

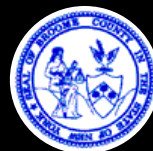


# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

BROOME COUNTY PLANNING AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

JASON GARNAR  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BETH LUCAS  
DIRECTOR







## MISSION

The Department of Planning and Economic Development provides professional services to many departments in Broome County Government, local municipalities as well as other public and private entities. These services include preparing comprehensive plans, researching land-use planning issues, obtaining, and administering grants, assisting with economic development, conducting environmental studies and assessments, carrying out reviews of development proposals, preparing tax maps, providing GIS mapping, and coordinating municipal training on a wide variety of subjects.

Planning staff works in close collaboration with the Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study, Agency (Broome County Industrial Development Agency), Environmental Management Council, Broome County Flood Task Force, Broome County Land Bank, the Broome-Tioga Stormwater Coalition, the Broome County Agriculture Task Force, the Susquehanna Heritage Area, and Visit Binghamton.



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## STAFF

### PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The Planning Department plays a critical role in reimagining and achieving our vision for the future through proactive and strategic efforts to inspire and engage the community, departments, and partner organizations. To that end, the Department has remained focused on initiatives to enhance community development, support local communities, modernize infrastructure, and overall enrich and improve the lives of residents.

Recent land use trends have brought the importance and need for long-term planning to the forefront in order to meet the needs of local residents, capitalize on emerging opportunities, and to attract a new and growing workforce. These include the ongoing need for housing and challenges in housing development, long-term climactic changes impacting resiliency, navigating the impacts of newer kinds of development such as renewable energy and cannabis growth, production and sales, and navigating the competing land use needs associated with these trends.

The Planning Department is charged with providing the tools that the County and local communities need to thrive and be successful in a way that reflects our shared vision for the future, respects our rich history, and takes advantage of available opportunities for progress and growth. Through a dedicated staff and continued partnerships, several significant initiatives have allowed us to make strides toward defining our community vision, engaging the community, fostering collaborative partnerships, and spurring project implementation. These include:

- Securing funding for a Countywide Resiliency Plan and Sustainability Element of the Comprehensive Plan
- Securing an Implementation Grant for the Brandywine Brownfield Opportunity Area.
- Began development of a Sustainable Operations Plan and Energy Action Plan to evaluate energy needs
- Completed Broome County Housing Needs Assessment
- Continued collaboration with our housing partners such as the Broome County Land Bank.
- Continued management of the Occupancy Tax funding for economic and community development projects.

Heading into 2024, Planning looks forward to continuing the initiatives highlighted in this annual report as we move toward the vision for a better Broome County and shape our future, built on the unique people, places and neighborhoods that make it great.

Sincerely,



Beth A. Lucas  
Director of Planning



# COUNTY-WIDE STRATEGIC PLANNING

Broome County's currently adopted Countywide Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2013. The plan serves as a framework to guide policies, programs and projects to be undertaken by the County, contributing toward the broader community vision established during the planning process in concert with County divisions, partners, stakeholder organizations and the general public. Prior to COVID, the Planning Department began the process of updating this document. The intent was to assess progress made since the previous plan was adopted and assess the alignment of previously identified and new actions with the current vision moving forward.

While significant progress was made, the long-term nature of the pandemic and the widespread community impacts became more apparent making it clear that these impacts, and the emerging trends that have followed, need to be integrated into the Comprehensive Plan, with a deeper look at how community impacts in a post-COVID world have changed the characteristics of Broome County and the vision moving forward.



To that end Planning has pursued multiple avenues for more in-depth planning on a variety of emerging issues in order to contribute to a plan that is a more thorough reflection of current and projected trends in land use and development. This includes the successful procurement of funding through multiple targeted planning grants with a focus on key issues facing the County. These are summarized below with more details provided in other relevant parts of this document.

## **ARC Strategic planning grant**

In 2023 Broome County Planning was awarded \$200,000 in funding through the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) to support strategic planning efforts to be integrated into the Comprehensive Plan. As New York State and the federal government roll out significant policies, programs and funding, more detailed analysis is needed to ensure that Broome County is aligning our goals and priorities to ensure that we are best positioning ourselves in this context. Areas where more detailed analysis is needed include housing needs, energy use and infrastructure, and sustainability and climate resilience.

In light of this, the strategic studies being developed through the grant include the Broome County Housing Needs Assessment, Broome County Sustainable Operations Plan, and Broome County Energy Plan (see more details later in this report). Preliminary goals include establishing historical and regional context for these issues, assess current conditions, outline future community impacts and benefits, develop goals and targets for the future, and profile various projects that will help the County meet its goals. Planning completed work on the Housing Study in December of 2023, with public outreach on the final plan scheduled for early 2024. For the Sustainable Operations Plan/Energy Plan, a consultant was selected in mid-2023 with early data collection and analysis started in the remaining part of the year. The project is expected to be completed in late 2024.

## **Smart Growth Countywide Resiliency Plan**

In 2023, Broome County Planning submitted a grant application to the Environmental Protection Fund Smart Growth Countywide Resiliency Planning Program seeking funding to create a Countywide Resiliency Plan. We received notification in December of 2023 that Broome County have been awarded the grant. Through this grant the Planning Department will obtain a consultant who will assist in the development of the resiliency plan, perform assessments, vulnerability modeling, community outreach and public engagement, and work with the county and its communities to plan for and identify strategies and projects to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

The Countywide Resiliency Plan will assess the risks and vulnerabilities of critical infrastructure and other key assets to climate hazards such as more frequent and intense extreme weather events, flooding, drought, extreme temperatures, and snowstorms. The Plan will be used to inform other planning initiatives and identify projects and actions for inclusion in future Capital Improvement Plans. Planning anticipates work on this plan will begin in the second quarter of 2024.

## **CSC Sustainable Comprehensive Planning**

In mid-2023 Planning submitted an application under the Climate Smart Communities Program for development of a Sustainability Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The comprehensive planning process offers an opportunity for communities to consider how to balance the three “Es” of sustainability: environment, economy, and equity. The CSC program encourages local governments to integrate sustainability into their comprehensive plans through the inclusion of analysis and recommendations related to alternative transportation, smart growth land use policies, open space protection, healthy communities, environmental justice, sustainable food system, green economic development, evolving energy production and use, water quality, and resiliency.

In December of 2023 we were notified that we had been awarded a \$30,000 grant toward development of this sustainability element. The intention is to advance this project in parallel with the Countywide Resiliency Plan above in order to maximize resources and strategically coordinate the projects. While the plan will comprise planning and analysis under all of the above focus areas a particular focus will be made on open space and natural resource preservation planning. Through the planning processes under these two projects, we anticipate development of an analysis identifying strategic growth areas and strategic conservation areas. This will provide a framework for the County and local municipalities to better assess the impacts of their land use and development decisions.



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

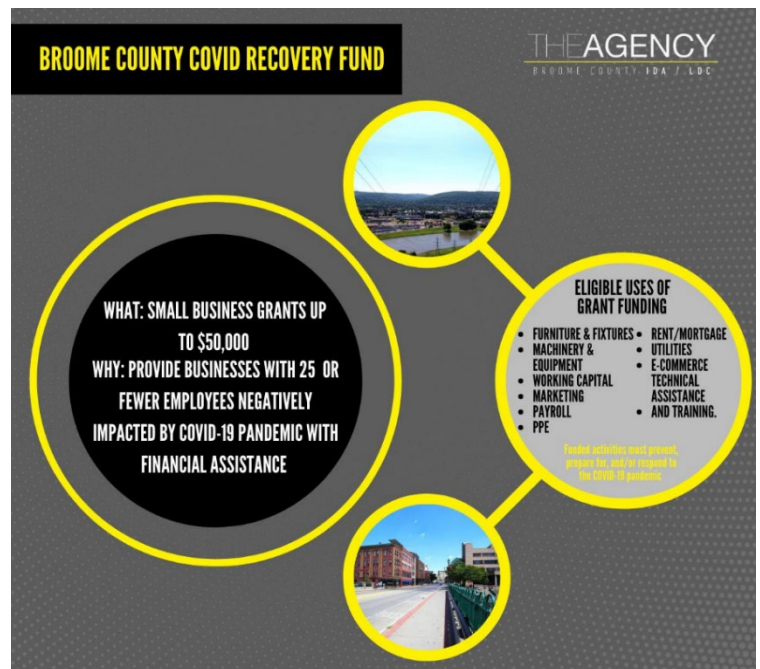
## Johnson City Downtown Revitalization Initiative

In 2022, the Director of Planning participated in the Johnson City Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) committee to develop an application for the Village of Johnson City for submission to the New York State DRI program. Each year, the competitive program provides one community per economic development region a significant \$10 million investment from the State for revitalization of targeted areas in the community. In early 2023 Governor Hochul hosted a press conference at the Goodwill Theater in Johnson City to announce that the Village of Johnson City had been selected among three finalists to receive the annual funding award.

In spring of 2023 the Village, along with the NYS Department of State initiated the Johnson City DRI Local Planning Committee to direct the preparation of a strategic plan for distribution of funding to community projects. In addition to the County Planning Director, the group consisted of Village officials, representatives from the Village, economic development agencies, local employers, and community organizations. The group worked together to guide the application process for funding under the program and select projects to be advanced to the State for approval. In late 2023, the Plan was finalized and advanced to the State for their consideration and approval. Projects included multi-family housing development, façade improvements, small business enhancements, and more. A final decision on projects is anticipated in early 2024.

## COVID Recovery Fund

Broome County was awarded \$1,000,000 to support the Broome County COVID Business Recovery Fund from the New York State Office of Community Renewal in 2021. The purpose of the program is to help businesses respond to financial hardships due to the pandemic, and better prepare their business for future events. The Planning Department partnered with The Agency (IDA/LDC) to administer the grant and carryout program delivery activities. The program was launched on February 1, 2022, and applications were accepted by The Agency on a rolling basis. After launching the Broome County COVID Recovery Fund (CRF), The Agency received applications from 29 small businesses throughout the county. Types of businesses requesting assistance from the CRF largely represent those severely impacted by the pandemic including bars/restaurants, service/hospitality, landscaping, auto repair and more.

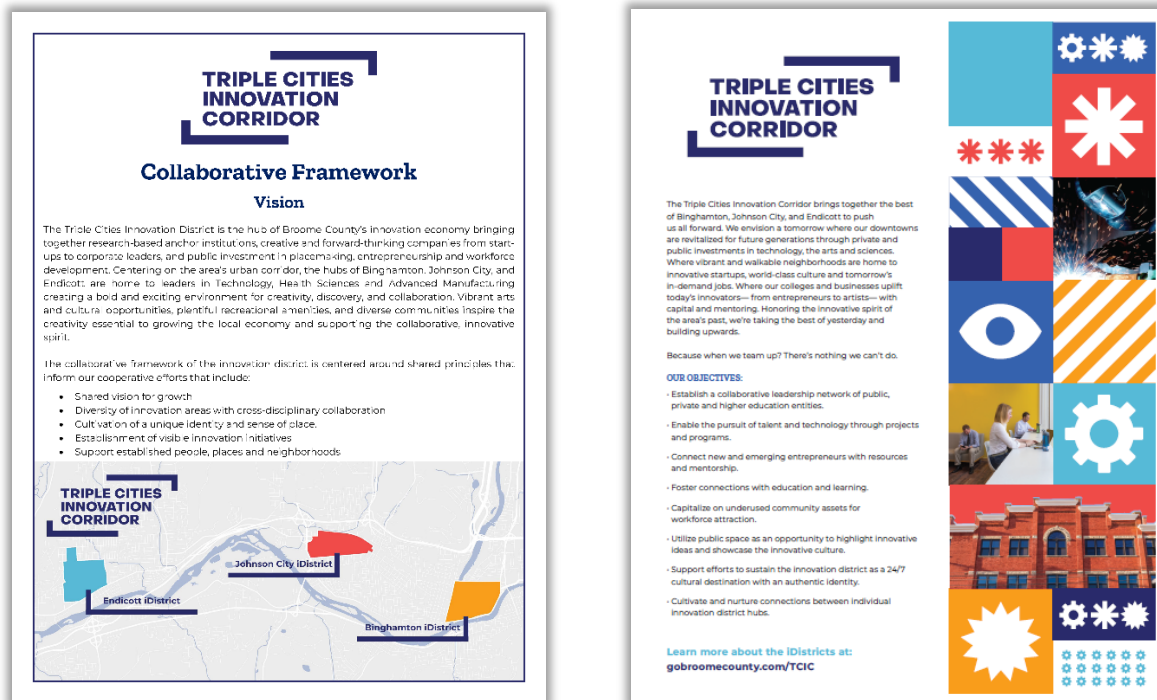


Throughout the past year, Broome County and The Agency prepared documentation and worked closely with the funding agency to ensure the project was meeting all grant requirements. In 2023, the remaining \$600,000 was awarded to an additional 14 businesses. Total accomplishments of the program include providing \$950,000 in grants to 21 small businesses that assisted with expenses including payroll, marketing, rent/mortgage, as well as working capital and equipment. As a whole, the COVID Recovery Fund allowed business owners to retain 25 jobs, including 15 full-time jobs and 10 part-time jobs. All the jobs retained through this program were jobs held by LMI persons. In addition, four (4) LMI businesses were assisted through the program.

# Triple Cities Innovation Corridor

One of the most successful ideas in the Broome County Comprehensive Plan was to create Innovation Districts (iDistricts) in the downtowns of Binghamton, Endicott, and Johnson City. Through the Upstate Revitalization Initiative, New York State made \$20 million available for the Greater Binghamton Fund to carry out projects in the iDistricts and the strategic focus of the program spurred additional investments and grant funding.

While the iDistricts experienced great success in recent years developing strategies to guide development and attracting hundreds of millions in investments, the Planning Department recognized the need for a to increase awareness of the iDistricts, provide a targeted strategy for future improvements, and ultimately attract new residents, businesses, and visitors to the iDistricts. Along with the municipal and economic development partners, Planning spearheaded an effort to brand the iDistricts as the Triple Cities Innovation Corridor which was completed in 2022.



To that end, Planning has focused on the following initiatives that have continued into 2023:

- **TCIC Collaborative Framework** - Planning developed and finalized the TCIC Collaborative Framework in 2022. The purpose of the document is to lay out a strategy for working together with partners in local government, academia, workforce and economic development to drive the success of our three urban downtowns. In 2023, information from the framework along with other informational documents were integrated into the Department website as well as an ArcGIS Story Map highlighting key assets in these areas.
- **Branding and Marketing Strategy** – Development of a Marketing and Streetscape Strategy led to the development of a logo system with symbols and color palette, logo patterns, social media templates, and a sell sheet for the Triple Cities Innovation Corridor (TCIC). The Planning Department used these materials to establish a webpage on the County’s website outlining the goals and various resources available in the TCIC. The department will continue to work with its key partners to pursue funding and implement the recommendations identified in the Marketing and Streetscape Strategy.
- **Streetscaping Improvements** - Planning also continued to coordinate with the three local municipalities on streetscaping improvements as part of the Greater Binghamton Fund. Through the Branding and Marketing Strategy funded by the Planning Department, we assisted the municipalities in development of a streetscape strategy that aligns with the branding and marketing goals for the iDistricts. The streetscape strategy identified opportunities to combine the branding themes with the design guidelines established through



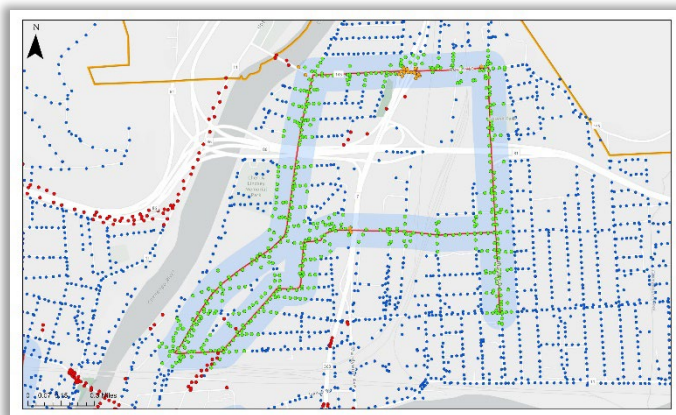
previous planning efforts. The municipalities are using this information to guide streetscape improvements and components have been integrated into projects funded under the Greater Binghamton Fund, Downtown Revitalization Initiative, and others, including the Art Parks projects being led by Broome County Planning.

## **Innovation Districts Fiber Enhancement and Smart Cities Plan**

In late 2021 Broome County was awarded a grant through the federal ARC POWER program for development of the Broome County Innovation District Fiber Enhancement and Smart Cities Plan. The POWER Initiative targets federal resources to support workforce and economic development activities in the communities and regions of Appalachia. The proposed project included development of a study outlining expansion of the Southern Tier Network open access fiber broadband network and the potential for smart cities integration in the Innovation Districts and other key development areas.

The Planning Department and the project consultant, ECC Technologies, worked with representatives from the City of Binghamton, Village of Endicott, and Village of Johnson City to identify broadband gaps and initiatives, learn about types of technological solutions the communities are currently using, other technologies that can be used in the future, and consider how they can be used to respond to their current and future challenges and opportunities.

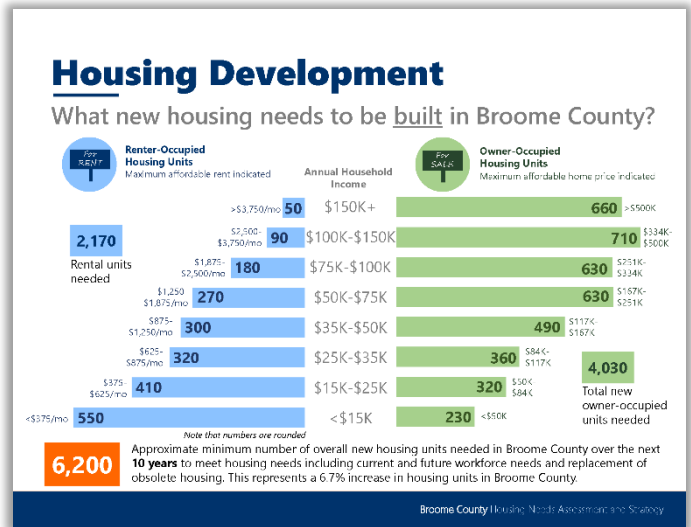
In 2023, ECC met with educational, institutional, and economic development stakeholders to learn about their needs and discuss how smart cities applications can be utilized to support community development and economic growth. These efforts were used to inform the plan and establish a vision for smart cities in the iDistricts and create a roadmap for the future. The completed plan focuses on expanding high-speed fiber connectivity to strategic economic development zones and delivering smart cities solutions to support improved public services, further promoting economic growth and development as well as an improved quality of life for residents. The Planning Department will work with community partners to implement priority projects which are well aligned with state and federal priorities and funding opportunities.



# HOUSING

## Broome County Housing Needs Assessment

In April 2023 Broome County began development of a County-wide Housing Needs Assessment. The report is the result of a collaborative effort led by the Broome County Planning Department and made possible with the support of the project consultants Camoin Associates and Highland Planning, the Steering Committee consisting of members from various county and local government departments and community organizations, as well as residents and community stakeholders. This effort builds on existing plans and local priorities to create a better understanding of housing needs and potential solutions for Broome County. The purpose of this project is to identify existing and future housing needs, as well as critical housing gaps and issues, and develop strategies that guide activities related to housing opportunities for the County, municipalities, and other partners.



Over the past year, the Planning Department worked with project partners to kick-off the project carryout the planning efforts. Early activities included establishing a project steering committee and working list of housing/community stakeholders, collecting a variety of data and information to support the needs analysis, and organizing a kick-off meeting with the steering committee. The Planning Department met regularly with project consultants to discuss progress of the plan and provide direction and feedback on the content of the plan. A draft plan and recommendations were shared with the steering committee in December 2023.

To ensure the plan reflected community needs, the Planning Department worked with its consultants to engage residents and stakeholders throughout the process. A public survey was released in the spring and over 1,000 residents provided their input and shared their housing experiences. Over a dozen focus groups interviews were organized with a range of community housing stakeholders to better understand the roles of different organizations, as well as the challenges and opportunities related to housing facing the county. In October 2023, a public workshop was held at the Broome County Library where about 50 participants attended to learn about the plan and share their feedback on specific housing needs and draft goals and strategies.

The Broome County Housing Needs Assessment is expected to be completed in early 2024. The Planning Department will work with municipal and community partners to begin implementation of the priority actions.

## Broome County Land Bank

Broome County Planning was awarded a grant through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) in partnership with the Broome County Land Bank as a subrecipient of funds for residential housing rehabilitation projects. The goal is to complete housing projects in areas of the County that are “non-entitlement communities”. These are communities outside of the urban core that do not receive annual allocations of federal funds to support housing development. This grant allows the County and Land Bank to devote attention to the housing needs in these areas through rehabilitation of sub-standard or blighted properties.

The Land Bank focused on identifying and acquiring properties under ownership of the County through foreclosure and in need of substantial rehabilitation for residential housing. Through this process, the Land Bank took ownership of three properties, 1593 Oakdale Road in the Town of Union, and 224 and 313 Marion Street



in the Town of Vestal. In late 2022 the Land Bank began the needed environmental and structural assessments to identify the scope of work for each property. Throughout 2023 Planning and the Land Bank worked together toward the design and construction associated with the rehabilitation of these homes. The home at Oakdale Road was successfully completed in 2023 and 313 Marion is nearing completion at the close of the year. These properties are anticipated to be listed by January/February 2024. 224 Marion Street rehabilitation is also underway with completion and listing of that home anticipated by early summer of 2024.

## **Fair Housing**

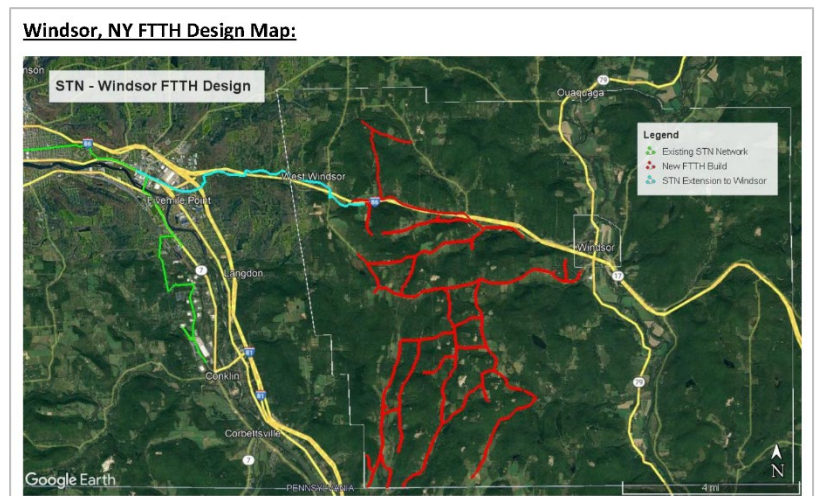
As a recipient of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, Broome County is required to undertake activities and report on efforts to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing. In 2023, representatives from the Broome County Planning Department attended a fair housing training program hosted by HUD. This webinar provided an overview of the Fair Housing planning process, including specific guidance on conducting a fair housing planning process and had an open-ended Q&A to submit questions related to fair housing. The Broome County Planning Department hosts a Housing page on its website where it posts housing resources. The Fair Housing Officer receives calls and emails related to housing issues; people are referred to the appropriate agency for further guidance and assistance.

# BROADBAND

Planning finalized development of the Broome County Broadband Feasibility Study in 2022 in partnership with Southern Tier Network, Inc. (STN). STN is a nonprofit, open access fiber broadband network that operates and leases bandwidth on its middle mile, dark fiber network infrastructure. STN is open to a range of service providers, including internet providers, enterprise-class services, cellular carriers and dedicated health and education networks. This model enables service providers and other users to utilize the STN infrastructure to expand and reach less marketable service areas more rapidly, making it a good option for connecting rural areas where it may be more difficult to generate revenue supporting individual investment. This project aimed to identify areas within the County that are underserved in their level of broadband access, and opportunities for expansion of STN infrastructure to reach these areas.

The main focus into 2023 was building on the plan and identifying geographical areas in Broome County to target as the focus for strategic expansion of broadband, based on the results of the study. Additional work and analysis was done with a focus on the following areas:

- **West Windsor** – This is the largest area of Broome County with a significant population of unserved and underserved households as it pertains to broadband access, with over 400 households identified. We partnered with Southern Tier Network to look for a design solution that would ensure expansion of fiber broadband to meet all homes in that area. Unfortunately due to changes with private internet service providers in that area, the project was unable to move forward due to impacts on the cost benefit analysis of the project. In 2024, we will continue to focus on other alternative approaches to meeting the needs of these residents.



- **STN Binghamton to Sherburne Extension** – Planning has continued work with the Town of Chenango and Southern Tier 8 Regional Planning Board on a project to extend open access middle mile broadband from the current terminus of the line in Binghamton north to Sherburne in Chenango County. While the last mile portion of the project is focused on unserved homes in the Sherburne area, this project offers benefit to Broome County by enhancing the marketability of broadband expansion into the areas along the extension. Having the middle mile line in this part of the County reduces the cost to private providers that wish to build last mile extensions of the line and increases competition, with the hopes of increasing options and reducing costs for residents in that area.
- **Broome County Facility Build-Outs** – In a separate effort the Broome County Information Technology Department has been working with STN on opportunities to utilize the network for open access fiber build-outs to various Broome County facilities including parks, communications towers, and the Landfill, among others. These build-outs are an opportunity to provide an overall community benefit beyond our own facilities as private ISPs are able to lease the use of the newly built lines and build out additional last mile infrastructure at a reduced expense. Due to the location of many of these facilities in the more rural parts of the County it provides an excellent opportunity to achieve multiple benefits associated with the projects. Planning will continue to coordinate as necessary to ensure we continue to maximize community benefit associated with these County-lead initiatives.

In addition, Planning continues to coordinate with New York State on broadband opportunities through their state-wide planning and programs through the Connect All office.



# BROWNFIELDS

Planning plays a role in redevelopment of brownfields and brownfield opportunity areas (BOAs) in a variety of ways. Brownfields are abandoned or underutilized properties with potential environmental contamination, while Brownfield Opportunity Areas (BOA) are a designation within a defined area aimed at revitalizing brownfield sites and addressing brownfield challenges comprehensively.



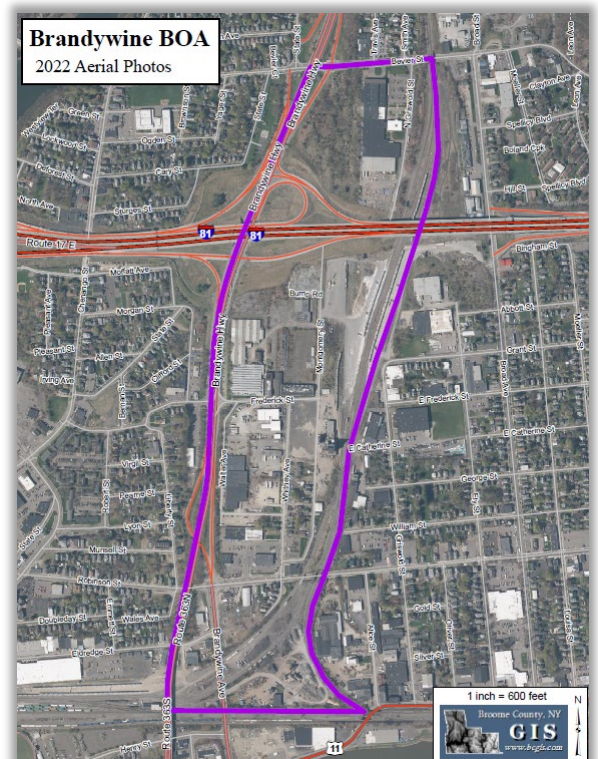
Brownfield sites often present complex challenges due to their historical land use, potential pollution, and the need for redevelopment. Planning coordinates with local municipalities on Brownfield issues within designated BOAs or for site specific projects. Planning works with partners on tasks that include assessing and inventorying sites and contamination, conducting site investigations, risk assessments, and cleanup strategies, developing land use plans, market analyses, and site reuse plans, and community engagement. In 2023, Planning made progress to a renewed interest in the Brandywine BOA in partnership with the City of Binghamton, and continued to assist the Department of Real Property in providing information on sites owned by the County through the foreclosure process.

## Brandywine Corridor BOA

Broome County previously partnered with the City of Binghamton to develop The Brandywine Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study (finalized in 2013) which provides an analysis to support revitalization strategies in the Brandywine BOA. The goals of the Brandywine BOA Nomination Study focus on addressing contamination issues, improving transportation networks and infrastructure, facilitating economic development, and promoting a high-quality urban environment to support improved quality of life. The Brandywine BOA Nomination Study was an essential first step to identify needs and priorities as well as focus areas for future planning and investment.

In 2023, the Planning Department developed a grant application for the 2023 Consolidation Funding Application Brownfield Opportunity Area Program for funding to complete predevelopment activities within the study area. The Brandywine BOA Predevelopment Activities project will complete necessary planning work identified in the Nomination Study to advance goals and recommendations. This project includes a series of targeted strategic planning documents that will build upon the broader plan for the area and establish a feasible, implementable approach to supporting future redevelopment and revitalization within the Brandywine BOA. These plans will provide impactful, actionable projects accompanied by implementation strategies and supporting documentation that can be used for future capital budgets and grant applications to execute next steps i.e., cleanup/remediation, design/engineering, and construction, etc.

In December 2023, the Planning Department was awarded \$448,200 for the proposed project. Over the next few years, the



Planning Department will work with various partners to implement the project.

## ***2 Titchener Place***

In late 2021 Broome County foreclosed on 2 Titchener Place, a 3-acre site previously home to the Titchener Company's metal plating facility. The site is considered strategic due to its size and central location in the heart of the Clinton Street commercial corridor. The site was abandoned in 2004 and was briefly owned by Broome County around 2015. While it was sold to a developer with plans for the site at that time, these fell through, with the property once again ending up under County ownership. This has provided an opportunity to do the planning and development work needed to bring this site into productive reuse in line with plans developed by the City of Binghamton's First Ward BOA Plan.



An opportunity to conduct a new assessment, along with additional needed assessments arose through a grant awarded to the Agency to do this type of work at various sites throughout the County. Development of the assessments and reuse plan began in 2022. The purpose of the Reuse Plan and Market Assessment is to support the revitalization and reuse goals for the 2 Titchener Place property, which include:

- To assess the physical characteristics of the property and building and make a preliminary determination as to its suitability for redevelopment.
- To identify potential future uses for the property that are consistent with community needs and market demand.
- To build upon the significant investments that have been made in the City and County.
- To provide sufficient programming details based upon community needs and market demand to inform site planning and conceptual reuse designs.

The report was completed in early 2023 and outlines the property setting, market assessment, environmental issues, and connectivity, and also assesses multiple reuse options including use as an industrial flex space and a makers space. Throughout 2023 Planning worked with the Department of Real Property to provide information and documentation on the property as part of efforts to prepare the property for sale and subsequent development, and identify a strategic private partner in development.



# PUBLIC ART

As part of the \$20 million Greater Binghamton Fund to carry out projects in the Innovation Districts Broome County Planning was awarded a grant for various projects to support enhancements of the downtowns with Public Art. Implementation of the programs and projects awarded under the grant continued through 2023.

## Murals and Mosaics Program

Broome County was awarded \$240,000 from New York State through the Greater Binghamton Fund to install public art in the Binghamton, Johnson City, and Endicott iDistricts. The goal of this program is to create more public art in our downtown areas and further enhance the cultural identity of these areas. The Planning Department will also create an online promotional tool to promote the new and existing public art as part of tourism efforts through the County and our partners.

In 2023, the Planning Department worked closely with the Broome County Arts Council along with the various artists and property owners participating in Round 3 of the iDistricts Public Art Program. Virtual meetings were held in early 2023 to introduce the partners and to provide an overview of the program. Throughout the spring and summer, the Planning Department established agreements with both the property owners and artists and to coordinate the permitting and approval process for the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the local municipalities. Seven new public art projects were completed during the summer of 2023, bringing the total number of completed murals through this program to 17 and adding over 15,000 square feet of murals to the iDistricts' landscape. The murals were met with a lot of excitement from the community.



During the Fall of 2023, Broome County worked with additional property owners to identify and plan projects for the remaining grant funds.

## iDistricts Art Parks

Broome County was awarded \$1.32 million from New York State through the Greater Binghamton Funds to create three Art Parks in each of the iDistricts. The goal of this project is to enhance public spaces in the iDistricts with innovative and interactive features. iDistricts Art Parks.

In 2023, the Planning Department worked closely with project partners to advance the design of the Johnson City iDistrict Art Park to construction documents. In 2023, an invitation for bids was released for the Jenison Park Art Park Improvements and a contractor was selected for the project. Construction of the park improvements began in August and are expected to be completed in spring 2024.



In February 2023, the Endicott Art Park project was temporarily paused due to new developments within the Village of Endicott. Ultimately, it was decided that the art park would be moved to another site within downtown Endicott (121-125 Washington Avenue) to accommodate the needs of a nearby housing development. In 2023, the Planning Department worked with project partners to amend the scope of the project and developed a new conceptual design for the space.



The Planning Department made efforts to pursue additional funding for the Binghamton Art Park project at Government Plaza, however, the County's grant requests were not selected for funding, forcing the County to revisit its options for project. The Planning Department is working with the City of Binghamton to explore other options for a creative placemaking project within the City's DECO district.

## Public Art Interactive Mapping

In a complimentary effort, Planning worked with the Department of Public Art, a local non-profit with a focus on encouraging and installing public art throughout the community, on development of an interactive map to highlight public art throughout the area. This was done through creation of an ArcGIS Story Map called "Explore Broome Public Art". This map is a resource for community members and visitors to view and learn about public art nearby, view photos, and plan new places to visit. The Planning Department will continue to make updates to the map as new public art installations are added throughout the county.

# WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION

The Planning Department received a grant from the NYS Department of State for developing a County-wide Local Waterfront Revitalization Strategy to update the 2011 County-wide Inter-municipal Waterfront Access Plan and developing a River Trails Plan, along with a River Guide to promote recreational river use in the area. The project includes updating the current plan, including identification of implementation projects in waterfront areas. We will also create a River Trails Plan that will lay out details associated with wayfinding for recreational river use, evaluation of existing services, solutions for identified hazard locations, and development of a river guide showing the river trails, access points, amenities, and services for use in awareness and promotion.

Over the past year, the Planning Department continued to progress the project. Consultants, Bergmann Associates, progressed work on the Local Waterfront Revitalization Strategy, using feedback from the Planning Department to complete full drafts waterfront revitalization area boundary and an inventory and analysis of project area. The project consultants began drafting other sections of the plan including Local Waterfront Revitalization Program Policies, Proposed Projects, Techniques for Local Implementation of the Program, and Municipal Appendices.

To support the development of the Blueway Plan, site visits to boat launches were completed in May to assess the condition and accessibility of various access points along the Susquehanna River. In addition, the Planning Department helped collect information about local waterfront resources and provided direction on the development of a draft plan.

Using feedback from previous stakeholder interviews and the public survey conducted in 2022, the Planning Department worked with project consultants to develop a draft Broome County River Guide. The guide includes a map showing access points, features and amenities hazards, as well as trip planning and safety information. The Planning Department collected information and data to assist with the development of map inserts for the River Guide to provide more detailed information on suggested paddling trips. The Local Waterfront Revitalization Strategy, Blueway Plan, and River Guide will be completed in 2024.

**Go With the Flow!**

**WITH NEARLY 90 BOAT LAUNCHES AND 93 RIVER MILES, THERE ARE AMPLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PADDLING ALL OVER BROOME COUNTY.**

Paddling Broome County's rivers is a truly wonderful experience. The Susquehanna, Chenango, and Tioughnioga Rivers offer a unique view of Broome County floating in a canoe, kayak, or stand-up paddleboard. With several rental options, it is easy to try paddling in Broome County.

**COUNTY MAP**  
Please review the back of this brochure for a detailed look of the:

1. Susquehanna River
2. Chenango River
3. Tioughnioga River

**PLANNING A TRIP**  
Dive in early on the paddling by "What's On the Water" section and then planning a route.

**EXPERIENCE:** Is there an experienced paddler who is familiar with the river conditions? Would any group members benefit from an instructional course? Consider renting a vessel and paddling a lake or pond at one of our County Parks to get a feel for the activity.

**WATER LEVELS:** Water levels of 3 to 5 feet are the minimum recommended depth for paddling. Spring and fall are optimal times for river paddling as water levels are at their peak. However, be cautious of high river levels due to rainfall, leading to dangerous conditions for beginners. If unsure, consult a local paddling organization or outfitter for advice.

**PLANNING YOUR ROUTE:** A fun part of paddling is deciding along or preplanning yourself with a lot of effort. You can expect to cover about two miles per hour, going faster or slower with different water levels and effort.

- This guide has recommended start and finish points, but you can choose from many great boat launches on the map.
- Do your research about your planned route ahead of time to assess their conditions, plan transportation, and assess hazards. Changing conditions may lead to unexpected hazards like downed trees — pay attention.
- Several locations in the urban area have dams or pipe crossings that create a hazard for paddlers. Paddlers should plan routes to avoid these areas.
- Familiarize yourself with conditions and routes with online maps.
- Plan for transportation between put-in and take-out points. Prepare to shuttle, arrange a ride, or use multiple vehicles to meet your travel needs.

**WHAT TO BRING**  
Make sure you are prepared by taking these items to the water.

**LIFESAVER:** It is required by law to have a personal flotation device for each person in a vessel, with additional requirements for children. Find a link to more info at the Go All Out Broome website on the Water page.

**FIRSTAID:** Any outdoor activity comes with the risk of an accident. One person in your group should have a first aid kit on hand in the event of an incident. Sunscreen is also a must, as rays reflecting off the water can enhance the risk of sun damage.

**CLOTHING:** Make sure you wear appropriate clothing to minimize sunburn exposure. Waterproof shoes with gripping soles are ideal. It is wise to bring extra clothes in case a change is necessary.

**HYDRATION:** Drinking water from the river is not advised, so bring your own water source to remain hydrated. Food is advised on longer trips, or plan to visit a local restaurant near one of the many boat launches along the way.

**PHONE:** Ideally, your group should have at least one phone on hand for emergencies or another type of radio and signaling device. There are many waterproof carriers on the market.

**ON THE WATER**  
As you head out, follow these guidelines:

**CONTACT:** Notify someone about when you are going and when you will be back. Check in periodically if possible.

**LEAKS:** Overboarding your vessel can be dangerous. Secure your gear to avoid loss.

**CONDITIONS:** Expect shallow points in some areas, which may change with the river level.

**HAZARDS:** The map notes known hazards like dam/pipe crossings. Never attempt to run a hazard. Go around if conditions are questionable and always portage to assess the situation.

**CONTROL:** Follow these guidelines to retain control of your vessel and keep safe:

- Watch for r-shaped patterns that indicate a submerged object.
- Avoid getting involved in a swift current.
- Always wear a life jacket.
- Do not switch positions in the boat while on the water. Go ashore.
- In a canoe, leave a spare paddle.
- Only go ashore at designated boat launches (unless there is an emergency).
- Carry all of your litter out with you.
- Check your vessel for aquatic invasive species.

**EMERGENCIES**  
In an emergency, dial 911. Always paddle with a partner. It is wise to have a "check list" with essential tools if stuck in a rural location.

**VISIT US AT**  
GoAllOutBroome.com

**EMERGENCIES**  
In an emergency, dial 911. Always paddle with a partner. It is wise to have a "check list" with essential tools if stuck in a rural location.

- Bring a map.
- Take note of landmarks occasionally in case you need to go ashore at an unexpected location.
- Familiarize yourself with accurate points along your route with likely obstacles nearby in case needed.



# PARKS AND RECREATION

The Broome County Parks Plan was adopted by the Broome County Legislature in 2019. The intent was to develop recommendations and actions to be used to improve our parks facilities and pursue grant opportunities through the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) and other funding sources. In partnership with the Departments of Parks and Public Works, Planning continues working on implementation through projects to improve these vital County assets.

## Chugnut Trail

The Planning Department received a \$2,613,820 from the NYSDOS Local Waterfront Revitalization Program for the Grippen Park and Chugnut Trail Waterfront Improvements project. This project will extend the Chugnut Trail to Grippen Park as well as expand the playground area, make improvements to the trailhead parking area, and incorporate wayfinding/interpretive signage into the park.

In 2023, the Planning Department completed various tasks to prepare the project for construction. A Coordinated State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) was completed, and it was determined the project would not have any adverse environmental impacts. The Planning Department organized a project kick-off meeting with partners including Broome County Parks, Broome County Public Works, the Village of Endicott, the Town of Union, and New York Department of State to discuss the project scope, budget, schedule, and establish roles and responsibilities for the team. A contractor was hired to provide landscape architecture and civil engineering professional services for the Chugnut Trail extension. The project team completed a walkthrough of the trail and park areas to identify any additional design needs and discuss coordination with the complimentary Grippen Park Recreational Building Renovations project. The next steps include completing the Joint Permit Application to determine which permits/approvals are needed for the project and finalizing the design documents for the bid phase.



## Go All Out Broome

In 2023 there was continued promotion of outdoor recreation opportunities through Go All Out Broome. Go All Out provides readily accessible information for residents and visitors related to outdoor recreation as a tool for tourism, economic development, wellness, alternative transportation, and other related initiatives through Facebook, Instagram, and the website: [www.GoAllOutBroome.com](http://www.GoAllOutBroome.com).



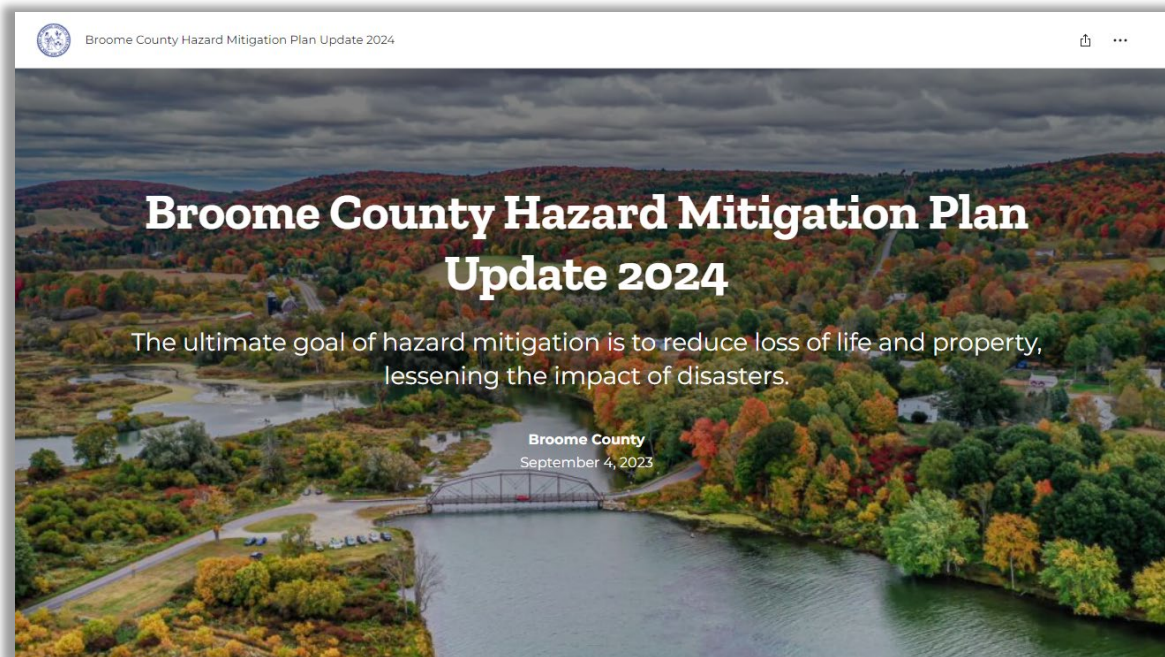
Planning continues to use Go All Out resources to promote outdoor events and activities. We continued to partner with the Triple Cities Hiking Club on the Broome County Dozen Hiking Challenge, a program to highlight twelve unique hiking spots throughout the County and reward participants with a patch showing that they have completed the challenge. The project is a true partnership with information housed on goalloutbroome.com and promoted by Go All Out and all submissions being managed by the TCHC. In addition Go All Out will be the primary branding associated with the roll out of the new Broome County River Guide (see Waterfront Development section).

# HAZARD MITIGATION

Flooding and hazard mitigation have continued to be a priority for the County and Planning Department. Continued localized and flash-flooding events highlight the ongoing need for local collaboration on these issues.

Currently, Broome County and local municipalities utilize the 2019 Broome County All-Hazards Mitigation Plan for prioritization and implementation of hazard mitigation projects, policies and programs. By having a current plan in place, local municipalities are eligible for hazard mitigation grant funding through various federal programs through FEMA, allowing us to continue to evaluate and address issues related to flooding or other hazards in our community. In order for continued eligibility these plans must be updated every five years, with the current plan expiring in August of 2024.

The Planning Department received a \$190,000 grant from FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) through the New York State Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Services to fund development of the 2024 Broome County Hazard Mitigation Plan. Over the past year, the Planning Department with the assistance of its project consultants, Tetra Tech, Inc., worked to gather data and information from existing plans and mapping databases, organize meetings of the steering committee and planning partnership, and conduct various analyses and assessments. The Planning Department and its partners updated the hazards of concerns, updated the goals and objectives, began updating the jurisdictional annexes, and updated the risk assessment.



## Flood Task Force

Public engagement efforts were initiated in 2023. The project website was updated with new information including links to project meeting and meeting materials. Multiple surveys were developed and distributed to residents, stakeholders and neighboring communities to help collect input and ideas for future hazard mitigation efforts. Broome County received over 400 responses to provide input and ideas for future mitigation efforts. In addition, a story map was developed to present major highlights of the plan in a more accessible format for the general public.

Through the Broome County Flood Task Force, Planning continues to update and coordinate the impacted municipalities regarding options for levee accreditation/improvement and other flood related issues. The Flood

Task Force held its only meeting of 2023 on October 10. A presentation was given regarding the expansion of the Susquehanna Flood Warning and Response System (SFWRs) to encompass the City of Binghamton and neighboring communities.

Additionally, representatives from the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the NYSDEC spoke regarding the status of the levees in Broome County and the steps toward initiating and completing the flood insurance rate maps and a potential levee accreditation process. The USACE may perform a NFIP levee system evaluation at the request of a local sponsor, if USACE operates and maintains the levee system or if the levee is part of a current USACE project, pending funding availability and a commitment from the local communities to provide 50% of the cost.

In 2024, additional meetings of the Broome County Flood Task Force may be scheduled as new information and opportunities arise.



# AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

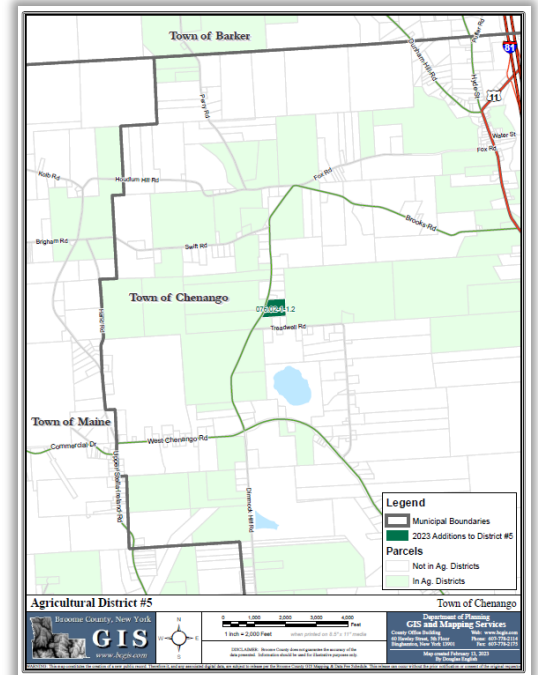
Broome County Planning works in many facets to support agriculture and agricultural economic development throughout the County, partnering significantly with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County (CCE). In 2023 the Planning Department continued to work as part of the Ag Task Force, led by CCE, to address issues surrounding agriculture and agricultural economic development in Broome County, and partnered with CCE on a number of trainings for municipal planning and zoning boards related to agricultural land uses. The Planning Department previously lead development of the County's Agriculture Economic Development Plan in partnership with CCE in 2019, and we continue to work together toward implementing the Plan.

A major role for the Planning Department is administration of the Agricultural Districts program. As part of this effort Planning coordinates meetings of the Broome County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB), works with CCE on accepting and reviewing applications for the district, research details of proposed additions, and performs other administrative tasks. In 2023, the main efforts under this program included carrying out the annual enrollment period.

## Annual Enrollment Period

While actions to modify the Agricultural Districts are reviewed and approved by the AFPB, Planning staff coordinates activities related to administration of the Agricultural District program in coordination with the assistance of CCE. By law, the County is required to hold an annual enrollment period to provide property owners with an opportunity to submit parcels for inclusion in the agricultural district and receive the protections. The Planning Department worked with the Legislature Department and CCE Broome to process the applications, hold a public hearing, complete the SEQR, and compile the information to submit to New York State for their official approval and integration into the official agricultural district map. In March 2023, a total of 14 additions totaling approximately 829 acres were added to Broome County Agricultural District 5.

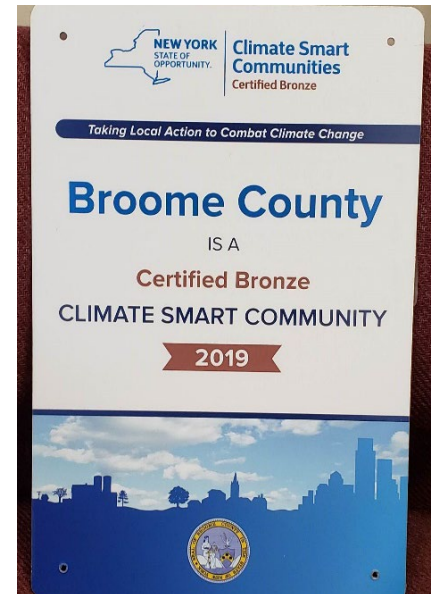
In the fall of 2023, the department worked closely with CCE and the Legislature staff on planning the next annual addition process to the agricultural districts which will be brought to the AFPB and the Broome County Legislature for review and approval in 2024.



# CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITIES

In 2019, Broome County was awarded bronze certification as a Climate Smart Community by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation along with the designation as a Clean Energy Community by NYSERDA. The status achieved under these programs gives Broome recognition as a leader in sustainability and an extra advantage when applying for state grant funds.

Recertification of our participation in the Climate Smart Communities Program is needed every five (5) years to remain certified. Broome County is due for recertification in September 2024. Over the past year, Planning staff has met with various county departments in order to gather pertinent information for submittal of an application for recertification. It is anticipated that Broome County will remain a Certified Bronze Climate Smart Community.



## Fleet Electrification

In mid-2022 Planning was recommended to NYSERDA by our Clean Energy Communities Coordinator to receive a free fleet electrification analysis by a consultant group called CADMUS. After being selected by NYSERDA, we were invited to participate in their Fleet Electrification Analysis Program, which provides technical assistance to municipalities that are interested in electrifying their vehicle fleet.

In 2023, Planning staff continued to provide data and related information to the consultant to facilitate completion of the analysis. The completed analysis was provided to Broome County in September 2023 and identified several ways we can manage our fleet better and move toward electrification. Specifically, 14 light-duty vehicles were identified as potential priorities for electrification in the near future. The analysis has been posted to our website for public information. Recommendations from the fleet electrification analysis are being incorporated into the 2024 Sustainable Operations Plan and the Energy action Plan.

## Sustainable Operations Plan and Energy Action Plan

In late 2022, Planning staff received grant funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) for strategic planning that will contribute toward the update to the Broome County Comprehensive Plan. A component of that grant will be devoted to development of a Sustainable Operations Plan and an Energy Action Plan. The general objective of these plans is to help the County and local municipalities to prepare for anticipated changes and opportunities at the state and federal level related to energy and infrastructure policies and investments as well as support development of sustainability components of the updated Broome County Comprehensive Plan. The Sustainable Operations Plan will create the framework for Broome County to direct County Operations toward a more resilient and energy efficient level of operations in the future, and the Energy Action Plan will provide information and guidance for local communities related to the energy infrastructure and land use impacts resulting from the changing energy landscape into the future. Both plans are being developed with consideration of existing and emerging state and federal regulations and initiatives.

A Request for Qualifications was released in early 2023 to solicit a consultant for development of the plans through 2023 into 2024. A consultant was selected and a kick-off meeting was held with the steering committee on August 28, 2023. Throughout the fall, Planning staff worked with the consultant and the various county departments to gather relevant plans, procedures, energy use data. This effort will continue through 2024.

The Broome County Sustainable Operations Plan and Energy Action Plan will be the first comprehensive planning effort completed for Broome County that examines how Broome County can prepare and position itself for the future in the context of climate resiliency and energy management. Plans will provide local and regional

data assessment as well as recommendations for how to prepare for the challenges to come. The purpose of this project is to provide a road map for how Broome County maintains levels of services to meet the needs of its citizens in the future. Through these efforts, Broome County is aiming to be in a better position to consider anticipated impacts of climate change policies and to obtain available funding for projects to improve our resiliency, specifically funding anticipated to be available over the next five to ten years.

## Sustainable Broome Environmental Education Initiative

Broome County Planning began its first official environmental education initiative in 2023, called Sustainable Broome. This initiative focuses on environmental education, communicating localized climate change effects, and promoting the sustainable and resilient programs, actions, and projects occurring across our County that aid in the adaptation to and mitigation of these climate change effects. Sustainable Broome kicked-off the year with releasing an educational flyer series, but staff quickly realized that there was a large amount of progress being completed at the different levels of government, non-profits, education institutions, and private sector, yet no centralized space to share these achievements. Thus, the Sustainable Broome Lunch & Learn Panelist series was created through collaborative efforts from partners at The Village of Johnson City, Southern Tier 8 Regional Planning Board, and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome. This series is centered around providing workshop-like sessions on a bimonthly basis that bring together community members and experts in the sustainability and resiliency spaces across the County. Sessions have a main sustainability focus area (following the Climate Smart Communities Pledge Element framework) where guest speakers present relevant projects, programs, research, and/or opportunities. The goal of this series is to provide local information about what is happening right in our backyard, how to get involved in sustainability efforts throughout our communities, and what steps each municipality and community member can take to decrease their impact on our interconnected-climate systems.

In 2023, the Sustainable Broome Lunch & Learn Panelist Series planning committee coordinated two sessions. Session details are below:

- “Creating Context: Broome’s Climate Future”- total of 4 presenters and 27 attendees
- “From Farm to Table: Broome County Food Systems”- total of 4 presenters and 33 attendees

## SUSTAINABLE BROOME LUNCH & LEARN PANELIST SERIES

HOSTED BY: THE BROOME COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

**SESSION #1  
AGENDA**

### CREATING CONTEXT: BROOME'S CLIMATE FUTURE

**11:30AM- 12:00pm:** Registrations

**12:00PM:** Welcome & Introductions

**12:10PM-12:30PM:** *Regional Climate Data & Trends,*   
Jessica Spaccio, NRCC Climatologist

**12:30PM-12:50PM:** *Binghamton2Degrees Initiative,*   
Dr. Andreas Pape, Binghamton University

**12:50PM-1:00PM:** Break

**1:00PM-1:20PM:** *Implications of Climate Migration,*   
Dr. Linda Shi, Cornell AAP

**1:20PM-1:40PM:** *State and Federal Funding Opportunities,*   
Diane Stefani, Climate Reality

**1:40PM-1:50PM:** Local Partner Sustainability Initiatives

**1:50PM-2:00PM:** Closeout Remarks and Next Session Info







## SUSTAINABLE BROOME

### THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY

**Climate Change? What's the issue?**  
The Earth's climate is changing. A buildup of greenhouse gases (GHG) in our atmosphere has caused the planet to rapidly warm, resulting in impacts felt throughout society, our ecosystems, and the environment with disproportionate effects on our most socially vulnerable populations.

**How are we experiencing Climate Change in Broome County?**  
Our region is directly experiencing increased temperatures, higher frequency and intensity of precipitation events, and higher risks of natural disasters. We will continue to experience greater environmental, economic, and social impacts from climate change unless mitigation and adaptation efforts are ramped up.

**EXTREME WEATHER**  
It is anticipated that Broome County will continue to experience increasing temperatures and heavy precipitation events with an increase in day hazards, such as snow, hail, ice or windstorms, thunderstorms, drought, flash floods, extreme heat and cold days, human health impacts, and utility failures. Over the past 20 years, nearly 30 natural disasters have been declared by the county, most of which relate to severe storm incidents.

**FLOODING**  
Historic flood events and climate projections show more frequent and intense flooding events for the region exposing new neighborhoods to flood risks. Communities may experience impacts such as infrastructure deterioration and failure, utility failures, power outages, water quality and supply concerns, and transportation delays, accidents, severe storms, and winter storms.

**15,314** Broome County residents are located within the 100-year floodplain leaving them at a high risk of flooding.

**SHIFTING SEASONS**  
Growing seasons are shifting across the region. Spring is arriving earlier, winters are shorter, and the number of freezing days is decreasing. These changes affect the timing of many life cycle events, such as when leaves bloom or when pollinators emerge. Agriculture is extremely sensitive to these shifts, and Southern Tier production and profitability is being impacted. Crops and livestock may be subject to high temperatures, leading to larger CO2 production and water needs; an earlier spring might lead to longer growing seasons, more abundant invasive species, pests and diseases, and earlier and longer allergy seasons.

**Nearly 500** farms provide \$19M to our county annual revenue through the production of dairy products, reared, and woodlands.



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# OCCUPANCY TAX

In 2023, the Director continued administration of the Hotel Motel Occupancy Tax Fund with assistance from the Planner. The total Hotel Motel Occupancy tax, a tax on stays in the County's hotels and motels, is 5%. Of this, 3% of funds go to the contract agencies for economic development and tourism. The remaining 2% is allotted for three purposes, economic development and marketing, brownfields, and the Small Community Fund. Expenditure of these funds is determined by the Hotel Motel Committee consisting of representatives from various County departments and officials. Planning provides administrative assistance to this committee through management of applications to the fund, coordination of the group, and management of the finances with the assistance of the Budget Director.

There are two major programs administered by the Planning Department through this fund, the Economic Development and Marketing Fund and the Small Community Fund. In addition, Planning provides guidance for expenditures through the Brownfields funding established under the program.

## **Economic Development and Marketing**

This fund supports projects anywhere in the County that can demonstrate a positive impact on the local economy and tourism. These may be projects that bring in visitors from other areas, improve community character, or support efforts to leverage private investment, among others. Projects, programs, and events that received Economic Development and Marketing funds from the fund in 2023 included Dicks Sporting Goods Open, Spiedie Fest, Luma and matching funds for Visit Binghamton's NYS tourism grant.

## **Small Community Fund**

This fund supports small projects to enhance community character or smaller contributions that leverage other funds for larger projects. The intent of this program is to highlight the importance of our diverse communities to the local economy. In 2023 the Small Community Fund was funded at the highest level ever, with \$1 million allocated, resulting in a record number of applications and projects. Projects funded in the 2023 rounds of the program included EMS equipment, generators, sports field improvements, parks amenity improvements, housing rehabilitation, trail enhancements, historic facility renovations, murals, and upgrades to social services facilities, among others.

Planning continues an effort to better streamline the programs and application process for projects funded through these programs. This effort will continue into 2024. We expect that this will establish a clearly outlined program for grantees and a manageable process for staff. Ultimately, Planning would like to work with Information Technology on development of an electronic grant submission portal into the future.

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# LOCAL LAND USE

## Town of Sanford Comprehensive Plan

The Broome County Planning Department offers support and technical assistance to local municipalities to write their comprehensive plans. By preparing a comprehensive plan, a community lays out its shared vision and builds consensus for public investment and regulatory policies. The plan can be used to protect resources, give validity to local land use decisions, guide infrastructure investments, support grant writing, and foster economic development.

In 2017, Broome County began working with the Town of Sanford to develop the Town's first Comprehensive Plan in over 30 years. After completing the draft plan and preparing for the final public hearing in 2018, the Town notified the County of their intention to pause these efforts, so they could direct their efforts on addressing a large-scale wind energy project proposed for the community. In late 2022, the Town established a new comprehensive plan committee and re-engaged the department to complete the comprehensive plan. Over the past year, the Planning Department worked to update the data and information in the plan and, at the Town's request, developed new sections on renewable energy and short-term rentals. The Planning Department is working on the final draft and anticipates the plan will be adopted by the Town Board in 2024.

## Municipal Training

New York State requires all zoning and planning board members to receive 4 hours of training each year. Planning organizes trainings each year to give local board members an opportunity to meet this training requirement and to educate local boards and officials of land use issues pertinent in our community. These continued in 2023. We also continue to make our training video recordings and PowerPoint presentations available on our website.

In Spring 2023, we partnered with the New York State Department of State (NYS DOS) and Coughlin & Gerhart LLP to present two in-person trainings: Zoning Board of Appeals Overview and Site Plan Review with the NYSDOS presenting and Broome County and Coughlin & Gerhart LLP hosting these trainings.

In Summer 2023, we worked with the Broome County Cornell Cooperative Extension to hold another three-part training series with trainings on the Broome County Agricultural Economic Development Plan, Balancing Renewable Energy and Agricultural Development, and Special Districts and Agriculture.

In Fall 2023, we partnered with the NYSDOS and Coughlin & Gerhart LLP to present two in-person trainings: 239 County Referral and the State Environmental Quality Review Short Environmental Assessment Form (SEQR SEAF) with the NYSDOS and Broome County presenting and Broome County and Coughlin & Gerhart LLP hosting these trainings.

## Land Use Reviews (239)

The Department has a legal obligation to conduct reviews and render advisory opinions on land-use proposals covered under NYS General Municipal Law 239 (l) and (m). The Department completed reviews and provided opinions on 187 projects in 2023.

## Broome County Construction Data Reports

The Department once again prepared the Construction Data Report in 2023. This report, available on Planning's website, provides an indicator of countywide growth and development patterns and trends, residential and

nonresidential building data from municipalities, and tables and charts documenting annual building permit activity within the municipalities.

## State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA)

Planning continued to complete SEQRA reviews and provide technical assistance to Broome County departments for the compliance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) as it pertains to County projects. In 2023, the Planning Department prepared the Environmental Assessment Forms for the Agricultural Districts Annual Enrollment, the Johnson City iDistrict Art Park Improvements at Jenison Park, and the AboveGrid Solar Project at the Broome County Airport, and the Chugnut Trail.

## Stormwater Management

Broome County is a member of the Broome-Tioga Stormwater Coalition (BTSC), a group of municipalities that collaborate to address local storm water issues and meet federal and state Storm water mandates. Planning staff works with other BTSC members on implementation and compliance by providing public education, opportunities for public participation, and training and outreach services.



A Planner currently serves as the Chair on the Coalition to represent the Planning Department along with a representative from the Engineering Division and representatives from each of the regulated communities. Along with Engineering, Planning documents activities related to implementation of Broome County's Stormwater Management Program Plan for the Annual Report required by New York State. The annual report is a compilation of the activities of all regulated municipalities under the state regulations, as well as Coalition wide activities for submittal to the NYSDEC.



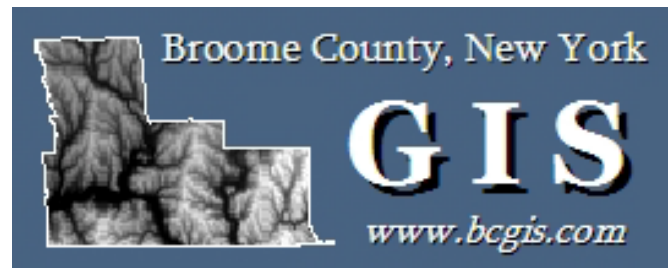
Planning most directly has a role in public education and participation activities required by the program, typically including attendance at local events, such as the annual Earth Fest, Porchfest, Luma Festival, Blues on the Bridge, and coordination of the annual Riverbank Cleanup. Planning continued to use resources from the BTSC's public education campaign, "Water from Rain", [www.waterfromrain.org](http://www.waterfromrain.org).



# GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

## GIS Portal Website and Mapping Applications

The GIS Portal website and mapping applications continue to be a highly-demanded online county resource. In 2023 the GIS Portal website received nearly 312,000 visits by nearly 99,000 unique users. This represents a 5.2% increase in visits and a 3.2% increase in unique users over 2022. The most viewed resource on the site was the *Parcel Mapper* with over 220,000 views (+10.3%). Parcel detail sheets saw another large increase in views over 2022 at over 155,000 (+18.8%). The *Election Mapper* saw a decrease in views at just over 2,100 (-50.0%), likely due to 2023 being an odd year election. PDF tax maps were viewed nearly 12,000 times (+10.5%). The COVID dashboards were no longer updated in 2023 so data related to those are not provided.



Other online GIS items of note: 2022 aerial photos were made available from NYS and included in the *Parcel Mapper*; an updated water bodies and streams layer was added to the *Parcel Mapper*; the demographic information app was updated to reference newer 2016 – 2020 American Community Survey data; the Construction Report dashboard was updated with 2022 data; new City Council District maps were added to the Map Library; the County Legislature Redistricting app was updated with adjusted population data.

## County Departments

The GIS Division supports nearly all county departments in some capacity with mapping, data, and analysis. Some highlights from individual departments include:

- **Emergency Services:** continued to assign all 911 addresses within the county; continued to support 911 dispatch mapping; added fire battalions and water features to dispatch mapping; created various fire coverage and fire quadrant maps; updated street and address data along 'old' Route 79 in Fenton/Barker in response to the new bridge and realignment of Route 79 over the Chenango River.
- **Sheriff's Office:** continued to provide weekly, monthly, and year-to-date maps and data for long term, strategic/administration planning; continued to provide access to online web maps using ArcGIS Online.
- **Security:** provided maps for various county events like the Dick's Open, Spedie Fest, and the Greater Binghamton Air Show.
- **Real Property:** continued to support tax mapping functions; continued to provide PDF tax maps and access to RPS data online through Image Mate Online from the GIS Portal website.
- **Planning & Economic Development:** continued to update 239 review information in the parcel data and the 239 review layer in the *Parcel Mapper*; provided various maps and/or data for different projects and grants; provided maps for the Sanford Comprehensive Plan; provided data for the Hazard Mitigation Plan; updated the GIS and mapping fee schedule for 2024; leased a new plotter to replace the existing plotter, which is still used for scanning purposes.
- **Health:** geocoded and provided various maps and data including COVID vaccine mapping, housing units by census tracts, and elevated lead levels mapping.
- **Elections/Legislature:** supported the court-ordered County Legislature redistricting process again; fulfilled various map and data requests for Elections and the Legislature; verified voter addresses for Elections;

updated the polling places layer; produced maps for the annual additions to agricultural district # 5 for the Legislature.

## City of Binghamton

In 2023 nearly 475 GIS projects were provided for the City of Binghamton. Some highlights include:

- *Police*: incidents and cases dashboard updated daily; continued to provide technical support to the City's Environmental Policing Task Force; continued to provide weekly, monthly, and year-to-date map, charts, and graphs for long term, strategic/administration planning; provided support for the City Crime Intelligence Center; utilized ArcGIS Online to create web maps for police use; participated in various meetings.
- *Planning*: provided mapping for various projects and grants; continued to provide updated data and server map services for the City's Building Blocks application; updated the local landmark layer; updated the zoning map with various edits.
- *Building & Code*: provided various maps and data; mapped code violations in relation to low-moderate income areas.

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# ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

The Broome County Environmental Management Council (EMC) serves as a citizen advisory board to county government on environmental matters. The EMC conducts environmental research and planning, reviews environmental plans, reports, and impact statements, and helps raise awareness through public participation and education programs. Planning provided technical, bookkeeping, and other support services. The EMC typically meets monthly. Planning generally provides administrative support to the EMC through meeting organization, membership administration, and other tasks.



The annual EMC Riverbank Cleanup went forward in October with volunteer members of the Riverbank Cleanup Committee organizing and holding the event. Tasks included pairing groups with locations and coordination for trash collection. The event helps promote the preservation of water quality and helps the County to meet our requirements under state and federal stormwater regulations. This year's event was the largest in recent years with a total of 25 groups, 24 sites, 256 volunteers, 177 bags filled totaling a collection and removal of over 2.4 tons of trash.

In addition, the EMC continued with the two working committees created in 2021. One of these committees focused on Climate Smart Communities as the EMC is Broome's officially designated Climate Smart Community Task Force. The goal of this group is to evaluate opportunities to move the County forward in our climate action goals as a bronze certified Climate Smart Community. In 2023, Planning staff worked with this committee to ensure the recertification of the County as a Bronze Climate Smart Community by providing assistance and recommendations for 2024. The second group is the Zero Waste Committee focusing on opportunities to advise on opportunities to enhance waste management policies and programs that provide alternative outlets for waste (through recycling, composting and other means), thus reducing the volume of trash in our community. In 2023, this committee worked with the Broome County Solid Waste Division to submit comments on the New York Product Stewardship and Extended Producer Responsibility Bill listing how this bill will both negatively and positively affect our County, encouraging needed changes to the bill itself, and encouraging the Broome County Legislature and Executive to support such a bill.

2023 was a restructuring year for the EMC. Members and Planning Staff spent many hours reimagining the identity and position of the EMC within Broome County along with making necessary edits to the Charter and Code, which is awaiting approval by the County Legislature. Changes to membership numbers and make-up was the main focus of these changes.



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# SUSQUEHANNA HERITAGE AREA

The Broome County Planning Department in partnership with the Tioga County Economic Development and Planning Department, provides administrative and technical support for the Susquehanna Heritage Area. The Planning Department implements the goals (preservation, education, recreation, revitalization, marketing, and partnerships) and recommendations of the *2010 Susquehanna Heritage Area Management Plan*. The current plan builds upon previous plans that have been developed since the Susquehanna Heritage Area was recognized by the New York State legislature in 1982.



The goals of the plan are to identify, promote, and develop the historic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources of an expanded Susquehanna Heritage Area, encompassing Broome County and Tioga County. The plan guides the implementation of programs and projects to foster economic revitalization and enhance quality of life throughout the region.

## Grant Funding

The two counties and all 39 municipalities and non-profit agencies are eligible to apply for New York State funding under the NYS Environmental Protection Fund Heritage Area funding. Planning administers the activities of the Susquehanna Heritage Area Commission that is responsible for reviewing and recommending projects for funding under this program, as well as those applying for historic preservation and parks grants under the broader program. Planning conducts outreach out to the municipalities and nonprofit agencies regarding the grants, facilitates meetings with the commission, advisory board, and applicants, provides technical assistance, reviews projects for consistency with the SHA Plan, and prepares the resolutions of endorsement and support letters for the applications.

In 2023, the Planning Department coordinated the review for 4 projects: Village of Johnson City Boland Park Design Plan, Southern Tier Zoological Center Interpretive Center Complex, Discoveries In Sculpture, Inc. Randall House Adaptive Re-use, and Goodwill Theatre Inc. Structural Integrity of Historic Firehouse.

## Path Through History Weekend

The Planning Department provides direction and coordination for the local participation in the *New York State Path Through History Weekends* – a bi-annual statewide event to promote the historical and cultural resources of New York State. Planning staff partner with Visit Binghamton to provide technical assistance and direction for the local programming and reach out to Broome County municipalities and historical and cultural groups to garner their interest and participation. Planning, GIS, and Print Shop staff design the interactive map, handout, poster, and event descriptions designed to promote these sites and events and to raise awareness of the historical and cultural resources of Broome County and the Susquehanna Heritage Area. Broome County Planning uses the Broome County Planning Department website to promote these two annual events and the Broome County Executive Office hosts the press conference held at Roberson Museum Mansion or at another participating site.

For the October 2023 Path Through History Weekend, the Broome County Planning Department partnered with the renowned local artist Aubrey Clark, the Endicott Visitor Center, the Goodwill Theatre Inc., and the Broome County Custodial Department to bring the Aubrey Clark murals from the Goodwill Theatre Inc. storage to the

Endicott Visitor Center for display. These vibrant murals depict some of the treasured historic and cultural sites of the Susquehanna Heritage Area.

The Broome County Planning Department and Print Shop helped to promote the national 2023 Carousel and Band Organ Rally held at Highland Park in Summer 2023 and sponsored by the Endicott Rotary, Town of Union, Village of Johnson City, BING Visit Binghamton, Broome County, and the Carousel Organ Association of America. This event brought visitors and carousel enthusiasts from near and far across the country to enjoy this celebration of our historic carousels. Broome County met with the sponsors to discern their promotional needs and the Print Shop developed a poster that highlighted the Broome County Carousel Circuit, Village of Johnson City Annual Carousel Festival, and the Carousel Band Rally.

## **Ride the Carousel Circuit**

For more than 25 years Broome County has coordinated with the local municipal parks departments for the Ride the Carousel Circuit Program. Planning provides the informational brochures and jeweled buttons that serve as tokens for participants in the program. We also partner with Visit Binghamton to promote the program annually.

## **Municipal and Non-Profit Representation**

The Susquehanna Heritage Area Commission and Advisory Board are comprised of representatives of the City of Binghamton, Village of Endicott, Village of Johnson City, Town of Colesville, Broome County, Tioga County, Visit Binghamton, Goodwill Theatre, Inc., Preservation Association of the Southern Tier (PAST), Broome County Arts Council, Tioga County Historical Society, and the local historian and landscape architect profession. Lora Zier serves as the Broome County Program Administrator, Commission Secretary, and Commission Representative for the Broome County Executive.

## **Commission and Advisory Board Meetings and Membership**

In 2023, the Planning Department partnered with Tioga County to hold in-person meetings which included discussion of the new grant opportunities and projects going forward in the new year and plans to update the Susquehanna Heritage Area Management Plan Amendment.

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# REGIONAL COLLABORATION

The Planning Department has taken an active role in collaborating and ensuring that our needs are met at a regional level as well. One of the primary means of regional collaboration is through participation in efforts spearheaded by the Southern Tier 8 Regional Planning Development Board. The Director of Planning is a sitting board member and participates in several of the related committees and groups. On an annual basis, along with the other regional Planning Directors, we work to identify projects to be funded through the federal Appalachian Regional Commission program and provide guidance for other federal funding and programming managed by ST8.

## Appalachian Regional Commission

The Director of Planning sits on the ST8 Planning Committee along with the other local Planning Directors in our region. One task of this group is to assist ST8 with implementing the local distribution of funds under the federal Appalachian Regional Commission program, intended to support investments in the region's economic and community development. Each applicant to the program must provide a letter of support from the Planning Director from the counties impacted by their proposed project. Annually, representatives assist in outreach to potential grant applicants and reviewing projects for consistency with local goals, feasibility, impact and other criteria.

## CEDS

The Director of Planning also sits on ST8's committee that drives development and implementation of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for our region. The committee consists of representatives from each county with a role in economic development. In Broome this includes representatives from the Leadership Alliance (IDA and Chamber of Commerce) and Broome-Tioga Workforce in addition to Planning.

## Broadband

In the wake of the COVID pandemic, with remote work and learning becoming a necessity for everyone, accessible internet access became a priority from the standpoints of economic development, resiliency, and equity on a nationwide scale. Locally, under the leadership of ST8 Broome County has partnered with neighboring counties to work together through the Regional Broadband Collaborative. The group works together on assessing local broadband needs, identifying the barriers to accurate service data and funding, and monitoring state and federal broadband policies that may impact our ability to make progress in broadband expansion.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Broome County Planning Department understands the importance of community engagement, and values the opinions of our residents, businesses, and other organizations. In 2023, Broome County conducted the following public engagement activities for various projects:



- iDistricts Fiber Enhancements and Smart Cities Plan
  - Focus Groups – 5 community stakeholder meetings
- Housing Needs Assessment
  - Public Survey – 1,054 responses
  - Focus Groups – 14 community stakeholder interviews
  - Public Workshop – 36 attendees
- Broome County Hazard Mitigation Plan
  - Public Survey – 441 responses
  - Neighboring Communities Survey – 11 responses
  - Community Stakeholder Survey – 24 responses

## Social Media

Over the course of the past year, the Planning Department's social media page, made 70 posts that were viewed 28,701 times and engaged 2,741 people. We will continue to use social media and other public outreach tools to engage our community.

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# BOARDS AND MEMBERSHIPS

Planning staff served on the following boards and committees in 2023:

- Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board
- Agricultural Task Force
- Aging Futures Partnership
- BMTS Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee
- BMTS Planning Committee
- Broome County Community Health Assessment Steering Committee
- Broome County Environmental Management Council
- Broome County Flood Task Force
- Broome Tioga Stormwater Coalition
- Census Complete Count Committee
- Communities Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD)
- Department of Public Art
- Johnson City Downtown Revitalization Initiative Local Planning Committee
- Local Emergency Planning Committee
- NYS DEC Region 7 Open Space Committee
- Southern Tier 8 Regional Planning Development Board
- Susquehanna Heritage Area Commission and Advisory Board
- New York State Path Through History Local Committee
- Broome County Climate Change Summit Planning Committee