

# INTRODUCTION

The Chenango County 2050 Vision Plan is our shared, comprehensive vision to guide the county's growth over the next 30 years. As a community-driven plan, this process was guided by the residents of Chenango County. It seeks to address the inequities of the past and unite the county around a shared set of goals for our future.

The Vision Plan is a living document that integrates community input and best practices into a framework that will guide our county's decision-making and investment in both the near- and long term. This Vision Plan addresses topics that can better reflect and advance our community values and aspirations around topics like community health and well-being, innovative infrastructure, economic opportunity and sustainability.

## Focus Areas

### COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLBEING

Enhancing community health and wellbeing in Chenango County requires a holistic approach, including expanding community services, increasing housing diversity, improving childcare options, and establishing additional support centers. These initiatives cater to diverse resident needs, foster a supportive community, and contribute to economic growth and stability.



### ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Economic opportunities in Chenango County rely on diversifying employment, fostering workforce development, and maximizing educational resources while leveraging the dynamic tourism sector. Broadening job options attracts a skilled workforce, fueling growth. Investing in workforce programs ensures residents have needed skills for emerging sectors.



### INNOVATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

To foster growth in Chenango County, innovative infrastructure upgrades, especially in transportation and broadband, are crucial. Better transportation enhances accessibility and stimulates economic development by facilitating the movement of goods and people.



### SUSTAINABLE LIVING & RURAL ENVIRONMENT

Building a resilient community involves prioritizing sustainability, addressing climate change, and embracing renewable energy. Implementing sustainable practices in infrastructure, agriculture, and resource management mitigates environmental impacts and safeguards natural resources.



# HARNESS THE POTENTIAL OF CHENANGO COUNTY

Discover the tranquility and potential of the 2050 Vision Plan



## STEERING COMMITTEE

The 2050 Vision Plan would not have been possible without the generosity of the many individuals who gave their time, expertise, and resources. Chenango County gratefully acknowledges the support of the following contributors.

- ROBERT DAVIS | Town of Guilford Planning Board
- MICHAEL FLANAGAN | LaBella Associates/City of Norwich
- TED GUINN | Town of Norwich Planning Board
- KAROL KUCINSKI | City of Norwich
- ZACHARY MESECK | Supervisor, Town of Preston
- VICTORIA MITCHELL | United Way Mid Rural New York
- PAUL ROMAHN | Town of Oxford Planning Board
- DIANE SCALZO | Supervisor, Town of Columbus
- ERIK SCRIVENER | City of Norwich
- GEORGE SENECK | Town of Guilford Planning Board
- SALVATORE TESTANI | Commerce Chenango
- PAUL THOMSEN | Town of New Berlin

## CHENANGO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

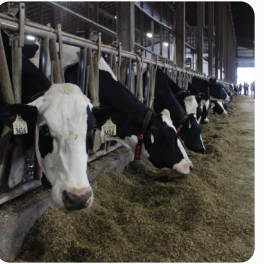
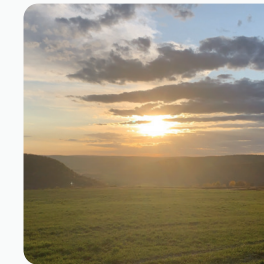
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## Snapshot

- **The County continues a path of steady recovery following the 2020 pandemic.** Since 2020 approximately half of the county's industries recouped some or all of jobs they lost during the pandemic. Manufacturing and Accommodation and Food Services have added the most jobs in the post-pandemic period, while other sectors have sustained further job loss since the initial pandemic shock.
- **Despite positive trends in some of the county's most specialized industries, job losses exceeded job growth between 2018-2023.** Jobs were down -2.8% during these five years. The County fared better than the Southern Tier, which lost -5.0% of its employment base over 2018-2023.
- **Manufacturing industries propelled the county's Gross Regional Product (GRP) forward in the last five years.** From 2018-2022, Chenango County saw steady GRP growth. From 2021-2022, GRP grew by about 30%.
- **Production occupations account for the largest share of Chenango County's workforce.** This is correlated to the county's concentration of Manufacturing industries. 15% of Chenango County's jobs are in Production Occupations, compared to only 7% in the Southern Tier overall.
- **Chenango County is a net exporter of workers, meaning more people commute out of Chenango for work than in.** Around 60% of Chenango County's residents work in other counties like Broome, Onondaga, and Otsego.

## CHENANGO Today

Chenango County is a rural county located in the approximate center of New York State, and is one of eight counties in the Southern Tier region. From Norwich, the county's seat and geographic center, it lies approximately 112 miles west of Albany, 40 miles north of Binghamton, and 60 miles southeast of Syracuse.

Planning for the future requires a clear understanding of current socio-economic conditions, past trends, and future projections. This section provides a snapshot of where the County is today.

### Key Findings

With a population of approximately 46,000 residents, the county boasts a blend of rural and small-town communities. The population demographics reflect a mix of age groups, with a slightly older median age compared to the national average. Housing demographics indicate a predominantly owner-occupied housing market, with a significant portion of homes being single-family dwellings. Additionally, there is a growing trend of older adults aging in place, influencing housing preferences and demand for senior services. Key sectors of employment include agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare, and education, though the county faces challenges in attracting and retaining a skilled workforce.



## CHENANGO Tomorrow

The vision plan framework organizes the Chenango County 2050 Vision Plan recommendations and establishes a roadmap for how Chenango County will evolve over the next thirty years.

Rooted in insights and ideas gathered from the community, this framework lays the foundation for future progress. Each component of the framework is detailed below, with further recommendations provided in subsequent sections.

### Goal

A general statement of a future condition towards which actions are aimed addressing a particular area or issue facing the community that impacts the vision. Goals should not dramatically change over time but rather be consistent throughout the planning horizon.



## Vision Statement

*Our 2050 Vision shows us a County to be proud of -- a place of diverse opportunities in a setting that preserves our cherished rural quality of life. We see a healthy, well-educated, involved, and informed citizenry participating fully in all aspects of community life. We will strive to become a county known for its...*

### COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLBEING

*We see a network of human services that supports those who cannot care for themselves while engendering self-sufficiency and greater productivity among those who can.*



### INNOVATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

*We see an advanced infrastructure system that ties the transportation and broadband network together for enhanced physical and digital connectivity within the County.*



### ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

*We see a diverse economy, with business and industry in a true partnership with government and the educational system to provide challenging lifelong opportunities for work and learning.*



### SUSTAINABLE LIVING & RURAL ENVIRONMENT

*We see a County that has grown and developed in a way that promotes sustainability and resiliency in a manner that preserves our natural environment for the enjoyment of future generations.*



## IMPLEMENTATION Strategy

### BROADBAND ACCESS & EXPANSION

Broadband is defined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as high-speed internet access that provides significantly faster speeds than dial-up connections, using digital transmission technologies to facilitate quick data transfer. This technological infrastructure is crucial because it supports economic development by enabling businesses to operate efficiently, facilitates education through access to online learning, enables residents to reliably work remotely, and improves healthcare delivery through telehealth services.



### CHENANGO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUCCESSES

Chenango County has leveraged strategic partnerships and innovative funding sources to drive local economic development, supporting job creation, industrial growth, and quality of life enhancements. Success stories include the expansions of Chobani, Golden Artist Colors, and Raymond Corporation, along with significant investments in housing.



### HOUSING DIVERSITY & NYS PRO-HOUSING COMMUNITY PROGRAM

Expanding housing diversity in Chenango County is essential to meet the evolving needs of residents. A mix of affordable rentals, single-family homes, and accessible senior housing attracts a broader workforce, supports aging residents, and strengthens community continuity.



### HOMELESSNESS

Addressing homelessness is critical for the health, safety, and resilience of Chenango County. Homelessness affects individuals' access to essential services, health care, employment opportunities, and overall well-being. Supporting those at risk or experiencing homelessness strengthens the social fabric and creates a foundation for sustainable economic growth.



### CHILDCARE SERVICES

Access to quality, affordable childcare is essential for supporting families, enabling workforce participation, and promoting healthy early childhood development. In Chenango County, as in many rural areas, families face significant challenges in accessing childcare.



### OPIOID EPIDEMIC

The opioid epidemic is a public health challenge affecting communities across the United States, particularly in rural regions like Chenango County. Opioid misuse has led to a significant rise in overdose deaths, chronic health issues, and socio-economic challenges that impact community well-being and resilience.

