

**CENTRAL NEW YORK REGIONAL PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

**CENTRAL NEW YORK
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND PROJECT PRIORITY LIST

ANNUAL REPORT

JUNE 2002

I. Introduction

The Central New York Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a plan prepared each year by the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (RPDB). The primary purpose of the plan is to guide the RPDB's economic development efforts and serve as a resource that can be used to help coordinate local economic development efforts and direct public resources to key economic development projects in the region.

II. Central New York Economy

The Central New York Region is situated in Upstate New York and consists of five counties including: Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, and Oswego. The Region covers an area of 3,120 square miles and has an estimated population of 780,000. By most measures, the region forms an area of interdependent economic activity. There is a central concentration of activity in Onondaga County and the City of Syracuse. In addition to this major urban center, there are intermediate areas of activity in cities located in each of the other four counties. These cities include: Auburn (Cayuga County), Cortland (Cortland County), Oneida (Madison County), and Fulton and Oswego (Oswego County).

Key statistical measures for Central New York indicate that the region's economy improved significantly during the period from 1996 – 2000. The indicators of economic strength include a record number of private sector jobs in CNY, an increase in construction activity, home sales, and a general improvement in the overall population trends for the region.

Despite the significant improvement in the local economy, there remains several indicators of economic distress. These indicators include a general decline of regional economic activity in 2001-02, the loss of manufacturing jobs, a decline in local sales tax revenue for local government, and areas of significant unemployment that exist in the City of Syracuse and many of the region's rural communities.

III. Resources and Initiatives

The Central New York community has undertaken a coordinated effort to support economic growth in the region. A cornerstone of this effort is county-based economic development and job training agencies that exist across the region. Supplementing this network are a number of agencies that provide development services on a regional basis. These organizations include the RPDB, Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce, NYS Empire State Development Corporation, Metropolitan Development Association, Niagara Mohawk, the CNY Technology Development Organization, the Manufacturers Association of Central New York, and the Small Business Development Center.

The CNY economic development network provides a range of traditional development services. These services include business recruitment and retention efforts, job training assistance, business financing, public facility development, and management of publicly sponsored business parks. In addition, this group has spearheaded several new economic development initiatives. These initiatives include the State's Build-Now New York and ChipFab projects, a NASA Regional Application Center, school-to-work partnerships, the hamlet enterprise program, the MACY/Onondaga Community College training partnership, and a State sponsored Center for Excellence at Syracuse University.

IV. Development Strategy

As a major metropolitan area, the Central New York area has a number of comparative advantages for developing and sustaining a productive economy. These advantages include a central location in close proximity to the major population centers in the Northeast, a well developed infrastructure base, a skilled and productive labor force, access to vocational and higher education facilities, strong capital markets, a diversified economy, and a network of organizations and programs designed to support economic growth in the region.

In order to capitalize upon these comparative advantages, the RPDB has adopted the following development strategy. The strategy relies on an awareness of the economic development needs of the region, evaluates the resources available to address these needs, recognizes the various roles that each economic development agency can play, and includes a list of recommended activities for improving the area's economy.

In accordance with these requirements, the strategy includes the following goal and objectives:

Goal: Support the continued growth of a diverse economic base that will provide a range of employment opportunities for citizens across the Central New York Region.

Objectives:

- continue the maintenance and development of the region's physical and human resources;
- support activities that help retain and expand businesses which are net wealth generators for the region;
- encourage the growth of employment opportunities in the region's economically distressed areas;
- improve area services and public facilities to help retain existing businesses and attract new companies to the region;
- support programs which strengthen the area's labor force to meet current and future employment needs in the region;
- increase the availability of capital resources to support small business growth in Central New York; and
- promote the development of planned industrial sites and public facility improvements which support economic growth in the region.

V. Workplan

Along with the goals and objectives listed above, the following work plan has been developed to guide the RPDB's economic development activities. The work plan consists of five major programs including:

- Project Development - Continue project development activities by advancing public works, institutional, and commercial projects that will support job creation and economic growth in the region. Specific tasks include feasibility analysis, preparation of applications for financing, and administration of program funds.
- Business Assistance and Finance - Working in cooperation with local economic development agencies, efforts will be directed to support the growth of small business in Central New York by managing a regionally based business loan program, sponsored by the CNY Enterprise Development Corporation and the COMCO Development Corporation.
- Regional Marketing – Assist local economic development agencies with the implementation of a regional marketing program. Activities will focus on managing a website for site location consultants, participation at various industry trade shows, placing trade publication advertisements, direct mail campaigns, and assisting with local efforts to address prospect leads.
- Research and Planning - Continue administration of the RPDB's data center program. The RPDB will also undertake specific research project which support local economic development efforts.
- Administration - This task includes management of the RPDB structure and activities, participating in various development and planning forums in the region and across the State, and filing various program and financial reports. Throughout the year, the RPDB's Economic Development Committee will have responsibility for monitoring program activities.

I. Central New York Project Priority List

In accordance with the goal and objectives of the CNY Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, the following list of projects have been recommended for funding consideration at the federal, state, and local level. These projects have been recommended by community representatives and economic development staff working in Central New York. Each of the projects have been identified, in part, because of their potential to help foster economic growth in the Region.

Cayuga County

- Aurelius Industrial Park Road Network – The County's top economic development priority is the development of infrastructure to serve the Cayuga County Aurelius Industrial Park, a 200-acre industrial park being developed by the County. This site has been chosen as one of thirteen sites to be marketed by New York State as a potential site for a computer chip manufacturing company. Completion of the site's internal road network is critical. Approximately \$900,000 is needed to complete the four lane entry road needed to meet the traffic demands of ChipFab and satisfy the standards established by NYS DOT during its review of traffic impacts of the ChipFab project.
- Town of Sterling Comprehensive Development Site – Cayuga County and the Town of Sterling have overseen the comprehensive development of a 2,800-acre area in the Town

of Sterling bordering Lake Ontario, Old State Rte. 104, and Oswego County. 1,500 acres have been set aside as a nature center. 1,300 acres have recently been sold to a private interests who have obtained local approval of a site plan that calls for multiple uses including a variety of recreational, light industrial and commercial development activities. The Cayuga County Water and Sewer Authority has been asked to work with the developer to install public water service from the Onondaga County Water Authority via Oswego County and sewer service to a new treatment plant in Wayne County operated by the Wayne County Water and Sewer Authority. Costs associated with the public infrastructure elements are estimated at \$1,500,000.

- Auburn Northwest Industrial Development Area – This project calls for upgrading existing infrastructure in the City’s major industrial area including the Auburn Technology Park located within the Auburn Empire Zone. A Build-Now NY site is located within the Park. Proposed improvements include road, sewer, storm drainage, street lighting, water supply repairs, and improved truck transit/access. Total project costs are estimated at \$800,000.
- Emerson Park Plan Implementation – Cayuga County has prepared a new development plan to expand the recreational/tourism potential of Emerson Park at the north end of Owasco Shore. The plan proposes a number of improvements including the introduction of a conference facility, new recreational attractions, and new restaurants. The introduction of new facilities needed to complete the restoration/upgrade is estimated to cost \$38,000,000. All but \$7,500,000 will be derived from non-public sources.
- Auburn Schine Theater – The Cayuga County Arts Council has undertaken the restoration of this historic downtown theater with the goal of making it a focal point for downtown revitalization and reinvestment. The facility should become a tourism attraction for the entire Finger Lakes region. The total project cost is estimated at \$4,400,000.

Cortland County

- “Build Now NY Industrial Parcel – The Cortland County IDA currently plans to submit a 100+ parcel in the next “Build Now NY” competitive grant round in June 2002. A large parcel in the Town of Cortlandville has been tentatively identified for this project, pending discussion with the municipality. The parcel is adjacent to an existing Empire Zone and is in an area the Town has targeted for planned industrial development. Funding support is required to bring infrastructure services to the site.
- Greek Peak/Hope Lake Conference Center -- Plans have been developed to expand the Greek Peak Ski Center into a four-season resort with a hotel/conference center, golf course, and indoor water park. The site has been included in a boundary amendment to the Cortland County Empire Zone. The total project is estimated to cost \$30.6 million. Public infrastructure improvements must be completed to support this development. These improvements include the relocation of a road, extension of sewer services, and provision of additional electric and gas service. The estimated cost of these improvements is \$1.2 million.

- Finger Lakes Business and Technology Park – In 2001, Photon Vision Systems became the anchor tenant in the new Finger Lakes Business and Technology Park. A new commercial building is currently under construction in the park and a third facility is being planned. This park is being developed by private investors, in partnership with the Cortland County Industrial Development Agency, on Route 281 in the Village of Homer. CCIDA proposes to extend infrastructure service in the park so that additional parcels can be developed.
- Smith Corona Industrial Park – Plans are currently underway to redevelop the former Smith Corona manufacturing facility into a multi-tenant business complex. The facility consists of approximately 413,200 square feet. An additional 40 acres of vacant land adjacent to this facility are being developed for commercial and industrial use. The property is adjacent to an intermodal rail transportation center that is being developed by CCIDA, NYSDOT, and New York State Susquehanna & Western Railroad. Public road, rail service, sewer, and water improvements are needed to serve this area. The project cost is estimated to cost \$1,500,000.

Madison County

- Trush Business Park – The Trush Park is located in the Madison County Towns of Nelson and Cazenovia. To support additional growth in the park a public water supply must be developed. Three options are being considered including: 1) connection to the Village of Cazenovia’s municipal system, 2) additional on-site wells, 3) utilizing Town of Nelson groundwater and pumping it to the Park. The preferred option from a cost and reliability standpoint is connection to the Village system. Discussions addressing this matter are currently underway. Construction costs of the three alternatives range from \$840,000-\$1,600,000.
- Hamilton Business Park - \$800,000 to provide additional public facilities to serve a business park being developed by the Village adjacent to the Hamilton Airport. The site is served by a municipal electric power system.
- Lakeport Business Park - Provide public facilities to serve a proposed business park being developed by the Town of Sullivan adjacent to Oneida Lake and the proposed Lakeside Planned Community. Total project cost is \$1,900,000 with infrastructure expenses totaling \$1,500,000.
- Village of Morrisville - Provision of public facilities to allow for the development of a business park in conjunction with SUNY Morrisville. Estimated cost of public improvements is \$1,700,000.
- City of Oneida Kenwood Sanitary Sewer Replacement - Improvements to sewer facilities serving Oneida Limited facilities in Oneida and Sherrill. Estimated cost of the project is \$1,500,000. Project is located in both the Mohawk Valley and Central New York regions.
- Munnsville Access Road – This project involves the construction of a new public access road to support a major expansion of the Ferris Industries/Simplicity manufacturing facilities in the Town of Munnsville.

Onondaga County

- Syracuse Technology Incubator Center – Plans have been developed to convert this one-story vacant building into an incubator center for high technology/computer related businesses. The project is estimated to cost \$2.8 million. Onondaga County has allocated \$1 million and NYS \$500,000 for the project.
- Clay Industrial Park - \$3 million to acquire land and provide infrastructure to an industrially zoned 245-acre parcel in the northern suburbs of Onondaga County. This site is on the State's list of 13 potential ChipFab locations. The Onondaga County Industrial Development Agency has initiated actions to acquire the necessary land for this project.
- Syracuse Lakefront/Inner Harbor – In conjunction with plans to expand Carousel Center and redevelopment of the Syracuse Lakefront, a significant number of public improvements are scheduled for this area. These activities include roadway construction, shore stabilization, reconstruction of harbor bulkheads, configuration of promenades and public spaces, development of a linear park/creekwalk, and reconfiguration of North Franklin Street. EDA awarded a \$1 million grant in September 2000 to support reconstruction of Solar Street. Additional funding is needed to complete other improvements in the area.
- Salina Industrial Power Park – The project involves the redevelopment of the former General Motors 850,000 square foot industrial complex, located on 78 acres in the Town of Salina. As part of this initiative, General Motors and prospective joint venture partners are developing plans to position the facility and site to accommodate multiple industrial users.

Plans include replacement of the plant's industrial waste treatment facility and central heating and steam generating plant; installation of new demising walls to secure demolition targets; and construction of new infrastructure serving water and domestic sanitation requirements. The estimated cost components of this project are as follows:

1. Replacement of the plant's industrial waste treatment and central heating and steam generating plants - \$1.8 million.
 2. New demising walls to secure demolition targets and conversion to a dry sprinkler system - \$1.4 million.
 3. Infrastructure serving water and domestic sanitation requirements, roof improvements and access road improvements - \$2 million.
- CSX Intermodal Terminal Access – The Central New York region has a unique opportunity to work with CSX and capitalize on the growth of freight-related intermodal activity. Increased capital investment in the DeWitt rail complex and new employment related to intermodal activity are both likely to occur if certain physical restraints and access limitations are properly addressed.

The proposed project would involve two separate elements: 1) addressing customer mobility by improving intersections, distance and constraints within the actual intermodal terminal area. Presently, due to the configuration of internal access roads and rail, truck traffic is blocked from entering or leaving the facility – reducing productivity and efficiency and diminishing the likelihood of further investment by CSX. 2) Improving off-side access and safety by improving a public street and intersections to reduce congestion, eliminate conflicts with school bus traffic, and provide for direct access to Kirkville Road. The estimated costs are:

1. Intermodal Customer Mobility Issues - \$200,000
 2. Offsite Access/Improvements to Public Roadway - \$1,000,000.
- Hancock Airpark - Continue redevelopment of the former Hancock Air Base for industrial and commercial use. Funds will be used to continue the demolition of vacant structures abandoned by the military, construct infrastructure, and undertake general site preparation on this 200-acre site. The County has secured a State Empire Zone designation for this location. EDA awarded a \$1.5 million grant and Onondaga County provided a loan of \$1 million to initiate the final stage of development of the park. Construction work on these activities was initiated in April 2001.
 - Electronics Park – \$3 million to improve utilities (sewer, water, electric, steam plant) and develop an interior access road in an industrial campus housing Lockheed Martin and 98 acres of new and adaptive re-use parcels. The County has designated this site as a State Empire Zone.
 - Landmark Theatre Renovation Study - \$10 million for the complete renovation and refurbishment of the historic Landmark Theater in downtown Syracuse. New York State has allocated \$2 million to assist with this revitalization effort. The theater is located within the Syracuse’s Economic Development Zone.
 - Rock Cut Road/I-481 – \$8 million to create a new interchange on I-481 which would open up a 280-acre development site (a former quarry) for industrial development as well as providing access to the Syracuse University Research Park being jointly developed by Syracuse University and the Metropolitan Development Association.
 - Syracuse City Crossroads Commercial Park – The Syracuse Industrial Development Agency has initiated work on the development of a light industrial/commercial park adjacent to Route 690 East at Green Avenue and Pearl Street. The park consists of approximately 20-acres and is publically owned. One tenant has moved into the park and is constructing a 20,000 square foot manufacturing facility. Additional road, sewer, water, and environmental clean-up is necessary at the site. The total project cost is \$1.5 million.

Oswego County

- Town of Scriba Sewer Improvements - \$1.6 million to extend public sewer service to a major industrial area in the Town that includes the Sithe Independence Energy Park. The project will capitalize upon the marketing opportunities presented by the Sithe co-generation facilities. EDA awarded a \$960,000 grant for this project in 1998. The

balance of the project funding has been secured from NYS and local sources. Construction is expected to begin on the sewer facilities in 2002.

- Village of Phoenix Sewage Treatment Plant Upgrade - \$5 million to expand capacity of treatment plant which serves the county industrial park in the Town of Schroepfel.
- Oswego County Airport/Industrial Park - \$5 million to provide water and sewer facilities to serve a proposed 130-acre industrial park located adjacent to the Oswego County Airport. The project also involves the construction of a 40,000 SF cross-dock facility to be used for cargo transitioning from air freight to ground transportation.
- Columbia Mills Infrastructure/Brownfield Reuse - The Oswego County Industrial Development Agency has developed a comprehensive redevelopment plan for the Columbia Mills Brownfield site. This contaminated 90-acre site has been cleaned up with \$2.9 million of state and federal funds. Reuse of the site will require additional demolition of remaining foundations and structures, site preparation, an access road and the extension of infrastructure to accommodate a combination of industrial, commercial and residential uses. The estimated cost for the initial phase of infrastructure to support redevelopment is \$1.5 million.
- Lake Ontario Industrial Park – The Lake Ontario Industrial Park is located in the northeastern corner of the City of Oswego in a State designated Empire Zone. The park has been designed as a State Build-Now NY site. It is comprised of 57 acres with 2,500 feet of roadway, and is serviced by municipal water, sewer, and storm water. Lots are available from 1.5 acres and up.

To further develop the park, \$2.5 million is needed to construct a 50,000 square foot speculative building. In addition, \$250,000 is needed to extend the existing road in the park to access rail service and the eastern area of the park.

- Parish Business/Industrial Park - \$1.6 million for infrastructure improvements to extend sewer, water, and a road into a 100-acre site located at the I-81 interchange in Parish. This park will be one of four industrial parks operated by Operation Oswego County, Inc. and the first one on the eastern side of the County.
- Telecommunications Spec. Building – The City of Oswego has been identified by several companies/site consultants as an excellent location for a technical call center. The lack of an existing vacant class A office building is a major problem in attracting a telecommunications project to the area. A proposal has been made to develop a 20,000 spec. building in a strategic location in the community. The estimated cost is \$1,000,000. The project is expected to help create 150-250 jobs.

Regional

- Central New York Enterprise Development Fund – The demand for small business loans has created an urgent need to secure funds to recapitalize the CNY Enterprise Development Fund. Funds will be targeted to small manufacturing companies and producer service firms throughout the region - \$1 million.

- Central New York Strategic Training Partnership Fund – Additional funding is required to recapitalize this regional training program. Funds will be directed to companies looking to upgrade the skills of their employees - \$1 million.
- Central New York Regional Business Recruitment Program – Funds are required to support administration of a comprehensive business recruitment program. Funds will be directed to marketing, site location consultants, trade shows and missions, and development of an electronic database of pre-approval/permitted business development sites in CNY- \$500,000.