

SOURCES OF RECOMMENDATION

- AMS City of Amsterdam (NY) downtown revitalization study (2000)
- CAMV Chamber Alliance of the Mohawk Valley study (2001)
- CACIS Central New York Community Arts Council, Arts Impact Study (2002)
- CACNS Central New York Community Arts Council, Needs Survey (2004)
- CFHOC "A Study to Improve Local Government Services," Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, Inc. (1999)
- CTC "Oneida County Communities That Care," Resource Center for Human Services, Hamilton College (2000)
- DTF "An Economic Development Strategy for the Oneida/Herkimer County Region," Deloitte, Touche & Fantus report (1997)
- ECNHC "Manifest for the 21st Century," Highlights of the Draft Presentation and Management Plan, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor (2005)
- ENYI Essential New York Initiative, Metropolitan Development Association (2004)
- FFUNY "How Family Friendly is Upstate New York?" Cornell Institute (2001)
- FIDP Industrial Development Program, Phase I, Oneida and Herkimer Counties, Fantus Co. (1974)
- GSP The Genesis Group, various strategic planning documents (2001-2005)
- LMV Local Economy Study, Leadership Mohawk Valley Local Economy Study Group (1993)
- LWRP Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, New York Department of State website (2005)
- OCCVB Oneida County Convention & Visitors Bureau marketing study (2002)
- OCSSS Oneida County Shared Services Study (1998)
- PHL Philadelphia College Town Study (2001)
- QCITF New York State Quality Communities Interagency Task Force web site (2005)
- RC&G Rome Clean & Green program, Mission of Keep America Beautiful (2005)
- RCMP City of Rome, Comprehensive Master Plan (2003)

- REACH Rome Entertainment, Arts, Cultural and Heritage Microenterprise Center Business Plan (2005)
- RUSK Mohawk Valley Compact, David Rusk (1996)
- TAPS Oneida County Teen Assessment Project Survey, Herkimer-Oneida Counties Comprehensive Planning Program (2004)
- V2020 Vision 2020 Project, Utica Observer-Dispatch and Zogby International (1999)
- VPAC Rome Visual and Performing Arts College Business Plan (2004)
- WVWF "Working Solutions," Mohawk Valley Workforce: Issues and Actions (2004)

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

1. View arts and cultural affairs as economic development opportunities as well as quality of life issues. (CAMV)

The CNY Community Arts Council is a regional asset that cultivates public and private investment. The Arts Council is an industry that is capable of drawing tourism dollars to the region. Investment in this “industry” will also boost the region’s image as a cultural center and a desirable place to live.

2. Recognize that the arts positively impact community and downtown development; economic development; community wellness; the built environment; education; and tourism in the region. (CACIS and RCMP)
3. Develop arts and cultural districts with incentives for artists and arts-related businesses to reside and do business. (RCMP)
4. Establish a Visual and Performing Arts College in Rome. (VPAC)

Utilizing existing community resources and infrastructure, the college will (a) meet the demand for quality arts education programs, (b) stimulate economic growth, (c) attract new residents and visitors to the Central New York Region, (d) improve the cultural quality of life in the community, (e) reduce school district overheads, (f) improve local business and retail opportunities, and (g) establish opportunities for the area youth.

Collaboration

5. Foster enhanced cooperation among the region’s A&E organizations and expand the leadership role of the Central New York Community Arts Council to create a broad, regional, dynamic force for economic and quality-community development. (GSP and CACNS)
6. Implement recommended shared programs that improve promotion, reduce expenses and foster cooperation among the region’s A&E organizations. (CACNS)

Survey respondents supported the creation of a shared-services network under the leadership of the CNYCAC that would provide administrative, health insurance, payroll, purchasing, marketing, web site, e-communication and other services at a reduced or shared cost.

7. Develop a regional, central e-calendar to promote area A&E events. (CACNS)
8. Develop a centralized grant-writing program for regional A&E organizations. (CACNS)

ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

1. Encourage entrepreneurs. (CAMV and REACH)

The study recommends increased emphasis on the growth of small businesses. Too much energy is currently invested in attracting firms that can promise 100 or more jobs. Economic development agencies should develop more tools such as grants, low interest loans, and Empire Zone benefits to assist smaller existing firms wishing to expand.

2. Grow the farming/agricultural industry. (CAMV and QCITF)

Focus on farming as a growth industry. Create incentives for farmers and economic development agencies to foster new opportunities within the industry such as processing plants.

3. Grow area businesses. (DTF)

Short-term strategies

- a. Articulate a business support program
- b. Establish an account management program
- c. Establish voluntary councils to address the needs of key industries and play a significant role in priority actions

Mid-term strategies

- d. Establish a strong liaison between the agricultural sector and economic developers
- e. Establish a single voice on business issues critical to the competitiveness of area businesses
- f. Refine the account management system

4. Business attraction. (DTF)

Short-term strategies

- a. Strengthen economic development effort
- b. Create a Business Investment Attraction Council
- c. Undertake a systematic intelligence-gathering effort among existing businesses in the region
- d. Complete work on a detailed database of available sites and buildings
- e. Organize 1-2 presentations of the regional story in targeted locations
- f. Establish a fund for flexible allocation by EDGE

Mid-term strategies

- g. Partner with the real estate development community to fill gaps in inventory
- h. Conduct a multi-faceted marketing campaign geared to raising the regional profile

5. Use the DFAS endorsement as a marketing tool for internal and external promotion of the region. (GSP)

Communication and Collaboration

6. Foster greater communication and collaboration among the region's economic development agencies, including monthly informational meetings. (GSP)

7. Develop a permanent economic development forum to analyze, develop and present a unified vision to the economic marketing and promotion activities in the Mohawk Valley. (LMV)

8. Encourage the development of regional economic development alliances through the formation of

inter-municipal agreements. (QCITF and RUSK)

9. Create economic development compacts. (CAMV)

Areas such as North and South Carolina and Dayton, Ohio have successfully implemented development compacts. Leaders in the Mohawk Valley should study and adopt these best practices.

10. Create a single umbrella economic development group to coordinate efforts in our area. (LMV)

11. Merge area economic development agencies. (FIDP)

General

12. Use a comprehensive approach to develop the core areas of downtowns, incorporating economic restructuring; promotion; design and organization planning. (RCMP)

13. Transition from reliance on traditional manufacturing to a diversified economic base featuring strong service, tourism and high-tech sectors. (RCMP and ECNHC)

14. Promote interest in industrial development programs and foster a positive viewpoint. (FIDP)

15. Utilize water resources in economic development to attract targeted industries to the region. (GSP)

16. Develop a regional public/private transportation system. (CAMV)

There is no inter-modal system linking different modes of transportation. The recommendation is for representatives from both the private and public sector to work together to suggest and monitor improvements to existing modes of transportation. Shuttle services should be considered to transport people between local attractions and to and from the regional airports.

17. Utilize the resources of New York State's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. (LWRP)

18. Provide the County with the ability and resources to approve tax abatement or other tax-based incentives. (RUSK)

19. Promote comprehensive, region-wide land use planning and appropriate zoning provisions to assure maximum efficiency in public infrastructure investments and preservation, and enhancement of the special assets of the Mohawk Valley. (RUSK)

20. Promote County reinvestment some portion of incremental revenues in marketing the region, new business incubator facilities, worker training and education, and other activities that support of new enterprises. (RUSK)

21. Promote major infrastructure investments [i.e., regionally significant] as the responsibility of the County. (RUSK)

22. Redevelop Brownfields. (CAMV, QCITF and RCMP)

Create many new public-private partnerships to restore and re-create business sites. Develop long-term

programs with State assistance to maximize utilization of brownfield sites in areas already developed and served by infrastructure.

23. Cultivate family-friendly environments in the workplace. (FFUNY)

Employers and community leaders need to develop or encourage flextime, telecommuting, personal time, dependent care time and parental leave policies are examples of increased and improved work/life programs, supportive workplace cultures and systematic tracking programs that are necessary to enhanced regional response to the needs of working families.

EDUCATION

1. Treat higher education similar to manufacturing. (CAMV)

This statement is intended to provoke a strategy to “grow” the educational system for the purpose of expanding local college enrollment and retaining graduating students in the area as you would retain skilled employees. Reference is made to the “college town” concept.

2. Education and labor force development. (DTF)

Short-term strategies

- a. Establish an Educational and Training Council.
- b. Define a clear point of entry for worker training support.
- c. Inventory primary, secondary, and higher educational institutions to identify gaps in curriculum for knowledge workers.
- d. Strengthen communication mechanisms for dialogues between technology businesses and the educational/training community.

Mid-term strategies

- a. Launch a comprehensive effort to implement as many school-to-work programs as possible in the middle and high schools, and institutions of higher education in the region.
- b. Strengthen trade skill programs in the schools in the region.

3. Address the need for greater collaboration among regional SUNY institutions. (GSP)

Especially at the upper-division level, and including the lack of and/or expansion of specific program offerings (e.g., graphic design, teacher education/childhood & adolescence, criminal justice, engineering science & technology, cyber security & information technology).

4. Strengthen the connections among K-12 and higher education and workforce development providers. (GSP)

5. Reorganize existing programs, such as Tech Prep, for more effective leadership by and participation among the constituent stakeholders, including K-12 and higher education, government, and the business community. (GSP)

6. Utilize the professional expertise at all area colleges and universities, businesses, not-for-profit organizations and private institutions in developing and implementing the community vision and conducting outreach programs to build local capacity and consensus. (QCITF, also in Vision)

7. Maintain the historical and social prominence of neighborhood schools by making the facilities available for use by the community outside the regular school day. (QCITF, also in Quality of Communities)

College Students

8. Provide better information to students about regional resources. (PHL)

- a. Deliver lifestyle content to expose the diverse offerings of the area in arts, culture, food, entertainment, and recreation

- b. Identify and promote activities for those under 21 years of age
- c. Solicit, aggregate, and distribute job and internship opportunities for which students can reasonably apply

9. Establish and cultivate student relationships with other students, businesses, employers, and community organizations. (PHL)

- a. Encourage academic and social exchange across campuses
- b. Catalyze networking between students and employers
- c. Forge ties with community, non-profit, and government organizations

10. Overcome transportation barriers to participation in regional life. (PHL)

- a. Improve education and promotion about existing resources to area students
- b. Work with transportation providers to improve nighttime services

11. Promote regional resources directly to students. (PHL)

- a. Solicit, aggregate, and promote new or existing student discounts to businesses, local services, and activities
- b. Distribute information to students by way of their peers
- c. Establish online opportunities for feedback, ratings, and interaction

REGIONAL CONSOLIDATION

Government Services

1. Consolidate government services to reduce taxes. (CAMV and V2020)
2. Consolidate school administrative spending to reduce taxes. (CAMV and RUSK)

There are 22 school districts in Oneida County with 22 superintendents and twice as many assistant superintendents. The study considers the possibility of a countywide district with a potential for significant administrative savings.

3. Encourage the use of shared services across municipal boundaries. (QCITF and V2020)
4. Consolidated/Metro government. (CAMV)

The study recommends examining successful ventures into metro governments in areas similar in size to the Mohawk Valley.

5. Consolidate law enforcement agencies for greater efficiency and cost effectiveness. (CFHOC)

a. Establish a task force to coordinate countywide law enforcement efforts to identify and implement enhancement opportunities. A five percent reduction in overall expenditures would result in an aggregate net savings of approximately \$800,000.

b. Implement a countywide patrol optimization system to coordinate deployment between the County Sheriff, City Police departments and other local police agencies that would help determine optimal patrol officer schedules, appropriate number of officers needed, and efficient route design for field deployments.

c. Modify the County 911 dispatch center to include an “expediter unit” to make better use of sheriff and police officer resources.

6. Combine and/or coordinate financial functions between local government entities. (CFHOC)

a. Combine payroll processing activities between Oneida County, City of Utica, and City of Rome to exploit excess capacity and reduce administrative overhead.

b. Share County resources and information technology, specifically the County’s new tax collection and billing system, with the cities to leverage existing resources. (Also in OCSSS)

c. Include the City of Utica in the existing inter-municipal agreement between Oneida County and the City of Rome for purchasing assistance to reduce administrative overhead, achieve better pricing through bulk purchases, and allow Utica access to technical expertise at the County central purchasing office.

7. Share central services between the County and the local governments. (CFHOC)

a. The County and Cities should share maintenance crews or apply managed competition to reduce operating costs and improve the level of routine maintenance.

b. The County and local governments should share information technology systems and printing operations. A five percent reduction in overall operating costs could result in an aggregate net savings of \$250,000.

8. Combine street maintenance and snow removal activities. (CFHOC and OCSSS)

Differences in cost per lane mile indicate the need to share practices and reallocate resources and responsibilities. A five percent reduction in street maintenance expenditures would produce a total net savings of \$500,000.

9. Create a centralized code enforcement office at the County level. (OCSSS)

This would create uniform building codes requirements and provide for standardized training for a more professionally trained staff.

10. Create a two-county purchasing cooperative for electricity. (OCSSS)

Through “load aggregation,” the counties would pool their purchasing power and achieve lower electrical costs than would be possible by each individual community.

11. Share vehicle maintenance through common repair garages. (OCSSS)

There are over fifty (50) public works garages in Oneida County alone. Fleet maintenance is performed on a piece meal basis and there is no economy of scale from shared staffing or repair bays. Significant savings are possible by combining repair facilities.

12. Combine drinking water purveyors with the County wastewater (sewer) agency to form a combined water/wastewater authority. (OCSSS)

This would achieve greater efficiency in administrative functions by eliminating duplication and enabling crews and equipment to become multi-purpose and more effective.

Other

13. Consolidate the Herkimer, Rome and Greater Utica United Ways to create a regional, “super” agency that eliminates duplicative overhead and provides a more efficient process for raising and distributing donations. (GSP)

14. Create a regional planning board. (CAMV)

Many of the study’s SWOT participants believe many of the region’s problems are the result of a serious lack of planning. They also recommend the creation of regional land use plan. This could help settle competition over where new businesses should be located or where expansion should occur. The goal should be a Mohawk Valley Master Plan.

15. New revenues derived from regionally significant investments would be shared among all participating jurisdictions. (RUSK)

16. Position Genesis as the neutral, non-aligned, leadership organization in the move toward

consolidation of government and social services, duplicative not-for-profit agencies and other overlapping regional programs. (GSP)

TECHNOLOGY

1. Grow technology businesses. (CAMV)

The study recommends consideration and attention be given to technology businesses of all sizes to further growth of this industry's presence. The goal would be to develop a technology cluster that would help attract more similar businesses.

2. Nurture high technology for the future. (DTF)

Short-term strategies

- a. Establish an Oneida-Herkimer Technology Council
- b. Support and strengthen the Mohawk Valley Applied Technology Council [MVATC]
- c. Work with the Rome Lab leadership to develop a higher profile for the institution
- d. Strengthen outreach efforts to the business community in the region

Mid-term strategies

- a. Survey technology businesses and refine business support services to meet their needs
- b. Strengthen communication mechanisms for dialogues between technology businesses and the educational/training community
- c. Generate private sector support for the SUNY Utica-Rome campaign to obtain state authorization for undergraduate and graduate degrees in engineering
- d. Ensure availability of education and training opportunities meaningful to entrepreneurs

3. Work with State and local government to identify and inventory the availability of broadband infrastructure in the region and develop a master plan for increasing services. (QCITF)

4. Encourage all local governments to participate in the statewide Geographic Information System (GIS) and GIS Data Sharing Cooperative as a sound and efficient research and planning tool for municipalities, planners, businesses and other interested parties, and to increase the amount and quality of available data layers. (QCITF)

5. Establish a Ph.D. granting program at a local high education institution to support the growth and maintenance of a high technology industry in the region. (GSP)

TOURISM

Market Identity and Development

1. Develop a new, regional brand-marketing program for the Mohawk Valley that replaces Leatherstocking Country. (GSP)
2. Create a broad-based, regional tourism marketing and development council. (GSP)
3. Expand and unite the "Circle of Friends" engaged in heritage development by creating regional roundtables and engaging civic participation. (ECNHC)
4. Develop and promote the Erie Canal corridor (Little Falls to Sylvan Beach) as the focal point for tourism and recreation in the Mohawk Valley. (GSP)
5. Reinforce the Erie Canalway Corridor's sense of place. (ECNHC)
 - a.promote preservation and conservation policies
 - b.use historic tax credits
 - c.assemble lists of guidelines, tools and best practices
 - d.promote national register listings
6. Build awareness and understanding of the Canalway Corridor. (ECNHC)
 - a.develop regional strategic Canal marketing and promotion programs
 - b.create graphic identities with wayfinding signage; making every site along the Canal a gateway
 - c.provide interpretive guides for schools
7. Support Canal recreational development that: accommodates diverse uses; capitalizes on existing structures; improves access to scenic routes; protects natural resources; upholds cultural significance; and successfully manages visitor use. (ECNHC)
8. Publish a AAA-style, comprehensive regional tourism guidebook. (GSP)
9. Leverage Turning Stone Casino and DestiNY USA as major attractions. (OCCVB)
10. Leverage the multiple area Halls of Fame. (GSP)
11. Create and then develop (enhance) more community events. (CAMV)

The study recommends the creation of more regional events that draw people and dollars to the area similar to other events such as the Boilermaker, Boxing Hall of Fame induction, Bouckville Antique Show, etc. There are few winter events even though snowmobiling is a billion-dollar industry.
12. Create a 52-week schedule of regional weekend events. (GSP)
13. Capitalize on existing eco-tourism opportunities. (CAMV)

National “eco-tourism” activities include burro trips in the Grand Canyon or viewing sea turtles at Florida wildlife preserves. National tourism estimates suggest that spending for these activities may soon surpass locations such as theme parks or Disney. Regional assets in this industry could include the Utica Marsh, the Adirondack State Park, the Erie Canal, or the Montezuma Wildlife Refuge. The study includes a vague recommendation for increased public/private cooperation to better promote these recreational opportunities.

14. Oneida County needs to respond with: strategically focused efforts, need additional funds, and need to have a collective, synergistic partnership made up of every business. (OCCVB)

15. Recommended major objectives: (OCCVB)

- a. Generate positive awareness of the County
- b. Stimulate interest and desire on the part of consumers
- c. Maximize the length and frequency of stays
- d. Increase the business volume
- e. Support the development of additional regional tourism products
- f. Maintain a research base for the County’s tourism industry
- g. Create positive awareness, support and participation in marketing programs

16. Tourism. (DTF)

Short-term strategies

- a. Extend the Tourism Central New York effort to Herkimer County
- b. Include Tourism Central New York in the account management program
- c. Enhance the existing orientation program for hospitality and retail employees
- d. Develop and conduct an education campaign in the region on tourism and its significance
- e. Conduct a Central New York facelift

Market Research

17. Interview visitors and gather information. (OCCVB)

College students could perform interviews as a part time job. The data collected would include the person’s hometown, age group, party size, purpose and duration of visit, attractions visited, likes, dislikes, etc. A local college statistics office should analyze information quarterly and annually, possibly.

18. Develop a GIS database. (CAMV and QCITF)

The Chamber Alliance recommends the development of a Geographic Information System (GIS) database to “identify, and thus promote” Mohawk Valley destinations, attractions, accommodations, services, etc. It is not clear if the report’s authors fully understand GIS.

Promotion and Advertising

19. Purchase Internet ads for the area as the initial ad program, once we adopt a theme. (OCCVB)

Banner ads would be purchased on various web sites through a professional marketing firm.

20. Promote the Mohawk Valley nationally and locally. (CAMV)

Until higher levels of investment can be sustained in the arts and cultural attractions, marketing and promotional campaigns should be developed that highlight the region's *current* assets. It is recommended that we develop a regional slogan similar to “I Love New York” or “Virginia is for Lovers.” The study also recommends the creation of a regional entity to take responsibility for funding and developing this campaign.

21. Appeals to attract tourism to our area should be collectively presented to consumers through all available venues – website, visitor guide, brochures, meeting planner packages, maps, trade show display, etc. (OCCVB)

All collateral materials should begin with the same common message. More expansive marketing should include additional text, which expands on the opening message. All material and venues should have consistent usage of the messages, text, icons, and images throughout.