



**BROOME COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
2006 ANNUAL REPORT**

Submitted to:
THE HONORABLE: BARBARA J. FIALA, COUNTY EXECUTIVE
THE HONORABLE: DANIEL L. SCHOFIELD, CHAIRMAN AND
THE BROOME COUNTY LEGISLATORS

The mission of the Broome County Department of Planning and Economic Development is to shepherd the sound and orderly economic, physical and environmental development of Broome County and its constituent municipalities.

The Department provides technical, planning and environmental services and assistance to the County Executive, Legislature and municipal jurisdictions and seeks funding to implement projects and programs designed to improve the economy, environment, quality of life and physical infrastructure of the County.

We are pleased to present our 2006 Annual Report.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Being diligent about securing grant funding for various projects, both for the County and for its municipalities, is part a multi-faceted economic development program. Our Department respectfully reports that we applied for and received \$1,223,275.00 in new grant monies during the year 2006 and were able to secure \$9.5 Million in Federal funds, for construction of an Intermodal Transit Terminal.

In 2005, the Department was able to create the position of Director of Economic Development. The person in the position works directly with the County Executive and other Economic Development organizations such as the IDA, the Chamber of Commerce, STOC and SCORE. During 2006, focus was directed toward creating a one-stop center where business people, developers, site selectors and businesses seeking to locate in Broome County could go and receive the information they required.

The County partnered with the Greater Binghamton Coalition, a private economic development organization made up of local business owners and developers, to create such an entity. The GBC hired a staff person using County economic development funds. The role of this person was to create an economic development website, to form a first response team and to work to create a steady reliable source of funding specifically for economic development activities.

Presentations were made to all municipal leaders, Broome County Legislators and local business organizations. Tioga County, which is adjacent to Broome, was asked to join the Project Team, formed as a mechanism to promote and support economic development initiations, in an effort to regionalize activities.

The Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development, as well as the Director of Economic Development are both members of the Project Team.

One main focus of the County's Economic Development program is to keep businesses here, and to assist entrepreneurs in growing their ideas into viable businesses. To promote this concept, the Department was able to secure Federal Funding in the amount of \$248,000 to create a business incubator. We anticipate site selection will be completed in early 2007.

Further, in 2002 the Department hired the Hudson Group to conduct a study of how wastewater is managed in Broome County. Essentially, the report, known as the "Hudson Report", concluded that no entity in Broome County is responsible for assuring that there will be adequate wastewater infrastructure available to accommodate new growth in the County. To remedy this, the Report included eight recommendations on establishing a County role in wastewater management.

The first recommendation was that the County hire a consultant to determine the financial feasibility of the County becoming involved with sewage treatment. To this end, the Department of Planning and Economic Development hired Stearns and Wheler to conduct such a study.

Because the project was put on hold due to the severe flooding in the Spring of this year (2006). Report results are not expected until late 2007.

Historic preservation is also a part of a sound economic development program. The Planning Department worked hand-in-hand with the County Executive and the Department of Public Works to direct money from the proceeds of the Tobacco Fund toward renovation of the George Harvey Justice Building, an historic County-owned office building located adjacent to the County Courthouse in downtown Binghamton. This building constructed in 1939 was the first County Office Building. Design of the project has begun with construction to begin in late 2007.

Binghamton Intermodal Transit Terminal

Broome County operates a local transit program which services all areas of the County. At this time, the "hub", the place where all buses come together in one place so that riders can transfer from one bus to another, is located at the Government Plaza on Hawley Street in downtown Binghamton. Riders are required to cross a four-lane street to reach buses. Additionally, there is no protection from the elements.

The County is served by two inter-city carriers, Greyhound and Shortline/Coach USA. Terminals for these two carriers are on the same block in a run down unkempt area of the City.

To promote the economic renaissance of this area, the County applied for funding from the NYSDOT and the FTA, through Congressman Hinchey's Office. The project came to a standstill when Federal Funding was not reallocated.

Because of the continuous efforts of this Department, BMTS, County Executive Fiala and Congressman Hinchey, the funding was restored in late 2006. The project is now fully under way, with preliminary design, (which includes preservation of the Historic Register eligible façade of the Greyhound Terminal) and preparation of the Federal Environmental Assessment nearly complete.

Geographic Information System

The Broome County Department of Planning and Economic Development continues to promote, develop and maintain the regions most comprehensive Geographic Information System (GIS), both internally and over the Internet.

We are extremely proud that because of the diligence and hard work of Doug English, our GIS Administrator, the Department's GIS Portal Website won the 2006 Outstanding Planning Award in the Public Education Category from the Upstate Chapter of the American Planning Association.

GIS information, analysis, data, maps, and training are being made available to more county departments, local municipalities, and the general public than in past years. For all of 2006, over 130,000 visits were made to the GIs Portal website by over 22,000 unique visitors. Hundreds of maps have been produced for county departments and the general public, while thousands of dollars worth of digital GIS data has been licensed to private companies.

Some GIS highlights from 2006 include:

The Department received a NYS Office of Real Property Tax Services grant to convert the County's Tax Parcel Information from CAD to GIS format. We also received a grant to digitize historic aerial photos so that they could be added to the County's Website.

A Grant from the Soil and Water Conservation District allowed the Department of Planning to complete outfall mapping for all municipalities in Broome County. This information was gathered by interns doing field work using GPS technology, then transferring the data points and photos to the County's GIS Website where it is available to all municipalities. Collecting this information is a requirement under the Stormwater Management and Pollution Prevention Discharge Programs. Obtaining the grant and being able to employ interns as data collectors saved tax payers in excess of \$25,000.

Brownfield Redevelopment

The Department of Planning and Economic Development has been very active in the area of Brownfield clean-up. A grant of \$200,000 was received from the NYSDOS to do on and off site testing at 312 Maple Street, a County-owned

property. In addition, funds from the NYSDEC funded removal of contaminated soil.

The Department conducted an environmental assessment and asbestos pre-demolition survey at a major site in the Village of Endicott using Brownfield grant dollars. Grant funds were also used to fund preparation of a Phase I Environmental Assessment at a property in the Village of Johnson City.

An additional \$155,000 was secured from NYS under the Brownfield Opportunity Area Program to prepare a redevelopment study for the Endicott Johnson Corridor in the City of Binghamton and Village of Johnson City.

The Department also secured a \$250,000 grant that will be used to prepare an end-use plan for the Depot site in the Town of Fenton.

Municipal Assistance

The Department of Planning and Economic Development makes a concerted effort to provide assistance to all municipalities in Broome County.

During the spring of this year (2006), the County was devastated by extreme flooding. This Department worked side by side with the Red Cross and municipal leaders to ensure all impacted residents were given the opportunity to apply for financial assistance. To this end, the Department through the diligence of Frank Evangelisti, Chief Planner, applied for and received a \$250,000 grant to assist damaged households. A majority of the checks were distributed to residents before Christmas. The Department has submitted a second grant application for \$500,000 to further assist flood victims.

Department staff member Jeremy Evans serves as the staff to the Council of Governments. This year he worked with the Council to establish a website which we update and maintain.

Jeremy, Frank and Lora Zier (Sr. Planner) have been working extensively with local residents and town officials. We have contracted with the Towns of Maine and Fenton to prepare Comprehensive Plans. Additionally, we have also contracted with Fenton and Kirkwood to map municipal sewer lines using GPS coordinates. This data is then transferred to the County GIS system where it is accessible to the municipalities.

New York State enacted legislation which requires all municipalities to prepare a multi-hazard mitigation plan. These plans incorporate strategies designed to lessen the impacts of natural occurrences such as ice storms, wind storms and flooding. The Plan once developed must then be submitted to the NYS Emergency Management Office for approval. If a municipality does not have such a plan, it is not eligible for assistance from SEMO or FEMA should an event occur.

This Department on behalf of all municipalities applied for and received a \$75,000 grant from SEMO to prepare a County-wide Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan at no cost to municipalities. Working with our consultant, Tetra-tech, we have submitted the draft plan to the State for review.

Historic Preservation

The Department of Planning and Economic Development is fortunate to have a very well rounded staff. Our Planner, Gail Domin, is very experienced and knowledgeable in the area of Historic preservation. This experience allowed us to contract with the City of Binghamton, Village of Johnson City and Village of Endicott to provide Historic Preservation and Heritage Area project development and grant preparation assistance.

So that other municipalities can benefit from this expertise, we applied for and secured a grant for \$80,000 to expand the Heritage Area Program to include more municipalities making them eligible for historic preservation funding.

We also applied for and received funding to record and photograph all remaining sections of the Chenango Canal located in Eastern Broome County. The Chenango Canal connected the Susquehanna River to the Erie Canal and Binghamton to Utica.

Staff worked closely with the Town of Conklin to apply for grant funding of \$449,292 for construction of a public trail. This grant was approved and we are now administering the program.

Department staff also assisted the County Parks Department in securing \$200,000 in grant dollars for trail development at Dorchester Park.

Empire Zone

The Planning Department works closely with the Empire Zone Coordinator to administer the Program. We also maintain the Empire Zone Website. During 2006, Legislation concerning Empire Zone regulations was enacted. Since that time, the Department has been working to transition the program to the County and to streamline zone regulations and operating guidelines.

Land Use Reviews

New York State General Municipal Law (l) & (m) mandates County review of designated land-use and zoning proposed within the County. Serving as the lead agency for these reviews, the Planning Department coordinates its responsibilities with a number of departments and agencies, including the Environmental Management Council, Broome County Health Department, Broome County Department of Public Works and the NYS Department of

Transportation. During 2006, the Department reviewed and rendered advisory opinions on 262 proposed projects. A list of these projects is included as an addendum to this Report.

Records

The Department's Secretary, Ann Marie Suer, maintains all Departmental Records, such as 239 opinions, training schedules, correspondence and requests for information as well as being responsible for accounts payable and receivables and assuring that Departmental operations are within the approved budget.

Local Assistance / Shared Services

Local Assistance:

- Town of Colesville: Reviewed and commented on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Alfred Gorick Co., Inc. Gorick Construction mine East Windsor Road – County Route 26, Town of Colesville, Broome County and Town of Afton, Chenango County for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- Town of Barker: At the request of the Town Attorney:
 - provided assistance to the Town of Barker on completing the SEQR Full EAF for proposed amendments to the Town Land Use Local Law and on drafting the proposed amendments to the Town Land use Local Law
 - Provided assistance to the Town of Barker on the review of the proposed expansion of a sand and gravel mine

Shared Services:

The Department is working closely with the Executive's staff on Initiatives such as:

- Developing a Shared Services Matrix to identify areas where sharing of services already exist
- Police Consolidation
- Employee Insurance
- Property Tax Assessment
- Code Enforcement / Fire Inspections

We also assisted the local snowmobile club with aerial photo's and maps needed to apply for funding.

Capital Improvement Program

As mandated by the Broome County Charter and Administrative Code, the Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development reviewed, rated and evaluated County Departmental requests for projects to be included in the County's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The Planning Department's recommendations were then forwarded to the director of Budget and Research for review.

Training

The Department of Planning and Economic Development provides a minimum of four training seminars free of charge, for all local municipal officials including member of planning and zoning boards. Many training seminars are conducted in conjunction with the NYS Department of State. Topics include such items as zoning for and regulation outdoor wood burning furnaces, subdivision regulations, smart growth and home windmills. All sessions are very well attended with a minimum of fifty participants.

Environmental Management Council

The Environmental Management Council (EMC) is Broome County Governments Citizens Advisory Board on local environmental matters.

Two full-time Planning Department staff members coordinate Council activities and implement Council projects.

Staff members also, facilitate public participation in activities such as the Joyce K. Smith Environmental Photography Show, the Book Recycling Fair and Riverbank Clean-Up Program.

Beth Egitto and Stacy Merola also contract with the division of Solid Waste Management to promote recycling, participate on the Landfill Advisory Committee, and other landfill issues.

EMC staff contributes the environmental component to mandated 239 (l) & (m) reviews and comprehensive plan preparation.

They also are involved with the federally mandated Stormwater Phase II Regulations, Brownfield Assessment program and development of a County-wide Open Space Plan.

Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study

BMTS's designated by the Governor to carry out federally mandated regional transportation planning functions for the Region 9 Metropolitan area. Department of Planning and Economic Development is the local sponsor for BMTS whose offices are located in the Edwin L. Crawford County Office Building.

BMTS staff through its various committees is charged with Long Range Planning activities, such as updated its long-range plan entitled Transportation Tomorrow: 2025.

They continue to work on Gateway Projects and river trail developments, bike pedestrian trail, safe routes to school and other quality of life projects.

BMTS provides Traffic Engineering and Project Development Services to Broome County and its municipalities.

BMTS Executive Director continues to be a member of the Binghamton Intermodal Transit Terminal Management Team.

To view the many reports written by BMTS, refer to their website at:
www.gobroomecounty.com/bmts

Committees

Department Staff serve on a variety of committees including:

- Local Emergency Planning Committee
- GIS Users Group
- Southern Tier East Regional Planning and Development Board
- Empire Zone Board
- BMTS Planning Committee
- EMC
- Broome County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
- Broome County Capital Program Advisory Board
- NYSDEC Region II Open Space Advisory Committee
- Susquehanna Heritage Area Commission
- American Planning Association Upstate Chapter, Southern Tier Section
- APA Upstate Awards Committee
- GHJB Management Team
- BITT Management Team
- Greater Binghamton Economic Development Project Team
- Broome County Council of Governments
- Broome County Flood Task Force

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STAFF AS OF 12/31/06

Commissioner	-	Rita M. Petkash
Director of Economic Development	-	John Serino
GIS Administrator	-	Douglas English
Chief Planner	-	Frank Evangelisti
Senior Planner	-	Lora Zier
Senior Environmental Planner	-	Stacy Merola
Economic Development Planner	-	Jeremy Evans
Planner	-	Gail Domin
Environmental Analyst	-	Beth Egitto
Secretary	-	Ann Marie Suer

BMTS

Director	-	Steven Gayle
Traffic Engineer	-	Cynthia Paddick
Senior Transportation Planner	-	John Sterbentz
Transportation Planner	-	Scott Reigle
Account Clerk Typist	-	Cecelia Laurendeau