies four invasive species commonly occurring in the county’s waterbodies: Eurasian Watermilfoil, Common Carp, Curly Leafed Pondweed, and Green Sunfish.

“Invasive Plants,” Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chemung County, last accessed October 23, 2024, <https://chemung.cce.cornell.edu/environment/invasive-plants>

“Invasive Pests,” Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chemung County, last accessed October 23, 2024, <https://chemung.cce.cornell.edu/environment/invasive-pests>

“Aquatic Invasive Species As of 2018 – Chemung County,” New York State Federation of Lake Associations, 2018, <https://nysfola.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/AISChemung.pdf>

Climate Change

The impacts of climate change will be felt across the globe in the coming years, increasing the risk of natural hazards due to “rising sea levels, warmer ocean temperatures, higher humidity, the possibility of stronger storms, and an increase in wind and flood damages due to storm surges.” The Southern Tier is expected to experience more heat waves, intense precipitation events leading to more intense flooding, more frequent and more severe droughts between precipitation events, and changing compositions of plants and animals and an increase in invasive species.

“Chemung County Hazard Mitigation Action Plan 2019,” Chemung County, April 2019, <https://www.chemungcountyny.gov/DocumentCenter/View/183/2019-Chemung-County-Hazard-Mitigation-Plan-PDF>

Ibid.

“Projects, Programs, & Initiatives,” Chemung County, last accessed August 16, 2024, <https://www.chemungcountyny.gov/1038/Projects-Programs-Initiatives>

ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE INITIATIVES

Agricultural District

Chemung County has one Consolidated Agricultural District certified by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets that encompasses approximately 40,678-acres. The county’s agricultural industry is diverse, including dairy, various livestock, vegetables, flowers, grasses, and grains. Agricultural districts are an effective tool to help protect agricultural land from being lost to development pressure. Additional information is provided in Chapter 7.

Climate Smart Communities Program

Chemung County became a Bronze Certified Climate Smart Community (“CSC”) in 2022. The CSC program, which is run by New York State, “helps local governments take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate.” To achieve Bronze Certification, the county was required to complete several actions, which included designating a CSC Task Force and Coordinator, participating in national and regional climate programs, pursuing partnerships with other entities, conducting a Greenhouse Gas (“GHG”) inventory, and implementing climate friendly programs, policies, plans, and capital investments. The county is currently pursuing its silver certification. More information is available online at: <https://climatesmartchemungco.carrd.co/>

In addition to the County’s participation in the CSC program, there are four municipalities in the county which are active in the CSC program: the Town of Big Flats, the Town of Horseheads, the Town of Van Etten, and the Town of Catlin.

“Projects, Programs, & Initiatives,” Chemung County, last accessed August 16, 2024, <https://www.chemungcountyny.gov/1038/Projects-Programs-Initiatives>

Future Planning Projects

Several of the county’s upcoming planning efforts will strengthen the county’s environmental resilience initiatives. These include the Chemung County Hazard Mitigation Plan update, and the Chemung County Resiliency Plan. Reference Chapter 3 for additional information on these plans and other county planning efforts.

Cornell Cooperative Extension Elmira Urban Green Equity (“EUGE”) Project

The Elmira Urban Green Equity Project (“EUGE”) is a Cornell Cooperative Extension-led initiative, in partnership with the Chemung County Planning Department and Chemung County Environmental Management Council. The purpose of the project is to help strengthen Elmira’s resilience against climate change while reducing the city’s environmental impact. The EUGE will facilitate the creation of green space, minimize climate hazards, and improve quality of life across Chemung County and the Southern Tier.

Gillian Friebis, “Chemung Cornell Cooperative Extension Starts Environmental Program, My Twin Tiers, June 16, 2024, <https://www.mytwintiers.com/news-cat/local-news/chemung-cornell-cooperative-extension-starts-environmental-program/>

6.3 Key Takeaways

NATURAL RESOURCES

Chemung County supports a variety of ecosystems that are important to the overall diversity and health of the community. Understanding and preserving natural and scenic resources not only protects these ecosystems but also supports the county's agricultural and tourist economies and a greater quality of life for county residents.

RECREATION

With a wide range of outdoor recreation areas, both privately and publicly owned, residents and tourists can explore and enjoy the beauty of nature in Chemung County. Providing open spaces for play, exercise, and community gatherings helps to maintain the public's connection to the natural world, fostering admiration for nature and a desire to preserve the county's ecological resources. There are opportunities to improve the community's connection to green space through enhanced connectivity between parks, increased multimodal access to park systems, and a focus on providing more trails and passive recreation options in parks. There are also opportunities throughout the county's park system to ensure equitable park access through improved awareness, accessible trail systems, and programming, among other improvements.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE

Chemung County is implementing and pursuing multiple plans, programs, initiatives, and capital improvements projects related to environmental resilience. Between certification in the Climate Smart Communities program, several recent, ongoing, and upcoming planning initiatives with a focus on improving resiliency, and capital improvements projects focused on creating green waste management systems and wastewater treatment infrastructure, Chemung County is committed to a more resilient and sustainable future.

PLANNING BOARD CONSIDERATIONS: Environmental

Planning Boards should favorably consider projects which prioritize the preservation of natural resources and critical environmental areas, using Smart Growth principles to concentrate development in existing urbanized areas and limit development in natural areas with valuable resources, prime agricultural land, and recreational open spaces. Planning Boards should favorably consider open space and recreation plans and capital projects to improve these assets. Planning Boards should ensure proposed capital projects provide residents with improved access to open space where possible, and that development is strategically located in areas in which it does not encumber existing open space. Planning Boards should favorably consider projects which integrate green infrastructure and stormwater measures into site plans, and which increase urban canopy coverage.

6.4 Goals & Strategies

GOAL 6-A: PROTECT WATER QUALITY AND WATERSHEDS

Chemung County relies on its water resources for recreation, proliferation of aquatic species, scenic resources, and drinking water availability. The county must protect its water resources to ensure a good quality of life for its residents.

STRATEGY 6-A1:

Continue to protect water resources including lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, and floodplains with appropriate regulations and programs.

The Chemung County Soil and Water Conservation District ("SWCD") protects the county's water resources through its initiatives. For instance, the SWCD, in partnership with the Chemung County Legislature and various municipalities in the county maintains the Chemung County Stream Program, which provides funding and technical assistance for stream restoration and streambank protection projects. These projects help to protect water quality and reduce streambank erosion and flooding. The SWCD is also involved in fish stocking, agricultural management, and other conservation activities.

The Chemung County Environmental Management Council works with the "Friends of the Chemung River Watershed" Organization, which advocates for recreation along the Chemung River and for the Chemung River's continued protection through responsible watershed practices.

More broadly, the county is within the Upper Susquehanna Watershed, which is advocated for by the Upper Susquehanna Watershed Coalition ("USW Coalition"). The USW Coalition plans and implements restoration projects within the watershed to improve water quality natural resources in the Upper Susquehanna River Basin.

The county should continue to invest in its partnership with the SWCD, Friends of the Chemung River Watershed, the USQ Coalition and other community groups to protect water resources in the county. Additionally, the county should review its existing laws and regulations regarding water resources to ensure that they are up-to-date and provide appropriate protections for water resources. For instance, neighboring Tompkins County dedicates funding towards research studying its aquifers to help protect its groundwater and drinking water supplies, and towards studying areas of high erosion to direct funding towards streambank stabilization. Where possible, enforce existing regulations and programs, provide technical assistance and promote voluntary compliance before implementing new mandates.

DID YOU KNOW? **Tree Mitigation Program**

Chemung County was awarded a Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant to create a Tree Mitigation Program.

This program trains staff to inventory and assess publicly owned trees in the county, which helps to identify trees that are at risk of falling (especially during weather events) and potentially causing risk of injury or property damage.

The program also includes public outreach and education about tree health and assessing trees, and training for municipal staff to conduct a tree inventory.

More information is available on the county's website at: <https://chemungcountyny.gov/1405/Tree-Mitigation-Program>

STRATEGY 6-A2:
Continue to promote the Chemung County Stormwater Coalition's stormwater pollution prevention educational campaign regarding proper handling and disposal of various household pollutants and completing other environmentally-friendly projects to help protect water resources.

The Chemung County Stormwater Coalition has published educational materials throughout the years to help residents properly dispose of waste and complete projects in ways that minimize harm to the county's water resources. Encourage practices which maintain private well safety and infrastructure efficiency. For instance, the Stormwater Management Council has published guides on creating rain gardens, and several video-messages regarding pollution prevention (available on the county's website at <https://chemungcountyny.gov/348/Stormwater-MS4-Information>). The county should coordinate to identify additional opportunities to expand the Coalition's educational resources, including identifying opportunities to fund additional educational campaigns, to ensure county residents have easy access to this information.

STRATEGY 6-A3:
Encourage and support the county's municipalities located along the Chemung River to develop a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program ("LWRP").

Chemung County is currently supporting the City of Elmira in the development of its Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan ("LWRP") for the Chemung River. The county should encourage the municipalities located along the Chemung River to develop an LWRP to improve access to the waterfront for residents across the county.

GOAL 6-B: **PROTECT TREES AND FORESTS.**

The county's trees and forests are crucial to overall health, air quality, scenic resources, natural habitat, and human health, comfort and quality of life. Whether large forests in the county's rolling hills, or carefully selected street trees in downtown areas, all of the county's forests and trees should be appropriately protected so their benefits can be enjoyed by residents for years to come.

STRATEGY 6-B1:
Continue to cooperate with the NYSDEC to continue to provide public access to state forests.

As noted previously, Chemung County has two State Forests: Maple Hill State Forest and Catlin State Forest. In New York, state forests are managed by the DEC's Division of Lands and Forests. The DEC is responsible for managing recreation in state forests, as well as timber harvesting (where appropriate), and hunting and trapping. The county should continue to cooperate with the DEC to protect these vital resources and ensure the public has access to recreational opportunities in state forests.

STRATEGY 6-B2:
Increase urban planting.

Urban trees improve air quality, provide cooling shade, and can have beneficial impacts on stormwater. Urban trees are also uniquely effective in countering the Urban Heat Island Effect, a phenomenon where urban areas with a high concentration of pavement and impermeable surfaces radiate heat and can cause dangerously hot conditions for residents. The county's Tree Mitigation Program includes training municipal staff to inventory and assess publicly owned trees. The county will use the data collected as part of this program to identify areas in the county that would benefit from planting additional trees, especially in urban areas. Funding for additional tree plantings will be pursued in coordination with long term maintenance plans.

STRATEGY 6-B3:
Encourage municipalities to apply to become tree cities through the Arbor Day Foundation's "Tree Cities USA" program.

The Arbor Day Foundation's Tree Cities USA program has four standards for qualifying in its program: (1) establishing a tree board or department; (2) establishing a public tree care ordinance; (3) documenting an annual expenditure of at least \$2 per capita on community tree care; and (4) having a public Arbor Day Observance and annual community proclamation issued by the municipality's mayor, city council, or equivalent office. The county will encourage municipalities and provide guidance and technical assistance where necessary to meet these standards and apply to become a qualifying "Tree City."

**GOAL 6-C:
PROTECT NATURAL HABITATS AND BIODIVERSITY.**

Chemung County's natural habitats include various types of forests among its hills and valleys, aquatic species (primarily in and around the Chemung River), and habitats that have evolved in its urban areas. Some of the county's natural resources are protected by the NYSDEC due to their designation as "Significant Natural Communities" or as state forests. Over 1,000 acres in Chemung County are protected by the Finger Lakes Land Trust. The county has ample partnership opportunities to ensure that its biodiversity and habitats are thoroughly protected for the continued enjoyment of the public.

**STRATEGY 6-C1:
Continue to protect critical habitats and rare and endangered plant and animal species.**

Rare and endangered plants and animals are identified through various resource agencies, including the NYSDEC (information is publicly available using the Environmental Resource Mapper ("ERM") tool) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service ("USFWS") Information for Planning and Consultation Resources ("IPaC") tool. Additionally, local entities such as the SWCD, Finger Lakes Land Trust, and Chemung County Environmental Management Council will have localized, on-the-ground knowledge of areas with critical habitats and threatened species. The county should work to aggregate the data from these various organizations to identify important habitats and species that are currently at-risk and develop a strategy for protecting these resources using available county-wide tools (e.g. conservation easement programs, grant funding, planning efforts, and more).

**STRATEGY 6-C2:
Encourage development patterns that reduce habitat fragmentation.**

Much of Chemung County is characterized by rural landscapes (reference Chapter 5 for a more detailed analysis of land use patterns). Sprawling development patterns would put the county's rural character, and the diverse and widespread habitats throughout the county, at greater risk. Habitat fragmentation occurs when a large, continuous habitat is fragmented by development patterns – whether through above-ground infrastructure like roadway construction, sprawling residential areas or construction of new large developments. Habitat fragmentation can have a compounding negative impact on the ecology of an area and its wildlife. The county can encourage development patterns that reduce habitat fragmentation by introducing Smart Growth principles to mitigate sprawl and concentrate development in existing urban centers (reference Chapter 4 for a more detailed list of Smart Growth principles). Additionally, the county should identify opportunities to retrofit the existing built environment to incorporate wildlife passages where feasible.

**STRATEGY 6-C3:
Identify and preserve scenic viewsheds throughout the county, and partner with the county's municipalities to enhance protections for scenic views.**

Scenic resources can be designated at the federal level, state level, or locally by the county or municipality. For instance, New York State has official designations for Scenic Byways, Scenic Roadways, and Scenic Parkways, as well as designations for Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers. Nearby Tompkins County has an online tool designating Distinctive, Noteworthy, and Characteristic Views and Viewsheds. The Town of Erin in Chemung County has identified the importance of preserving scenic views in its Town-wide Comprehensive Plan, adopted in April 2024. The Town of Erin notes that preserving scenic views is important to overall quality of life in the town. Their plan identifies planning tools that protect scenic viewsheds including reviewing zoning laws and strategically siting renewable energy resources in a way that does not disrupt scenic features.

The county should identify strategies that it can use to effectively identify scenic viewsheds in its jurisdiction (e.g. through online mapping), and work with its municipalities to formally recognize the importance of scenic viewsheds throughout the municipalities and identify municipal tools that can protect scenic resources.

**GOAL 6-D:
IDENTIFY AND MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF INVASIVE SPECIES.**

Invasive species pose problems to land and aquatic resources across New York State. They can outcompete native species and cause human health concerns and therefore are an important issue for counties to address.

**STRATEGY 6-D1:
Collaborate with natural resources agencies and groups to address predominant invasive species in the County.**

Local natural resource agencies and groups have on-the-ground, localized knowledge about the most pressing invasive species issues in the local ecosystem. The county should partner with these organizations to assist in identifying opportunities for funding efforts to address invasive species, promotion of volunteer events, and other tasks as needed.

"We need to preserve and take advantage of the natural beauty we have here... investing more in our parks."

Survey Results

**GOAL 6-E:
MEET THE NEEDS OF THE COUNTY'S COMMUNITIES TO PROMOTE
INCLUSIVE ACCESS TO AND ENHANCE EXISTING RESOURCES.**

The county's residents highly value their abundant natural resources and outdoor recreation spaces and expressed the desire for expanded and enhanced recreational opportunities. Access to the outdoors is an integral part of everyone's quality of life, from the county's youngest to oldest residents.

**STRATEGY 6-E1:
Assess opportunities to preserve and protect open spaces and natural resources.**

The county should consider pursuing a formal inventory of opportunities for land conservation, preservation, and outdoor recreation. Plans such as Open Space Inventories can be funded through state grant programs and are valuable tools in identifying priority parcels of land for the county to protect.

**STRATEGY 6-E2:
Continue to partner with NYS OPRHP, NYSDEC, and other entities to expand hiking opportunities, including trail network, funding, and more.**

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation ("NYS OPRHP") and NYSDEC are invested in helping expand outdoor recreation opportunities for all New Yorkers. Through State Parks, grant funding programs, technical assistance, and more, these state agencies will continue to be valuable partners to the county in expanding outdoor recreation opportunities to Chemung County residents.

**STRATEGY 6-E3:
Identify opportunities to improve accessibility at county parks to ensure equitable access to the County's recreational resources.**

Parks are meant for everyone to enjoy! Universal design principles go beyond accessibility requirements to ensure that the urban environment is built in a way that everyone can access places and spaces together. This is regardless of age, use of mobility aids like wheelchairs or strollers, different spoken languages, and other factors. Universal design in parks can look like ensuring connections to the street are at grade, creating a clear identity for the park separate from the street, providing choice and opportunities for access, providing ease of access to public restrooms, providing interpretive signage in various languages, and more. The county should consider opportunities to upgrade the county-owned parks to incorporate best-practice principles, so parks can benefit all users.

**STRATEGY 6-E4:
Strengthen strategic partnerships with other entities to expand and advance recreation opportunities across the county.**

Entities like the Chemung County Youth Bureau, NYSDEC (campgrounds), Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance, National Soaring Museum, Cornell Cooperative Extension, 4-H, YMCA, and many others provide recreational opportunities for people of various ages across the county. Chemung County should work to create and enhance its network with these organizations to amplify its recreational offerings across the county.

**STRATEGY 6-E5:
Create a master plan to improve linkages between parks and open spaces and help prioritize multimodal connections.**

Improving connectivity between open space resources will help residents more easily and safely access outdoor spaces and activities. Creating multimodal connections between open space resources enables residents to choose to travel to open space resources on foot or bicycle, in addition to access via vehicular travel, which makes open spaces more accessible to those without cars, youth and elderly populations who cannot drive, families, and everyone in the community. The county should identify opportunities to improve connectivity and continue seeking funding for capital projects improving connections. The development of a "Parks/Open Space Plan," "Green Network Plan" or "Park Connectivity Plan" should identify opportunities to expand the county's existing outdoor/recreational areas.

**STRATEGY 6-E6:
Work with the Elmira-Chemung Transportation Council ("ECTC") and surrounding counties to create a "Twin Tiers Regional Trail Map" to be accessible via each county's website.**

The county does not currently have a user-friendly, comprehensive and easily accessible map of all the trails in Chemung County. The county should work with ECTC and surrounding counties to update regional trail maps that can be used by the community, visitors, hikers, and cyclists.

STRATEGY 6-E7:
Create a county-wide wayfinding plan for parks, trails, and recreational amenities.

Similarly, the county should invest in a cohesive wayfinding plan throughout the county to connect its various recreational amenities. Precedents in New York State include the Empire State Trail wayfinding strategy.

STRATEGY 6-E8:
Improve safety and accessibility of existing bicycle paths, sidewalks, and trails and prioritize maintenance of existing assets.

In addition to expanding recreational resources, it is imperative that Chemung County invest in maintaining its existing infrastructure, including its bicycles paths, sidewalks, and trails. The county should coordinate with ECTC to ensure these recreational and multimodal pathways are well maintained and safe for users. Additionally, the county should work with ECTC and stakeholders to implement the recommendations of the ECTC Pedestrian Trail Plan Update (2025), which is anticipated to be completed by Summer 2025.

STRATEGY 6-E9:
Increase bicycle racks at public recreation facilities.

Cycling is a beneficial mode of transportation that provides health and recreation benefits and has a lower environmental impact than driving a car. To encourage residents to cycle recreationally and / or to commute, the county should invest in additional bicycle infrastructure, including bicycle racks at public recreation facilities.

STRATEGY 6-E10:
Expand and enhance recreational opportunities to meet the needs of young people and an aging population.

As noted in the “Emerging Themes,” (Chapter 2), county residents feel a strong desire to ensure that its youngest and more senior residents have access to goods, services, and recreational resources to create a good quality of life. As the county works through these strategies for improved park and recreation space, it should include dedicated amenities and programs for its youth and seniors, including more seating, plenty of shaded areas, playground equipment, a walking loop for active older adults, restrooms, and accessibility features that accommodate walkers, wheelchairs, and strollers.

STRATEGY 6-E11:
Utilize “Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design” (“CPTED”) strategies to enhance safety in recreational facilities.

Some county residents have expressed concerns about public safety while accessing parks. One avenue through which the county can address public safety concerns is by implementing CPTED principles to enhance safety at recreational facilities. These may include physical improvements, lighting improvements, clearer lines of sight, fencing, landscaping, and routine maintenance.

STRATEGY 6-E12:
Identify and pursue funding opportunities at local, state, and federal levels as applicable to the County’s recreation goals.

New York State offers various funding opportunities each year through its Consolidated Funding Application (“CFA”). The CFA includes grant programs through the NYS OPRHP, NYSDEC, NYS Empire State Development (“ESD”), New York State Canal Corporation, and other entities that fund outdoor/recreation improvements. The county should continue to track funding opportunities through these programs to apply for funding for programmatic and capital improvements. This will be especially important in pursuing large-scale recreation projects, like the now underway Chemung Canal Trail.

**GOAL 6-F:
MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF NATURAL HAZARDS AND CLIMATE IMPACTS.**

Climate change is an issue that becomes more pressing for counties to address with each passing year. Due to climate change, sea levels are changing, global average temperatures are rising, and extreme weather events are becoming more common. As these changes affect communities across New York and the country, the county should take action to mitigate the impacts of natural hazards to protect its community.

**STRATEGY 6-F1:
Continue to implement the recommendations in the county's Hazard Mitigation Plan. Update the Hazard Mitigation Plan every 5 years.**

Chemung County's last Hazard Mitigation plan was published in 2019, and a 2025 update to the plan is anticipated to be published in early 2026. The plan identified six goals related to hazard mitigation in the county and identified seven natural hazards. Reference Chapter 3 for additional information about the plan. Overall, the plan resulted in a series of Action Items to address and mitigate impacts from these natural hazards, which are posted on the county's website. The county should continue to implement the Action Items listed in the plan and update the plan every five years. Highlight that actions function as risk-reduction and cost avoidance, which yield insurance savings, and boost infrastructure protections.

**STRATEGY 6-F2:
Create a Countywide Comprehensive Emergency Management (Evacuation) Plan.**

Several counties in New York State have a County Emergency Management Department which implements a Countywide Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan or similar planning document. These plans are intended to provide leadership during emergencies, facilitate partnerships with organizations that are equipped to respond to emergencies, enhance emergency response and improve emergency planning, conduct trainings and education, provide evacuation information and protocol in case of an emergency, seek grant opportunities to improve emergency preparedness, provide hazmat response, and more. The county should work with its existing departments to organize a team that spearheads emergency management and preparedness in the county and consider creating a Countywide Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

**GOAL 6G:
CREATE MORE RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND GUIDE THE COUNTY TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.**

As extreme weather events and climate changes are inevitable, it is important for the county to look to the future of construction and infrastructure solutions to ensure that the county's facilities, services, and structures are prepared to withstand the shifting climate.

**STRATEGY 6-G1:
Continue implementing the Climate Smart Communities ("CSC") program in accordance with Chemung County's bronze CSC designation.**

The Climate Smart Communities program is a NYS program which supports counties and municipalities in implementing climate-conscious initiatives. The program includes technical assistance for climate smart communities, assistance with reports and planning, a competitive boost on grant applications that are related to the program, support for sustainability and smart growth initiatives, and more. Chemung County is currently a certified Bronze CSC. The county should continue to participate in the program and work towards a Silver certification.

**STRATEGY 6-G2:
Identify opportunities to implement green infrastructure improvements at existing county-owned facilities.**

Green infrastructure refers to stormwater management practices that use filtration, infiltration, and evapotranspiration to treat and absorb, which may include rain gardens, planter boxes, green roofs, and permeable pavements, among others. The County should review its existing stormwater management plan (published in June 2010) and update the plan with recommendations to install green infrastructure. An inventory of existing facilities should be conducted to identify green infrastructure opportunities.

**STRATEGY 6-G3:
Identify opportunities to make facilities upgrades to improve energy efficiency at county-owned buildings.**

Similarly to Strategy 6-G2 above, the county should inventory its existing facilities to identify opportunities to make general facility improvements and energy efficiency updates (e.g., installation of LED lights) to improve the energy efficiency of county-owned buildings.



THE
**CHEMUNG
COUNTY**
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Chapter 7 **Agriculture**

AGRICULTURE

7.1 Guiding Principle

Agriculture is deeply rooted in Chemung County's economy, heritage, and landscape. Spanning thousands of acres of diverse farmland, from rolling hayfields and dairy operations to smaller specialty farms, agriculture remains a defining element of rural life in the county. The County's farms face upcoming challenges such as aging producers, rising costs, and competition from larger agricultural markets, which it will need to address to sustain agriculture's vital role in the county's identity and economy. Chemung County is committed to preserving its working lands, supporting its producers, and promoting sustainable agricultural development. In recognition of agriculture's significant role in the county, the fourth guiding principle of the Comprehensive Plan is to:

GUIDING PRINCIPLE:

Protect and promote the agricultural heritage, economy, and open space of Chemung County by supporting farmers, preserving farmland, and encouraging future generations to continue agricultural traditions.

7.2 Relevant Inventory Data

The County's planning efforts are guided by its Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board ("AFPB"), a state-mandated body composed of farmers, agribusiness professionals, and municipal representatives. The AFBP advises on farmland conservation policy and reviews changes to the County's Agricultural District. In 2011, the County published the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan ("AFPP"), which outlined strategies to protect farmland, strengthen agricultural enterprises, and promote coordination among stakeholders. During the development of the Comprehensive Plan, the County worked concurrently to update the AFPP. The updated AFPP will be available on the county's website. Reference Chapter 1 (Introduction) and Appendix M7: Agriculture Memo for more information.

AGRICULTURAL LAND USE

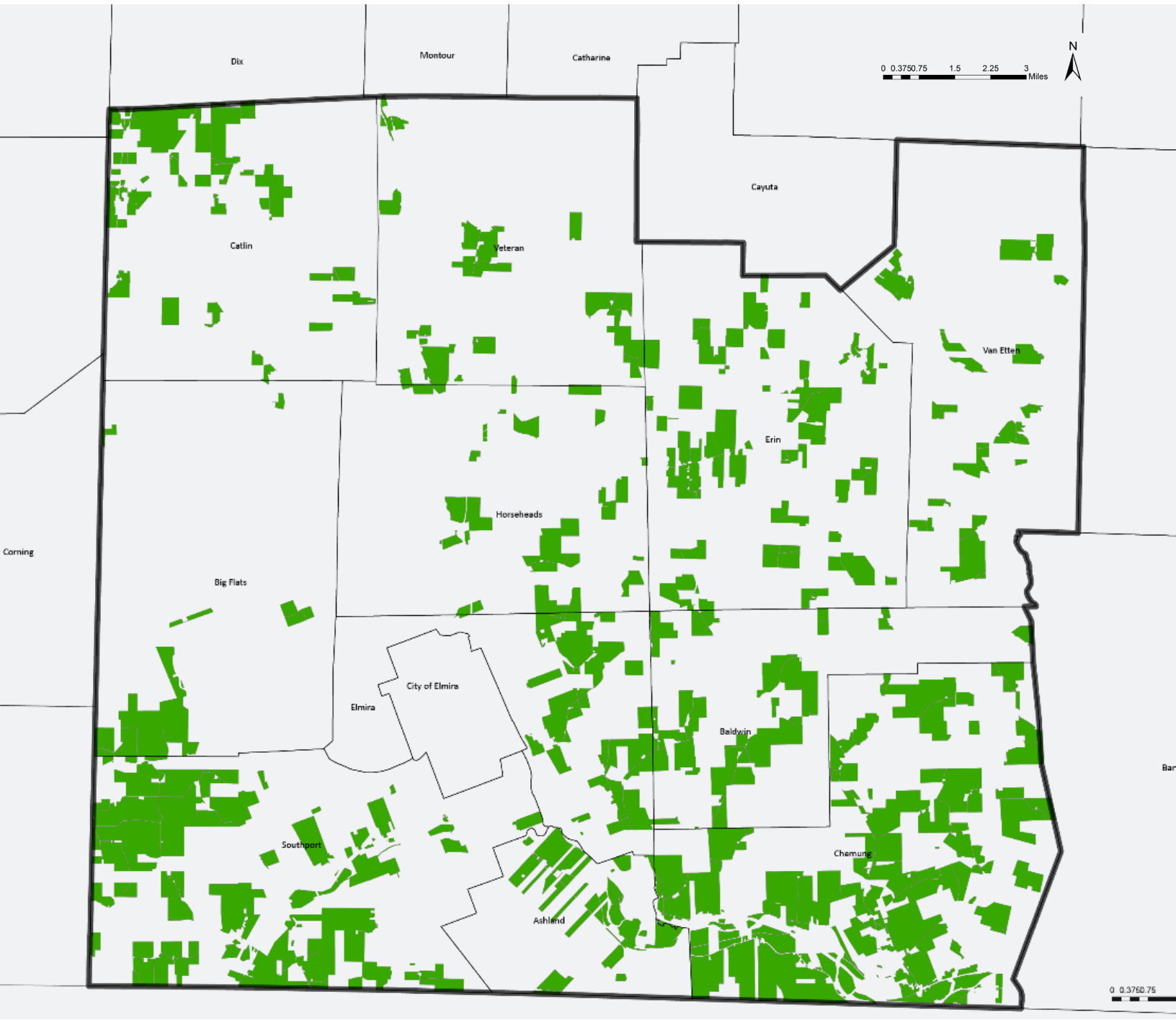
Chemung County's agricultural land covers a wide variety of uses. Based on New York State Property Classification Codes, field crops dominate the agricultural landscape, occupying 51.2% of farmland. Vacant but productive agricultural land comprises 23.6%, suggesting potential for expansion. Dairy production occupies 16.2% of agricultural land, underscoring the importance of milk and dairy products in the local economy. Smaller-scale uses—such as honey and beeswax, nurseries, and orchards contribute to the county's agricultural diversity. Over 5,000 acres of agricultural land is classified as 'productive but currently vacant, representing future potential for new or expanding farms.

AGRICULTURAL ZONING & AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

Most municipalities in Chemung County have zoning categories that permit or prioritize agricultural use. These include designations such as "Agricultural Residential," "Agricultural & Rural," and "Conservation Agriculture." The Town of Van Etten, which lacks formal zoning, reviews permit through its code office. This varied zoning landscape offers flexibility but also presents opportunities to strengthen farmland protections through more consistent strategies. All towns in Chemung County are part of a single Consolidated Agricultural District, encompassing 46,315 acres, with 34,900 acres actively farmed and supporting 254 farms. The County collaborates with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets to implement the Agricultural Districts Program and conduct outreach to landowners about enrollment and assessment benefits.

LAND COVER

Forests remain the dominant land cover in Chemung County, but hay/pasture and cultivated crops are widely distributed across towns such as Chemung, Ashland, Big Flats, and Veteran. This blend of natural and agricultural land illustrates the close relationship between environmental conservation and active farming (reference Land Use map in Chapter 5, Infrastructure). The Chemung County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) supports this relationship by working with farmers to implement practices that protect water quality, reduce erosion, and improve soil health.



Legend
 □ Chemung County ■ Agricultural District 1

PRODUCER CHARACTERISTICS

Chemung County has 623 agricultural producers, which is defined by the USDA as a person who is involved in making decisions regarding farm operations. The average age is 58.4 years, which is slightly higher than the national average of 58.1 years, following a trend of steady increases since 2017. Only 66 of Chemung County’s agricultural producers are under age 35—fewer than in neighboring counties. Nationwide, the average number of producers under 35 is approximately 300,000, while the number over 65 is 1.2 million. This highlights a pressing need to support young and beginning farmers.

Most Chemung County farms are between 50 and 179 acres, representing mid-sized operations. Very small (under 10 acres) and very large farms (500+ acres) make up less than 15% of total farms. Additionally, many farmers are part-time since they cannot generate sufficient income on their farms to sustain themselves.

FARMLAND CLASSIFICATION

Chemung County contains a mix of farmland soil classifications. About 17% is Prime Farmland, 46% is Farmland of Statewide Importance, 1% is Prime Farmland if Drained, and 36% is Not Prime Farmland. Reference Chapter 6, Environment, for a more detailed description of these soil classifications. Notably, some of the most fertile soils are in urbanized or commercially developed areas, which may pose a threat of conversion if growth pressures continue.

AGRICULTURAL TRENDS (2002–2022)

Between 2002 and 2022, the number of farms in Chemung County declined from 427 to 352, and the total land in farms decreased from 69,183 acres to 60,337 acres. Despite this reduction in the number of farms and agricultural acreage, the market value of products sold saw significant growth, rising from \$12 million in 2002 to \$34.5 million in 2022. Notably, average sales per farm more than doubled between 2017 and 2022, reaching \$97,877, indicating increased productivity or market value per operation.

The dominant crops in the county are forage (hay and silage), corn for grain, and soybeans. While some orchards and vegetables are grown, these occupy much less acreage. Dairy remains a critical component of Chemung County’s agricultural economy, accounting for 42% of all agricultural sales in 2022.

AGRICULTURAL ASSESSMENTS

Agricultural assessments offer tax relief for eligible lands. In 2022, the Town of Veteran had the highest number of parcels receiving an agricultural exemption, and the Town of Catlin reported the highest assessed land value for farmland.

ECONOMIC DATA

In 2022, the average market value per farm in Chemung County was \$607,073, with total farm sales reaching \$34.5 million. Of these sales, 58% came from livestock and related products, while 42% were from crops. Net cash farm income rose significantly to \$9.25 million, marking a 115% increase from 2017. Although fewer farms received government payments during this period, the average payment per farm increased by 47%, reflecting a shift in the distribution of financial support.

Compared to adjacent counties (Schuyler, Tioga, Tompkins), Chemung has lower average farm revenue and fewer government-supported farms. However, it has competitive land value per acre and strong livestock sales.

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS AND RESOURCES

The Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chemung County (“CCE”) is a key resource for the local agricultural community. CCE provides training, technical assistance, and public outreach on topics ranging from livestock and horticulture to agribusiness and energy efficiency. It also plays an essential role in youth education through 4-H and farm-to-school partnerships. The South-Central NY Agriculture Team, which includes Chemung County, offers regional guidance and enterprise support for farmers in coordination with CCE programs.

The Chemung County Soil and Water District provides technical support to farmers through State and Federal programs. These include outreach events and direct support for agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs).

The Chemung County Agricultural Society, which manages the County Fair, is another important partner in promoting agricultural awareness and community engagement. The fairgrounds serve as a platform to celebrate the County’s farm heritage, highlight youth in agriculture, and support small food businesses through initiatives such as the proposed USDA-certified kitchen.

7.3 Key Takeaways

Chemung County’s agricultural landscape is productive and diverse, with room to grow.

Field crops, including hay and corn, dominate the agricultural landscape, while smaller operations like orchards, nurseries, and apiaries contribute to the county’s agricultural diversity. In addition, more than 5,000 acres of productive but currently vacant farmland present a significant opportunity to expand farming activity or attract new farm businesses.

Farm consolidation has led to higher productivity and market value per operation.

While the number of farms declined from 427 in 2002 to 352 in 2022, and land in farms dropped by nearly 9,000 acres, farm revenues have grown considerably. Average farm sales more than doubled between 2017 and 2022, and net cash farm income rose 115%, reflecting more intensive and economically viable operations.

Prime farmland is at risk due to development pressures.

Although 17% of Chemung’s soils are classified as Prime Farmland and 46% as Farmland of Statewide Importance, much of this high-quality land lies near urbanized or commercially developing areas. Without stronger protective measures, these lands may be vulnerable to conversion for non-agricultural uses.

The aging producer base presents a challenge for generational continuity.

With an average age of 58.4 and only 66 producers under age 35, Chemung County has fewer young farmers than neighboring counties, such as Schuylers and Tioga. This demographic imbalance underscores the importance of succession planning, land access initiatives, and targeted support for new and beginning farmers.

Livestock and dairy continue to anchor the county's farm economy.

In 2022, dairy accounted for 42% of all agricultural sales, and livestock-related products made up 58% of total farm revenue. Meanwhile, forage crops, corn for grain, and soybeans remain the dominant uses of farmland, highlighting the ongoing strength of both animal agriculture and row crop production in the county.

PLANNING BOARD CONSIDERATIONS: Agriculture

Planning Boards should favorably consider projects which prioritize the preservation of viable and active farmland and benefit the quality of life of the county's farmers.

As noted in Chapter 5, plans and capital projects which seek to retain the county's agricultural land and rural character, while strategically developing greenfield and underutilized sites and redeveloping in existing urban centers, should be prioritized.

Planning Boards should ensure proposed projects do not negatively impact the county's agricultural economy (e.g. through loss of viable agricultural land, threats to environmental health and safety, or impediments to growth of the county's agricultural economy).

7.4 Goals & Strategies

GOAL 7-A: PROTECT AND PRESERVE CHEMUNG COUNTY'S PRIME AGRICULTURAL LAND AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE LAND USE PRACTICES.

Chemung County is home to over 60,000 acres of agricultural land and approximately 17% of the county's total acreage is considered prime farmland (reference Chapter 6). The County's rich farming heritage is closely tied to its identity and economy. With growing development pressures and land conversion trends, the preservation of prime farmland—particularly in areas such as Big Flats, Horseheads, and the Town of Chemung—is critical to sustaining the county's agricultural future.

STRATEGY 7-A1: Collaborate with municipalities to strengthen agricultural zoning and conservation policies.

Chemung County is home to over 60,000 acres of agricultural land and approximately 17% of the county's total acreage is considered prime farmland (reference Chapter 6). The County's rich farming heritage is closely tied to its identity and economy. With growing development pressures and land conversion trends, the preservation of prime farmland—particularly in areas such as Big Flats, Horseheads, and the Town of Chemung—is critical to sustaining the county's agricultural future.

STRATEGY 7-A2: Encourage enrollment in agricultural districts and educate landowners about agricultural assessments and tax relief programs.

Chemung County should continue promoting participation in its consolidated Agricultural District, which currently spans 46,315 acres, by coordinating with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. The County can assist in implementing the state's Agricultural Districts Program by conducting local outreach and offering guidance to landowners about the financial benefits of agricultural assessments and tax relief. Coordinate with the AFPB to host public information sessions to help farmers and landowners understand these benefits and sustain agricultural land use over time. More information about the state program is available at the state Agriculture & Markets website.

STRATEGY 7-A3: Implement the strategies in the AFPP.

The AFPP identifies priority farmland based on soil quality, vulnerability to development pressure, and proximity to urban growth areas, and outlines specific tools including conservation easements, land acquisition, and transfer of development rights to protect high-value agricultural land for future generations. The strategies in the AFPP should be implemented in partnership with the AFPB and key stakeholders such as the Chemung County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Finger Lakes Land Trust.

**GOAL 7-B:
PROMOTE AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION PROGRAMS
SUCH AS LAND TRUSTS.**

Chemung County is home to over 60,000 acres of agricultural land and approximately 17% of the county's total acreage is considered prime farmland (reference Chapter 6). The County's rich farming heritage is closely tied to its identity and economy. With growing development pressures and land conversion trends, the preservation of prime farmland—particularly in areas such as Big Flats, Horseheads, and the Town of Chemung—is critical to sustaining the county's agricultural future.

**STRATEGY 7-B1:
Encourage landowners to conserve
farmland through land trusts,
conservation easements, or Purchase
of Development Rights ("PDR")
agreements.**

Chemung County should collaborate with agricultural producers and landowners on the common goal of preserving farmland. Several planning tools, including land trusts, conservation easements, and PDR agreements can assist the county and landowners in effectively preserving agricultural land. Reference the County's AFPP for additional information.

**STRATEGY 7-B2:
Explore the feasibility of a county-
owned agricultural land trust
program which could be administered
through the Planning Department
and the Chemung County Soil and
Water Conservation District.**

To further encourage local farmers to participate in agricultural land conservation programs, the county should consider implementing a county-owned agricultural land trust program. Reference the County's 2025 Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan for additional information.

**GOAL 7-C:
SUPPORT THE ECONOMIC VIABILITY AND RESILIENCE OF THE
AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY.**

Agriculture in Chemung County has experienced significant economic change, with total sales growing to \$34.5 million in 2022, yet fewer farms are realizing net gains. Supporting a robust, competitive farm economy will require targeted investments, diversification strategies, and expanded market opportunities.

**STRATEGY 7-C1:
Provide technical
assistance and support to
help farmers access grant
funding, new markets, and
diversification tools.**

Chemung County should collaborate with regional partners such as Cornell Cooperative Extension and Southern Tier Economic Growth (STEG) to assist farms in pursuing New York State grants, US Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs, and local value-added initiatives. Targeted support could include assistance with business planning, agritourism development, direct-to-consumer sales, and transition to specialty or high-value crops.

**STRATEGY 7-C2:
Work with regional
and state agencies to
stabilize farm incomes
and promote equitable
access to government
programs.**

The County should advocate for policies and programs that increase access to government payments, which declined by 39% from 2017 to 2022 in Chemung County. This includes supporting outreach to underrepresented farmers and young producers and working with NYSDAM to expand educational resources on available subsidies and assistance.

**STRATEGY 7-C3:
Facilitate land access and
ownership opportunities
for beginning and young
farmers.**

With the average age of Chemung County's producers at 58.4 and a comparatively low number of young farmers, the County should explore ways to help new farmers acquire land. This could include supporting land-linking programs, succession planning workshops, and partnerships with land banks to transition underutilized or tax-delinquent land into agricultural use.

**GOAL 7-D:
ENCOURAGE ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AND THE INTEGRATION
OF AGRICULTURE INTO THE COUNTY'S SUSTAINABILITY GOALS.**

Farming practices in Chemung County play a vital role in maintaining open space, preserving ecosystems, and contributing to water and soil health. As New York pursues aggressive climate and energy goals, agriculture must be recognized as both a stakeholder and a contributor to sustainable land management.

**STRATEGY 7-D1:
Promote sustainable
practices
and resource
conservation on
farms.**

Chemung County should promote best practices for soil health, water conservation, and nutrient management by partnering with the Soil and Water Conservation District and Cornell Cooperative Extension. Technical workshops, on-farm demonstrations, and cost-sharing programs can encourage widespread adoption of conservation measures.

**STRATEGY 7-D2:
Support renewable energy projects that align with
agricultural land preservation.**

Chemung County should explore strategies for integrating renewable energy development (such as solar, wind, and anaerobic digesters) in tandem with long-term farmland preservation goals. While renewable energy infrastructure can offer farmers important supplemental income in a context where government payments are declining and net farm income varies; its expansion must be balanced with the protection of prime agricultural land. As noted in the agricultural inventory, prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance are in areas like Big Flats, Chemung, and Horseheads; which are also likely to be attractive for renewable energy siting due to open land and infrastructure proximity.

To address this, the County should consider convening a task force to assess where and how solar and wind projects can be sited in a way that minimizes land conversion and protects the region's most productive soil. To ensure productive use of land, this group should explore dual-use strategies such as agrivoltaics, assess trade-offs for different types of farms, and develop recommendations that promote both environmental sustainability and agricultural viability. County and municipalities should ensure that any development agreements contain sufficient decommissioning standards. These efforts should be coordinated with state-level renewable energy siting policies and local zoning tools, including the use of overlay districts where appropriate. Additionally, the County should seek opportunities to connect farmers interested in pursuing solar lease agreements to resources through the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority ("NYSERDA").

**STRATEGY 7-D3:
Evaluate the impacts of climate change on local agricultural systems and
plan for resilience.**

With more extreme weather events and shifting growing seasons, Chemung County should assess agricultural climate vulnerability and integrate findings into future planning. This could include mapping flood-prone areas, assess irrigation needs, and developing emergency response plans for livestock and crop loss events.

**GOAL 7-E:
BUILD COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR AGRICULTURE AND EXPAND
EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.**

The long-term success of agriculture in Chemung County depends on cultivating public appreciation, a skilled labor force, and the next generation of producers. Agricultural literacy and workforce pipelines are essential for keeping the sector vibrant and viable.

**STRATEGY 7-E1:
Expand agricultural education in
schools and youth programs.**

In partnership with local school districts, 4-H, and BOCES, Chemung County should help integrate agricultural education into curricula and after-school programs. Farm-to-school efforts, hands-on learning opportunities, and partnerships with local producers can help build early awareness of agriculture's importance.

**STRATEGY 7-E2:
Highlight the value of agriculture
through public engagement and
awareness campaigns.**

The County should develop a public information campaign to celebrate Chemung's agricultural heritage, promote local farm products, and educate residents about the value of farmland preservation. This may include social media campaigns, farmer profiles, signage along rural roads, and "Buy Local" marketing efforts.

STRATEGY 7-E3:
Support training programs to grow the local farm workforce.

To address labor shortages and support succession, the County can work with regional workforce agencies, community colleges, and agricultural organizations to promote job training in farming, machinery operation, business management, and sustainable practices. Apprenticeship and mentorship programs should be explored to connect retiring farmers with new entrants.

STRATEGY 7-E4:
Support the County Fair and explore the development of a USDA-certified kitchen at the fairgrounds.

The Chemung County Fair plays a vital role in celebrating the county's agricultural roots and building public appreciation for farming among youths and families. The County should explore ways to support and expand agricultural programming at the fair, including educational exhibits, demonstrations, and youth competitions. Additionally, the community has expressed interest in the development of a USDA-certified shared use kitchen at the fairgrounds, which could be used to support local food producers, expand farm-to-market opportunities, and provide food safety training and entrepreneurial resources.

In addition to the proposed improvements to agricultural programming and a potential USDA-certified kitchen at the Fairgrounds, the county has the opportunity to pursue additional capital improvements at the Fairgrounds. These include site circulation and landscaping improvements, newly constructed buildings at the fairgrounds entry and the interior of the site, and additional amenities include covered seating areas and a gazebo.



PROPOSED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS, CHEMUNG COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS



THE
**CHEMUNG
COUNTY**
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Chapter 8

Cultural & Historic Resources



CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES

8.1 Guiding Principle

Studying the historic and cultural resources of an area allows planners to understand how the built environment, culture, demographics, traditions, economic climate, and artistic and cultural landscape of that area evolved over time and led to current conditions. Patterns of migration in and out of a community, major events such as natural disasters, the growth and decline of prominent industries, the evolution of transportation systems, and historic, political, and socioeconomic conditions all influence the decision-making that shaped the present-day built environment, along with its successes and modern challenges. Historic resources also contribute to an area's unique character and can contribute to larger placemaking projects that attract cultural and heritage tourists. By focusing on the previously untold or forgotten history of an area, planners can help elevate the stories of historically marginalized and disenfranchised communities through rehabilitation and placemaking projects.

In recognition of the prominent role that historic and cultural resources and the arts play in making Chemung County a vibrant place to live, the fifth guiding principle for the Comprehensive Plan is to:

GUIDING PRINCIPLE:

Protect the unique character of Chemung County by preserving and celebrating its historic and cultural resources.

8.2 Relevant Inventory Data

BRIEF HISTORY OF CHEMUNG COUNTY

Reference Appendix M8: Cultural and Historic Resources Memo for more information.

Native American History

Long before Europeans settled in the Lower Chemung River Valley, the region was home to Native Americans. Evidence of early agricultural villages dating back to A.D. 900 has been found along the Chemung River in what is now Ashland, Chemung, and Horseheads.

The region was primarily inhabited by the Seneca tribe of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy, along with other groups including the Delaware (Munsee) and Cayuga people.

The County's name "Chemung" comes from the Delaware dialect of the Algonquin language, where it translates to "Place of the Big Horn." This is a reference to the discovery of large mammoth tusks along the banks off what is now the Chemung River in the area of the Native American village destroyed during the Battle of Newtown.

Founding and Revolutionary War History

During the Revolutionary War, Chemung County became a significant battleground due to its strategic location and the presence of Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) tribes allied with the British. The Battle of Newtown occurred in August 1779, pitting the Continental Army against British soldiers aided by Loyalists and Haudenosaunee warriors. It was part of the larger "Sullivan-Clinton Campaign," the most significant Campaign of 1779, which sought retribution for earlier attacks in the region by British soldiers and Native American allies. The Sullivan-Clinton Campaign encompassed over 20% of the Continental Army, and the Battle of Newtown was a significant battle that influenced the course of the American Revolution. Today, Newtown Battlefield State Park is overseen by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, and is a designated historic landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

"The Sullivan-Clinton Campaign in Chemung County," Chemung Valley History Museum, 2006, <https://chemungvalleymuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Sullivan-Clinton-Driving-Guide.pdf>
"Newtown Battlefield State Park," New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, last accessed January 2, 2025, <https://parks.ny.gov/parks/newtownbattlefield/>

Abolition History

Between the 1840s-1860s the abolition movement was strong in Chemung County. Elmira was a key stopping point for freedom seekers heading north, due to its proximity to the Chemung River and railways heading through the area. Approximately 800 freedom seekers passed through Chemung County, all aided by John W. Jones. Jones was born into slavery in Virginia and fled north in the 1840s. He was most active in the Underground Railroad in the 1850s, housing up to 30 freedom seekers in his home at a time. The home, which stands on Jones' original farm property on Davis Street was condemned by the City of Elmira in 1997 and subsequently rescued and restored by a group of concerned citizens lead by Lucy Brown. Today, his house serves as the John W. Jones Museum, a testament to the importance of commemorating historical events through the protection and restoration of the built environment.

"Who Was John W. Jones," John W. Jones History Museum, last accessed January 2, 2025, <https://www.johnwjonesmuseum.org/about>

Civil War History

Chemung County played a major role in the Civil War as it was the site of the Elmira Prison Camp. The Prison Camp saw thousands of troops from 1861-65. The camp was used for training Union soldiers before they went off to battle, and for holding Confederate prisoners of war. The Camp was infamous for its poor conditions. Although the camp was demolished, the 501c3 "Friends of Elmira Civil War Prison Camp" currently operates at 641 Windsor Street, providing education and completing reconstruction projects yearly with the help of its members. A monument to the confederate soldiers detained in the prison camp is standing at Woodlawn Cemetery, a National-Register listed site.

Krystal Cole, "Civil War Played a Vital Role in the Early Days of Elmira," Spectrum News 1, July 25, 2024, <https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/central-ny/news/2024/07/24/elmira-s-ties-to-the-civil-war>

DESIGNATED HISTORIC RESOURCES

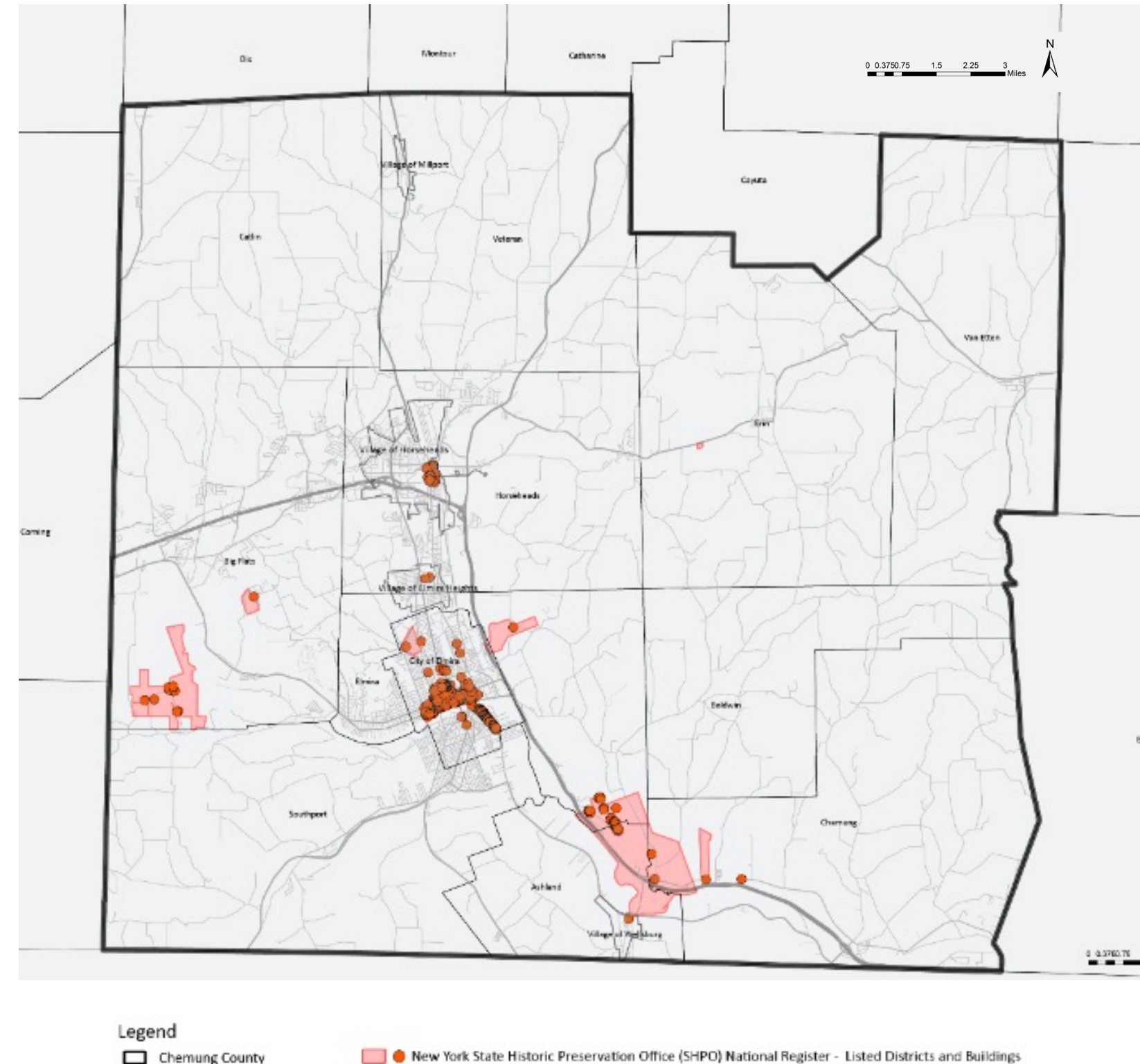
Historic and cultural resources data was obtained from the New York State Historic Preservation Office ("SHPO") Cultural Resources Information System ("CRIS") online database. CRIS maps the locations of buildings, sites, districts, and areas that may be historically and / or archaeologically significant, including sites that are listed in the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

According to SHPO CRIS, there are 2,586 buildings that are either "Listed" on the State or National Register of Historic Places or "Contributing" to a Listed Historic District within the county. There is a total of 48 National Register Listed Buildings and 18 National Register Listed Historic Districts in the county. There are an additional 176 National Register-eligible historic buildings in Chemung County, and an abundance of properties that are greater than 50 years old and therefore could become eligible for the National Register due to their age. There are also several areas of potential archaeological sensitivity throughout the county, which include Chemung, Big Flats, Horseheads, and Elmira.

The Chemung County Historical Society, located in the City of Elmira, maintains a database of local historic monuments and markers. As of 2024, the database included over 130 local monuments and markers including NYS Roadway Signs, historic sites and structures, burial locations and cemeteries, memorials, monuments, and statues. The database includes local historic monuments and markers in the municipalities.

Historic resource and National Register data provided by the New York State Division for Historic Preservation

FIGURE 8-1: NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES-LISTED BUILDINGS AND HISTORIC DISTRICTS



CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Chemung County's cultural institutions make life in the county more vibrant, interesting, and educational. The county's cultural institutions include:

Arnot Art Museum

A museum dedicated to "preserve the original collection of Matthias H. Arnot and, with a primary focus on representational art, to collect and exhibit works of art possessing the highest quality, merit, enduring worth and interest." The Arnot Art Museum is located in the neo-classical mansion of John Arnot Sr, at 235 Lake Street in Elmira.

The ARTS Council of the Southern Finger Lakes

An organization dedicated to supporting artists in the Southern Finger Lakes region by providing numerous services to the art community, including disbursing grant funding and providing support to artists, assistance with proposal writing, providing exhibit and performance opportunities, career- and audience-building, budgeting, and program development and marketing.

Big Flats Historical Society

Founded in 1971, the Historical Society preserves information of local historical significance, provides outreach and education to other groups and citizens, maintains a local history museum, and serves as the Town's local historian.

Chemung County Fair / Robert S. Turner Chemung County Fairgrounds

A versatile venue designed to host a wide range of recreational and entertainment programs, events, and activities. These include antique car shows, concerts, animal exhibitions, and festivals. The Fairgrounds is also home to the renowned Chemung County Fair, which features an array of attractions including trotter's racing, bingo, live music performances, car displays, tractor pulls, and fireworks.

The Chemung County Historical Society

A nonprofit founded in 1923 whose mission is "to deepen our understanding of history and to provide an appreciation of our community's place in state and national history." Located in the National Register-listed former Chemung Canal Bank Building, the oldest commercial structure in Elmira.

"Chemung Canal Bank Building Elmira," Landmarks of New York State, last accessed January 2, 2025, <http://nyslandmarks.com/southerntier/elmbank.htm>

Chemung County Library District

Includes five locations and a "Bookmobile" which travels throughout the county. The Chemung County Library District's Mission Statement is "to provide exceptional public library services and programs to our citizens – fulfilling their individual needs for educational, recreational, and cultural information – through contemporary, well-maintained library collections and facilities located throughout Chemung County."

Clemens Center

An organization which hosts Broadway Series plays, family friendly shows, and a "School Time" series and participates in local arts programming, volunteer efforts, and architectural studies.

Community Arts of Elmira

A nonprofit founded in 2005 which is dedicated to "provide performance and exhibition space to new and established artists, to offer educational programs and activities and to create public awareness by encouraging participation in and appreciation for all of the arts." Located in the National Register-listed Pratt Mansion at 413 Lake Street in Elmira. Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes, Inc. An organization which gives grants, mini grants, training, and resources to nonprofits throughout the region.

Eldridge Park / Carousel Preservation Society

Eldridge Park was founded in 1857 in Elmira, and the historic carousel in the park was added in 1924. The carousel was subsequently destroyed by vandals in the 1980s, and restored in 2006, after years of dedicated efforts by the Eldridge Park Carousel Preservation Society. Today, fewer than 20 such carousels remain in the United States. The park offers a wide array of activities, preserving both the spirit of its past and excitement for its future.

Horseheads Historical Society

A volunteer-run organization which operates from the Depot Museum at 312 W Broad Street in Horseheads and maintains the "Zim" House, formerly the home of world-renowned cartoonist Eugene Zimmerman ("Zim") at 601 Pine Street. The Horseheads Historical Society hosts tours of the Depot Museum (regularly scheduled) and the Zim House (by appointment), along with events to educate the community and schools about local history.

"About," Horseheads Historical Society, last accessed January 5, 2025, <https://www.horseheadshistoricalsociety.com/about>

John W. Jones Museum

Jones' home was slated for demolition in 1997 but was saved by a group of involved citizens led by Lucy Brown and converted to a museum. A recently added statue depicts John Jones pointing escaped slaves north toward freedom. Today, the John W. Jones Museum is listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places.

National Soaring Museum

An aviation museum whose mission is to preserve and present “the heritage of motorless flight, and promotes through education, a greater knowledge of soaring aeronautics, and related physical sciences for everyone.” The National Soaring Museum is located on Harris Hill in Elmira, which is known as the “Soaring Capital of America.” The museum houses one of the largest collections of historic and vintage gliders and sailplanes, dating back to the late 1890s, and is the official repository of the United States Soaring Hall of Fame.

“National Soaring Museum,” National Soaring Museum, last accessed January 5, 2025, <https://www.soaringmuseum.org/>

Tanglewood Nature Center

A nonprofit nature-focused educational facility which maintains two independent trail systems and houses a museum at 443 Coleman Ave in Elmira with various animals, including mammals, birds, reptiles, and more. The Center provides programming for school and community groups, both on-site and at area schools and libraries.

Wings of Eagles Discovery Center

Originally the National Warplane Museum, the Wings of Eagles Discover Center on Daniel Zenker drive in Big Flats focuses on aerospace and STEM education. The Center balances preserving aviation history with inspiring future aerospace innovation, offering hands-on learning to equip youth for a technology-driven future.

NATIVE AMERICAN RESOURCES

Though there are no federal or state recognized territories or tribal lands, the County is located in the ancestral territory of the Onöndowa'ga:' (Seneca) Nation, a member of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, as well as the Susquehannock people.

The Chemung Valley History Museum tells the history of Chemung County and its earliest Native American settlement through its permanent exhibit “In the Valley of the Big Horn.” Historic markers dedicated to Native American history are dotted throughout the county,

including a William G. Pomeroy Foundation marker at Chemung Village on County Rd 60 in Elmira. The marker commemorates the Delaware village destroyed by General Sullivan's forces in 1779. Another Pomeroy marker dedicated to the Seneca and Delaware people that fought to protect their lives and homes is located on Lowman Road in Lowman.

REGULATORY TOOLS AND POLICIES

In Chemung County, historic preservation efforts are primarily managed at the municipal level. In the City of Elmira, the Elmira Historic Preservation Commission is responsible for reviewing requests from property owners seeking to undertake external renovations on properties located within historic districts or designated as historic. This ensures that any modifications align with preservation standards and maintain the historical integrity of the area. The City of Elmira also regulates demolition activities involving historic structures, including obtaining a demolition permit. Elmira's zoning ordinances incorporate provisions related to historic preservation. The Historic Preservation Commission collaborates with the Planning Commission during site plan reviews to ensure that proposed developments within historic districts are consistent with preservation goals.

Other municipalities within Chemung County may have their own regulations and procedures concerning historic preservation and demolition. At the county level, the Chemung County Planning Board oversees broader planning and zoning matters, which may include aspects related to historic preservation. However, detailed policies and procedures are typically defined and enforced at the municipal level.

STATE RESOURCES

Preservation League of New York State

The Preservation League of New York State provides information, advocacy, and funding support to preserve historic buildings, districts, and landscapes in the state of New York. In addition to providing resources for historic property owners, technical services, and educational programming, the League also administers several grant programs.

The Preservation League, in collaboration with the NYS Historic Preservation Office, developed a Model Preservation Law designed to assist municipalities in updating existing preservation laws and to encourage more communities to prioritize historic preservation.

“Model Landmarks Preservation Local Law for New York State Municipalities,” New York State Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, last accessed January 5, 2025, <https://parks.ny.gov/documents/shpo/certified-local-governments/ModelLawForLocalGovernments.pdf>

New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

The New York State office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation oversee New York State's parks, historic sites, recreational trails, golf courses, boat launches, and more. Their mission is to "provide safe and enjoyable recreational and interpretive opportunities for all New York State residents and visitors and to be responsible stewards of our valuable natural, historic, and cultural resources." One of the ways that SHPO encourages recognition and preservation community historic resources is through the federally sponsored Certified Local Government ("CLG") program. Any city, county, town, or village can qualify to be a CLG by meeting a series of state and federal standards related to preservation legislation and local preservation review. Program benefits include support from the SHPO, technical assistance, legal advice, training opportunities, and access to grants designated for CLG communities. At present, the City of Elmira is the only CLG in Chemung County.

8.3 Key Takeaways

HISTORICAL RESOURCES

Chemung County is rich in historical and cultural resources that offer both opportunities and challenges for preservation, community engagement, and economic development. The county's narrative, from its Native American heritage and abolitionist history to its founding and wartime contributions, provides a deep well of stories to celebrate and share. The Chemung River, with its historical significance and challenges related to flooding, underscores the need for thoughtful integration of natural and cultural heritage in future planning efforts.

"About Us," New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, last accessed January 5, 2025, <https://parks.ny.gov/about/>

The inventory of historic resources, including the 2,586 buildings listed or contributing to State and National Historic Registers, and areas of archaeological sensitivity, demonstrates the breadth of assets in need of ongoing care and recognition. However, there is also an opportunity to expand awareness of and access to these resources by supporting local institutions like the Chemung County Historical Society, the John W. Jones Museum, and the Wings of Eagles Discovery Center. Each plays a vital role in keeping the county's history and culture alive for current and future generations.

CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Cultural institutions such as the Clemens Center and Arnot Art Museum, along with community-led organizations, enhance the vibrant artistic and cultural fabric of the area, while the preservation of iconic landmarks like Eldridge Park and the Chemung County Fairgrounds ensures the continuity of beloved traditions. Strengthening partnerships between local, regional, and state organizations can help identify and pursue funding opportunities and implement historic preservation initiatives. By investing in the county's cultural institutions, the County is investing in its "creation economy," a framework for growth and development of the county's cultural climate which was original posited for the City of Elmira in 2016. The Creation Economy incorporates principles of placemaking, revitalization of civic centers, and investment in arts and cultural organizations to develop a renewed sense of place and passion for the county's unique resources, community, history, and vision for the future.

Joe Caparulo, "Elmira's Creation Economy," Community Arts of Elmira, 2016, <https://www.communityartsofelmira.com/assets/documents/ece.pdf>

REGULATORY TOOLS

Regulatory tools and policies can be leveraged to safeguard historic sites and promote adaptive reuse of aging properties. Chemung County has an opportunity to position itself as a model for balancing preservation with progress, fostering a deep sense of identity, and attracting both residents and visitors to engage with its remarkable heritage.

PLANNING BOARD CONSIDERATIONS: Cultural & Historic Resources

Planning Boards should favorably consider projects which facilitate adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of the County's historic buildings, especially those in the county's urban centers as their rehabilitation is aligned with Smart Growth principles.

When reviewing Site Plan Review applications, zoning variances, and State Environmental Quality Review documentation, Planning Boards should consider whether the proposed development impacts existing historic resources or archaeological resources, including local landmarks, and State and National Register of Historic Places-Listed properties or districts.

Planning Boards should consider the impact of proposed developments on local and county-wide arts and cultural programming – this includes accessibility to arts and cultural institutions, walkability/availability of multimodal access, affordability, and proximity to transit services, among others.

8.4 Goals & Strategies

GOAL 8-A: STRENGTHEN AND PURSUE ADDITIONAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS.

As noted in Chapter 4, strong partnerships with other local and regional organizations are among the county's greatest assets in achieving a greater quality of life for its residents. Local historic and cultural institutions have a network of resources, points-of-contact, and institutional knowledge pertaining to the county's history and arts programming. The county should work to strengthen its existing partnerships and seek out new partnerships with organizations that can help implement future planning initiatives.



"The County has a rich history of abolitionists and the Underground Railroad. Also, the oldest college that granted academic degrees to women, Elmira College."

Survey Results

STRATEGY 8-A1: Foster greater coordination between the County and local historic preservation advocacy organizations.

Historic preservation has a long legacy of advocacy work from grassroots and nonprofit organizations. For example, the John W. Jones Museum in Elmira was saved after a dedicated advocacy campaign to rescue the building from demolition. The county should foster its participation with advocacy organizations to stay connected with pressing issues in county-wide and regional preservation.

STRATEGY 8-A2: Continue to support local historic and cultural institutions (e.g., Chemung County Historical Society, Horseheads Historical Society, Big Flats Historical Society, John W. Jones Museum, Wings of Eagles Discovery Center, Tanglewood Nature Center, etc.).

The county should continue to seek opportunities to proactively engage with local historic and cultural institutions. These opportunities could include collaboration on county-wide and local events, promoting events and projects hosted by these institutions, and maintaining regular communication with points-of-contact at the institutions.

STRATEGY 8-A3: Identify potential partners in the creation of a historic and cultural resources committee.

A dedicated historic and cultural resources committee would help to identify historically significant properties needing protection in the county, brainstorm opportunities for expanded cultural programming and events, and engage with local arts groups and organizations. The county should work with existing municipal, nonprofit, and other cultural and arts organizations to form this committee.

STRATEGY 8-A4: Consider establishing a volunteer County Historian position.

In addition to a historic and cultural resources committee, and dedicated volunteer position for the County historian would be an asset in preserving the County's history through conducting and preparing research into the county's history, participating in workshops and educational opportunities, helping to maintain county archival records, and advocating for the county's historic preservation efforts.

**GOAL 8-B:
PRESERVE AND PROTECT PROPERTIES OF HISTORIC AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE.**

Several of the county's most notable buildings were once at risk of demolition, abandonment, and/or vacancy before they were rehabilitated (e.g., John W. Jones Museum). Preservation of historic and cultural resources is an effective tool for placemaking, storytelling, and creating a unique and purposeful identity for the county and community.

**STRATEGY 8-B1:
Create educational materials and support property owners that wish to preserve and restore historic properties with tools including State and Federal tax credit programs.**

Many residences and businesses are privately owned. While there are state and federal resources to help preserve historic properties that are privately owned, such as State and Federal tax credits, accessing these resources can be complicated and confusing for first time users. The county can help private property owners access to these resources by creating educational materials and other systems to explain the process of obtaining financial support.

**STRATEGY 8-B2:
Pursue funding for critical improvements to the County Clerk Building at 210 Lake Street in Elmira.**

The County Clerk's Building at 210 Lake Street in Elmira was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in the 1970s. According to the National Register nomination form, the County Clerk's Office was constructed in 1875, and an addition called the "Court House Annex" was constructed in 1895. The building is currently used for county offices including the county clerk's office and needs upgrades and rehabilitation work to improve accessibility and ensure the building is compliant with ADA regulations, without compromising the historic character of the building.

**STRATEGY 8-B3:
Establish a database of historic properties in need of rehabilitation and work to connect developers with rehabilitation opportunities and historic tax credits.**

There are historic properties throughout the county, some of which are owned by the county and its municipalities, and others which are owned by private entities and residents, which need rehabilitation. These properties/property owners could benefit from the many grant funding and historic tax credit opportunities which provide financial assistance and incentives to rehabilitate historic properties. The county should work to establish a database of historic properties which need rehabilitation, especially those that are owned by the county and its cities, towns, and villages, to prioritize rehabilitation efforts and identify financial incentives for which the county and its municipalities should apply.

**GOAL 8-C:
PROMOTE EXISTING CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS, STRENGTHEN FOCUS ON HISTORICALLY UNDERREPRESENTED STORIES, AND FACILITATE PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS AT CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS.**

There is already a wealth of historic and cultural attractions throughout Chemung County, some of which are not yet well known or attended. The county can help promote these existing attractions through various avenues, such as through cross-department collaboration, using its social media channels to promote events, and prioritizing cultural attractions in its plans, budgets, and grant applications. Recognizing the community's diversity, these attractions will appeal to multiple population segments and should rely on volunteers and sponsorships while avoiding ongoing county cost commitments.

**STRATEGY 8-C1:
Increase promotion of the County's status as the "Soaring Capital" of the United States.**

Chemung County is known as the Soaring Capital of America and is home to the National Soaring Museum, though that may not be widely known to those unfamiliar with aviation history. There are opportunities to promote the "Soaring Capital" and introduce more people to the sport of soaring.

Chemung County currently promotes the county's aviation legacy through its Chamber of Commerce, "Things to Do" page on the county website, and through partnerships with other organizations such as the Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance. The county should continue to seek out opportunities to highlight its unique aviation history and existing tourism attractions at Harris Hill and the National Soaring Museum.

**STRATEGY 8-C2:
Prioritize the historic significance of the Chemung River in County planning projects.**

The Chemung River played an instrumental role in shaping land development patterns and economic development in the county. As noted previously, Elmira was established as an important trading and economic hub due to its proximity to the Chemung River, and the Chemung River influenced development patterns due to frequent and significant flooding events. As the county works to formalize the Chemung River as a recreational and aesthetic resource through planning efforts like the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (see Chapter 3), Chemung County should also ensure it acknowledges the role of the Chemung River in shaping the county's history and current state.

STRATEGY 8-C3:
Continue to support the Chemung County Fair as an important cultural event in the region.

The Chemung County Fair is a yearly event that hosts programs that uplift the central role of agriculture in the county's identity and economy. Chemung County hosted the 183rd County Fair in 2025. The county should continue its dedication to providing quality entertainment, attractions, educational booths, and family friendly fun through the County Fair. It should also continue to maintain and improve the Fairgrounds to offer quality amenities for residents and vendors and seek opportunities for new and exciting attractions.

STRATEGY 8-C4:
Explore opportunities to develop cultural programming and resources specifically for young people.

One of the consistent themes heard during public outreach and stakeholder engagement was the need to prioritize programming and things to do for the young community members of Chemung County. The county could expand cultural programming for youth through museum programs, summer camps, educational classes, and arts programming in partnership with local cultural organizations.

STRATEGY 8-C5:
Support and create opportunities for arts and cultural programming to encourage community gathering and sharing of local pride.

To encourage people to take advantage of local arts and cultural programming, the county should find ways to improve accessibility to programs and the built environment to encourage people to access these opportunities. Investment in placemaking strategies like murals and temporary art installations can create a more welcoming built environment for the public. Programming and events can help to encourage residents to utilize "third spaces" and participate in community events. For instance, the Clemens Center is an influential cultural institution which hosts a variety of plays and programs. By redesigning the area surrounding the Clemens Center to include multimodal transportation options, shade from street trees, and access to "third spaces," the county can create a more welcoming environment encouraging the community to take part in local events.



CONCEPTUAL REVITALIZATION OF CLEMENS CENTER CORRIDOR

STRATEGY 8-C6:
Explore the creation of a cultural district that celebrates the County's existing historic and cultural resources and expands recognition of historic assets.

In coordination with local partners, which could include the proposed historic and cultural resources steering committee, gather insight and public feedback on the possibility of creating a cultural district which celebrates the county's historic and cultural assets.

STRATEGY 8-C7:
Continue to document and share the history of historically underrepresented communities in the County.

Chemung County has begun to weave a story of how historically marginalized and underrepresented histories, including Black history, Native American history, and women's history, have impacted the development of the county and influenced people throughout the region. The John W. Jones Museum is an important testament to the influence of Black history in Chemung County. The county should continue to actively identify opportunities to celebrate the influence of historically underrepresented communities in shaping the county's growth and evolution over time. This can be accomplished by using project-based grants through local historical societies with editorial transparency requirements.

STRATEGY 8-C8:
Encourage teaching of local history in local school districts throughout the County and promote inclusion of local history into the NYS educational curriculum.

Through its partnerships with local school districts, the county should prioritize teaching local history in local school districts. The county should collaborate with local cultural institutions to create educational programs, field trip opportunities, and workshops to celebrate the county's local history. In advocacy work at the state level, the county should advocate for the inclusion of local history into the NYS educational curriculum.





THE
**CHEMUNG
COUNTY**
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Chapter 9

Economy & Tourism

ECONOMY & TOURISM

9.1 Guiding Principle

Economic development is vital to a community's comprehensive plan, as it plays a critical role in enhancing quality of life and positively impacting other aspects of the plan. Increasing economic development activity, including more employment opportunities, can stem population loss and increase spending at local businesses, creating a positive loop that increases tax revenues for county and for local governments. Sustained job growth can lead to improvements in the education and skills of the local labor force, making the community a more attractive location for businesses in the future.

The sixth guiding principle for the Comprehensive Plan is intended to highlight the importance of economic development in every aspect of life in Chemung County. The guiding principle is to:

GUIDING PRINCIPLE:

Promote economic growth and development by supporting new and existing businesses and an evolving workforce, capitalizing on tourism assets, and embracing emerging industries.

9.2 Relevant Inventory Data

See Appendix M9: Economy and Tourism Memo for more information.

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

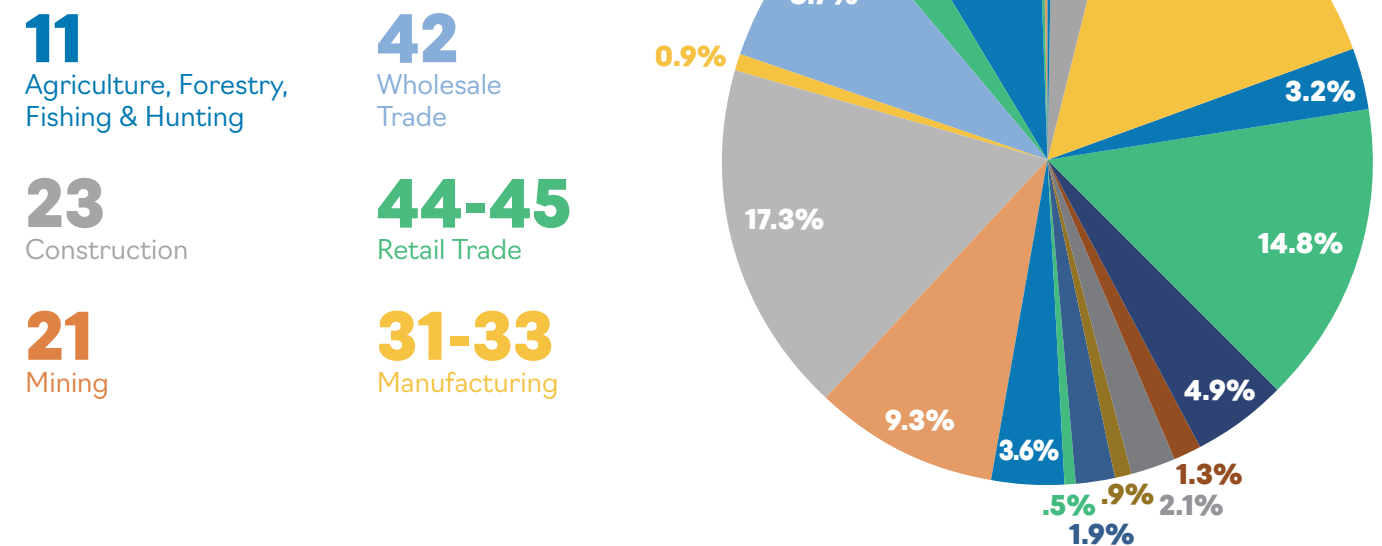
According to the NYS Department of Labor, the Healthcare and Social Assistance industry provides the greatest number of jobs in the county (5,700 jobs or 17% of total employment). This is followed by Manufacturing (5,110 employees) and Retail Trade (4,900 employees), which comprise 15.4% and 14.8% of total jobs, respectively.

Although Healthcare and Social Assistance has the most jobs in the County, it is in the middle of the pack in terms of average wages. By far the highest wages are in Mining, although that only makes up a very small part of the County's employment base (0.4%). Retail Trade has the greatest number of establishments in the County at 285. This is followed by Healthcare and Social Assistance (214 establishments) and Accommodation and Food Services (199).

The unemployment rate among residents in the three neighboring counties of Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben hit a peak of 17.2% in April 2020. The unemployment rate subsequently dropped to 5.7% in September 2020. Since the national recession following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic ended, unemployment in the region has been consistently below statewide rates. As of April 2025, the unemployment rate in Chemung County was 3.2%, which was lower than the statewide unemployment rate of 3.6%.

Annual QCEW Data 2022 (<https://dol.ny.gov/quarterly-census-employment-and-wages>)
 "State Labor Department Releases Preliminary April 2025 Area Unemployment Rates," May 2025, New York State Department of Labor, <https://dol.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2025/05/state-labor-department-releases-preliminary-april-2025-area-unemployment-rates.pdf>

FIGURE 9-1: PERCENTAGE OF INDUSTRY JOBS TO TOTAL EMPLOYMENT



11
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting

23
Construction

21
Mining

42
Wholesale Trade

44-45
Retail Trade

31-33
Manufacturing

Employment Trends - Manufacturing

As noted previously, the manufacturing industry provides many jobs in the region. However, manufacturing employment has significantly declined in the past two decades, which is a notable trend for the county since this sector provides high employment to county residents. Many of the industries experiencing decline are called “traded industries” (those that generate wealth through the sale of products and services to outside markets). Chemung County has experienced a particular loss in manufacturing establishments in the region which surpasses the loss experienced in nearby Schuylers and Steuben counties. Reversing this trend may require more direct investment in redevelopment and workforce incentives and is particularly important near the I-86 corridor.

Industry/Supply Chain Analysis, Placedynamics (2022)

Employment Trends - Agriculture

Agriculture is shifting in Chemung County, which is expected considering Chemung County is a largely rural location that is subject to unique economic and land use pressures. Loss of small, locally owned farmland is an ongoing pattern that will require coordination between NYS, nonprofit agencies, and local farmers to address. Emerging business models brought by cannabis cultivation and green energy farmland leasing offer potential profits for the agriculture sector, but the pros and cons must be carefully weighed as long-term options for the County’s future agricultural direction.

The rural agricultural landscape of much of Chemung County is a source of pride for many residents and remains a draw for families that choose Chemung County as their home. The agricultural sector has ties to many aspects of the economy, from agriculture and manufacturing through distribution and tourism, while contributing to the quality of life and sense of place in the region. Reference Chapter 7 for additional information on agriculture in the county.

INDUSTRY TRENDS

Shift Share Analysis

Findings from a shift-share analysis conducted for Chemung County for the period 2012 to 2022 showed the following industries grew faster in Chemung County than in the United States as a whole:

- ✓ Construction
- ✓ Transportation and Warehousing
- ✓ Real Estate, Rental and Leasing
- ✓ Professional
- ✓ Scientific and Technical Services
- ✓ Management of Companies and Enterprises
- ✓ Administrative, Support, Waste Management and Remediation Services.

The analysis also indicated that the following industries employed a greater share of the county’s workforce compared to the national average, producing more goods and services than could be consumed locally, thereby necessitating exports to regions outside the county:

- ✓ Accommodation and Food Services
- ✓ Health Care and Social Assistance
- ✓ Retail Trade
- ✓ Wholesale Trade
- ✓ Manufacturing

However, the analysis also indicated that while some industries generally grew and performed well at the national level, industries overall underperformed in Chemung County during the 10-year period. Specifically, the county underproduced and fell below self-sufficiency for the following industries:

- ✓ Mining
- ✓ Utilities
- ✓ Construction
- ✓ Information
- ✓ Finance and Insurance
- ✓ Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing
- ✓ Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- ✓ Management of Companies and Enterprises
- ✓ Administrative, Support, Waste Management, and Remediation Services
- ✓ Educational Services

This suggests that these sectors were less developed in Chemung County in 2022 compared to the national average, indicating a reliance on external sources to meet local demand and highlighting opportunities for growth and investment in these areas. This shows a need for the county's conscious efforts to improve in these industries.

Office / Industrial Market Trends

Both national and local factors result in low demand for industrial and office space within the Southern Tier Central region. The industrial sector in the three counties (Steuben, Chemung, and Schuyler counties), and throughout the Southern Tier, has not been growing. Most demand for space will originate with existing businesses or startups, with little net change in occupancy. Employment in these sectors is projected to remain at current levels, with most demand generated by existing businesses. The three counties have a large inventory of available office and industrial space, which is more than what can currently be absorbed.

The Southern Tier Central region can expect to see little new demand for office space over the next several years. There is an estimated 312,000 square feet of vacant office space and an estimated 552,000 square feet of vacant industrial space in Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben Counties. Their age and condition vary considerably, though most are suitable for small businesses in the region.

Most of the industrial businesses attracted to the three counties over the past decade are retail stores and restaurants or small operations with headquarters located outside the region with only a handful of local employees. The region is bringing in an average of one new establishment per year, aside from retail and hospitality, with about 20 or more employees.

Office/Industrial Market Analysis. Southern Tier Central Region. Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben Counties, NY

Retail Market Trends

Many of the region's commercial districts continue to be challenged by demographic and industry changes. The retail industry expanded rapidly through the 1990s and early 2000s. The 2008 Great Recession, along with an increase in online shopping added momentum to the wave of store closings and chain bankruptcies. With a severely diminished pool of anchor and smaller tenants, regional malls have also suffered, including the Arnot Mall located in the Town of Big Flats. Many commercial areas, including downtowns and commercial corridors, must now reinvent themselves to be viable. This can be accomplished by providing experiential services that can't be easily ordered online -- such as restaurant options, entertainment, and services -- combined with increasing the customer base through the creation of mixed-use neighborhoods based on traditional neighborhood development principles.

According to a "Retail Leakage Analysis" conducted for the three counties (see Appendix XX: Economy and Tourism Memo), Chemung County has a surplus of sales in electronics and appliance stores; building materials and garden equipment and supply stores; food and beverage stores; shoe stores; sporting goods, hobby, and music stores; and general merchandise stores. It also produces a surplus of restaurant sales.

Commercial Market Analysis. Southern Tier Central Region. Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben Counties, NY.

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

Economic Opportunity Program (EOP) of Chemung County

EOP is a 501(c)(3) Community Action Organization serving Chemung and Schuyler Counties by offering a variety of services to community members including “Birth to 5 School Readiness” programs, a center of excellence, community center, literacy programs, culinary training programs, weatherization services, and family support services. EOP has 12 core values which include:

1. People living with Dignity.
2. Families and communities as the foundation for individual stability and growth.
3. Diversity and the unique contributions of everyone.
4. Active community participation and involvement by government, community leaders, donors, human service providers, and others in enabling people to enjoy economic stability and growth.
5. A living wage for all individuals and families to promote financial stability.
6. Excellence in services that create positive change in individuals and families.
7. Effective and efficient use of all humans, material, and financial resources.
8. Integrity in allocating our resources and providing services.
9. Collaborative partnerships in the community.
10. Competent and caring staff to deliver quality services that honor people’s rights to confidentiality.
11. Recognition of staff and volunteers as our most valuable resource in carrying out the mission of EOP.
12. Human resource development and support as a primary means for ensuring personal and professional growth.

In its 2019-2021 Community Impact Report, EOP identified several key issues to address to improve economic development and stability in Chemung and Schuyler counties. These issues include the overall poverty rate of 14.8%, the high child poverty rate of 20.8% a decreasing population rate, health inequities revealed during the COVID-19 pandemic,, and the need for adequate transit, immigration, and veteran services. In its 2022-2023 Annual Report, EOP focused on four key areas of community needs: access to health care, child care and youth care, food security, and housing security.

“Values,” Educational Opportunity Program Inc, last accessed October 23, 2024, <https://www.cseop.org/about>
“2019-2021 Community Needs Assessment,” Economic Opportunity Program, Inc., 2021, last accessed October 23, 2024, https://issuu.com/eop-elmira/docs/eop_inc_community_needs_assessment_2019-2021?fr=sYmU1YTQ3OTY0OTE
“2022-2023 Annual Report,” Educational Opportunity Program Inc, <https://www.cseop.org/community-impact>

Post Secondary Education

Elmira College is a private liberal arts college located in Elmira, which was founded in 1855. Elmira College offers four-year undergraduate programs, certificates, master’s degree programs, and professional development opportunities. SUNY CCC is a two-year community college with over thirty programs of study available. In recent years these educational institutions, as well as many higher education institutions across the country, are facing declining enrollment. The Greater Southern Tier Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) provides multidisciplinary early and adult educational and training services to the Southern Tier Region.

Chemung County Industrial Development Agency (“IDA”)

The Chemung County IDA is a Public Benefit Corporation of the State of New York, which provides financial incentives to projects that have a positive economic impact on the community. IDAs are established to help foster economic development in its locality by purchasing properties, facilitating sales, and positioning properties for reuse.

Chemung County Chamber of Commerce

The Chemung County Chamber of Commerce is comprised of a 29-member Board of Directors and nine-person Executive Committee which works together to advocate for local business throughout Chemung County. The Chamber advocates for local, state, and federal legislation which helps local business, collaborates with small businesses in the region, and advocates for economic development initiatives.

Chemung County is notable for its place as the Nation's Soaring Capital, its fame as Mark Twain Country, and its various recreational and outdoors opportunities among its rolling hills and waterways. Tourism is an important component of the county's economy. Between 2016 and 2022, spending on lodging, food and beverage, retail, and recreation all increased. The county recorded almost 300,000 visitors in 2024, which consisted predominantly of domestic (United States) visitors but also included international visitors (primarily from Canada) and in-state visitors. About half of these visits included an overnight stay.

The Chemung County Chamber of Commerce has a Visitor Guide and website that describes the county as "the southern gateway to Finger Lakes Wine Country, New York's largest wine producing region, [and a place with] a fascinating story of its own." The guide includes recommendations for outdoor recreation, arts and cultural offerings, dining opportunities, businesses and services, historic sites, and annual events. In addition to the Chemung County Chamber of Commerce, the Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance, the Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council, and New York State Tourism Industry Association all highlight the many offerings of the county on their website and track tourism data.

Tourism destinations in the County range from arts and cultural, recreational, historical, and educational. Chemung County keeps a list of major tourist attractions on its website, which include the Arnot Art Museum, Chemung Valley Historical Society and Museum, John W. Jones Museum, Elmira Pioneers, Chemung County Fair, Mark Twain Country historical sites, Harris Hill Soaring Center, Clemens Center, Tanglewood Nature Center, Wings of Eagle Discovery Center, Harris Hill Amusement Park, Sperr Memorial Park, and the National Soaring Museum.

"Visitor Summary, January 1, 2024 – October 5, 2024" Domo + Rove, October 16, 2024

"Discover Chemung," I Love New York, last accessed October 24, 2024, <https://www.marktwaincountry.com/wp-content/uploads/MTC-Travel-Guide.pdf>

"Recreation and Attractions," Chemung County, last accessed October 24, 2024, <https://www.chemungcountyny.gov/quicklinks.aspx?CID=62>



9.3 Key Takeaways

OVERALL ECONOMIC TRENDS

In Chemung County, overall economic trends are related to labor force shifts, manufacturing, regulating emerging industries, the circular economy, and the economy's impact on community character and quality of life. Each of these trends is described in greater detail below:

Labor Force Shifts

For much of the previous century, communities sought to attract businesses to smaller communities where they could reap the advantages of lower costs, especially for land and labor. Over the last couple of decades, this trend has shifted to focus on urban and suburban locations in larger metropolitan areas where there is a plentiful pool of workers, existing infrastructure, and transportation access. This poses a challenge for more rural communities like Chemung County to attract businesses.

Population Loss

As noted in Chapter 3, the county's population peaked around 1970 and has steadily fallen through the present day. Population loss causes economic issues including a smaller workforce, mismatched housing demand and supply, and a lack of available resources/ economic growth to support the remaining population.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing is becoming more concentrated in metropolitan markets, and a much less viable target for rural or small city economic development. However, Chemung County has key manufacturing partnerships supporting its local economy. These include Siemens Mobility, which announced it would be establishing its first high speed rail production facility in Horseheads. The County also participates in the "New Energy New York" ("NENY") program, which aims to advance end-to-end battery development and manufacturing.

"New Energy New York (NENY) Battery Tech Hub," U.S. Economic Development Administration, last accessed October 23, 2024, <https://www.eda.gov/funding/programs/regional-technology-and-innovation-hubs/2023/New-Energy-New-York-Battery-Tech-Hub>

Emerging Industries

The cannabis industry and solar development are both emerging industries that will warrant careful consideration and discussion. Cannabis is regulated at the state level by the Cannabis Control Board ("the Board") and the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM). Municipalities were able to "opt-out" of participating in the cannabis industry in New York State upon its legalization, which precluded municipalities that did so from reaping associated tax

benefits. Cannabis industries can be regulated by municipalities through zoning requirements. Cannabis will continue to impact the agricultural sector in the county as local farmers look to diversify their products (reference Chapter 7). Many towns and villages are also grappling with how to address the proliferation of solar farms in rural areas, and some municipalities have implemented moratoria on solar farms until additional review and regulations can be determined (reference Chapter 7).

"Cannabis Conversations," Cannabis Law Overview, Office of Cannabis Management, last accessed October 23, 2024, <https://cannabis.ny.gov/cannabis-law-overview>

Circular Economy

As the county continues to address issues related to sustainability, resiliency, and the growing impacts of climate change in the county and across New York State, the county has begun pursuing projects and initiatives to create a more circular economy. The circular economy refers to a more sustainable lifecycle for natural resources and products by focusing on the reuse, repair, and recycling of goods instead of emphasizing single-use products.

Community Character

Communities are increasingly recognizing that businesses often take community character into consideration when choosing locations, especially when the business needs to attract highly skilled and specialized workers. Workers are typically attracted by entertainment and recreational offerings; high-quality restaurants; a robust retail sector; access to health care; housing that is affordable and desirable to its workforce and other factors. A strong local economy is vitally important to the County, ensuring its residents have opportunities and create the conditions for the County to achieve its goals. Despite challenges, the County has economic development strengths, including a promising agricultural industry, healthcare industry, and potential for tourism growth. The Goals and Strategies section of this plan will discuss ways to build on this base and adapt for the future.

PLANNING BOARD CONSIDERATIONS: ECONOMY & TOURISM

Planning Boards should favorably consider projects which prioritize economic growth in the county, including for emerging industries and agricultural businesses, while supporting its existing local and small businesses.

Planning Boards should favorably consider capital improvements projects which improve multimodal transportation options to employment centers and higher education institutions, and which support zoning and land use decisions that allow for the expansion of existing businesses and the relocation of new businesses to the county.

Planning Boards should consider the level of burden zoning may place upon small business applicants when reviewing special use permits and variances.

9.4 Goals & Strategies

GOAL 9-A: WORK WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES AND INSTITUTIONS TO BROADEN WORKFORCE TRAINING IN MULTIPLE SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY, AND FOSTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP.

Many of Chemung County's specialists working in the economic development field expressed a gap between the types of jobs that are available in the county and the experience and training of its existing workforce. There is a notable sector of the county's workforce that is seeking employment and needs additional training to qualify for the jobs that are available. Therefore, the county should seek opportunities to partner with local organizations and businesses to expand workforce training programs.

**STRATEGY 9-A1:
Provide incentives and support for local businesses and organizations to broaden prospective career paths for young adults through educational opportunities and career development support. Continue to promote the County Youth Bureau's Learn and Earn Program and other offerings through the Youth Bureau.**

Chemung County's youth deserve a robust network of training and mentorship opportunities to help them identify viable career paths and develop the necessary skillsets for those careers. Organizations such as BOCES and the Chemung County Youth Bureau work closely with youth to provide these opportunities. The county should partner with these organizations and other youth and job training organizations to continue offering job training programs and expand offerings where needed.

**STRATEGY 9-A2:
Encourage entrepreneurship by providing accessible information about local training, investment, and technical assistance opportunities.**

Chemung County should share information about local training and technical assistance opportunities and expand opportunities for prospective entrepreneurs to seek mentorship, ask questions, apply for funding, and identify business opportunities.

**STRATEGY 9-A3:
Consider increased partnership opportunities with local organizations supporting the County's entrepreneurial community, such as IncubatorWorks in Elmira, and explore additional resources the County can provide to support entrepreneurs.**

IncubatorWorks' mission is to "promote economic development in the Southern Tier of New York through supporting entrepreneurial growth and development of businesses and their creation of jobs." IncubatorWorks supports entrepreneurs by providing guidance, mentorship opportunities, and connections to available resources. The county should collaborate with IncubatorWorks to expand opportunities for entrepreneurs through classes, workshops, mentorship, and other identified opportunities.

Additionally, other counties in New York State offer formal programs for entrepreneurs to pitch their business ideas to receive feedback and in some cases receive grant funding to make their entrepreneurial vision come to life. The county should coordinate with other local economic development agencies to formulate a program for entrepreneurs to help them start their business.

**STRATEGY 9-A4:
Foster econdary educational attainment to broaden residents' career prospects and partner with local secondary education institutions, including Elmira College and Corning Community College ("SUNY CCC"), to continue offering a broad array of educational programs.**

The County should partner with higher education institutions like Elmira College and SUNY CCC to identify student areas of concern which might pose barriers to enrollment, such as a need for varied and consistent transportation and transit options, employer partnered childcare and financial support where feasible and sustainable.

**STRATEGY 9-A5:
Explore participating in existing programs to coordinate and manage services for individuals with prior criminal convictions to re-enter the workforce in appropriate industries.**

There is a need to provide opportunities for those with prior criminal convictions to re-enter the workforce and contribute to society. The County should consider strengthening its participation in existing programs, such as the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services' County Re-Entry Task Force Initiative, and offer new programs offered in peer counties such as tax incentives and grant programs, to offer these pathways to appropriate employment for those with prior convictions.

**GOAL 9-B:
ATTRACT A TALENTED WORKFORCE BY TAKING A COMPREHENSIVE
APPROACH TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CONSIDERING THE
NEEDS OF TODAY'S WORKERS.**

As noted in the "Key Takeaways" section, today's workforce is often attracted to job opportunities in areas that have a strong sense of place, vibrant community character, and diverse offerings for things to do. The County can help attract and retain a strong workforce by focusing on improving all aspects of life in the county, improving infrastructure for remote workers and for businesses looking to relocate (see Chapter 4), and enhancing/expanding recreation opportunities (see Chapter 6 and tourism recommendations).

**STRATEGY 9-B1:
Bridge workforce accessibility gaps
in different facets of life including
transportation / transit services,
childcare services, workforce training,
enhancing digital skills, fostering employer
engagement, and workforce housing.**

The workforce needs access to services that make the workplace accessible, including access to transportation options, childcare services, training, and adequate housing. Reference Chapter 10 for a more robust discussion on improving transportation options in the county, and reference Chapter 11 for a discussion on housing choice, accessibility, and affordability. As noted above, workforce development opportunities such as training and fostering employer engagement with the community are instrumental in attracting and retaining a talented workforce. As the County pursues improvements to various services and amenities for the community, they should keep the needs of the workforce at the forefront to ensure greater accessibility. The County will provide technical assistance to employers interested in programs that improve recruitment and employee wellbeing.

**STRATEGY 9-B2:
Encourage opportunities for
flexible and remote jobs by
providing training opportunities
for remote jobs, facilitating
access to shared / community
workspaces, and improving the
necessary infrastructure (e.g.
broadband) needed for remote
workers to thrive.**

The COVID-19 pandemic created a rapid shift in the workforce towards greater remote/hybrid work schedules and flexibility. To support the shift towards remote work, the county should work with its partners to provide training opportunities, promote access to shared/ community workspaces, and continue improving its broadband access to support remote workers. Reference Chapter 4 for additional information about broadband.

**STRATEGY 9-B3:
Explore assisting municipalities
in establishing a coalition or
community group that focuses on
addressing workforce barriers,
such as job training, childcare, and
transportation.**

As noted in other sections of the Comprehensive Plan, one of the county's core strengths is in its partnerships with local experts and stakeholders to improve quality of life in the county. Therefore, the county should work with municipalities, stakeholders, and community organizations to establish a coalition or working group which is focused on addressing workforce barriers in Chemung County.

**STRATEGY 9-B4:
Continue to provide access to guaranteed
child-care for low-income residents
through the Chemung County Child
Care Assistance Program. Explore
opportunities to expand child-care
programs for County workers.**

Chemung County's Child Care Assistance Program is available through the Chemung County Child Care Council in Elmira. Families are eligible for financial assistance with their childcare expenses if they meet the state's low-income guidelines and need childcare to work. Childcare is also guaranteed for individuals on cash assistance who need childcare to meet work participation requirements. Further, childcare financial support is guaranteed for one year after leaving the cash assistance program if leaving due to employment and needing childcare to work. In addition to continuing to offer this support, the county should work with the Child Care Council and area employers to identify opportunities to expand child-care programs for County workers, low income residents, and other at-need groups, with employer partnership where applicable.

STRATEGY 9-B5:

Improve access to employment opportunities through transportation improvements, including an improved transit system, comprehensive pedestrian and multimodal access to employment centers, and continued maintenance of roadways (also reference Chapter 10).

As noted throughout the Comprehensive Plan, creating access to choice for transportation, housing, and other accommodations in the community is vital to ensuring that all the county's residents can access the services they need. To better support the county's workforce, focused consideration needs to be given to improving multimodal transportation access to existing employment centers throughout the county and to maintain transportation networks so the workforce can easily and safely get to work. Reference Chapter 10 for additional recommendations related to transportation options in the county.

STRATEGY 9-B6:

Create a streamlined pathway for new Americans and immigrants to join the County's workforce.

According to the National Association of Counties, county governments have the opportunity to create opportunities for new Americans and immigrants to join the workforce through several pathways, including partnerships with local workforce development agencies, partnering with local community colleges and higher education institutions to offer job training and resources are available and aligned with current and future workforce opportunities, and in advocating for supportive services for job seekers such as transportation, child care, and others. The New York State Office for New Americans seeking employment opportunities with appropriate credentials and state and federal compliance.

GOAL 9-C:

PRIORITIZE RETENTION AND EXPANSION OF EXISTING SMALL BUSINESSES AND WORKFORCE.

The county's small businesses are the backbone of the community in many ways. In addition to attracting and retaining larger and emerging businesses, the county should take special care to ensure its small business community is supported.

STRATEGY 9-C1:

Continue to support and expand platforms for small local businesses to network and create a strong business community, such as the Small Business Development Center (based in Binghamton).

Small businesses rely on networking and tapping into the local community to strengthen their customer base, connect with their community, and network with fellow local businesses. The county should support small businesses' efforts to expand their networks by promoting existing resources, like the Small Business Development Center (based in Binghamton), and work with the small business community to determine whether additional support/networking resources are needed.

STRATEGY 9-C2:

Continue to support municipalities that offer low-interest financing options (e.g. City of Elmira and Village of Horseheads) for the expansion of commercial and industrial businesses and encourage other municipalities in the County to consider offering similar programs.

Continue working with municipalities that offer financial incentives to expand brick-and-mortar businesses and promote the benefit of these financial incentives to other municipalities in the county.

STRATEGY 9-C3:

Coordinate with municipalities to offer grant funding opportunities for small businesses to open brick-and-mortar locations and receive mentorship and support in financing and storefront activation.

Start-up and operational costs can be prohibitive for many businesses. The county can support the growth of its small business community by offering available grant funding opportunities for small businesses to open brick-and-mortar locations, improve their operations, and complete projects that activate their storefronts. Funding opportunities such as CDBG Microenterprise programs should continue to be pursued on a rolling basis.

STRATEGY 9-C4:
In partnership with municipalities, examine opportunities to streamline permitting processes (e.g. site plan review) to help businesses operate more efficiently.

The costs and time that businesses spend on permitting processes, while necessary, can be prohibitive, especially to start-up and small businesses. The county currently offers a non-referral agreement for municipalities to streamline the General Municipal Law (“GML”) 239-M review procedure to omit certain development proposals from County review, which has assisted in streamlining local permitting processes. The county should work with municipalities to identify additional opportunities to streamline permitting processes where possible to ensure that municipalities receive the information they need to issue permits, while making the process easier for businesses where possible.

STRATEGY 9-C5:
Explore programs and partnerships (e.g. Elmira Downtown Development) to help small businesses access brick-and-mortar locations in currently underutilized buildings.

Elmira Downtown Development is one of many organizations that is dedicated to helping small businesses in Chemung County. Elmira Downtown Development is a nonprofit which helps small businesses improve their stores through initiatives like façade improvements, signage improvements, environmental programs, and working with New York’s Main Street program. The county should expand its outreach to organizations like Elmira Downtown Development to strengthen its network of resources for local businesses.

STRATEGY 9-C6:
Establish a regular communication schedule with existing businesses in Chemung County to ensure retention and aid expansion.

As noted previously, small businesses rely on a robust network of other businesses, organizations, and local officials to identify opportunities to help their business grow and thrive. The county should identify opportunities to strengthen its outreach to small businesses, so small business owners are able to easily contact the County with questions, concerns, and suggestions.

GOAL 9-D:
ENCOURAGE EMERGING INDUSTRIES TO ESTABLISH IN CHEMUNG COUNTY.

As indicated through the inventory of existing conditions, the manufacturing sector provides many jobs in Chemung County, but manufacturing employment has been declining for the past two decades. Reversing this trend will require innovation, a focus on emerging technologies and businesses, and reinvestment in associated industries. The County should work to encourage the success of emerging industries to strengthen the county’s economy in the face of rapidly shifting industries.

STRATEGY 9-D1:
Continue to collaborate with STEG and CCIDA to enact the Strategies and Actions highlighted in the Chemung County Strategic Economic Development Plan (2023).

The Chemung County Strategic Economic Development Plan was published in 2023 and was the result of intensive collaboration among the county’s leading experts and organizations in economic development. The plan resulted in four goals for economic development in the County:

- 1. Business Development:** Build an economic ecosystem that supports and resources all entrepreneurs, businesses, and prospects with the aim of improving community prosperity and sustainable, common-sense growth.
- 2. Built Environment/Infrastructure:** Create a built environment supported by resilient, future-ready infrastructure that effectively and efficiently meets the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.
- 3. Human Capital:** Ensure that residents and workers can achieve their highest potential and attain a thriving quality of life.
- 4. Creating Vibrant Communities:** Develop downtowns, neighborhoods, and communities with diverse and distinct characters, and support development of a balance of necessities and amenities appropriate for each.

Each of these goals is accompanied by a set of strategies and action items with associated priority scoring, timing, cost, and strategic partnerships. Chemung County should continue to work towards achieving the goals set out in the Strategic Plan.

STRATEGY 9-D2:
Capitalize on federal and state funding opportunities for emerging industries, such as funding through NYS Empire State Development.

New York State offers a variety of grant funding opportunities each year through the Consolidated Funding Application (“CFA”), many of which are focused on supporting emerging industries in the state. The CFA deadline for submission is typically late July. The County should work year-round with prospective partners and businesses to identify opportunities for grant funding applications and should submit applications to appropriate programs (e.g. The Empire State Development Grant Funds program) in partnership with prospective industries.

STRATEGY 9-D3:

Continue to support municipalities in establishing clear guidelines for local cannabis growers, sellers, and manufacturers of cannabis-based products to legally operate in the County.

The Office of Cannabis Management is the New York State entity that is responsible for regulating cannabis production and sale in the state. The Marihuana Regulation and Taxation Act was initially enacted in 2021, and legalized adult-use cannabis with the state goal of generating significant new revenue. The state-wide regulation does not preclude municipalities from creating their own laws/policies pertaining to cannabis. The law created the Office of Cannabis Management and the Cannabis Control Board.

The legalization of cannabis in New York State is still new, and municipalities are continuing to work to understand the law, the rights of municipalities in regulating cannabis cultivation and use, tax benefits and implications, and more. The county will continue to coordinate with municipalities to enhance understanding of new regulations and thoughtfully weigh the pros and cons of this emerging industry within each municipality, to tailor local regulations to best meet the needs and desires of the community.

STRATEGY 9-D4:

Highlight the advantages of emerging industries locating in Chemung County through a cohesive marketing effort in coordination with the Chemung County IDA and STEG.

As noted previously, businesses are increasingly looking at quality of life and amenities in the communities to which they locate or relocate their business, to offer a competitive range of comforts to their prospective workforce. To attract more businesses the county should work with partner organizations like the IDA and STEG to develop a cohesive marketing campaign. This can include promotional materials like print pieces, documentation, and targeted websites, highlighting all the benefits of living and working in Chemung County.

STRATEGY 9-D5:

Offer support for new industries in pursuing state incentives for establishing in the county, such as START-UP NY, Excelsior Job Programs, Empire State Development, NYSERDA funding, and other programs.

Applications for state programs such as tax incentives and grant funding opportunities can be time consuming to complete, labor intensive, and require connections with regional and state representatives and/or letters of support. The County should be prepared to support prospective new industries to relocate in the county by helping with these applications where needed, and by offering information about these incentive programs to prospective businesses.

STRATEGY 9-D6:

Create a cohesive branding strategy highlighting the County's local amenities and recreational opportunities to potential employers.

The Chemung County Chamber of Commerce recently completed a cohesive re-branding strategy. In addition to this updated branding, the County should work to work with the new branding to expand its marketing campaign highlighting all the benefits of living, working, and starting a business in Chemung County.

GOAL 9-E:

COLLABORATE WITH LOCAL AND REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS TO FOSTER THE CONDITIONS NEEDED FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH.

The county's partnerships with local and regional stakeholders, and ongoing communication with the public, will be instrumental in continuing to offer comprehensive economic development opportunities for the workforce, small businesses, and emerging markets.

STRATEGY 9-E1:

Foster collaboration between local stakeholder groups and the County to pursue economic development initiatives.

Local stakeholder groups such as the IDA, Elmira Downtown Development, and Chemung County Chamber of Commerce are important implementation partners for the County to achieve the goals and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan and Southern Tier Economic Development Plan. The county should continue to foster its relationships with local stakeholder organizations to reach its goals for economic development. The county should consider establishing a working group or committee of local stakeholder groups to meet on a regular basis (monthly or quarterly) to discuss ongoing economic development initiatives. The IDA should also work with the County planning department in development potential incentives for economic development, to ensure the IDA's initiatives are aligned with the County Comprehensive Plan and other countywide initiatives.

STRATEGY 9-E2:

Continue to expand open channels of communication between the County and the public on the most pressing economic development needs.

Ongoing public engagement will continue to be instrumental in understanding the most pressing needs of the county's workforce, small businesses, and vulnerable populations seeking employment. The County should continue to create meaningful public engagement opportunities through meetings, forums, and other communications with the community to ensure a channel is always open for the public to communicate its concerns and wishes.

STRATEGY 9-E3:
Expand and strengthen coordination efforts between the county, Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board (STC), and other regional partners to bring new economic development opportunities to the County.

Regional partners such as the STC and STEG can connect Chemung County with economic development initiatives occurring throughout the Southern Tier, particularly in neighboring counties and throughout the nearby Finger Lakes. The County should continue its coordination with these organizations to identify new opportunities for economic development in the region.

STRATEGY 9-E4:
Partner with municipal, nonprofit, and local organizations that are dedicated to helping local community members access jobs.

There are already organizations in Chemung County that are connecting jobseekers with open positions and providing job training, such as the “Chemung Schuyler Steuben Workforce New York” Nonprofit. The county should strengthen its connections with these organizations to reinforce the network of resources for the county’s workforce.

STRATEGY 9-E5:
Collaborate with the Chemung County Youth Bureau, BOCES, and other community organizations to help young people find employment opportunities.

During public outreach for the Comprehensive Plan, several of the County’s young people voiced a desire to find employment opportunities specifically for them and expressed their difficulty in finding appropriate and accessible opportunities. The County should act as a bridge between community youth organizations, like the Youth Bureau and BOCES, and community organizations for jobseekers and local businesses to help foster conditions that match youth with appropriate job opportunities.

GOAL 9-F:
PRIORITIZE INVESTMENT IN CHEMUNG COUNTY’S TOURISM INDUSTRY AND PARTNER WITH LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS PROMOTING TOURISM.

Chemung County is full of tourism opportunities: from the Soaring Capital to Mark Twain Country; from plentiful parks and campgrounds to exciting cultural events at the Clemens Center and beyond. The County should work with its local and regional partners to actively promote its tourism industry, bolster its hospitality industry, and invest in the county’s unique assets.

STRATEGY 9-F1:
Identify opportunities to strengthen the hospitality industry in the county, especially in its downtown areas.

County residents have expressed a strong interest in a greater presence of the hospitality industry in Chemung County, particularly in its downtown areas. The County should work to identify prospective land development opportunities for hospitality businesses, such as hotels, to locate in the county along its populated and scenic areas (e.g., Chemung River).

STRATEGY 9-F2:
Advertise the tourism and recreation opportunities in the county to both NYS and out-of-state visitors.

Some visitors to the county are unaware of all the amazing opportunities for outdoor recreation, cultural and historic opportunities, educational programs, and various entertainment events that are available in Chemung County! The County should work to expand promotional materials advertising these events and destinations across New York State and even to visitors from out of state, especially from states and provinces that have been shown to visit New York more frequently. The county should also work to promote tourism in areas with direct air travel to Chemung County, including Michigan and Florida.

STRATEGY 9-F3:
Invest in the county’s recreational assets to draw in tourists.

Chemung County’s rolling hills, meandering rivers and streams, and picturesque valleys are a point of attraction for many visitors each year. The county offers ample opportunities for visitors to experience the outdoors, through hiking, camping, kayaking, and more. The County should find opportunities to invest in its outdoor resources, especially those that are County-owned.

As part of the Comprehensive Plan, the County has begun to envision expansion of its Park Station Campground to include new camping opportunities and improved amenities for campers.

STRATEGY 9-F4:
Identify a dedicated point of contact for tourism questions and promotional/outreach efforts.

The county website currently has dedicated webpages for “Things To Do” and “Recreation and Attractions,” neither of which list a dedicated point of contact. County staff should consider selecting a dedicated point of contact to spearhead tourism initiatives and answer questions from the public and prospective visitors about the county’s tourism amenities.

STRATEGY 9-F5:
Promote the County’s arts, cultural, and historic resources and tourism opportunities through a comprehensive, unified database or webpage cataloging the resources.

To help local, regional, and out of state visitors find the county’s many historic and cultural tourism opportunities, the County should partner with local cultural institutions to create a comprehensive database with the names, addresses, hours of operation, and webpage links of county’s historic and cultural assets.

STRATEGY 9-F6:
Develop tools to make new tourism branding in the County more accessible to tourism partners throughout the region and create clear guidelines to ensure correct use of updated branding.

Chemung County has recently developed new branding which will differentiate the county and the region for its unique tourism opportunities. The county should distribute new branding materials across its departments and to regional tourism partners and create clear guidelines for use of such materials. In recognition of changing media consumption patterns, the social media presence of these tourism opportunities should be increased.



PROPOSED CAMPGROUND IMPROVEMENTS AT PARK STATION



THE
**CHEMUNG
COUNTY**
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Chapter 10

Transportation



TRANSPORTATION

10.1 Guiding Principle

The Elmira Chemung Transportation Council (“ECTC”) has guided the maintenance and capital improvements of transportation infrastructure in Chemung County since 1974. ECTC publishes various plans, including federally required plans and regional planning efforts, to ensure that the County’s roadways, trails, rail, airport, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and transit system meet the community’s diverse needs to live, work and play. The ECTC’s planning efforts are documented on their website, which is updated regularly. To support the integral role that transportation infrastructure provides in all aspects of county life, the seventh guiding principle for the Comprehensive Plan is to:

GUIDING PRINCIPLE:

Maintain existing transportation infrastructure, enhance transportation network connectivity, and promote safe and efficient multi-modal mobility.

10.2 Relevant Inventory Data

The inventory data that follows is organized by mode of transportation and includes a section on transportation planning/committees. As noted in Chapter 1 (Introduction), the project team updated the Long-Range Transportation Plan (2025-2045) (“LRTP”) concurrently with the Comprehensive Plan. This included a detailed inventory and analysis of existing conditions, stakeholder engagement, a transportation focus group, and extensive public outreach which informed both plans. The information below is described in greater detail in Appendix 10: Transportation System and Mobility Memo and the LRTP.

VEHICULAR TRAVEL

Classifying Roadways

For planning purposes, roadways are frequently defined by their “functional classification,” “average annual daily traffic” (“AADT”), and by roadway ownership. Each of these is described in greater detail below.

Functional classifications are determined based on a roadway’s characteristics including its role in the regional transportation network and the density and purpose of traffic on a particular roadway. There are seven functional classifications according to the FHWA: “interstate,” “other freeway or expressway,” “other principal arterial,” “minor arterial,” “major collector,” “minor collector,” and “local roadway.” These are further divided into “urban” or “rural” roadways based on the population of the area in which the road is situated. Local rural roads are the most prevalent roadway classification in Chemung County, accounting for almost 40% of roadways, followed by local urban roads.

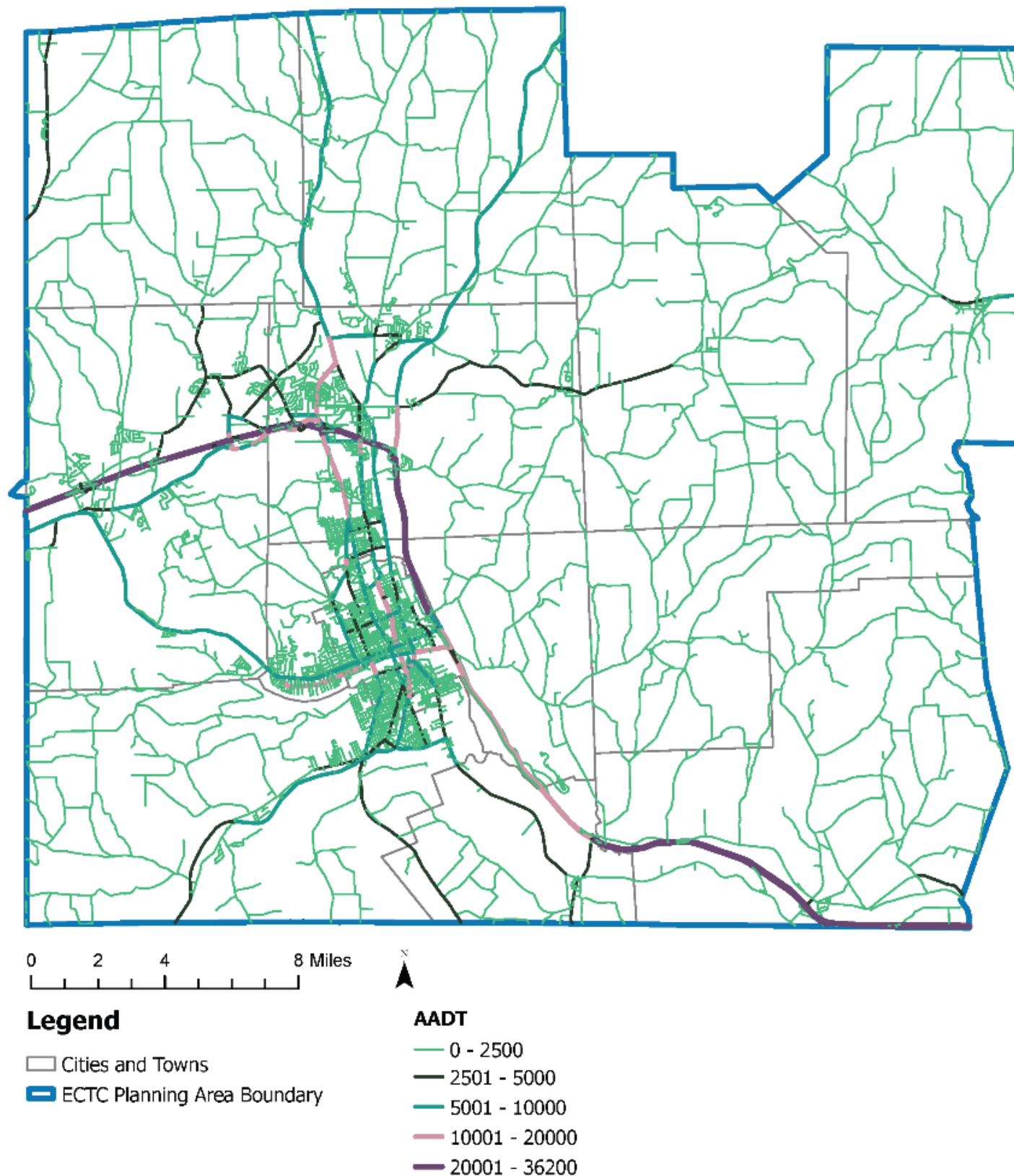
Average Annual Daily Traffic (“AADT”) is an estimate of the average traffic volume along a roadway each day for a year. Southern Tier Expressway (I-86/NY-17) has the highest AADT in the county. The Clemens Center Parkway also carries a high volume of traffic in and around the City of Elmira. Other roadways with a high AADT in the City of Elmira include Main Street, Church Street, Walnut Street, Pennsylvania Avenue, Maple Avenue, and Water Street. In terms of truck/freight traffic, I-86 serves as the most significant freight corridor within the region by AADT.

Road ownership indicates which governmental body is responsible for a roadway, often including maintenance and capital improvements. Chemung County and the City of Elmira own most of the public roadways in the county. The county’s towns and villages generally own local roadways in each municipality, which can cause complications for roadway maintenance due to limited funding.

Maintenance and Funding

Chemung County played a major role in the Civil War as it was the site of the Elmira Prison. As noted above, maintenance of local roadways can prove challenging for local municipalities due to funding constraints. For roadways that are federal aid-eligible, the FHWA provides financial resources for the creation and maintenance of roadways through the Federal Aid Highway Program. For qualifying roads, the Program supports the administration of funding and technical assistance for roadway design, construction, and eligible maintenance. In Chemung County, federal aid-eligible roads are primarily owned by NYSDOT, including Interstate 86, and Chemung County. Most of the federal aid-eligible roadways in the City of Elmira are owned by the municipality.

FIGURE 10-1: AADT



NYSDOT scores all federal aid-eligible roads based on a visual scoring methodology ranging from 1 (Very Poor) to 10 (Excellent). ECTC staff also deploy this scoring methodology to rate roadways in the county that are not federal aid-eligible. ECTC most recently rated pavement conditions using this scoring system in 2025. The report indicated that regarding the roadways that are owned by the City of Elmira and Chemung County, 20% of roadways were in excellent condition; 64% of roadways were in good condition; 12% of roadways were in fair condition; and 5% of roadways were in poor condition. Roadways in poor condition were generally local roadways in the City of Elmira and select roadways in the Town of Southport and Chemung.

Roadway Safety

ECTC published its most recent roadway safety data in the Long Range Transportation Plan (2025-2045). The data indicates that between 2013 and 2023 over 22,000 collisions occurred, predominantly in the City of Elmira's central business district and on I-86 and New York State Routes 13 and 14.

Bridges

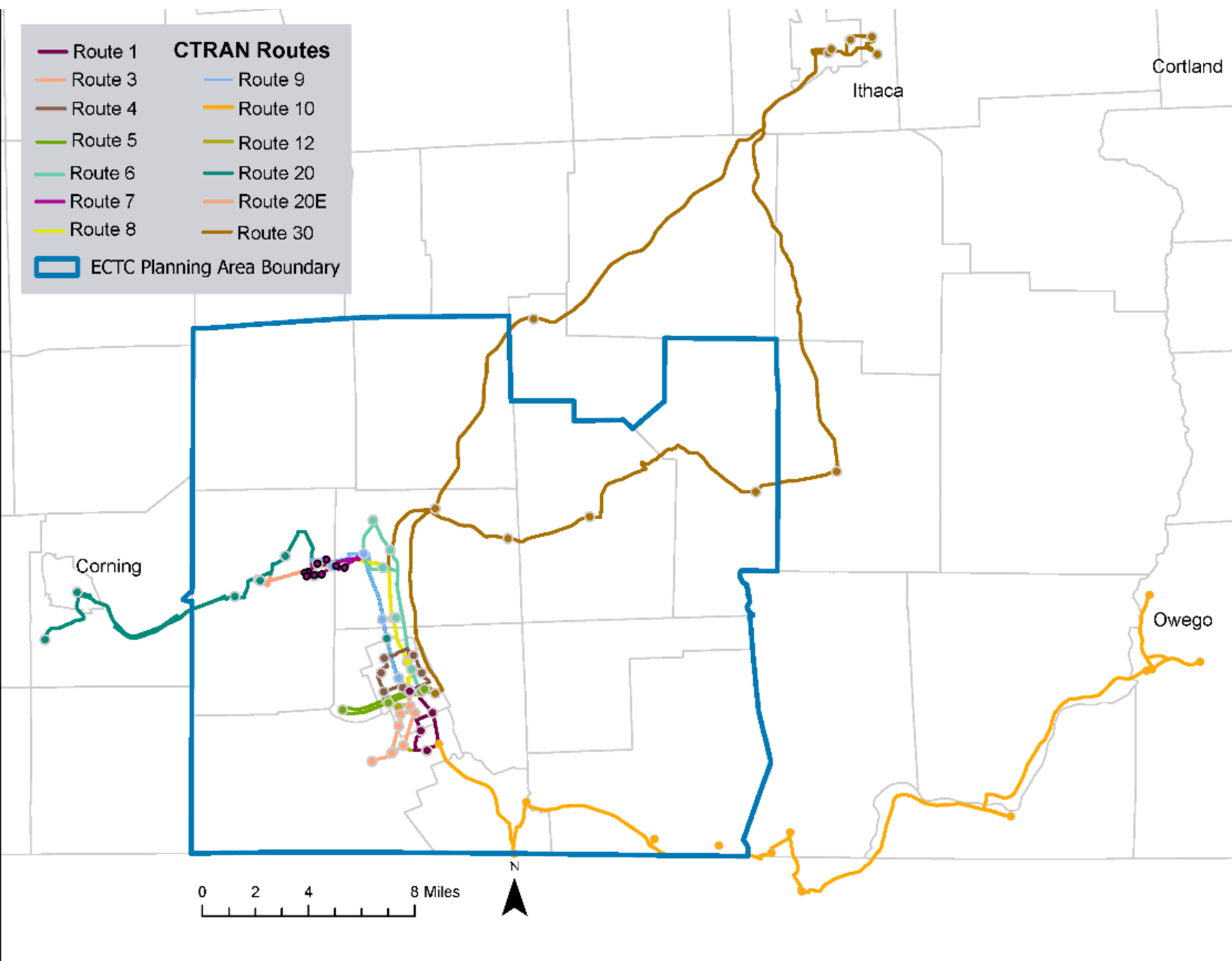
Chemung County is home to more than 250 bridges which are scored by NYSDOT similarly to its roadways. NYSDOT's bridge inspectors assess bridges every two years for the structural integrity of individual parts and the carrying capacity of the bridges, which results in a score between 1 to 7. Bridges rated as 7 are considered in new condition. Bridges rated above five are considered in good condition. Approximately 82% of bridges in the County were scored as "fair," and twenty-seven bridges were scored as "poor."

TRANSIT

Routes

Chemung County's transit system, C TRAN, operates thirteen fixed routes and a demand-response bus system throughout the County. Fixed routes connect the City of Elmira; Towns of Elmira, Horseheads, Southport, and Big Flats; Villages of Elmira Heights and Horseheads, and the hamlet of West Elmira. The demand-response bus system is operated by flagging down buses along a fixed-route, and the option for transit users to request a bus stop up to ¾ of a mile off a fixed-route in advance. Riders can also use C TRAN to access the broader region, including Ithaca, Corning, and Owego. The routes typically operate on an hourly basis. More information, including fare schedules, payment methods, and the transit system's overall performance is available on C TRAN's website or in the LRTP.

FIGURE 10-2: CTRAN BUS ROUTES



BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Chemung County bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure provides alternative primary transportation options for members of the community other than vehicular travel, creates outdoor recreation opportunities, and encourages healthier habits and a more active lifestyle. The ECTC released the “Bicycle Pedestrian Trail 2035 Plan” in 2025. The plan includes project recommendations to expand infrastructure and transportation options, increase walkability, and lay out an action plan for bike accessibility in the county (reference Chapter 3, County Overview).

Sidewalks

Most of the county’s rural areas do not have an interconnected sidewalk network. The City of Elmira has by far the greatest sidewalk accessibility and connectivity as compared to the county’s other municipalities. ECTC’s “City of Elmira Sidewalk Inventory & Analysis” indicates that there is a greater need for safe and well-maintained sidewalks in historically disadvantaged communities and areas with a proportion of individuals with disabilities in the City of Elmira. While there are some areas of the City with sidewalks in excellent condition, other areas are missing pedestrian infrastructure, or existing sidewalks are in poor condition. Additionally, there is a lack of complete data about sidewalk prevalence and inventory throughout the county, and there is a need to conduct a county-wide inventory of sidewalk conditions and prevalence to create more concrete recommendations for sidewalk expansions and improvement.

Bicycle Facilities

County bicycle facilities are generally located within the road right-of-way, predominantly on State Bike Routes 14 and 17, and as part of trail networks (see “Trails” section below). The County does not maintain a county-wide inventory of bicycle racks and station locations. This information is available for the City of Elmira, which includes 15 bicycle racks and two bicycle stations (publicly accessible racks at which patrons can park their bicycles). C TRAN currently allows riders to transport bicycles on public transit, and the County has added front-mounted bicycle racks to all of C TRAN’s buses.

Trails

Several major trails traverse Chemung County. Big Flats Trail is a 1.7-mile dirt/gravel trail east of the Town of Big Flats. It is owned by the Town and the County. The Catharine Valley Trail runs along the old Chemung Barge Canal towpath and sections of abandoned rail lines. It connects the hamlet of Pine Valley to Watkins Glen and is owned and maintained by NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (“OPRHP”). The Lackawanna Rail Trail follows an abandoned rail line along the east side of the City of Elmira from Elmira Heights to Lowman. It is owned and operated by the City of Elmira within the city limits and operated by Chemung County on NYSDOT-owned land. The county is currently working to connect the Catherine Valley Trail and Lackawanna Rail Trail in the urbanized areas of the county with the Chemung Canal Trail project. Finally, the “North-South Bike Friendly Corridor” connecting Horseheads with Elmira was opened in late 2025.

The region also has several shorter trails that are open to both bicycle and pedestrian traffic, along with several proposed/future trail opportunities. More information is available in Chapter 3 (County Overview) and the LRTP.

RAIL & AIR TRANSPORTATION

Chemung County does not have passenger rail service. Norfolk Southern (NS) Railroad owns and operates the freight rail lines in Chemung County, which operate between Buffalo and the Port of New York and New Jersey. Very few lines stop in Chemung County. The Elmira Corning Regional Airport provides passenger service via Delta Airlines and Allegiant. Air freight is transported via the Elmira Corning Regional Airport. Most air freight, however, arrives and departs from Syracuse and then is trucked into Chemung County.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Chemung County Coordinated Transportation Committee

The ECTC established the Chemung County Coordinated Transportation Committee (“CTC”) was established by ECTC in 2008. The committee was established to support ECTC’s first Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan, and since then has met quarterly to discuss regional transportation planning. CTC also coordinated with ECTC to release the “Chemung County Coordinated Transportation Plan in 2022 to identify transportation services and needs in the county.

10.3 Key Takeaways

The county’s transportation system is the network that connects its residents with all aspects of life: employment, recreation, community, historic and cultural activities, health and human services, housing, and more. The County will need to balance transportation infrastructure maintenance with investments in new transportation infrastructure where needed, while taking into consideration the needs of its pedestrians, cyclists, vehicular users, and transit users. In particular, the county will need to focus on the following areas of improvement:

TRANSPORTATION CHOICES

Many of the county’s residents have expressed the need for more mobility options throughout the county. In addition to vehicular travel, residents want to have greater opportunities to walk, cycle, and take transit to their destinations.

SAFE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Safety is paramount to any maintenance and improvements to the county’s transportation system. Transportation improvements should prioritize improving vehicular safety on roadways, expanding infrastructure that keeps pedestrians and cyclists safe from cars, and enhancing the safety of the county’s youth and elderly populations.

REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

The county’s residents have expressed interest in improved and expanded access across the region through various modes of transportation. These include a more robust sidewalk and bicycle network throughout the region, trail connections, and expanded transit opportunities to help residents connect with destinations throughout the region, including towns and villages in the Finger Lakes and nearby cities such as Syracuse, Rochester, and Binghamton.

PLANNING BOARD CONSIDERATIONS: TRANSPORTATION

Planning Boards should favorably consider projects which improve multimodal transportation access throughout the county, especially connecting residents with employment centers, housing, and recreation and cultural institutions and events.

Capital improvements projects should include plans to improve transportation infrastructure and amenities where possible (e.g. improved transit stops, parking for cyclists, safe pedestrian corridors and sidewalks).

Plans and capital projects should prioritize safety for all roadway users.

10.4 Goals & Strategies

GOAL 10-A: PRIORITIZE TRANSPORTATION CHOICE AND THE EXPANSION OF MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE.

Transportation choice is essential when building a more equitable transportation system. Many county residents do not own a reliable vehicle or prefer to live in walkable, denser communities where a vehicle may not be necessary. These residents deserve a comprehensive transportation network that prioritizes all modes of transportation including pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities.

STRATEGY 10-A1: Upgrade/replace missing sidewalks and those in disrepair. Prioritize accessibility and connectivity, especially in city, town, and village centers.

As noted above, the county's sidewalk infrastructure is the most connected in the City of Elmira and is sparse throughout the county overall. In the City of Elmira, there are areas that lack a safe and well-maintained sidewalk system. The county should work with its municipalities to target strategic areas for sidewalk improvements and expansion. The county should work to seek funding for these capital improvements.



"I would like to see more public transportation and walkability in the future. I think this would be good for the people and the environment."

Survey Response

STRATEGY 10-A2: Expand the bicycle and trail network throughout Chemung County and make transportation infrastructure safer and more efficient for cyclists, scooters, and electric bicycles.

The county has some bicycle and trail networks but could benefit from expanding these networks. Referencing the recommendations of the Bicycle Pedestrian Trail 2045 Plan (updated in 2025), the county should work with municipalities, ECTC, and other transportation stakeholders to expand access to trails and bicycle networks to improve outdoor recreation and transportation options and promote healthy habits. The county should also continue its efforts to link existing trail systems and support the completion of the Chemung Canal Trail.

STRATEGY 10-A3: Identify opportunities to implement Complete Streets elements on roadways with opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian use.

Complete Streets are roadways that are designed to accommodate all users, not just individual vehicle owners. This includes cyclists, pedestrians, transit users, drivers, and anyone else who may use Chemung County streets. Complete Streets improve safety by slowing vehicular traffic, create more comfortable streetscapes for all users, and promote economic development by increasing foot traffic to local businesses. Complete Streets may look different depending on the context in which they are implemented. A Complete Street in a primarily residential neighborhood might include sidewalks, street trees, and curb extensions. In these areas, it may be safe for bicycles to share lanes with vehicles. A Complete Street in an urban "main street" setting may include many of the same components, but also might reduce the number of lanes, add turning lanes, bike lanes, or bus lanes, depending on what's best for the street. In an urban setting, particularly with faster-moving traffic, it may be more important to separate vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle uses into their own lanes, providing protected bicycle lanes where suitable.

Chemung County should partner with ECTC and municipalities to identify opportunities for complete streets improvements across the county. For instance, the County has identified the Church Street/Water Street gateway area as a prime opportunity for implementing complete streets principles to create a more multimodal, pedestrian friendly environment. Additionally, the county should ensure that safety, job access and school routes are initial priorities before broad rollouts occur across the county.

STRATEGY 10-A4: Create transportation options that meet the specific needs of seniors.

Seniors need specialized services to help them get around safely, much of which includes designing roadways for all types of users since many seniors no longer drive. This includes improving walkability, implementing universal design principles, and expanding transit and shuttle services specifically for senior citizens. These expanded transportation options and services should not be limited to daytime use, as vision changes may make some older residents comfortable driving during the day, but not at night. Chemung County should coordinate with CTRAN, the Office for the Aging, ECTC, and other regional and local partners to ensure a robust transportation network that meets the needs of the county's seniors is implemented.

**GOAL 10-B:
CONTINUE TO WORK TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND THE COUNTY'S
TRANSIT SERVICES FOR ALL USERS.**

C TRAN is Chemung County's transit system, which provides local and regional bus service on a fixed-route and a demand route service. C TRAN recently provided updates to its website, branding, and bus tracking services and continues to seek ways to optimize its services and meet the needs of all its users. The County should work with C TRAN to help implement its future projects.

**STRATEGY 10-B1:
Consider increasing/expanding
opportunities to connect to other
transit systems throughout the region
(e.g. nearby cities such as Syracuse,
Rochester, and Binghamton)**

C TRAN currently operates regional routes to Ithaca, Corning, and Owego. During the public engagement process, residents expressed interest in expanding regional transit services to include linkages to transit services in nearby cities such as Syracuse, Rochester, and Binghamton. The county should collaborate with C TRAN to assess the viability of broadening its regional services.

**STRATEGY 10-B2:
Consider opportunities to expand
transit services locally and create
express routes for popular
destinations.**

Like the previous recommendation, members of the public expressed a desire for expanded local transit services and express routes for popular destinations.

Options may include expanded service to Corning for an afternoon workday express run; expanding local transit runs to local amenities like shopping centers; and adding late night service for third shift workers and people traveling downtown for Elmira's night life. The county should work with CTRAN to assess these and other opportunities to expand service locally and implement changes where appropriate.

**STRATEGY 10-B2:
Inventory existing bus shelter locations
and consider adding additional bus
shelters in areas that are lacking.**

Providing amenities for transit users helps to improve user experiences and encourage greater ridership. The county and C TRAN should collaborate to inventory existing bus shelter locations and consider adding additional bus shelters where appropriate, based on validated ridership data and employer partnerships to encourage greater bus use. Sponsorship for private bus shelters should also be explored where feasible.

**GOAL 10-C:
CONTINUE TO ENACT THE GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING DOCUMENTS PUBLISHED BY ECTC AND
OTHER COUNTY/REGIONAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES.**

ECTC is the primary governmental body in the county which makes transportation planning decisions. However, ECTC works with many other organizations to advance the county's transportation infrastructure, including CTC, Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board ("STC"), and others. The county should continue its coordination between government entities to fulfill federal requirements for transportation planning, and to meet the needs of its municipalities in maintaining and improving the transportation system.

**STRATEGY 10-C1:
Continue to update comprehensive
planning documents and implement
the recommendations of those
documents, including the Long Range
Transportation Plan ("LRTP") and
Bicycle Pedestrian Trail 2035 Plan.**

The LRTP is a 20-year plan that is updated every five years. The LRTP is based around five categories of improvements: Future Mobility and Transit; Regional Highway System; Cities and Centers; Regional Multi-Use Trail Network Projects; and Management and Operations Projects. The county should continue to work with its local and regional partners to implement the recommendations of the LRTP.

The Bicycle Pedestrian Trail 2045 Plan includes a series of recommendations regarding bicycle infrastructure and pedestrian infrastructure. The county should work with ECTC to identify which goals and recommendations of the

plan have been completed and which are still in progress or have not been started, and work to implement these recommendations.

**GOAL 10-D:
CONTINUE TO IMPROVE SAFETY FOR USERS OF ALL MODES OF
TRANSPORTATION.**

All users deserve a safe transportation system in Chemung County. From its youngest members to its adults and seniors, safety should be woven into the fabric of transportation planning and capital projects. Many of the goals and recommendations in this chapter aim to create safer, more accessible transportation options for all users, with the goal of reducing transportation-related injuries and fatalities. Additional safety-specific recommendations include:

**STRATEGY 10-D1:
Focus on safe
transportation options
and educational programs
for children.**

Safety for the county's youth can come in many different forms: creating safe, multimodal routes to school, educational programs about safe practices like wearing seatbelts in vehicles and helmets while riding bicycles, scooters, and skateboards. The County should also prioritize safe transportation routes and options that connect the community to schools, parks, play areas, and other destinations frequented by children.

**STRATEGY 10-D2:
Implement safety
measures on major
roadways and in high-
collision areas.**

Strategies to improve safety can include the implementation of traffic calming practices like reduced roadway widths where appropriate, buffered bicycle and pedestrian paths, pedestrian crossing infrastructure like crosswalks and signalized pedestrian intersections, and lighting improvements including the amount and quality of lighting around sidewalks and walking/cycling paths. The county should work with its partners to identify high-collision areas (such as those identified in the LRTP, particularly the Clemens Center Parkway) and create specific plans to improve the streetscape to address the root cause of safety issues.

**STRATEGY 10-D3:
Implement safety
measures to reduce
vehicular safety issues,
especially in high collision
areas.**

Similar to the previous recommendation, the county should identify and address safety issues for vehicular roadway users. These may include low intersection visibility in rural areas, reckless driving, areas where speeding is frequent, and areas with unsafe/insufficient infrastructure. Road design interventions such as separating lanes by mode of transportation, a comprehensive wayfinding system, regular maintenance, narrowed lane widths, appropriate speed limits, and right-sizing transportation infrastructure can all help to reduce vehicular safety issues.

**GOAL 10-E:
IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND RAIL AND AIR
TRANSPORTATION FOR FREIGHT AND PASSENGERS.**

Currently, the county's rail network is comprised of freight rail travel, most of which is through-traffic. The county's airport receives limited air freight - most air freight goes to Syracuse and arrives in Chemung County via trucks. The county should continue to monitor these transportation resources and examine opportunities for expansion and improvements.

**STRATEGY 10-E1:
Identify opportunities to improve navigability surrounding the airport.**

Public engagement indicated that some airport users find the airport and the area surrounding the airport difficult to navigate. The county should coordinate with the airport and surrounding landowners to find opportunities to improve circulation, wayfinding, and navigability.



PROPOSED STREETSCAPING AND WAYFINDING IMPROVEMENTS IN ELMIRA



THE
**CHEMUNG
COUNTY**
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Chapter 11
Housing

HOUSING

11.1 Guiding Principle

Housing is a fundamental need for every person in the County, providing shelter, refuge, and a place to care for loved ones, pursue interests, conduct home-based businesses, and maintain safety and security. While housing serves these fundamental human purposes, it is also an important aspect of economic life. Homes are often the largest expense for most families, and they are typically the largest asset for homeowners.

The data below assesses housing development trends, the existing housing stock, and the housing needs of county residents. This data has been analyzed and paired with public and stakeholder feedback to develop the next guiding principle for the Comprehensive Plan, which is to:

GUIDING PRINCIPLE:

Provide a range of housing choices and neighborhood densities for people with a variety of household types, income levels, phases of life, and living preferences.

11.2 Relevant Inventory Data

Reference Appendix M11: Housing Memo for more information.

HOUSING TRENDS

Throughout the County (mirroring trends in the state and country), single family homes on relatively large lots have become the predominant type of housing unit over the past century. Restrictive zoning has made it illegal to build other forms of housing or allow multiple uses in most parts of communities. The results of this zoning are now well-recognized: they increase sprawl and reliance on personal vehicles. This has led to a loss of open space and agricultural lands, as well as increased pollution from automobiles.

From a housing perspective, there is a mismatch between supply and demand. Chemung County has an aging population, which has different housing needs from people in other phases of life. Seniors often prefer homes that are smaller with less upkeep, often with a single level, and may also prefer to drive less while maintaining accessibility to community spaces. Age-restricted housing complexes may be desirable to some seniors, as they offer a host of services and amenities, and a variety of residential units, from cottages to apartments to assisted living facilities. Other older adults may seek mixed-use or multifamily homes in downtown settings. If appropriately designed, they can meet the needs of an aging population in a more urban environment, with walkable destinations like parks, restaurants, shops, and essential services.

Household size is also decreasing, meaning the existing housing stock may not meet the changing needs of the population. Paired with a decreasing population and recent cultural shifts regarding the desirability of different types of environments and neighborhoods, there is a growing contingent of people who are attracted to walkable, mixed-use areas, and are willing to sacrifice a large home to be in these types of environments.

Although the population has been declining, there has been a slight increase in housing stock, as well as an increase in the vacancy rate. This suggests that there is an ongoing mismatch in market demand and market supply. That is, there is demand for different types of housing than what is predominantly on the market today.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Housing Stock

Chemung County has almost 40,000 housing units. The most common housing type is single-family detached homes, which comprise about two thirds of the County's housing stock.

Multifamily homes (here defined as buildings with five or more units) comprise 6% of the County's housing stock. These units are absorbed into the market faster than any other type in the county, indicating a need for more of this type, especially in downtown and other walkable areas.

Between traditional single-family homes at one end of the spectrum and multifamily residential buildings at the other end of the spectrum there are housing typologies often referred to as "missing middle housing." Because they are typically smaller than single family homes, they tend to be more affordable. These include townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, quadruplexes, and more.

FIGURE 11-1: CHEMUNG COUNTY UNITS (by housing type)

67%
26,249
Single-family
Detached

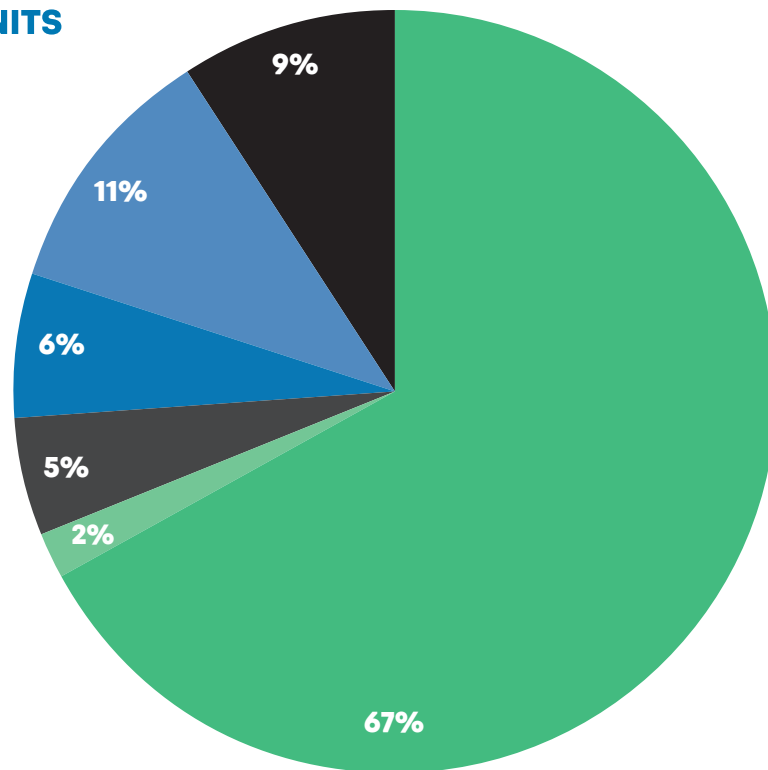
6%
2,361
Triplex or
Quadruplex

2%
716
Townhome

11%
4,340
Duplex

5%
1,759
Mobile Home

9%
3,671
Mutifamily



Statistics on housing units comes from the Housing Market Study (2023), which differs slightly from the available Census figures of 38,891 housing units. Because the Housing Market Study was commissioned specifically for the County, this comprehensive plan relies on those figures when available, rather than the slightly older Census figures. Ibid.

FIGURE 11-2: MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING ILLUSTRATION (Copyright OPTICOS)



Townhomes are housing units typically attached side-by-side, though they can also be stacked. Currently, townhomes comprise the smallest share of housing in Chemung County at 2%. Townhomes can provide many of the benefits of traditional single-family homes (e.g., space large enough for a family, private outdoor space), but in more dense, walkable mixed-use areas.

Mobile homes (also referred to as manufactured homes) comprise 5% of the County's housing stock. Manufactured homes are those that are constructed off-site on a permanent chassis, which allows them to be moved from site to site. Since they are not considered a building, mobile homes are not subject to conventional building codes. They are, however, required to be constructed according to a code administered by HUD, and are subject to applicable fire codes.

Modular homes are also constructed in off-site factories, but unlike mobile homes are not built on a chassis and are instead placed on permanent foundations. They are required to meet the same applicable local, regional, or state buildings codes as site-built homes. Adaption of current housing stock can help meet the demand for missing middle and multifamily housing. Existing single-family homes have potential for conversion into multifamily housing. For example, the Stowell House in Elmira is lauded by the Preservation League of New York State as an example of a sensitive adaptive reuse project that converted a single-family dwelling into four affordable one-bedroom apartment units. These adaptations can be achieved through zoning changes such as adoption of form-based codes and upzoning (increasing allowable density) in single family districts.

FIGURE 11-3: STOWELL HOUSE (Before & After Restoration/Conversion to 4 Apartments)

Katy Peace, "Excellence Award Spotlight: Reynold's Way," Preservation League of NYS, September 10, 2024, <https://www.preservenys.org/blog/excellence-award-spotlight-reynolds-way>



Housing Occupancy

Chemung County's vacancy rate is 10.5%, which exceeds the national average of 9.8%. The county's vacancy rate has drastically increased over the past decade, in both rural and urban areas.

Housing tenure refers to whether someone owns or rents their home. In Chemung County, 61% of residents own their home, which is greater than the national average of 59%.

Housing Age & Bedroom Mix

Most housing in Chemung County was built in the twentieth century or earlier. A third of housing units were built in 1939 or earlier and nearly half were built between 1940 and 1979. Since 1980, fewer new houses have been constructed. The age of housing in Chemung County has several implications:

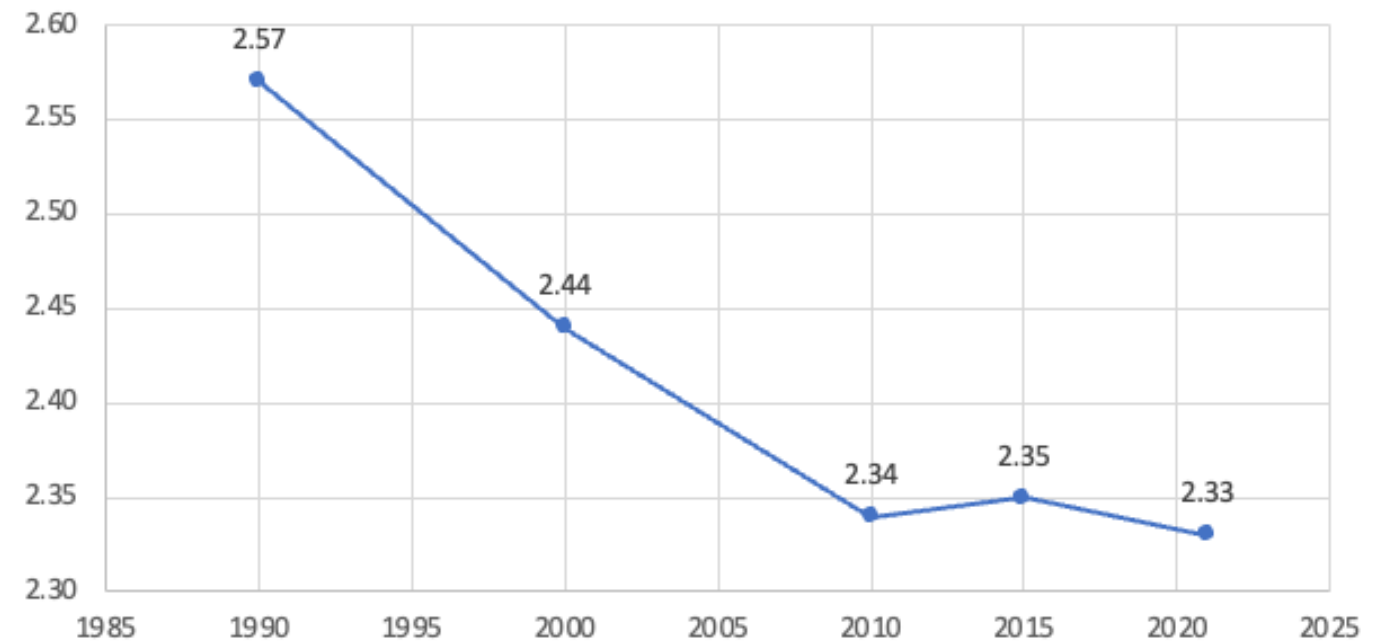
1. Many homes, particularly those that have not been well-maintained, may be at the end of their useful life.
2. Older homes were often designed for families larger than the typical modern household, resulting in a housing mismatch. As the County looks towards potential areas of growth (e.g., downtown areas), one- and two-bedroom dwelling units will likely be in higher demand than three- or four-bedroom houses.

The decline in housing production is likely due to a lack of demand, given that the population has decreased. There could, potentially, be other barriers (e.g., regulatory) that have restricted growth in certain parts of Chemung County.

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

A household is a person or group of people who occupy a dwelling unit, including people living alone, roommates, and families. Chemung County has just under 35,000 households, around 61% of which are family households. About 14% of households in Chemung County are comprised of seniors living alone. Household size has been declining over at least the past 30 years and is currently around 2 people per household.

FIGURE 11-4: AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE. (Source: 2023 Housing Market Study)



SENIOR HOUSING/AGING IN PLACE

An older population has different needs and desires when it comes to housing. There is a need for accessible housing, multi-generational living options, and senior living communities. One challenge is the ability of aging residents to find housing that meets their changing needs within or near their current neighborhoods. Particularly in rural areas, some people may find themselves needing to move to an entirely different community to find senior and/or assisted living options. On one hand, moving closer to urban areas can make amenities and healthcare facilities more accessible. On the other hand, moving farther away from a familiar environment, friends, and neighbors may have a negative impact on the mental well-being of seniors. Age-in-place housing provides a variety of accommodations in one place, often including independent living, assisted living, and skilled nursing in one cohesive development. This allows residents to remain in the same complex or neighborhood while receiving the services and support they need to maintain quality of life.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

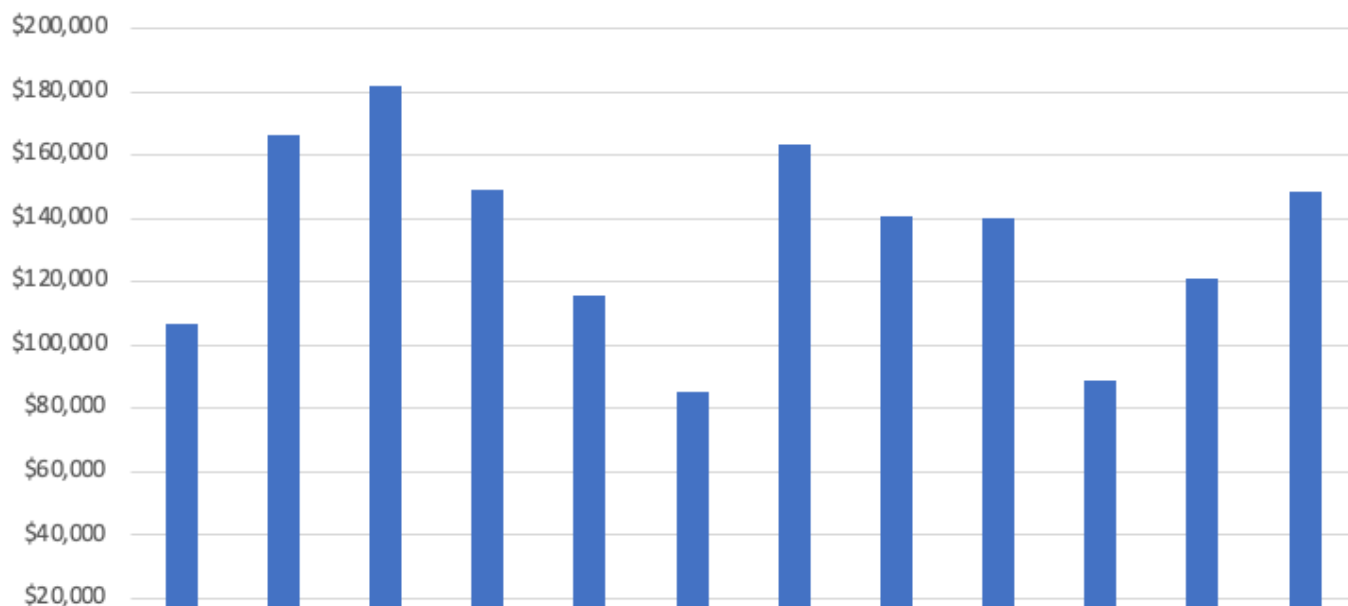
Finding affordable housing, whether for ownership or rent, is a challenge for many households. Barriers to homeownership can include high interest rates (which have risen drastically in recent years), credit eligibility requirements, and the challenge of making down payments to reduce mortgage payments. These factors can put homeownership outside the grasp of many residents. Affording rent can be similarly daunting.

Housing in Chemung County is more affordable than neighboring counties and the state (statewide housing costs skew higher due to high housing prices in New York City). Although prices have risen sharply over the past 5 years (+30%), the rise has been less drastic than in neighboring counties (home prices in Schuyler County, for example, have risen 61% since 2018). According to the most recent data, the average home price in Chemung County was \$150,000, with Big Flats having the highest median value of owner-occupied homes at \$177,200. At the other end of the spectrum, the City of Elmira has the lowest average home price at \$78,200. Price growth was modest or flat between 2018 and 2020 and then increased rapidly between 2020 and 2021. Between 2021 and 2022, home prices again grew at a more modest rate, which may reflect the effect of higher interest rates.

Rents followed a similar upward climb, though at a less drastic rate than home sales. The median rent over the past five years climbed 14% to \$918 per month. Since 2010, rents have risen 29%.

Chemung County has a median household income of \$58,175, which is lower than the state and most neighboring counties other than Schuyler. Whether a household is “low-income” depends on both its income and household size. Households with incomes that are 80% of the AMI or less are considered “low-income.”

FIGURE 11-5: MEDIAN HOME VALUE (Source: 2023 Housing Market Study)



AMI is calculated by “Metropolitan Statistical Area.” Chemung County is part of the Elmira Metropolitan Statistical Area. For a family of four, 80% of AMI is \$65,950.

Approximately one fifth of homeowners with a mortgage are cost burdened (See “Did You Know? Common Housing Terms”). Being cost burdened is far more prevalent for renters. More than half of renters in Chemung County are cost burdened and 26% of renters are severely cost-burdened (i.e., paying more than half their income to rent).

POLICIES & REGULATIONS

Although none of the communities in Chemung County have specific policies or regulations that require deed-restricted affordable housing (often known as inclusionary zoning), several do allow districts that encourage a variety of housing types and densities, which could improve affordability. For instance:

- ✓ Big Flats, Chemung, Erin, and Horseheads all have types of Planned Development Districts, which provide flexibility in uses, densities, and other standards.
- ✓ Catlin has a similar district called a Planned Multiple Residential District.
- ✓ Horseheads has two residential districts intended to allow medium and higher density residential uses to be constructed.
- ✓ The City of Elmira has a form-based zoning code for its Center City, which helps the city to diversify its housing stock (see “Did You Know?” in Chapter 5 for more information).
- ✓ The City of Elmira, Village of Elmira Heights, Town of Southport, and Town of Big Flats have achieved Pro-Housing Community Program certification through New York State’s Homes and Community Renewal (“HRC”). Municipalities can achieve Pro-Housing Community Program certification by increasing their housing stock through permitting processes, either by 1% (downstate) or 0.33% (upstate) over the past year, or by 3% (downstate) or 1% (upstate) over the past three years.

DID YOU KNOW? Common Housing Terms

These common housing terms are used by planners to understand the state of housing in the county:

Housing Cost Burdened: when a household spends more than 30% of its income on housing.

Severely Housing Cost Burdened: when a household spends more than 50% of its income on housing.

Area Median Income (AMI): an official figure produced by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) which determines eligibility for housing assistance within each region of the United States. Eligibility for deed-restricted affordable housing is generally based on AMI and varies by household size.

Deed-restricted Affordable Housing: housing that is legally required to cost no more than 30% of a household’s income and is available to income-eligible households only. HUD defines eligible households as those with earnings that amount to 80% of AMI or less.

11.3 Key Takeaways

HOUSING STOCK

Housing is a critical planning topic for Chemung County. Currently, there is both excess vacancy, as well as pent-up demand for housing. While most of the housing currently on the market consists of older, single-family homes on larger lots, many people in the county have expressed interest in multifamily homes located in walkable, mixed-use areas. There is also a need for more affordable housing and “missing middle” housing.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Although prices have increased in the past five years, following a nationwide trend in rising home prices, Chemung County's housing stock is relatively affordable compared to surrounding neighborhoods. The average home price in Chemung County was \$150,000, and the median rent is \$918 per month.

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

Organizations like the Chemung County Land Bank (see Chapter 5) and Chemung County Industrial Development Agency (“CCIDA”) will play a critical role in expanding gaps in the existing housing stock and services to help residents find housing. The CCIDA, for instance, provides financial incentives to projects that have a positive economic impact on the community. This can include redevelopment and adaptive reuse for housing.

HOUSING POLICIES

Housing policies are heavily dependent upon the laws and regulations in each individual city, town, or village. Several of the county's municipalities (including the City of Elmira, Town of Big Flats, Town of Chemung, Town of Erin, Town of Catlin, and Town of Horseheads) have implemented zoning regulations which encourage mixed-use developments with residential components, various housing typologies, and housing choice.

PLANNING BOARD CONSIDERATIONS: Housing

Planning Boards should favorably consider projects which improve the affordability, accessibility, safety, availability, and diversity of the county's housing stock.

This may include favorably considering capital projects which include mixed-use development with a housing component, developments which include missing middle housing (e.g. townhouses, condominiums, etc.), and projects which prioritize housing for seniors and promote aging in place by prioritizing affordability and accessibility.

11.4 Goals & Strategies

GOAL 11-A: PROVIDE A VARIETY OF HOUSING CHOICES FOR DIFFERENT HOUSEHOLD TYPES, INCOME LEVELS, AGES, AND ABILITIES.

Providing a variety of housing choice is essential to ensure that housing is more affordable and accessible for all and that people can live independently in the neighborhoods that are best suited for their lives. Seniors, for instance, are often interested in aging in place or moving to more accessible living communities within their existing neighborhoods. Many individuals are interested in living in mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods.

STRATEGY 11-A1:
Consider implementation of a county-wide incentive program to assist low- and moderate-income residents avoid homelessness.

New York State offers the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (“ERAP”) to state residents, which is designed to help low- and moderate-income households at risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability by providing rental arrears, temporary rental assistance, and utility arrears. The county should look to this program and other comparable county-wide rental assistance make renting more affordable for low-income or young tenants at below-market rates.

STRATEGY 11-A2:
Consider implementing assistance programs for young people entering the housing market.

Breaking into the housing market is challenging for young people, who are often just entering the job market and may have other obligations such as student loans, car payments, and more. To help more of the community achieve homeownership, the county should consider offering loan assistance programs to help young people entering the housing market.

STRATEGY 11-A3:
Provide information and resources about federal, state, and local homeowner assistance programs. Aid municipalities in pursuing federal and state funding and establishing local homeowner assistance programs.

New York State launched the Homeowners Assistance Fund in 2022 to help financially at-risk homeowners stay in their homes. There are a variety of other federal and state programs which are geared towards helping homeowners who are struggling with various housing costs. The county should aim to provide increased technical assistance for the community to access these resources.

STRATEGY 11-A4:
Continue to support the City of Elmira's First Time Homebuyers Assistance Program and offer resources to expand the program to other municipalities in the county.

The Catholic Charities of Chemung and Schuyler Counties offers a First Time Homebuyers program to residents in the City of Elmira. Chemung County should continue to support this program and seek opportunities to expand the program and similar programs to other municipalities in the county.

STRATEGY 11-A5:
Encourage municipalities to introduce requirements for new housing developments to include a minimum percentage of affordable housing, or to allow property tax abatement for developers who allocate a minimum percentage of units to affordable housing.

As developers seek to expand their portfolios in the county, one way the county could incentivize increased affordable housing options is by encouraging municipalities to require new housing developments to include a minimum percentage of affordable housing. Municipalities could also incentivize developers to pursue this option by offering voluntary tax incentives such as property tax abatements and streamlined permitting for developers who include affordable housing in their developments.

STRATEGY 11-A6:
Encourage municipalities and developers to include multi-family and missing middle housing options (e.g. condominiums, townhouses, and apartments) to increase housing affordability and housing choice, in the context of the municipalities' unique character.

To improve housing choice throughout the county, Chemung County should encourage developers to include missing middle and small-scale, multi-unit housing options in their developments. These can be encouraged through financial/tax incentives and through site plan review during 239-M review at the county level, or by working with municipalities to update their zoning codes and design guidelines to enable and encourage the construction of missing middle housing while maintaining neighborhood character. The county will encourage owner-occupied multifamily housing where infrastructure already exists, in accordance with Smart Growth principals.

STRATEGY 11-A7:
Establish guidance for municipalities to incorporate accessory dwelling units ("ADUs") into local codes, which will serve as an affordable housing option for many individuals.

Some zoning codes prohibit having a variety of housing types in one area. These types of regulations can exclude ADUs, which support intergenerational living, adaptive use of oversized single-family structures, and special permitting systems that allow for preservation of neighborhood character. The county should work with municipalities to update their zoning codes to allow for ADUs in more zoning districts. The county should also pursue the Plus One ADU program with NYS HCR to fund ADU construction and rehabilitation with a focus on incentivizing homeownership.

STRATEGY 11-A8:
Coordinate with municipalities to promote inclusionary and incentive zoning practices that encourage a diversity of housing choices beyond single-family housing, encourage infill housing development, and promote greater affordability.

Similarly, the county should work with municipalities to update their zoning codes to encourage a greater variety of housing choice, including mixed-use and greater density developments for housing. This will help to promote greater choice and affordability in housing while maintaining a municipality's desired character. Reference Chapter 5 for additional information on land use and zoning practices.

STRATEGY 11-A9:
Continue to pursue the development of diverse housing options as identified in the 2023 Chemung County and City of Elmira Housing Market Study.

The 2023 Chemung County and City of Elmira Housing Market Study was intended to create "a baseline for a resilient growth strategy by understanding the housing preferences of established and future residents; analyzing the market feasibility of a wide spectrum of housing options...and incorporating real life financial limitations of residents without filtering out a target market, so as to support the long term resilience of the housing market and the community." The county should continue to use this plan as a guide to pursuing diverse housing options throughout the county.

"Housing Market Study," City of Elmira and Chemung County, 2023, <https://www.chemungcountyny.gov/DocumentCenter/View/13087/Chemung-County-and-City-of-Elmira-Housing-Market-Study---FINAL?bidId=>

STRATEGY 11-A10:
Identify opportunities to expand and construct new senior housing to serve the county's aging population.

The county's senior population deserves to have a choice of safe, affordable, and accessible housing throughout the county, with the opportunity to remain in or near their desired neighborhood. The county should identify opportunities to expand and construct new senior housing and should develop programs to incentivize developers to construct senior housing. Encouraging partnerships with local nonprofits and faith-based groups should be explored with a focus on continued property maintenance.

**GOAL 11-B:
SUPPORT A COMPASSIONATE, COMPREHENSIVE, AND FAR-REACHING
APPROACH TO ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS IN CHEMUNG COUNTY.**

Homelessness is a complex and far-reaching issue that greatly impacts the mental and physical health, safety, and quality-of-life of unhoused individuals. These individuals, regardless of circumstance, have the same rights and responsibilities as any other citizen and deserve compassionate and comprehensive pathways to stable housing. Providing this also saves the county costly emergency shelter expenditures. The county will pursue initiatives that assist homeless populations in their transition into permanent shelter, for the holistic benefit of communities.

**STRATEGY 11-B1:
Support municipalities in expanding
low-income housing options.**

The sparse availability of income restricted housing is a nationwide issue, but solutions must be tailored to local conditions. Programs like the City of Elmira's Vacant Rental Program, which offer funding to rehabilitate vacant rentals under the condition that units are made available to low-income renters, especially suit housing conditions with a high degree of vacant and aged housing stock. This program will be encouraged in municipalities with similar housing conditions. Municipalities with higher rates of new residential construction should be encouraged to explore incentive zoning, or to offer tax incentives to developers for including income restricted rental units in developments, particularly those located near public transportation routes.

**STRATEGY 11-B2:
Facilitate the development of
supportive housing projects through
grant support and partnership.**

Supportive housing is a dire need for addressing homelessness. Casework is integral to the long-term wellbeing of unhoused individuals, and available units in these programs are frequently overprescribed with low discharge rates. Non-profit agencies may have the capacity to offer wrap-around services with new multi-unit housing but lack the capacity to apply for grant funding or administer construction. The county will explore funding options currently underutilized in Chemung County, like the NYS Homeless Housing and Assistance Program (HHAP), to fund new construction of supportive housing projects.

**STRATEGY 11-B3:
Coordinate with local agencies and
employers to develop transitional
housing linked to job training and
employment services. Ensure robust
job training and employment services
are available for unhoused individuals
seeking employment.**

Organizations such as The Arc of Chemung-Schuyler offer job training programs in the county. These job training programs can be paired with transition housing services which help unhoused individuals seeking employment can receive necessary skills training for available jobs while also receiving housing. The county will explore options with local partners to offer this program to residents.

**STRATEGY 11-B4:
Continue to support the activities and
recommendations of the Homeless
Housing Task Force.**

The multifaceted issue of homelessness requires ongoing coordination with key partners. The Homeless and Housing Task force, led by Catholic Charities and attended by multiple community stakeholders, is the longest standing committee focused on homelessness in the county. The county will maintain a presence on the Task Force, encourage its activities and membership expansion, and seek to implement its recommendations.

**GOAL 11-C:
WORK WITH PARTNERS TO ADDRESS THE COUNTY'S AGING HOUSING STOCK AND ASSOCIATED ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMAN HEALTH RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH AGING INFRASTRUCTURE.**

Chemung County's older housing stock is beneficial in that it creates a strong sense of place and unique community character grounded in the county's rich history. Older buildings present additional challenges regarding maintenance and upkeep, and the potential presence of environmental contaminants. The county should work with its partners to address these challenges while celebrating the unique array of historic buildings that beautify the county.

**STRATEGY 11-C1:
Continue working with public entities such as the Land Bank and organizations to address the County's critical repairs program and resources for homeownership.**

The County's Land Bank is a critical asset in returning underutilized and vacant properties back to the community so they can be rehabilitated or demolished as necessary. These properties cause blight in the surrounding neighborhood but have significant potential to positively contribute to the overall neighborhood. See Chapter 5 (Land Use and Infrastructure) for more information about the County Land Bank. As noted in Chapter 5, the County should continue to strengthen its partnership with the Land Bank to address the issue of vacant and underutilized properties.

**STRATEGY 11-C2:
Pursue grant funding to provide support for owners of older homes in critical need of repairs.**

State and Federal grant opportunities abound to address repairs needed on older homes, especially for those that are within local historic districts or are Eligible or Listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places. The county should increase its technical assistance programs for homeowners of historic/older properties to connect homeowners with funding programs.



"Historic homes within the region are amazing but are costly to repair. Please offer incentives for homeowners to help fix these gorgeous homes."

Survey Response

**STRATEGY 11-C3:
Develop incentives for homeowners and property owners to make on-going improvements to their homes, such as through tax abatements and a homeowners façade improvement assistance program.**

To preserve the historic housing stock in the county and to ensure older homes and well maintained and safe to live in, the county should consider incentive programs for homeowners and property owners to continually upkeep their properties.

**STRATEGY 11-C4:
Encourage adaptive reuse and repairs of historic properties, particularly opportunities to convert single-family homes into multi-family buildings.**

Encourage property owners or prospective property owners to pursue adaptive reuse projects of historic properties to preserve the county's historic properties and address issues of blight and vacancy in historic homes, particularly owner-occupied homes. Seek opportunities to convert historic single-family residential properties to "missing middle" housing, such as duplexes or triplexes (reference Chapter 5 for definitions), to address housing needs and preserve the county's historic properties as discussed in Chapter 8.

**STRATEGY 11-C5:
Continue to identify historic properties and neighborhoods that may be eligible for state and national register listing.**

Historic resource surveys can be used to identify historically significant properties and districts that may be eligible for listing on the State and National Register of Historic Places. The county should invest in working with qualified historic resources professionals to identify historic properties and neighborhoods in the county that would benefit from the protections and funding opportunities available through State and National Register Listing.



THE
**CHEMUNG
COUNTY**
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Chapter 12

Community Health



COMMUNITY HEALTH

12.1 Guiding Principle

County and local government play a key role in improving public health, especially when it comes to development patterns, transportation decisions, and the physical environment in which people live. Injuries and chronic health conditions can be caused or exacerbated by proximity to pollutants, unsafe living conditions, inadequate utility services, and unsafe transportation systems. On the other hand, the quality and accessibility of open spaces, recreational amenities, health care, supportive services, and opportunities to engage with the community can enhance both physical and mental health. The priorities of modern planning have changed over the past century and now emphasize quality of life more than ever before. Communities are recognizing the importance of considering public health when making planning decisions. To that end, the ninth guiding principle for the Comprehensive Plan is:

GUIDING PRINCIPLE:

Invest in improving health outcomes for all residents by ensuring access to healthcare services and prioritizing community health in broader decision-making.

12.2 Relevant Inventory Data

Reference Appendix 12: Community Health Memo for more information.

PUBLIC HEALTH INDICATORS

Chemung County has a Public Health Department whose mission is to promote and respond to the health needs of the community. It does so through collaboration with local health departments and by educating the community on the issues like vaccination, substance abuse, healthy lifestyles, and more.

New York State's Department of Health maintains a set of indicators for tracking public health. These indicators show that Chemung County has higher rates than New York State of the following disease/risk indicators:

- ✓ Chronic lower respiratory disease hospitalizations among adults
- ✓ Mortality due to heart disease
- ✓ Lung and bronchus cancer incidence
- ✓ Percentage of adults consuming less than one fruit or vegetable per day
- ✓ Age-adjusted percentage of obese adults

Conversely, Chemung County has higher rates of adults engaged in leisure time physical activity, and a lower percentage of adults with diabetes.

Life Expectancy

Life expectancy is influenced by a variety of factors, including many of the health indicators above, and can provide insight into the impacts of public health indicators on overall health of residents in the county. According to data from the University of Wisconsin's County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, Chemung County had the lowest life expectancy in New York, at 76.4 years in 2022. This was 3.9 years less than the statewide average of 80.3. Life expectancy has been decreasing in Chemung County since 2020, though this decrease slowed in 2022. This may be due to a variety of factors, including increased opioid use and the Covid-19 pandemic, which saw nationwide decreases in life expectancy.

Life expectancy, however, is not the same across the entire county. Data from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) showed that between 2010 and 2015, life expectancy ranged from 83.4 in Census Tract 109, which covers portions of the Town of Elmira, to a low of 68.5 in Census Tract 6 which covers the eastern portion of the City of Elmira. While this data is several years old, it gives insight into the potential discrepancies in life expectancy across the county.

BROWNFIELD SITES

Brownfields refer to underused or abandoned industrial or commercial property. Brownfields include old factories, vacant warehouses, defunct gas stations, and more. Many brownfields are contaminated with potentially dangerous conditions that could significantly impact public health. Remediation of these sites can have positive public health outcomes along with the opportunities for economic revitalization.

There are a total of sixty-two active, no-action, or closed NYSDEC Environmental Remediation sites in Chemung County, which are primarily located in Elmira, Horseheads, and Big Flats. Reference Chapter 6 for additional information about these sites.

SUPERFUND SITES

The Environmental Protection Agency defines Superfund sites as uncontrolled or abandoned sites or properties where hazardous waste or other contamination is present. Superfund sites differ from brownfields in that superfund sites are higher priority mitigation sites where the federal government is involved in cleanup efforts. There are two federally designated superfund sites located in Chemung County, the Facet Enterprises site located in the Village of Elmira Heights and the Kentucky Ave Well Field located in the Town of Horseheads.

CHILDHOOD LEAD EXPOSURE

According to the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), in children under the age of 18, blood lead levels above 5 mcg/dL require immediate action to avoid long term developmental and health impacts. Data from NYSDOH indicated that between 2003 and 2020, almost 14,000 tests were administered to children under the age of 18 in Chemung County. Children with elevated levels of lead in blood were found in several municipalities throughout the County. Chemung County has the 11th highest rate of elevated blood lead levels in New York State, which is higher than neighboring Tompkins, Schuyler, and Tioga counties, and above the statewide rate.

To combat lead exposure in portions of the county, the Elmira Water Board has replaced almost all its lead service lines. However, lead exposure can also occur from contaminated surfaces in houses such as lead paint. As noted in Chapter 10, the housing stock in the county was predominantly built before lead paint was banned in 1978. If not properly maintained or disturbed during renovations, this lead paint can become airborne as dust particles or large flakes and expose young children. According to the EPA, the most likely areas for contamination are windows, doors, stairs, and porches. Lead exposure can come from soils, dust, commercial products, and hobbies.

TRAFFIC

According to data from the National Center for Health Statistics, between 2015-2021, Chemung County saw 10 traffic related deaths per 100,000 people, more than Tompkins County, Tioga County, and the New York State average of 6 deaths per 100,000 people. Schuyler County experienced 13 deaths per 100,000 people over the same period.

CRIME

According to data from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (NYSDCJS), Chemung County experienced 158 violent crimes in 2023, which decreased from 2022, and slightly increased from the 2015-2023 average. This is below the state average and Steuben County crime rates, but above the crime rates in Schuyler County, Tompkins County, and Tioga County. This has followed the statewide trend of decreasing crime rates, which reached a peak in many communities between 2021 and 2022. Chemung County has also fallen from the second highest homicide rate in New York State in 2021 to below the statewide average of 2.2 homicides per 100,000 people.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Substance abuse is currently affecting every community in New York State, and Chemung County is no exception. According to data from the Centers for Disease Control, there were 41 deaths from drug overdose in Chemung County in 2023. This is a continued increase from 36 deaths in 2022 and 33 in 2021. Neighboring Tompkins and Schuyler County have also seen an increase in deaths between 2020 and 2023, though both counties saw deaths decrease in 2023. Data is not available for Steuben County.

MENTAL HEALTH/MENTAL HEALTH FACILITIES

Chemung County has a ratio of 300 people per mental health professional. This is above the ratio for mental health professionals to individuals in New York State and Tompkins County, but significantly below neighboring Tioga County, Schuyler County, and Steuben County.

The Chemung County Department of Mental Hygiene is responsible for administering oversight and planning for mental health and other related health services. There are over 100 mental health provider locations in Chemung County, ranging from local practitioners to inpatient and outpatient facilities. Major locations include Arnot Heath's St. Joseph and Arnot Odgen Medical Center. The Elmira Psychiatric Center is a New York State operated psychiatric facility located in the City of Elmira which provides inpatient treatment with capacity for 52 adults and 12 children. The Center provides a variety of community-based mental health services.

12.3 Key Takeaways

INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC HEALTH

Planning decisions related to development patterns, land use, transportation networks, open spaces, and provision of services have a significant impact on public health. Land use and development patterns impact where people live, where they commute, and how they access goods and services. People that live in urban areas and compact, walkable communities tend to be more active and have better access to recreation, healthcare, fresh healthy food, and other services. People in rural areas may be more reliant on vehicles and therefore less active, and less able to access essentials.

The safety and efficiency of transportation networks and infrastructure also impact community health. Roads that are adequately designed to support traffic and mitigate dangerous driving conditions are safer to travel on and cause fewer injuries and fatalities. Multi-modal transportation networks and “complete streets” prioritize the safety of ALL users, including pedestrians and bicyclists. Increasing non-vehicular transportation can decrease pollution and increase physical activity, which can in turn have positive impacts on physical and mental health.

“Smart Growth” principles of walkability, safety, housing choice, and community engagement can all have a positive impact on public health.

PLANNING BOARD CONSIDERATIONS: Community Health

Planning Boards should favorably consider projects which clearly demonstrate positive impacts to public health.

These may include capital projects for public health facilities, grocery stores or markets to improve access to fresh and healthy food, safe housing, and facilities and infrastructure which encourage healthy habits like trails and bicycle lanes.

Planning Boards should ensure proposed plans and developments provide prospective residents and users with access to essential health services / providers, health food, safe living environments, and accessible spaces for gathering, socializing, and recreation.

HOUSING & PUBLIC HEALTH

Housing is another contributing factor when it comes to overall health. All residents deserve safe housing that is free of hazards such as lead, radon, asbestos, mold, poor water quality, lack of heating, flood risk, deterioration, etc. – all factors that can have a negative impact on health.

HEALTH INDICATORS

Chemung County has higher rates than the New York State average of certain health concerns, including chronic lower respiratory disease hospitalizations, heart disease, lung and bronchus cancer, percentage of adults consuming less than one fruit or vegetable per day, and percentage of adults with obesity. These indicators point towards a need for the county to focus on environmental determinants of health, such as air quality and indoor health and safety concerns (e.g. lead, mold, etc.), access to multimodal modes of transportation and recreation to promote healthy habits and exercise, and access to fresh and healthy foods.

HEALTHCARE NEEDS

Healthcare facilities and resources specifically addressing substance abuse issues and mental health concerns are prime considerations in Chemung County, as indicated earlier in the chapter. Substance abuse has increased across New York State and requires comprehensive solutions from healthcare providers and local government to improve access to resources. Additionally, Chemung County has the opportunity to expand its mental healthcare resources to match the ratio of mental healthcare providers to individuals, to match the ratio of providers to residents in nearby Tioga, Schuyler, and Steuben counties.

12.4 Goals & Strategies

GOAL 12-A: ADDRESS THE HEALTH NEEDS OF AN AGING POPULATION TO ENSURE CHEMUNG COUNTY REMAINS A DESIRABLE AND ACCESSIBLE PLACE TO LIVE THROUGHOUT ONE'S LIFE.

The population of Chemung County is aging, and with that demographic shift comes new considerations related to housing, transportation, and public services. Older residents, often couples or singles, may prefer smaller homes or apartments with less space to maintain. Recommendations related to housing choice are included in Chapter 11. Seniors may choose to drive less, or may not be able to drive at all, relying on non-vehicular or public transportation. Recommendations related to safe, accessible multi-modal transportation are included in Chapter 10. An aging population may also need access to different types of specialized healthcare and supportive services to address their physical, mental, and social health needs.

STRATEGY 12-A1: Continue to pursue state, federal, and other funding to support the Chemung County Department of the Aging and Long-Term Care.

The Chemung County Department of the Aging and Long-Term Care provides invaluable resources and support to Chemung County's older residents. As the aging population increases, there may be a proportional need for additional funding and support.

STRATEGY 12-A2: Update the Chemung County Age-Friendly Community Action Plan, which was last updated in 2015.

The Age-Friendly Community Action Plan addresses some of the specific needs of an aging community, including outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect, social inclusion, civic participation, employment, communication and information, and community support and health services. It identifies specific actions with anticipated timelines and performance indicators. As the plan is now ten years old, it should be evaluated to determine which of the actions have been achieved, which are still relevant but may need to be updated to encourage implementation, and which may no longer be relevant. As with the 2015 Plan, the updated plan should utilize an Age-Friendly Community Planning Committee and Advisory Council to ensure broad input.

STRATEGY 12-A3: Expand and promote at-home care for seniors.

The Chemung County Health Department Home Health Agency is a nonprofit organization that provides home care to residents of all ages, including seniors. They provide nursing care, case management, chronic disease care, education and support to promote independent living. The County should continue to work with the Agency to ensure it has the funding and support to meet the needs of county residents.

STRATEGY 12-A4: Expand and promote access to home and facility retrofit programs and funding to improve residential accessibility for an aging population.

There are various programs which grant funding to help seniors stay in their homes long term. The NYS Homes and Communities Renewal "Residential Emergency Services to Offer (Home) Repairs to the Elderly (RESTORE)" program grants financial assistance to homeowners over sixty years old to address emergency and code violations which threaten health and safety. The HOME program, established under Title II (Home Investment Partnerships Act) of the National Affordable Housing Act, provides grant funding to low-income individuals for home rehabilitation, which can include retrofitting homes for seniors to be able to age in place. The County should continue to promote and advocate for these funding programs to assist the county's aging population to be able to stay in their homes with accessibility improvements.

**GOAL 12-B:
ADDRESS THE HEALTH NEEDS OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN TO
ENSURE CHEMUNG COUNTY REMAINS A DESIRABLE PLACE TO RAISE
FAMILIES AND SUPPORT YOUTH.**

Chemung County provides a variety of resources aimed at supporting the health needs of its younger population, but there are opportunities to improve and enhance services and amenities.

**STRATEGY 12-B1:
Investment in
youth activities and
enrichment.**

Physical activity and social engagement are key to fostering healthy, happy youth. By investing in children's activities and enrichment, the County can demonstrate its commitment to youth health. The County can collaborate with local schools, libraries, recreation centers, and youth organizations to expand recreational activities, before- and after-school programming, and other opportunities for children to learn and socialize. Individual pilot programs with outcome driven designs will be prioritized.

**STRATEGY 12-B2:
Continue to work with
community partners
including the Southern
Tier Connect Family
Resource Network and
those expanding their
mission to achieve
these goals.**

The Southern Tier Connect Family Resource Network provides access to medical care, intellectual and developmental disability services, and family education and training. Southern Tier Connect works with the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities and other partner organizations to help connect families with high quality services in the Southern Tier region. The County should continue to support the efforts and initiatives of the Network.

**STRATEGY 12-B3:
Create targeted
programs to address
youth mental health
concerns in the county.**

The county's residents mentioned throughout the public engagement process that there is a gap in mental health care that is specifically targeted towards youth and teenagers. The county should work with its local healthcare providers to incentivize the growth of its mental health services and should seek additional funding and resources to provide more comprehensive youth mental health care with school partnerships.

**GOAL 12-C:
CONTINUE TO PROMOTE HEALTHY HABITS TO IMPROVE OVERALL
HEALTH OUTCOMES ACROSS THE POPULATION.**

There are many ways for the County to promote and educate the community about the importance of physical activity, healthy eating, health screening, and other proactive healthy habits.

**STRATEGY 12-C1:
Promote programs that improve access to
healthy food.**

The Chemung County Nutrition Program provides congregate meals, home delivered meals, and nutrition counseling and education. Meals are provided at five locations throughout the county at no cost to residents aged 60 and over. In addition to nutritious lunches, the program helps encourage socialization and provides access to additional supportive services. The Home Delivered Meals program provides meals to individuals that are unable to prepare their food, helping them maintain or return to independence and avoid ER visits. The New York State Farmer's Market Nutrition Program provides coupons to eligible participants age 60 and over for use at Farmer's Markets throughout New York State. The Chemung County Cornell Cooperative Extension also runs a comprehensive nutrition program which includes SNAP-Ed, the nutrition promotion and obesity-prevent component of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP"), a "veggie van" which operates as a mobile market that travels throughout the region, and information on its website including food preservation strategies, recipes, and farmers markets throughout the County. All of these programs help ensure access to healthy food for vulnerable and aging populations in the county. The county will work to promote these programs more widely and explore expanding their service areas with private partnerships.

**STRATEGY 12-C2:
Develop additional parks,
recreational facilities, and
other areas that support
healthy habits.**

Spending time outdoors has proven benefits to physical and mental health. All Chemung County residents, regardless of age, ability, income, or place of residence should have safe access to public parks and recreational facilities. The County should consider the location of parks and recreation facilities and proximity to neighborhoods and employment centers and ensure equitable access for all residents, for community wellbeing and healthcare cost reduction. Additional recommendations related to overall land use planning are included in Chapter 4.

STRATEGY 12-C3:

Expand the County Health Department's outreach to the community at events such as fairs, festivals, and other local programming.

The County Health Department provides resources on its website and print material available at The County Health Department's Office in Elmira. To broaden its reach, the Department should set up a table, booth, or kiosk at local events to provide information, answer questions, and direct people to health-related resources. The Health Department might also consider partnering with local healthcare providers to offer free health screenings like blood pressure tests or vision/hearing assessments at events.

STRATEGY 12-C4:

Create educational campaigns around radon and lead, including potential sources, identification, and mitigation measures.

The Chemung County Health Department's "Environmental Health Services" sector provides information on its website with information about radon, including potential health impacts, types of test kits and where to find test kits, and how to address the presence of radon in the home if detected. The Environmental Health Services sector also provides information about lead poisoning prevention on its website, including information about what lead is, the health impacts of lead, where lead can be found, resources to address childhood lead exposure, and requirements for addressing lead for property managers and strategies to address lead for homeowners. The county should continue to promote its existing resources on radon and lead and expand its educational campaigns to help homeowners, property managers, and tenants better understand their options for identifying and addressing lead and radon exposure in the home.

GOAL 12-D:

ENSURE ALL OF CHEMUNG COUNTY'S RESIDENTS HAVE ACCESSIBLE, HIGH-QUALITY PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTHCARE AVAILABLE LOCALLY.

In many rural communities like Chemung County, it can be difficult to attract and retain high-quality healthcare providers and to ensure residents have access to doctors, dentists, specialists, urgent care, emergency care, and medical treatments. People that live in rural locations often must travel great distances to access health services, particularly specialty care.

STRATEGY 12-D1:

Expand local services and health clinics, screenings and vaccinations, and other preventative care.

The County should continue to support healthcare providers and organizations such as Mosaic Health in their efforts to expand local health screenings and both physical and mental health services. This may include pursuing grants and other funding mechanisms to bring healthcare into the rural parts of the county, either as permanent facilities or as mobile providers. One example is the Mosaic Health Mobile Dental Unit, which provides dental services to patients without insurance or those that cannot reach a dentist.

STRATEGY 12-D2:

Encourage health care providers to relocate to or stay in Chemung County by making Chemung County a desirable place to live and work and by considering incentive programs to attract health care workers.

The County can advocate higher wages and professional development support for healthcare workers, and can invest in modern healthcare facilities and broadband. The County can also consider tax incentives or tax breaks and loan forgiveness programs for healthcare workers. Additional recommendations related to land use and utilities are provided in Chapter 4, while recommendations related to economic development and attracting workers can be found in Chapter 9.

STRATEGY 12-D3:

Work with the Veteran's Affairs (VA) to expand services in Chemung County.

The Department of Veteran's Affairs in Chemung County provides services and information to veterans and their spouses and dependents about the benefits for which they are eligible. The Elmira VA clinic provides outpatient healthcare including physical and mental health services. However, some Chemung County veterans report traveling to the VA Medical Center in Bath, NY (Steuben County) to receive medical care and supportive services. Expanding the availability of services at the Elmira clinic will ensure veterans receive the services they need without having to travel a great distance. The County should work with the Elmira VA clinic and the Department of Veteran's Affairs to identify deficiencies and potential solutions.

**GOAL 12-E:
ADDRESS AND SEEK TO IMPROVE ISSUES OF SOCIAL ISOLATION
FOR RESIDENTS.**

Many factors can contribute to feelings of loneliness and social isolation, particularly in rural communities and those with an aging population. These issues have been exacerbated by the lasting social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the prevalence of technology and digital communication. The County should work to combat some of these issues and encourage more social interaction among its residents through programming, events, private partnerships, and targeted outreach to residents most at-risk of social isolation.

**STRATEGY 12-E1:
Support, promote, and expand the
Chemung County Department of Aging
and Long-Term Care "Happy to Chat
Bench" program.**

The Happy to Chat Bench program is a community initiative spearheaded by the Department of Aging and Long-Term Care in partnership with Elmira Downtown Development with funding through the Community Foundation. The program seeks to bring attention to the issue of social isolation by designating special benches in public locations that encourage community members to interact with one another. The County should continue to support the program and look for opportunities to promote and expand it beyond the City of Elmira.

**STRATEGY 12-E2:
Consider supporting and implementing
programs that help unite youth and
elderly populations.**

Intergenerational programs are designed to bring together youth and older adults in mutually beneficial interactions in which they can share ideas and experiences. This can include mentoring or tutoring programs, community service, arts programming, and workforce development. There are many organizations within the County that serve the senior and youth populations, and the County should seek to connect these organizations to create more opportunities for interaction. The county should also continue its efforts to create programming which unites youth and senior populations, including the "intergenerational games" which is an ongoing initiation through the Office of the Aging to bring youth and senior populations together for various sporting and recreation events.

**STRATEGY 12-E3:
Support the Chemung County
Humane Society and SPCA's efforts
to help residents care for their pets.
Coordinate with local stakeholders on
a plan for a County housing shelter for
unhoused individuals seeking housing
support that allows pets.**

Pets contribute to quality of life and for many people, are considered a part of their family. However, there are many challenges that come with pet ownership and the ability to care for a pet can be impacted by one's housing situation, employment/income, or individual physical or mental health. The Chemung County SPCA provides educational resources to help people be responsible pet caregivers. They also provide resources for pet owners, including spay and neuter clinics, affordable vaccination clinics, a pet food pantry, temporary pet housing, and relinquishing support for people that are no longer able to care for their pets. The County should continue to provide support for the SPCA and share information about its services. Additionally, the County should work with its local stakeholders on creating a plan for a county housing shelter that allows individuals to stay with their pets. Currently, some unhoused individuals are unable or unwilling to use existing housing services because many services do not accept pets.

**STRATEGY 12-E4:
Promote improved access to
community centers and gathering
spaces.**

Addressing social isolation requires providing places and spaces for people to gather, including parks, plazas, recreation and community centers. Common gathering spaces can enhance community connections, civic engagement, local activism, and overall well-being. Such spaces can also contribute to economic development by providing a place to host events, markets, and performances. The County should work with municipalities and organizations to ensure social groups have safe, accessible spaces to meet and hold events.

**GOAL 12-F:
PROVIDE SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES IN CITY, TOWN, AND VILLAGE CENTERS.**

Providing public facilities in places where people are likely to congregate, like parks and urban centers, can help mitigate litter and vandalism and provide dignity for those struggling with homelessness, substance abuse, or physical conditions that may necessitate such facilities. In addition to public restrooms, the County should also support the distribution and maintenance of trash receptacles and sharps/hazardous materials bins.

**STRATEGY 12-F1:
Increase access to public restrooms in parks, public buildings, and other gathering places.**

Providing clean, safe, public restrooms can help reduce the spread of disease, support better hygiene, and ensure that everyone has equitable access, including unhoused individuals, delivery and maintenance workers, and people with medical conditions or disabilities. It can also reduce the likelihood of public urination or defecation in public spaces, which can make spaces more attractive to residents and visitors. The County should explore opportunities to provide more or increase access to public restrooms in County-owned buildings, parks, and open spaces and ensure regular maintenance of public restrooms.

**STRATEGY 12-F2:
Decrease litter by providing and maintaining adequate trash/recycling receptacles in County spaces, especially the County's parks and open spaces.**

The presence of litter detracts from the overall appearance of public roadways and spaces. The County should identify areas with accumulations of litter and look for opportunities to add and maintain trash receptacles. Encouraging private groups of volunteers to assist in maintaining parks, trails and roadways can also help decrease litter.

**GOAL 12-G:
COLLABORATE WITH LOCAL AND REGIONAL PARTNERS TO ADDRESS MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND THE IMPACTS ON COMMUNITY WELL-BEING.**

There are many ways for the County to promote and educate the community about the importance of physical activity, healthy eating, health screening, and other proactive healthy habits.

**STRATEGY 12-G1:
Reduce drug-related fatalities and injuries by providing emergency resources, training, and safe disposal for needles and other biohazards.**

All County facilities should provide access to Naloxone/Narcan and safe disposal of sharps and other biohazardous materials. The County should also host public training events to teach the community how to administer Naloxone/Narcan. The County should work through the Department of Mental Hygiene to expand the provision of these resources to other public and private facilities throughout the county. Volume of disposal as an outcome measure will be pursued.

**STRATEGY 12-G2:
Increase the Mental Hygiene Department's program and collaborative efforts to address issues such as substance abuse.**

The Chemung County Mental Hygiene Department focuses on an integrated and collaborative model that brings together public and private agencies to provide mental health and substance abuse services. The County should continue to support the efforts of the department and seek funding to expand programming and initiatives with selected community partners.

**STRATEGY 12-G3:
Support and expand county-wide crisis services and support Chemung County's Department of Social Services and Department of Mental Hygiene in promoting and expanding their various community services.**

While prevention is key to addressing issues related to mental health and substance abuse, it is also critical to provide services for individuals and families in times of crisis. Current services include acute hospitalization, 24-hour crisis assistance, and intensive and traditional outpatient programs. The County should work with its partner network to explore additional options including crisis walk-in centers, mobile crisis teams, non-hospital crisis stabilization facilities, peer support networks, and enhanced post-crisis case management.

**STRATEGY 12-G4:
Collaborate with the Alcohol & Substance Abuse Sub-Committee to create educational programs about the signs of substance use and available resources.**

Continue to support the Chemung County Alcohol & Substance Abuse Sub-Committee and work with the committee to host seminars and meetings to raise awareness among parents, youth, and community members about the signs of substance use and available resources.



THE
**CHEMUNG
COUNTY**
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Chapter 13

Implementation Matrix

Implementation Matrix

This Comprehensive Plan will only be successful if the goals and strategies are implemented.

This chapter helps facilitate implementation by:

- Establishing a process to guide achievement of the County's vision and prevent the plan from just "sitting on a shelf."
- Prioritizing the goals and strategies.
- Identifying responsible parties to implement each strategy.
- Identifying potential funding to implement each strategy.

While development of the Comprehensive Plan has been an effort led by County Planning Staff and a project Steering Committee, the implementation of the plan will require much more broad cooperation and participation.

The County may wish to convene a separate Implementation Committee comprised of representatives of groups responsible for leading the implementation efforts. The Committee would be tasked with assessing the status of specific strategies, evaluating priorities, and coordinating funding efforts. Members of the Committee would likely include County Planning staff and members of relevant County boards and committees.

The following pages are a summary of all of the goals and strategies included throughout Chapters 4-12 of the Comprehensive Plan. They are organized in a matrix that includes additional information intended to guide implementation of each strategy.

P Indicates a Priority Strategy that, if implemented, will address a critical issue or have a catalytic impact on a larger goal.

Performance Metrics

The goals in the Implementation Matrix are followed by Performance Metrics, used to gauge each goal's implementation status. The Performance Metrics are based on measurable data to help quantify the level of implementation of each. These metrics are provided as a guide for the County, and may be measured and utilized by different departments and/or committees responsible for plan implementation.

Strategy Sources

Each strategy in the Comprehensive Plan was informed by the inventory and analysis and public engagement phases of the project. The matrix identifies the source of each strategy, which may be one or more of the following:

- **Best practices/planning expertise** - these strategies are based on best practices in regional planning and consultant expertise.
- **Steering Committee** - these strategies are based on feedback received from the project Steering Committee.
- **County Planning Staff** - these strategies are based on feedback received from County Planning staff, based on known issues and needs or ongoing initiatives.
- **Focus Groups** - these strategies are based on feedback received during the transportation, municipalities, economic development, agriculture, and housing focus groups described in Chapter 2.
- **Public Input** - these strategies were suggested or informed by feedback received through the public surveys and/or public meetings, as described in Chapter 2.
- **Precedent County Plan** - these strategies were inspired by other Comprehensive Plans for counties or regions facing challenges similar to those in Chemung County.

Responsibility/Partners

Implementing this Comprehensive Plan will require a coordinated effort between the County Executive, County Legislature, various County departments, boards, and committees, and outside organizations, groups, and agencies. This column in the matrix identifies the County entities that will have primary responsibility for implementing the strategy, and any secondary entities that will likely support or partner on such efforts.

Acronyms and abbreviations for entities listed in the Implementation Matrix are included on the following page.

Priority/Timeframe

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide County decision-making over a five-to ten-year planning horizon. Many of the strategies identified in this plan will require ongoing efforts to implement. Others should be prioritized and implemented early to address critical issues or spur further improvements. This column identifies the suggested timeframe for each strategy:

- **Short Term** - these strategies should be implemented as soon as possible (within 1-3 years).
- **Medium Term** - implementation of these strategies is expected to take place in 3-6 years.
- **Long Term** - implementation of these strategies is expected to take place in 7 or more years.
- **Ongoing** - these are strategies that may be currently underway and expected to continue in perpetuity or the life of the Comprehensive Plan.

Cost

The Comprehensive Plan serves as a guide for future budgeting and planning for capital improvements. Implementing many of the strategies will require additional funding beyond the current County budget, but other strategies may not have a cost associated with them. The implementation matrix breaks down the potential costs as follows:

- \$ Little or no cost
- \$\$ \$100k or less
- \$\$\$ \$100-\$400k
- \$\$\$\$ More than \$400k

Potential Funding Sources

There are numerous local, regional, state, and federal funding sources that may be applicable for various strategies. The list provided in the Implementation Matrix is not exhaustive of all potential options. Furthermore, over the life of this plan, these sources are subject to change, and the County should constantly monitor for new opportunities.

Acronyms and abbreviations for funding programs and sources listed in the Implementation Matrix are included on the following page.

Acronyms & Abbreviations

Organizations, Boards, and Committees

ACS	Arc of Chemung-Schuyler
AH&D	Arbor Housing and Development
AIM	AIM Independent Living Center
CC-AFPB	Chemung County Agricultural & Farmland Protection Board
CC-AS	Chemung County Ag Society
CC-A<C	Chemung County Aging & Long Term Care Department
CC-BG	Chemung County Buildings and Grounds
CC-CC	Chemung County Clerk
CC-EHS	Chemung County Health Department - Environmental Health Services
CC-EMC	Chemung County Environmental Management Council
CC-EX	Chemung County Executive
CC-F&EM	Chemung County Fire & Emergency Management Department
CC-L	Chemung County Legislature
CC-LO	Chemung County Law Office
CC-LB	Chemung County Land Bank
CC-MH	Chemung County Mental Hygiene Department
CC-PB	Chemung County Planning Board
CC-PH	Chemung County Public Health Department
CC-PI	Chemung County Public Information Office

CC-Planning	Chemung County Planning Department
CC-PW	Chemung County Public Works Department
CC-SC	Chemung County Stormwater Coalition
CC-SD	Chemung County Sewer Districts
CC-SO	Chemung County Sheriff's Office
CC-SS	Chemung County Social Services Department
CC-SW	Chemung County Solid Waste Management Department
CC-TB	Chemung County Transit Board
CC-YB	Chemung County Youth Bureau
CCCCC	Chemung County Child Care Council
CCCS	Catholic Charities Chemung / Schuyler
CCE	Cornell Cooperative Extension
CCHS	Chemung County Historical Society
CCIDA	The Chemung County Industrial Development Agency
COC	Chemung County Chamber of Commerce
CSSWFNY	Chemung Schuyler Steuben Workforce New York
CCSWCD	Chemung County Soil & Water Conservation District
CSSWFNY	Chemung Schuyler Steuben Workforce New York

CCWQSC	Chemung County Water Quality Strategy Committee
ECRA	Elmira Corning Regional Airport
ECTC	Elmira Chemung Transportation Council
EDD	Elmira Downtown Development
EWB	Elmira Water Board
GST BOCES	Schuyler-Steuben-Chemung-Tioga-Allegany Counties and BOCES (Greater Southern Tier)
NYSAM	New York State Agriculture and Markets
NYSDEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
NYSDOS	New York State Department of State
NYSDOT	New York State Department of Transportation
NYSERDA	New York State Energy Research and Development
NYSESD	New York State Empire State Development
NYSHCR	New York State Homes and Community Renewal
NYSOPRHP	New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
STBC	Southern Tier Broadband Coalition
STC	Southern Tier Central Regional Planning & Development Board
STEG	Southern Tier Economic Growth
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Acronyms & Abbreviations

Potential Funding Sources

ALPF	Appalachian Landscapes Protection Fund
ARC	Appalachian Regional Commission
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant Program (Federal)
ESD-RCF	New York State Empire State Development Regional Council Capital Funds
ESD-SP	New York State Empire State Development Strategic Planning and Feasibility Program
LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund (U.S. Department of the Interior)
NYS-ADU	New York State Plus One ADU Program
NYS-AFPG	New York State Age Friendly Planning Grant
NYS-CA	New York State Connect ALL Program
NYS-CAC	New York State Companion Animal Capital Fund
NYS-CCS	New York State Office of Children and Family Services Empire State Child Care Share Pilot Program
NYS-CMAQ	New York State Department of Transportation Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program
NYS-CPCC	Certified Provider In-Community Clinic Services
NYS-CRP	New York State Department of Transportation Carbon Reduction Program
NYS-CSC	New York State Climate Smart Communities Program

NYS-DRI	New York State Downtown Revitalization Initiative
NYS-EPF	New York State EOffice of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation Environmental Protection Fund Program
NYS-FAE	New York State Food Access Expansion Grant Program
NYS-FAST	New York State Shovel-Ready Grant Program
NYS-GO	New York State Get Offline, Get Outside
NYS-HEAL	New York State Local Health Planning Initiatives Grant Program
NYS-HHAP	New York State Homeless Housing and Assistance Program
NYS-HOME	New York State Access to Home and RESTORE Programs
NYS-HSIP	New York State Highway Safety Improvement Program
NYS-LGE	New York State Local Government Efficiency Program
NYS-LWRP	New York State Local Waterfront Revitalization Program
NYS-MPR	New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Municipal Parks and Recreation Grant Program
NYS-MS	New York State Main Street Program
NYS-MWRR	New York State Municipal Waste Reduction and Recycling Program
NYS-SG	New York State Smart Growth Community Planning Grant
NYS-SO	New York State Street Outreach Funding

NYS-SWIMS	New York State Statewide Investment in More Swimming
NYS-TAP	New York State Department of Transportation Transportation Alternatives Program
NYS-WIIA	New York State Water Infrastructure Improvement Program
NYS-UCF	New York State Urban and Community Forestry Grants
NYS-WQIP	New York State Water Quality Improvement Project Program
NYS-YMH	New York State Youth Mental Health Corps
PLNYS-POF	Preservation League of New York State Preservation Opportunity Fund
OAHM	Older Adults Home Modification Grant Program
SS4A	Safe Streets for All
USDOT-EMSD	Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities
USDOT-TIFIA	United States Department of Transportation Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act

County Governance and Administration

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)
<p>Goal 4-A: Foster greater coordination between the county, municipalities, and local organizations to achieve common goals and address regional issues.</p>					
<p>Performance metric: Improve meeting schedules between departments and formalize tracking performance metrics, communications, and departmental needs with the Office of Fire and Emergency Management.</p>					
<p>4-A1</p> <p>P</p>	<p>Establish regular meeting schedules and communication channels between County, municipalities, and local organizations.</p>	<p>Steering Committee Staff Best practices/planning expertise</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All County Departments Municipalities Community Organizaitons 	<p>Short Term</p> <p>\$</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>4-A2</p>	<p>Continue to maintain adequate levels of services during emergencies and spearhead emergency planning and preparedness initiatives through the Office of Fire and Emergency Management.</p>	<p>Steering Committee Staff</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CC-F&EM 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>\$\$</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>Goal 4-B: Find ways to support municipalities in basic infrastructure improvements and services.</p>					
<p>Performance metric: Increase the number of systemic improvements / projects completed in collaboration with the County Public Works Dept..</p>					
<p>4-B1</p>	<p>Support municipalities in pursuing and executing grant-funded projects.</p>	<p>Staff</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CC-Planning Municipalities 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>\$\$</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>4-B2</p>	<p>Expand planning support to municipalities through formal agreements, grant support, and other shared services.</p>	<p>Staff Best practices/planning expertise Precedent county plan</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CC-Planning CC-LO Municipalities 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>\$\$</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NYS-LGE

County Governance and Administration

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)		
<p>Goal 4-C: Increase transparency, accessibility, and inclusivity of County governance and administration.</p>							
<p>Performance metric: Increase number of public forums, engagement with social media posts, and attendance at county informational events.</p>							
<p>4-C1</p> <p>P</p>	<p>Use public meetings and hearings to communicate local initiatives and projects (e.g., development projects). The County will establish an annual symposium to update the community about current and planned initiatives and projects with the intent to publicize and celebrate achievements and services across all departments, with the potential to include non-profit participation to improve collaborative efforts and shared successes.</p>	<p>Best practices/planning expertise Precedent county plan</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CC-PB • CC-PI 	<p>Short Term</p>	<p>\$</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>4-C2</p>	<p>A social media plan will be developed to include clear SMART goals for community engagement, a content calendar specifying key messages and posting frequency, and reviewing existing presence on social media platforms.</p>	<p>Steering committee Staff Best practices/planning expertise Precedent county plan</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-PI • All County Departments 	<p>Short Term</p>	<p>\$</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>4-C3</p>	<p>Establish a public engagement strategy to coordinate scheduling between County offices and to provide information to the community.</p>	<p>Steering committee Staff Best practices/planning expertise Precedent county plan</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-PI • All County Departments 	<p>Short Term</p>	<p>\$</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>4-C4</p>	<p>Proactively identify and engage underrepresented groups in all stages of County planning processes.</p>	<p>Focus groups Steering committee Public Input Staff Best practices/planning expertise Precedent county plan</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CC-PI 	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>\$</p>	<p>N/A</p>


County Governance and Administration

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)		
<p>Goal 4-D: Strengthen County governance and administration.</p>							
<p>Performance metric: Increase availability of information on County website.</p>							
4-D1	<p>Improve coordination between County Executive, legislators, and County offices.</p>	<p>Focus groups Steering committee Staff</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-EX • All County Departments • CC-LB 	Ongoing	\$	N/A
4-D2	<p>Enhance the content and availability of information on the County website.</p>	<p>Steering committee Staff</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-PI • All County Departments 	Ongoing	\$	N/A

Land Use & Infrastructure

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)
<p>Goal 5-A: Focus on strengthening downtowns and centers and balancing development and growth in areas with existing infrastructure with strategic greenfield development</p>					
<p>Performance metric: Increase the number of development projects occurring in areas with existing infrastructure to meet the housing and economic development needs of the county.</p>					
<p>5-A1</p> <p>P</p>	<p>Work in partnership with local municipalities to prioritize investment in existing city, town, and village centers.</p>	<p>Focus groups Steering committee Public input Staff</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CCIDA • STC • Municipalities 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>\$</p> <p>NYS - SG</p>
<p>5-A2</p> <p>P</p>	<p>Encourage municipalities to update zoning codes to allow for mixed-use and infill development, walkable urban centers, and suburban retrofit.</p>	<p>Focus groups Steering committee</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • Municipalities 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>\$</p> <p>NYS - SG</p>
5-A3	<p>Foster collaboration with municipalities and outside service providers to update and maintain infrastructure in existing city, town, and village centers.</p>	<p>Focus groups Steering committee Public input Staff</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CC-PW • CC-SD • Municipalities 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>\$</p> <p>N/A</p>
5-A4	<p>Incentivize new housing development in and around existing downtowns and centers where appropriate to enhance walkability and reduce sprawl.</p>	<p>Focus groups Steering committee Public input Staff Best practices/planning expertise</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCIDA • Municipalities • CC-PB 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>\$</p> <p>N/A</p>
5-A5	<p>Collaborate with partner organizations to identify areas for targeted new growth and development.</p>	<p>Focus groups Steering committee Staff</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CCIDA • STC • Municipalities 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>\$</p> <p>N/A</p>

Land Use and Infrastructure

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)		
5-A6	Support the efforts of the Chemung County Land Bank to achieve its mission statement to "acquire and return vacant, abandoned, and or tax delinquent properties within the City of Elmira and Chemung County to uses that support community revitalization, sustained economic development and improvement of the financial condition of the City and County."	Steering committee Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CC-LB • AH&D • Municipalities 	Ongoing	\$	N/A
Goal 5-B: Preserve existing open space and natural resources.							
Performance metric: Maintain or increase the acreage of existing valuable natural landscape, open space, and agricultural land preserved in the county.							
5-B1	Work with municipalities to review and update existing ordinances to encourage smart growth and preserve prime agricultural lands, natural resources, and other environmentally sensitive areas.	Focus groups Public input Staff Best practices/planning expertise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CC-EMC • Municipalities 	Ongoing	\$	• NYS-SG
5-B2	Develop a conservation plan to facilitate land acquisition and conservation easements to expand and manage conserved land resources.	Best practices/planning expertise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • NYSDEC • CC-EMC • Municipalities • NYS-AM 	Medium Term	\$\$	• NYS-SG
5-B3	Create educational programs for property owners and municipal officials on best practices in caring for and managing open space and natural resources.	Staff Best practices/planning expertise Precedent county plan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • NYSDEC • CC-EMC • Municipalities 	Short Term	\$	N/A
5-B4 	Explore the impact of development on open space, viewsheds, and scenic views and plan for their protection.	Steering committee Public input Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CC-PB • Municipalities 	Ongoing	N/A	N/A

Land Use and Infrastructure

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)
Goal 5-C: Maintain, enhance and strategically expand infrastructure to ensure all Chemung County residents have access to reliable and affordable services.					
Performance metric: Increase the percentage of households with access to essential utility services, improve and enhance the efficiency of existing services.					
5-C1	Coordinate with public and private service providers to identify sites suitable for future development.	Best practices/planning expertise Precedent county plan		• CC-SD • Service Providers	Ongoing \$\$ • NYS-CA
5-C2	Continue working with the Southern Tier Broadband Coalition and other partners to pursue grant funding and expand broadband access throughout the county.	Steering committee Staff		• STBC • CC-EMC	Ongoing \$\$\$ • NYS-CA
5-C3	Implement the recommendations of the Southern Tier Broadband Study.	Steering committee Staff		• STBC	Ongoing \$\$\$ • NYS-CA
5-C4 	Explore opportunities to combine services and improved coordination between the county and/or municipalities to limit redundancy and enhance efficiency.	Focus groups Steering committee Staff		• CC-SD • Municipalities • All County Departments	Ongoing N/A N/A
5-C5	Continue to budget for and implement upgrades to the county's wastewater systems.	Focus groups Steering committee Staff		• CC-SD	Ongoing \$\$\$\$ • NYS-WQIP
5-C6	Continue to budget for and implement upgrades to Chemung County's water systems.	Focus groups Steering committee Staff		• EWB	Ongoing \$\$\$\$ • NYS-WIIA
5-C7	Explore grant funding opportunities related to expanding clean energy systems in the county.	Steering committee Staff Best practices/planning expertise		• Municipalities	Ongoing N/A N/A
5-C8 	Establish a committee or task force to address proper siting and regulations around solar and battery storage.	Steering committee Staff Best practices/planning expertise		• CC-Planning	Short Term N/A N/A

Land Use and Infrastructure

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)		Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)
5-C9 Engage in the update of the New York State Energy Plan by providing feedback to advocate for County energy goals, and to be informed on state direction.	Steering committee Staff		• CC-Planning	Ongoing	N/A	N/A

Environment

Strategy		Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)	
Goal 6-A: Protect water quality and watersheds.							
Performance metric: Decrease pollutants observed/recorded in County waterbodies. Increase the number of municipal LWRPs in the County. Increase number of projects dedicated to stormwater management.							
6-A1	Continue to protect water resources including lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, and floodplains with appropriate regulations and programs.	Public input Staff Best practices/planning expertise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • NYSDEC • CC-SC • CCSWCD • CC-EMC • STC 	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
6-A2	Continue to promote the Chemung County Stormwater Coalition's stormwater pollution prevention educational campaign regarding proper handling and disposal of various household pollutants and completing other environmentally-friendly projects to help protect water resources.	Best practices/planning expertise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CC-SC • CCSWCD • CCWQSC • CC-EHS • CC-EMC 	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
6-A3	Encourage and support the county's municipalities located along the Chemung River to develop a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program ("LWRP").	Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CC-EMC • Municipalities 	Ongoing	\$	• NYS-LWRP
Goal 6-B: Protect trees and forests.							
Performance metric: Maintain or increase acreage of protected forest. Increase number of urban trees.							
6-B1	Continue to cooperate with the NYSDEC to continue to provide public access to state forests.	Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning 	Ongoing	N/A	N/A


Environment

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)		
6-B2 P	Increase urban planting.	Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CC-PW • CCSWCD • Municipalities 	Long Term	\$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NYS-CSC • NYS-MS • NYS-UCF
6-B3	Encourage municipalities to apply to become tree cities through the Arbor Day Foundation's "Tree Cities USA" program.	Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • Municipalities 	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
Goal 6-C: Protect natural habitats and biodiversity.							
Performance metric: Maintain or increase acreage of critical habitat and scenic viewsheds that are protected.							
6-C1	Continue to protect critical habitats and rare and endangered plant and animal species.	Public input Best practices/planning expertise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • NYSDEC • USFWS 	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
6-C2	Encourage development patterns that reduce habitat fragmentation.	Staff Best practices/planning expertise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CC-PB 	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
6-C3	Identify and preserve scenic viewsheds throughout the county, and partner with the county's municipalities to enhance protections for scenic views.	Steering committee Public input Staff Best practices/planning expertise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • Municipalities 	Ongoing	\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALPF
Goal 6-D: Identify and mitigate the impacts of invasive species.							
Performance metric: Decrease impact of invasive species on the county's natural resources.							
6-D1	Collaborate with natural resources agencies and groups to address predominant invasive species in the County.	Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CCSWCD • CCE 	Ongoing	N/A	N/A


Environment

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)		
<p>Goal 6-E: Meet the needs of the County's communities to promote inclusive access to and enhance existing resources</p>							
<p>Performance metric: Increase acreage of natural resources and open spaces which are preserved and protected. Increase wayfinding and mapping of the county's recreational outdoor amenities. Increase recreational amenities such as bicycle racks.</p>							
6-E1	Assess opportunities to preserve and protect open spaces and natural resources.	Steering committee Public input Staff Best practices/planning expertise		• CC-Planning • CC-CCE	Ongoing	N/A	• ALPF
6-E2 P	Continue to partner with NYS OPRHP, NYSDEC, and other entities to expand hiking opportunities, including trail network, funding, and more.	Best practices/planning expertise		• CC-Planning • CC-BG • NYS OPRHP • NYSDEC	Ongoing	\$\$\$\$	• NYS-EPF • NYS-TAP • NYS-CRP • NYS-ARC
6-E3	Identify opportunities to improve accessibility at county parks to ensure equitable access to the County's recreational resources.	Steering committee Public input Best practices/planning expertise		• CC-BG • CC-DPW • CC-Planning	Ongoing	\$\$	• LWCF • NYS-MPR • NYS-EPF
6-E4	Strengthen strategic partnerships with other entities to expand and advance recreation opportunities across the county.	Steering committee Best practices/planning expertise		• CC-YB • CC-A&TC • CC-Planning • Community Organizations	Ongoing	N/A	• LWCF
6-E5 P	Create a master plan to improve linkages between parks and open spaces and help prioritize multimodal connections.	Staff Best practices/planning expertise		• CC-Planning • CC-EMC	Short	\$\$	• LWCF • ARC • ESD-SP
6-E6	Work with the Elmira Chemung Transportation Council ("ECTC") and surrounding counties to create a "Twin Tiers Regional Trail Map" to be accessible via each county's website.	Staff		• CC-Planning • ECTC	Short	\$	N/A

Environment

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)		
6-E7	Create a county-wide wayfinding plan for parks, trails, and recreational amenities.	Staff		• CC-Planning • CC-COC	Short	\$	• LWCF • ESD-SP • ARC
6-E8	Improve safety and accessibility of existing bicycle paths, sidewalks, and trails and prioritize maintenance of existing assets.	Focus groups Steering committee Staff		• CC-Planning • ECTC • CC-PW	Ongoing	\$\$\$	• NYS-TAP • SS4A
6-E9	Increase bicycle racks at public recreation facilities.	Public input Best practices/planning expertise		• CC-Planning • CC-PW • ECTC	Ongoing	\$\$	• LWCF • NYS-MPR
6-E10 	Expand and enhance recreational opportunities to meet the needs of young people and an aging population.	Focus groups Steering committee Public input Staff Best practices/planning expertise		• CC-PW • CC-PH • CC-YB • CC-A<C	Ongoing	\$\$	• LWCF • NYS-MPR • NYS-EPF
6-E11	Utilize "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design" ("CPTED") strategies to enhance safety in recreational facilities.	Focus groups Public input Best practices/planning expertise		• CC-PW • CC-PH • CC-EHS • CC-SO	Ongoing	\$	• LWCF • NYS-EPF
6-E12	Identify and pursue funding opportunities at local, state, and federal levels as applicable to the County's recreation goals.	Best practices/planning expertise		• CC-Planning • CC-EHS	Ongoing	\$	• LWCF • NYS-EPF • ARC

Environment

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)
Goal 6-F: Mitigate the impacts of natural hazards and climate impacts.					
Performance metric: Update the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan. Publish a Countywide Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.					
6-F1 	Continue to implement the recommendations in the county's Hazard Mitigation Plan. Update the Hazard Mitigation Plan every 5 years.	Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CC-F&EM • CC-PW • CC-EMC • Municipalities 	Ongoing \$ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NYS-LWPR • NYS-CSC
6-F2	Create a Countywide Comprehensive Emergency Management (Evacuation) Plan.	Best practices/planning expertise Precedent county plan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-F&EM • CC-Planning 	Short \$\$ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NYS-LGE
Goal 6-G: Create more resilient infrastructure and guide the County to a sustainable future.					
Performance metric: N/A					
6-G1	Continue implementing the Climate Smart Communities ("CSC") program in accordance with Chemung County's Bronze CSC designation.	Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-EMC • CC-Planning 	Ongoing \$ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NYS-CSC
6-G2 	Identify opportunities to implement green infrastructure improvements at existing county-owned facilities.	Best Practices/Planning expertise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-PW • CC-EMC • CC-SD • CC-SC 	Ongoing \$ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NYS-WQIP
6-G3	Identify opportunities to make facilities upgrades to improve energy efficiency at county-owned buildings.	Steering Committee Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-EX • CC-BG 	Ongoing \$ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NYS-CSC


Agriculture

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)		
Goal 7-A: Protect and preserve Chemung County's prime agricultural land and promote sustainable land use practices.							
Performance metric: Increase the acreage of farmland which is protected by municipal zoning laws, conservation policies, and is within the County's agricultural district.							
7-A1	Collaborate with municipalities to strengthen agricultural zoning and conservation policies.	Focus groups Staff Best practices/planning expertise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CC-AFPB • Municipalities 	Ongoing	\$	ESD-SP
7-A2	Encourage enrollment in agricultural districts and educate landowners about agricultural assessments and tax relief programs.	Staff Best practices/planning expertise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CC-AFPB • Municipalities 	Ongoing	\$	N/A
7-A3	Implement the strategies in the AFPP.	Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CC-AFPB • CC-PB • Municipalities 	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
P							
Goal 7-B: Promote agricultural preservation programs such as land trusts.							
Performance metric: Increase the acreage of farmland protected by land trusts, conservation easements, and other agreements.							
7-B1	Encourage landowners to conserve farmland through land trusts, conservation easements, or Purchase of Development Rights ("PDR") agreements.	Best practices/planning expertise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CC-AFPB • NYSAM • CC-LO 	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
7-B2	Explore the feasibility of a county-owned agricultural land trust program which could be administered through a partnership between the Planning Department and the Chemung County Soil and Water Conservation District.	Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CC-AFPB • CCSWCD • Municipalities 	Short	N/A	N/A

Agriculture

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)	
Goal 7-C: Support the economic viability and resilience of the agricultural industry.						
Performance metric: Increase participation in existing technical assistance programs for farmers, and increase breadth of technical assistance offered. Increase the percentage of young people and new farmers operating farms in the County.						
7-C1	Provide technical assistance and support to help farmers access grant funding, new markets, and diversification tools.	Focus groups		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-AFPB • CCE • CCSWCD 	Medium	\$\$ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDBG • ARC
7-C2 P	Work with regional and state agencies to stabilize farm incomes and promote equitable access to government programs.	Focus groups		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-AFPB • NYS-AM 	Ongoing	N/A
7-C3	Facilitate land access and ownership opportunities for beginning and young farmers.	Focus groups Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-AFPB • CC-LB 	Ongoing	\$
Goal 7-D: Encourage environmental stewardship and the integration of agriculture into the county's sustainability goals.						
Performance metric: Implement clear, data-driven guidance for renewable energy projects in the County which balance the needs of agriculture with clean energy. Increase awareness and participation in sustainable farming practices in the County.						
7-D1 P	Promote sustainable practices and resource conservation on farms.	Focus groups Best practices/planning expertise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-AFPB • CCSWCD 	Ongoing	\$
7-D2	Support renewable energy projects that align with agricultural land preservation.	Focus groups Steering committee Staff Best practices/planning expertise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CC-AFPB • NYSAM • CC-PB 	Ongoing	\$
7-D3	Evaluate the impacts of climate change on local agricultural systems and plan for resilience.	Best practices/planning expertise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CC-AFPB • CCSWCD 	Short	\$\$ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NYS-SG • ESD-SP


Agriculture

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)		
Goal 7-E: Build community support for agriculture and expand education and workforce development.							
Performance metric: Increase number of educational and training programs specifically targeted towards agriculture. Increase agricultural education in classrooms. Establish a USDA-certified kitchen at the fairgrounds. Increase attendance at County Fair.							
7-E1	Expand agricultural education in schools and youth programs.	Focus groups		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-AFPB • CC-YB • CC-AS 	Ongoing	\$	N/A
7-E2	Highlight the value of agriculture through public engagement and awareness campaigns.	Focus groups Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-AFPB • CC-AS 	Ongoing	\$	N/A
7-E3 	Support training programs to grow the local farm workforce.	Focus groups Steering committee Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-AFPB • GST BOCES 	Ongoing	\$\$	• ARC
7-E4	Support the County Fair and explore the development of a USDA-certified kitchen at the fairgrounds.	Focus groups Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-AFPB • CC-AS 	Ongoing	\$\$\$	N/A

Cultural and Historic Resources

Strategy		Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)	
<p>Goal 8-A: Strengthen and pursue additional partnerships with local historic and cultural institutions and organizations.</p>							
<p>Performance metric: Increase partnerships between the county and local historic and cultural institutions.</p>							
8-A1	Foster greater coordination between the County and local historic preservation advocacy organizations.	Staff Best practices/planning expertise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCHS • CC-BG • CC-Planning 	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
8-A2	Continue to support local historic and cultural institutions (e.g., Chemung County Historical Society, Horseheads Historical Society, Big Flats Historical Society, John W. Jones Museum, Wings of Eagles Discovery Center, Tanglewood Nature Center, etc.).	Steering committee Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CO • CC-EX • CC-L 	Ongoing	\$\$\$	NYS-EPF
8-A3	Identify potential partners in the creation of a historic and cultural resources committee.	Steering committee		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CO • CC-EX 	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
8-A4	Consider establishing a volunteer County Historian position.	Steering committee		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-EX 	Short Term	N/A	N/A
<p>Goal 8-B: Preserve and protect properties of historic and cultural significance.</p>							
<p>Performance metric: Improve resources and increase funding streams for historic preservation projects in the county.</p>							
8-B1	Create educational materials and support property owners that wish to preserve and restore historic properties with tools including State and Federal tax credit programs.	Best practices/planning expertise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCHS • NYSOPRHP 	Short Term	\$	N/A

Cultural and Historic Resources

Strategy		Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)
8-B2	Pursue funding for critical improvements to the County Clerk Building at 210 Lake Street in Elmira.	Steering committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-EX • CC-BG 	Short	\$\$	N/A
8-B3	Establish a database of historic properties in need of rehabilitation and work to connect developers with rehabilitation opportunities and historic tax credits.	Steering committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CC-CC • CCHS 	Medium	\$	N/A
Goal 8-C: Promote existing cultural attractions, strengthen focus on historically underrepresented stories, and facilitate programming and events at cultural institutions.						
Performance metric: Increase informational and promotional materials related to arts and cultural programming. Increase participation / attendance metrics for existing arts and cultural programming. Increase educational materials and events focused on historically underrepresented communities and the county's local history.						
8-C1	Increase promotion of the County's status as the "Soaring Capital" of the United States.	Focus groups Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-COC • CCHS 	Short	\$\$	• ESD-RCF
8-C2	Prioritize the historic significance of the Chemung River in County planning projects.	Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning 	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
8-C3	Continue to support the Chemung County Fair as an important cultural event in the region.	Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-AS • CC-LCC • CC-EX 	Ongoing	\$\$	N/A
8-C4	Explore opportunities to develop cultural programming and resources specifically for young people.	Focus groups Steering committee Public input Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCHS • CC-YB 	Short Term	N/A	N/A
8-C5 	Support and create opportunities for arts and cultural programming to encourage community gathering and sharing of local pride.	Steering committee Public input Staff Best practices/planning expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CO 	Ongoing	N/A	N/A



Cultural and Historic Resources

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)		Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)
8-C6 Explore the creation of a cultural district that celebrates the County's existing historic and cultural resources and expands recognition of historic assets.	Steering committee Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CCHS • NYSOPRHP • CC-PB 	Short Term	N/A	N/A
8-C7 Continue to document and share the history of historically underrepresented communities in the County.	Best practices/planning expertise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCHS • CO 	Ongoing	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESD-RCF
8-C8 Encourage teaching of local history in local school districts throughout the County and promote inclusion of local history into the NYS educational curriculum.	Best practices/planning expertise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCHS 	Ongoing	N/A	N/A

Economy and Tourism

Strategy		Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)	
Goal 9-A: Work with local businesses and institutions to broaden workforce training in multiple sectors of the economy, and foster opportunities for local entrepreneurship.							
Performance metric: Increase number of available training, mentorship and networking opportunities for the County's youth and entrepreneurs. Increase participation in existing training, mentorship, and networking opportunities for the County's youth and entrepreneurs.							
9-A1 P	Provide incentives and support for local businesses and organizations to broaden prospective career paths for young adults through educational opportunities and career development support. Continue to promote the County Youth Bureau's Learn and Earn Program and other offerings through the Youth Bureau.	Focus groups Steering committee Public input Staff		• CC-YB • GST BOCES • CSSWFNY	Ongoing	\$\$	N/A
9-A2	Encourage entrepreneurship by providing accessible information about local training, investment, and technical assistance opportunities.	Focus groups Precedent county plan		• CSSWFNY	Ongoing	\$	N/A
9-A3	Consider increased partnership opportunities with local organizations supporting the County's entrepreneurial community, such as IncubatorWorks in Elmira, and explore additional resources the County can provide to support entrepreneurs.	Staff Best practices/planning expertise Precedent county plan		• CO • COC • CC-Planning	Short Term	N/A	N/A
9-A4 P	Foster secondary educational attainment to broaden residents' career prospects and partner with local secondary education institutions, including Elmira College and Corning Community College ("SUNY CCC"), to continue offering a broad array of educational programs.	Staff		• CC-YB	Long Term	\$\$\$	N/A
9-A5	Explore participating in existing programs to coordinate and manage services for individuals with prior criminal convictions to re-enter the workforce in appropriate industries.	Focus groups Public input		• CC-SO	Short Term	N/A	N/A

Economy and Tourism

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)	
Goal 9-B: Attract a talented workforce by taking a comprehensive approach to economic development and considering the needs of today's workers.						
Performance metric: Increased services offered and utilization of existing services to support workers, including transportation/transit, childcare, workforce training, affordable and accessible housing, remote job opportunities, and pathways for New Americans and immigrants to secure employment.						
9-B1 	Bridge workforce accessibility gaps in different facets of life including transportation / transit services, childcare services, workforce training, enhancing digital skills, fostering employer engagement, and workforce housing.	Focus groups Steering committee Staff Best practices/planning expertise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECTC • CC-SS • CCCC • CSSWFNY 	Long Term \$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARC • ESD-SP
9-B2	Encourage opportunities for flexible and remote jobs by providing training opportunities for remote jobs, facilitating access to shared / community workspaces, and improving the necessary infrastructure (e.g. broadband) needed for remote workers to thrive.	Focus groups		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSSWFNY • STEG • CC-IDA 	Medium Term \$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NYS-CA
9-B3	Explore assisting municipalities in establishing a coalition or community group that focuses on addressing workforce barriers, such as job training, childcare, and transportation.	Focus groups Steering committee Staff Best practices/planning expertise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCCCC • CSSWFNY • Municipalities 	Short Term N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
9-B4	Continue to provide access to guaranteed child-care for low-income residents through the Chemung County Child Care Assistance Program. Explore opportunities to expand child-care programs for County workers.	Focus groups Best practices/planning expertise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCCCC • NYS-OCFS • CC-SS 	Ongoing \$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NYS-CCS
9-B5 	Improve access to employment opportunities through transportation improvements, including an improved transit system, comprehensive pedestrian and multimodal access to employment centers, and continued maintenance of roadways (also reference Chapter 10).	Focus groups Steering committee Public input Staff Best practices/planning expertise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • ECTC • NYSDOT • CC-TB 	Medium Term \$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARC • ESD-SP • SS4A • NYS-CSC • NYS-CRP

Economy and Tourism

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)		
9-B6	Create a streamlined pathway for new Americans and immigrants to join the County's workforce.	Staff		• CSSWFNY	Medium Term	\$\$\$	• ARC • ESD-SP
Goal 9-C: Prioritize retention and expansion of existing small businesses and workforce.							
Performance metric: Increased levels of retention of existing businesses, increase in new businesses starting in the county, and increase in funding and programming to support new and existing small businesses.							
9-C1	Continue to support and expand platforms for small local businesses to network and create a strong business community, such as the Small Business Development Center (based in Binghamton).	Focus groups Best practices/planning expertise		• CCIDA • STEG	Ongoing	\$\$	• ARC
9-C2	Continue to support municipalities that offer low-interest financing options (e.g. City of Elmira and Village of Horseheads) for the expansion of commercial and industrial businesses and encourage other municipalities in the County to consider offering similar programs.	Staff		• STEG • Municipalities	Ongoing	\$	• CDBG
9-C3	Coordinate with municipalities to offer grant funding opportunities for small businesses to open brick-and-mortar locations and receive mentorship and support in financing and storefront activation.	Staff		• STEG • Municipalities	Ongoing	\$\$\$	• CDBG
9-C4	In partnership with municipalities, examine opportunities to streamline permitting processes (e.g. site plan review) to help businesses operate more efficiently.	Focus groups Staff Best practices/planning expertise		• STEG • Municipalities	Medium Term	N/A	N/A
9-C5	Explore programs and partnerships (e.g. Elmira Downtown Development) to help small businesses access brick-and-mortar locations in currently underutilized buildings.	Staff Best practices/planning expertise		• STEG • EDD	Short Term	N/A	N/A

Economy and Tourism

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)		
9-C6	Establish a regular communication schedule with existing businesses in Chemung County to ensure retention and aid expansion.	Staff Best practices/planning expertise		• STEG • CC-COC	Short Term	\$	N/A
Goal 9-D: Encourage emerging industries to establish in Chemung County.							
Performance metric: Increase in emerging industries doing business in the county.							
9-D1 P	Continue to collaborate with STEG and CCIDA to enact the Strategies and Actions highlighted in the Chemung County Strategic Economic Development Plan (2023).	Steering committee		• CCIDA • STEG	Ongoing	\$	N/A
9-D2	Capitalize on federal and state funding opportunities for emerging industries, such as funding through NYS Empire State Development.	Focus groups Best practices/planning expertise		• CCIDA • STEG • NYS ESD	Long Term	\$\$\$\$	• ESD-RCF
9-D3	Continue to support municipalities in establishing clear guidelines for local cannabis growers, sellers, and manufacturers of cannabis-based products to legally operate in the County.	Focus groups Steering committee Staff		• CC-Planning • Municipalities	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
9-D4	Highlight the advantages of emerging industries locating in Chemung County through a cohesive marketing effort in coordination with the Chemung County IDA and STEG.	Steering committee Staff		• CCIDA • STEG	Short Term	\$\$	• ESD-RCF
9-D5 P	Offer support for new industries in pursuing state incentives for establishing in the county, such as START-UP NY, Excelsior Job Programs, Empire State Development, NYSERDA funding, and other programs.	Focus groups		• CCIDA • STEG • NYS ESD • NYSERDA	Medium Term	\$\$\$	• START-UP NY • Excelsior Job Programs • ESD-RCF • NYS-FAST
9-D6	Create a cohesive branding strategy highlighting the County's local amenities and recreational opportunities to potential employers.	Staff		• CCIDA • STEG • CC-COC	Short Term	\$\$	• ESD-RCF

Economy and Tourism

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)		
Goal 9-E: Collaborate with local and regional stakeholders to foster the conditions needed for economic growth.							
Performance metric: Increase in employment rates and investment in new industries, businesses, and economic development initiatives.							
9-E1	Foster collaboration between local stakeholder groups and the County to pursue economic development initiatives.	Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCIDA • STEG • CC-COC • CO 	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
9-E2	Continue to expand open channels of communication between the County and the public on the most pressing economic development needs.	Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-EXC • CC-PI 	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
9-E3	Expand and strengthen coordination efforts between the county, Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board (STC), and other regional partners to bring new economic development opportunities to the County.	Focus groups Steering committee Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCIDA • STEG • STC 	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
9-E4	Partner with municipal, nonprofit, and local organizations that are dedicated to helping local community members access jobs.	Focus groups		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCIDA • STEG • CC-COC • CSSWFNY • GST BOCES • Municipalities 	Ongoing	N/A	N/A

Economy and Tourism

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)		
9-E5	Collaborate with the Chemung County Youth Bureau, BOCES, and other community organizations to help young people find employment opportunities.	Focus groups Steering committee Staff		• CC-YB • GST BOCES • CSSWFNY	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
Goal 9-F: Prioritize investment in Chemung County's tourism industry and partner with local organizations promoting tourism.							
Performance metric: Increase in visitors and tourism dollars.							
9-F1	Identify opportunities to strengthen the hospitality industry in the county, especially in its downtown areas.	Public input		• CC-COC	Ongoing	\$\$	• NYS-DRI • NYS-MS
9-F2	Advertise the tourism and recreation opportunities in the county to both NYS and out-of-state visitors.	Focus groups Steering committee		• CC-COC	Ongoing	\$\$	• ESD-RCF
9-F3 	Invest in the county's recreational assets to draw in tourists.	Focus groups Steering committee		• CC-P&R	Ongoing	\$\$\$\$	• ARC • NYS-EPFI • NYS-DRI • NYS-LWRP
9-F4	Identify a dedicated point of contact for tourism questions and promotional/outreach efforts.	Public input		• CC-EX	Short Term	N/A	N/A
9-F5	Promote the County's arts, cultural, and historic resources and tourism opportunities through a comprehensive, unified database or webpage cataloging the resources.	Steering committee		• CC-COC	Short Term	\$	• ESD-RCF • NYS-LGE
9-F6	Develop tools to make new tourism branding in the County more accessible to tourism partners throughout the region and create clear guidelines to ensure correct use of updated branding.	Staff		• CC-COC	Short Term	\$	• ESD-RCF


Transportation

Strategy		Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)
Goal 10-A: Prioritize transportation choice and the expansion of multimodal transportation infrastructure.						
Performance metric: Increase in amount of overall sidewalk and amount of sidewalk in good repair, expansion of bicycle and trail facilities and network, and increase in transportation options for seniors.						
10-A1	Upgrade/replace missing sidewalks and those in disrepair. Prioritize accessibility and connectivity, especially in city, town, and village centers.	Focus groups Steering committee Public input Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CC-PW • ECTC • NYSDOT 	Long Term	\$\$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NYS-CSC • NYS-CMAQ • CSDBG
10-A2 P	Expand the bicycle and trail network throughout Chemung County, and make transportation infrastructure safer and more efficient for cyclists, scooters, and electric bicycles.	Focus groups Steering committee Public input Staff Best practices/planning expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CC-PW • ECTC • CC-TB • NYSDOT 	Long Term	\$\$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NYSC-CSC • NYS-TAP • NYS-CMAQ • NYS-CRF
10-A3 P	Identify opportunities to implement Complete Streets elements on roadways with opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian use.	Best practices/planning expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-Planning • CC-PW • ECTC • NYSDOT 	Short Term	\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NYS-CSC
10-A4	Create transportation options that meet the specific needs of seniors.	Focus groups Steering committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-PW • ECTC • CC-TB • CC-A&LTC • CTRAN • NYSDOT 	Medium Term	\$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USDOT-EMSD
Goal 10-B: Continue to work to improve and expand the county's transit services for all users.						
Performance metric: Improved transit facilities and increased local and regional transit options.						
10-B1	Consider increasing/expanding opportunities to connect to other transit systems throughout the region (e.g. nearby cities such as Syracuse, Rochester, and Binghamton).	Public input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-TB • ECTC • CTRAN 	Short Term	\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A


Transportation

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)		
10-B2	Explore opportunities to expand transit services locally and create express routes for popular destinations.	Public input Best practices/planning expertise		• CC-TB • ECTC • CTRAN	Short Term	N/A	N/A
10-B3	Inventory existing bus shelter locations and consider adding additional bus shelters in areas that are lacking.	Public input Best practices/planning expertise		• ECTC • CTRAN	Short Term	\$	N/A
Goal 10-C: Continue to enact the goals and recommendations of transportation planning documents published by ECTC and other county/regional planning authorities.							
Performance metric: N/A							
10-C1	Continue to update comprehensive planning documents and implement the recommendations of those documents, including the Long Range Transportation Plan (“LRTP”) and Bicycle Pedestrian Trail 2035 Plan.	Staff		• CC-Planning • CC-PW • ECTC • NYSDOT	Ongoing	\$\$	• USDOT-TIFIA • NYS-TAP
Goal 10-D: Continue to improve safety for users of all modes of transportation.							
Performance metric: Reduced crash rates and increased implementation of roadway safety measures.							
10-D1	Focus on safe transportation options and educational programs for children.	Public input		• CC-PW • ECTC • CC-YB	Ongoing	\$\$	• SS4A
10-D2	Implement safety measures on major roadways and in high-collision areas.	Focus groups Steering committee Public input Staff Best practices/planning expertise		• CC-PW • ECTC • CC-SO • NYSDOT	Medium Term	\$\$\$	• SS4A • USDOT-TIFIA



Transportation

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)		Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)
10-D3  Implement safety measures to reduce vehicular safety issues, especially in high collision areas.	Focus groups Steering committee Public input Staff Best practices/planning expertise		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-PW • ECTC • CC-SO • NYSDOT 	Medium Term	\$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SS4A • USDOT-TIFIA
Goal 10-E: Identify opportunities to expand rail and air transportation for freight and passengers.						
Performance metric: Increased availability of rail and air transportation options.						
10-E1 Identify opportunities to improve navigability surrounding the airport.	Public input		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-PW • ECTC • ECRA 	Medium Term	\$\$	N/A


Housing

Strategy		Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)
Goal 11-A: Provide a variety of housing choices for different household types, income levels, ages, and abilities.						
Performance metric: Increased investment in affordable housing and development, and increased availability of a variety of housing types to meet need/demand.						
11-A1	Consider implementation of a county-wide incentive program to assist low and moderate income residents avoid homelessness.	Focus groups Public input Best practices/planning expertise	• CC-SS • CC-A<C	Short Term	N/A	N/A
11-A2	Explore implementing assistance programs for young people entering the housing market.	Focus groups Public input	• AH&D • CCCS	Short Term	N/A	N/A
11-A3	Provide information and resources about federal, state, and local homeowner assistance programs. Aid municipalities in pursuing federal and state funding and establishing local homeowner assistance programs.	Staff Best practices/planning expertise	• CC-A<C • CCCS • Municipalities	Ongoing	\$	N/A
11-A4	Continue to support the City of Elmira's First Time Homebuyers Assistance Program and offer resources to expand the program to other municipalities in the county.	Best practices/planning expertise	• CCCS • CC-Planning • Municipalities	Medium Term	\$\$\$	N/A
11-A5	Encourage municipalities to introduce requirements for new housing developments to include a minimum percentage of affordable housing, or to allow property tax abatement for developers who allocate a minimum percentage of units to affordable housing.	Best practices/planning expertise	• CC-Planning • CCPB • Municipalities	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
11-A6 	Encourage municipalities and developers to include multi-family and missing middle housing options (e.g. condominiums, townhouses, and apartments) to increase housing affordability and housing choice, in the context of the municipalities' unique character.	Focus groups Best practices/planning expertise	• CC-Planning • CCPB • Municipalities	Ongoing	N/A	N/A

Housing

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)		
11-A7	Establish guidance for municipalities to incorporate accessory dwelling units (“ADUs”) into local codes, which will serve as an affordable housing option for many individuals.	Focus groups Best practices/planning expertise		• CC-Planning • CCPB • Municipalities	Short Term	\$	N/A
11-A8	Coordinate with municipalities to promote inclusionary and incentive zoning practices that encourage a diversity of housing choices beyond single-family housing, encourage infill housing development, and promote greater affordability.	Focus groups Best practices/planning expertise		• CC-Planning • Municipalities	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
11-A9 	Continue to pursue the development of diverse housing options as identified in the 2023 Chemung County and City of Elmira Housing Market Study.	Staff		• CC-Planning • Municipalities • CC-LB • AH&D • NYSHCR	Ongoing	\$\$\$\$	• CDBG • NYS-ADU
11-A10	Identify opportunities to expand and construct new senior housing to serve the county’s aging population.	Focus groups Steering committee Best practices/planning expertise		• CC-Planning • Municipalities • CC-A<C	Short Term	\$	• NYS-HHAP
Goal 11-B: Support a compassionate, comprehensive, and far-reaching approach to addressing homelessness in Chemung County.							
Performance metric: Decreased rates of homelessness and increased programming and support for those seeking housing.							
11-B1	Support municipalities in expanding low income housing options.	Focus groups Steering committee Best practices/planning expertise		• CC-Planning • Municipalities	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
11-B2 	Facilitate the development of supportive housing projects through grant support and partnership.	Focus groups Best practices/planning expertise		• CC-SS • AH&D • NYSHCR	Long Term	\$	• NYS-HHAP

Housing

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)		
11-B3	Coordinate with local agencies and employers to develop transitional housing linked to job training and employment services. Ensure robust job training and employment services are available for unhoused individuals seeking employment.	Focus groups Public input		• CC-SS • CSSWFNY • AH&D • ACS • AIM	Long Term	\$\$\$\$	• ARC • NYS-HHAP
11-B4	Continue to support the activities and recommendations of the Homeless Housing Task Force.	Focus groups		• CC-SS • CCCS	Ongoing	\$	N/A
Goal 11-C: Work with partners to address the county's aging housing stock and associated environmental and human health risks associated with aging infrastructure.							
Performance metric: Increased investment in housing rehabilitation, and increased funding for critical home repairs.							
11-C1	Continue working with public entities such as the Land Bank and organizations to address the County's critical repairs program and resources for homeownership.	Focus groups Public input		• CC-Planning • CC-LB • AH&D	Ongoing	\$\$\$	• NYS-HOME • CDBG
11-C2 	Pursue grant funding to provide support for owners of older homes in critical need of repairs.	Public input		• CC-EHS	Ongoing	\$\$\$	• NYS-HOME
11-C3	Develop incentives for homeowners and property owners to make on-going improvements to their homes, such as through tax abatements and a homeowners façade improvement assistance program.	Best practices/planning expertise Precedent county plan		• Municipalities	Medium Term	\$\$\$	N/A
11-C4	Encourage adaptive reuse and repairs of historic properties, particularly opportunities to convert single-family homes into multi-family buildings.	Best practices/planning expertise		• CC-Planning • AH&D	Ongoing	\$	• NYS-ADU
11-C5	Continue to identify historic properties and neighborhoods that may be eligible for state and national register listing.	Best practices/planning expertise		• NYSOPRHP • CCHS	Ongoing	\$	N/A

Community Health

Strategy		Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)
Goal 12-A: Address the health needs of an aging population to ensure Chemung County remains a desirable and accessible place to live throughout one's life.						
Performance metric: Increased funding and support for County departments and programs that improve the health of seniors.						
12-A1	Continue to pursue state, federal, and other funding to support the Chemung County Department of the Aging and Long-Term Care.	Focus groups Steering committee	• CC-PH • CC-A<C	Ongoing	\$	N/A
12-A2 P	Update the Chemung County Age-Friendly Community Action Plan, which was last updated in 2015.	Best practices/planning expertise	• CC-PH • CC-A<C	Short Term	\$\$	• NYS-AFPG
12-A3	Expand and promote at-home care for seniors.	Focus groups Steering committee	• CC-PH • CC-A<C	Medium Term	\$\$\$	N/A
12-A4	Expand and promote access to home and facility retrofit programs and funding to improve residential accessibility for an aging population.	Focus groups Steering committee Best practices/planning expertise	• CC-PH • CC-A<C • AH&D • CC-Planning	Medium Term	\$\$\$	• NYS-HOME • OAHM
Goal 12-B: Address the health needs of families with children to ensure Chemung County remains a desirable place to raise families and support youth.						
Performance metric: Increased funding and support for County departments and programming that improve the health of youth.						
12-B1 P	Invest in youth activities and enrichment.	Focus groups Steering committee Public input	• CC-PH • CC-EHS • CC-YB	Ongoing	\$\$	• NYS-GO
12-B2	Continue to work with community partners including the Southern Tier Connect Family Resource Network and those expanding their mission to achieve these goals.	Steering committee	• CC-PH • CC-YB • CO	Ongoing	N/A	N/A

Community Health

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)		
12-B3	Create targeted programs to address youth mental health concerns in the county.	Focus groups Public input		• CC-PH • CC-MH • CC-SS • CC-YB	Medium Term	\$\$\$	• NYS-YMH
Goal 12-C: Continue to promote healthy habits to improve overall health outcomes across the population.							
Performance metric: Increased health-related programming and educational campaigns.							
12-C1	Promote programs that improve access to healthy food.	Focus groups Public input Staff Best practices/planning expertise		• CC-PH • CCE • CC-AS	Short Term	\$	• NYS-FAE
12-C2	Develop additional parks, recreational facilities, and other areas that support healthy habits.	Staff Best practices/planning expertise		• CC-PH • CC-YB • Municipalities • CC-BG	Long Term	\$\$\$\$	• LWCF • NYS-MPR • NYS-SWIMS • NYS-EPF
12-C3	Expand the County Public Health Department's outreach to the community at events such as fairs, festivals, and other local programming.	Staff		• CC-PH • CC-AS	Short Term	\$	N/A
12-C4	Create educational campaigns around radon and lead, including potential sources, identification, and mitigation measures.	Steering committee Staff		• CC-EHS • CC-PH • CC-PI	Short Term	\$	N/A
Goal 12-D: Ensure all of Chemung County's residents have accessible, high-quality physical and mental healthcare available locally.							
Performance metric: Increased access to healthcare for residents and adequate staffing of healthcare providers.							
12-D1	Expand local services and health clinics, screenings and vaccinations, and other preventative care.	Staff		• CC-PH	Medium Term	\$\$\$	• NYS-HEAL

Community Health

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)
12-D2 P Encourage health care providers to relocate to or stay in Chemung County by making Chemung County a desirable place to live and work and by considering incentive programs to attract health care workers.	Steering committee Staff	• CC-PH	Long Term	\$\$\$	• ARC • NYS-MS • NYS-DRI
12-D3 Work with the Veteran's Affairs (VA) to expand services in Chemung County.	Staff	• VA	Long Term	N/A	N/A
Goal 12-E: Address and seek to improve issues of social isolation for residents.					
Performance metric: Increased programming and access to community centers and gathering spaces.					
12-E1 Support, promote, and expand the Chemung County Department of Aging and Long Term Care "Happy to Chat Bench" program.	Steering committee Staff	• CC-A<C • CC-MH • CC-SS	Ongoing	\$	N/A
12-E2 Consider supporting and implementing programs that help unite youth and elder populations.	Steering committee Staff	• CC-A<C • CC-MH • CC-SS • CC-YB	Short Term	N/A	N/A
12-E3 Support the Chemung County Humane Society and SPCA's efforts to help residents care for their pets. Coordinate with local stakeholders on a plan for a County housing shelter for unhoused individuals seeking housing support that allows pets.	Public input	• CC-SS	Medium Term	\$\$\$	• NYS-CAC
12-E4 P Promote improved access to community centers and gathering spaces.	Steering committee Staff	• CC-A<C • CC-SS • CC-YB • Municipalities	Short Term	\$\$\$	• NYS-MPR

Community Health

Strategy		Strategy Source(s)	Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)
Goal 12-F: Provide safe and accessible public facilities and services in city, town, and village centers.						
Performance metric: Increased access to safe and accessible public facilities, and decreased litter in public spaces.						
12-F1	Increase access to public restrooms in parks, public buildings, and other gathering places.	Public input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-EHS • CC-PW • CC-BG 	Medium Term	\$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NYS-MPR
12-F2	Decrease litter by providing and maintaining adequate trash/recycling receptacles in County spaces, especially the County's parks and open spaces.	Public input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-PW • CC-BG • CC-SW 	Short Term	\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NYS-MWRR
Goal 12-G: Collaborate with local and regional partners to address mental health and substance abuse and the impacts on community well-being.						
Performance metric: Reduce drug-related fatalities and injuries and rates of substance abuse.						
12-G1	Reduce drug-related fatalities and injuries by providing emergency resources, training, and safe disposal for needles and other biohazards.	Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-PH • CC-EHS • CC-F&EM • CC-SO • CC-MH • CC-SS • CCCS 	Short Term	\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NYS-SO • NYS-CPCC
12-G2	Increase the Mental Hygiene Department's program and collaborative efforts to address issues such as substance abuse.	Public input Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-PH • CC-MH • CC-SS 	Short Term	\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NYS-SO • NYS-CPCC

Community Health

Strategy	Strategy Source(s)		Responsibility	Priority/Time Frame	Cost	Potential Funding Source (s)
12-G3 Support and expand county-wide crisis services and support Chemung County's Department of Social Services and Department of Mental Hygiene in promoting and expanding their various community services.	Public input		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-PH • CC-F&EM • CC-SO • CC-MH • CC-SS 	Short Term	\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NYS-CPCC
12-G4 Collaborate with the Alcohol & Substance Abuse Sub-Committee to create educational programs about the signs of substance use and available resources.	Best practices/planning expertise Precedent county plan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC-PH • CC-EHS • CC-MH • CC-SS 	Short Term	\$	N/A



THE
**CHEMUNG
COUNTY**
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Appendices

**JOIN US IN
MOVING
CHEMUNG
COUNTY
FORWARD.**

Together, we
can create
a brighter
future for our
community.

