



Broome County Comprehensive Plan

Building our Future

The cultural resources of Broome County help create a sense of place, serve as a marketing tool to attract and retain businesses and residents, and generate economic spinoff. For example, it is estimated by Americans for the Arts, that the typical attendee of an arts event spends over \$24 per person for each event *beyond the cost of admission*. For residents of the same county as the event, the figure is \$17 per person, and it is more than double that amount (nearly \$40) for each non-local attendee. Spending on meals, snacks, and refreshments is the largest single expense of attendees at arts events.

Historic and Cultural Preservation

There is inherent value in our historic resources. They can encourage sound development practices that respect and enhance the urban and rural character of our region. Over 84% of the respondents to the comprehensive plan survey thought that preserving our cultural and architectural heritage was a major (44%) or minor (40%) opportunity. Broome County has a diverse and nationally significant cultural and architectural heritage that has been recognized through various programs and initiatives for decades. In 1976, as a bi-centennial tribute, the City of Binghamton enacted legislation for a Commission on Architecture and Urban Design to support and encourage recognition and preservation of significant historic sites and structures. Several important structures were individually listed on the National and State Historic Registers that included the Broome County Courthouse, Roberson Mansion, First Presbyterian Church, Christ Church, South Washington Street Bridge and others. Eventually this commission established design review procedures for deliberating on any designated landmark or public property proposal within the city.

From the Susquehanna Heritage Area Management Plan Update: The natural resources of the Susquehanna Heritage Area form the backdrop and underpinning of human civilization of this region. Residents of the past two centuries altered and sought to tame this landscape to support their needs and interests. A quiet agricultural region eventually gave way to a network of cities and towns connected by roads and rail lines. Though human occupation of the past 200 years has often been at odds with the natural features of the landscape, progress has been made in preserving and conserving areas of unspoiled forest, significant natural beauty, and valuable habitats for native species.

For millennia prior to non-Native settlement, Native Americans lived in and traveled through this region, leaving behind artifacts as evidence of their presence. The most recent Native American civilization was the Iroquois Confederacy. Their concept of land ownership and use of resources were highly attuned to the natural world and completely foreign to European settlers. Europeans initially came as missionaries, followed closely by traders, who continued to inhabit the region until well past the end of the American Revolution. As contact with adjacent European settlers increased and the region plunged into war, sharp conflicts arose over land ownership that led to bloodshed on both sides.

Industry has played an important role within the Susquehanna Heritage Area region since the mid-1800's. Small-scale, localized early mills and lumbering operations gave way to concentrated, large scale manufacturing and mass production after the Civil War. The jobs and prosperity brought by industrial concerns created much of the built environment visible in riverfront communities today: grand public buildings, industrial complexes, ornate commercial and office buildings, streets of fine mansions, immigrant enclaves, and neighborhoods created as company towns. The twentieth century saw the merging of companies to form larger conglomerates and the rise of numerous innovative technology companies in the region.



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During the 1980's Historic Districts were established in Broome County. Historic districts acknowledge a group of buildings and properties that have historic or architectural significance. According to the National Register of Historic Places, a historic district is a defined area, "possessing a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united by past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development." National Register Historic District designation does not create any property restrictions and the only property protections are limited to actions involving a federal or state government or agency.

Within Broome County there are seven designated National Register Historic Districts. The seven districts are all focused along the primary river corridor where a vast majority of the historic resources in the region are concentrated. The National Register Historic Districts represent a range of architectural styles, time periods, historical themes, and areas of significance. They are as follows:

- The Abel Bennett Tract Historic District in Binghamton is the most recent district addition within the County, listed in February 2008. The district is recognized as an example of a late nineteenth to early twentieth century residential subdivision.
- The Court Street Historic District in Binghamton encompasses 33 acres and includes 87 buildings, including Courthouse Square. This district represents significant civic and commercial architectural styles and trends from 1825-1949.
- The Railroad Terminal Historic District in Chenango Street and North/South Depot Street area of Binghamton includes 19 buildings representing the period between 1875 and 1949. The buildings reflect the City's history associated with transportation and industry.
- The State Street-Henry Street Historic District, also in Binghamton, encompasses seven acres and includes 20 buildings. The district includes a Federal Courthouse and Post Office, as well as an arts district and vernacular early twentieth century commercial structures.
- The Cyrus Gates Homestead Historic District in the town of Maine includes 1,300 acres and seven buildings. The farmstead is historically significant from the perspectives of social history, architecture, and agriculture.
- The Windsor Village Historic District is in the heart of the Village of Windsor and includes 70 buildings and 1 structure, covering over 550 acres. The





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significance of the district is related to architecture, exploration, and settlement from 1800 through 1924.

- The newest district, approved in 2011, is the Village of Johnson City Historic District. The district is generally bounded by Corliss Avenue, Arch Street, Main Street, Lester Avenue and Helen Drive.

In addition, there is one thematic National Register District in Broome County. Although not geographically defined like the national historic districts listed above, the six carousels in the Triple Cities are listed as a thematic National Register Historic District.

Themes of the Susquehanna Heritage Area:

1. Natural Resources and Harnessing Nature

- Hills, Valleys and Waterways: The Topographical Landscape
- Impact Upon the Land
- The Early Agricultural Landscape
- From Mixed Farming to Specialization
- Scenic and Natural Beauty: The Emerging Conservation Ethic

2. Native Americans in the Upper Susquehanna

- Remains of a Lost Civilization: Archaic to Woodland
- Preserving a Stronghold: The Iroquois Confederacy
- Joseph Brant and the Revolution
- Post-Revolutionary Frontier

3. Valley of Opportunity

- The Early Forest Industries
- Rise of the Factory Economy
- The World Comes to Work
- Welfare Capitalism and Labor Practices
- Valley of Innovation
- Challenges of a Changing World

In addition to the six National Register Historic Districts, and the one thematic National Register Historic District, there are three active locally designated historic districts in the City of Binghamton. They are Court Street, State and Henry and the Rail Terminal District. Locally designated historic districts can provide the greatest level of legal protection for historic properties as land use decisions in New York State are made at the local level. As a result, local historic district designation can also be the most difficult designation to garner public support, as some property owners are resistant to accepting any additional requirements or restrictions on their property, even for the sake of community and building preservation.

There is one State registered district in the County. The Rivercrest Historic District in Vestal was approved for state registry designation in 2009. It includes 28 houses along Vestal Parkway that remain from a planned community developed in the 1930s.

Beginning in 1979, the New York State Urban Cultural Park Program (now called Heritage Areas) also began to establish local districts and historic preservation



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ordinances in Johnson City and Endicott. Hundreds of sites were recognized as within local districts in Binghamton, Johnson City and Endicott and many individual sites were cited as primary resources that contributed to the community and industrial heritage of our county.

The Susquehanna Heritage Area extends beyond preservation of historically significant buildings and neighborhoods. The Susquehanna Heritage Area program is a regional strategy to enhance historic communities and landscapes while encouraging economic development. From the recently completed Susquehanna Heritage Area Management Plan Amendment, “The goal of the Susquehanna Heritage Area is to use the historic, cultural and natural resources of Broome and Tioga Counties to strengthen regional identity, enhance local quality-of-life, support the local economy, and promote stewardship. This goal is achieved through the partnership and coordinated activities of a wide range of local and regional organizations with technical support from the New York State Heritage Area Program.” The Susquehanna Heritage Area Commission seeks to achieve this goal through six interrelated efforts: 1) Preservation, 2) Education, 3) Recreation, 4) Revitalization, 5) Marketing and 6) Partnerships.

In 2011, the New York State legislature signed into law an expansion of the original Susquehanna Heritage Area to include all of Broome and Tioga Counties. The benefits to communities that participate in the program include New York State grant eligibility, technical assistance for projects that address the program goals, and regional marketing of community assets that support businesses, organizations, public facilities and attractions.

The Susquehanna Heritage Area recognizes a wide variety of resources found in each community that reflect the region’s inherent qualities such as its primary destinations, historic museums and societies, galleries and performing arts venues, agri-tourism sites and the abundant passive and active recreational opportunities in local, county and state public lands.

In the City of Binghamton all site plan approval applications for parcels within an historic district and for identified resources within the 1996 Urban Cultural Park boundaries are required to be reviewed by the City of Binghamton Commission on Architecture and Urban Design. The City of Binghamton is also a Certified Local Government community.

In 2010, the Vestal Town Board approved a Historic Preservation Ordinance for the Town of Vestal and the establishment of a Historic Preservation Commission. In 2011, a preservation consultant was hired by the Town to complete a town-wide



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Reconnaissance Level Historic Resources Survey. The survey identified 20 properties and 1 district as eligible for listing on the State and National Register of Historic Places. As of 2012, Vestal has a number of local landmarks and State and National Register properties. Vestal became a Certified Local Government in 2011. Pursuant to this designation, the Vestal Historic Preservation Commission reviews Certificates of Appropriateness for all properties.

Individual Historic Buildings, Structures, and Sites

Within Broome County there are 42 individual listings on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the nation's historic buildings, sites, structures, and objects that are considered worth preserving. It is intended as one tool to assist in the coordination and support of public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic resources. The National Register list provides a solid baseline for identifying key, priority historic resources within the County that may be of interest to visitors.

There are National Register listed buildings and sites throughout the Broome County, with the greatest concentration in the City of Binghamton. In addition to nationally designated historic sites, a thorough inventory of historic resources, both nationally and locally significant, was conducted for the City of Binghamton, Village of Endicott, and Village of Johnson City in association with the original Susquehanna Urban Cultural Park (now Heritage Area) Management Plan and its 1996 update. The 1996 Management Plan identified a total of 129 historic resources in the City of Binghamton (58 resources), Village of Johnson City (42 resources), and Village of Endicott (29 resources). Johnson City does have a local historic preservation ordinance that allows for local historic designations as well as review of projects, but only a few individual resources have been officially designated.

The list of buildings and sites inventoried to date is not fixed. Communities, individuals, and groups throughout the community are consistently striving to add resources to the National Register and to existing and proposed historic districts. Only a small portion of the County has been surveyed and there are a large number





of historical resources that may still be identified.

Historic properties that are publicly owned, or held by a non-profit, are eligible for State and Federal grants for restoration. For-profit entities that own historic properties are eligible for potentially lucrative Federal and State Historic tax credits. In addition, homeowners can now use state tax credits for property rehabilitation if it is listed on the National Register, or is a contributing site in a National Register historic district, and located within a distressed census tract.

Nationwide, tax credits are being used to make historic preservation financially feasible on large scale investments and smaller mixed used developments. To make it easier to access these credits, Broome County completed a Multiple Resource Survey on the industrial properties in Broome County in 2012. This survey work can be used by property owners wishing to apply for historic tax credits.

Community Facilities

Broome County is fortunate to have a wealth of community and cultural facilities and institutions. One of the primary strengths of the area cited by the Broome County Arts Council during their stakeholder meeting was the quality of the performing arts in this area. Some facilities are considered primary destinations because they draw people from outside the region, are visitor-ready in terms of having regular, seasonal or event-specific posted hours of operation and have some level of guest amenities. These primary destinations are:

- Museums and Cultural Attractions

Binghamton Zoo at Ross Park: The Binghamton Zoo at Ross Park is located on 90 acres of land on Morgan Road in the City of Binghamton. The zoo opened in 1875, making it the 5th oldest zoo in the nation. The zoo is only open seasonally from April through October and offers education programs, guided tours and events all year by appointment.

Roberson Museum & Science Center: Roberson Museum and Science Center is located at 30 Front Street in the city of Binghamton. Roberson Museum and Science Center is an accredited museum under both the American Association of Museums and the Association of American Science and Technology Centers. The museum campus houses the restored Roberson Mansion, the Decker Life Science Center, a modern pottery studio known as Clayworks, the restored mansion across Front Street known as the Decker Arts and Cultural Center, the Binghamton Visitor Center and a digital planetarium.



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Kopernik Observatory & Science Center: The Kopernik Observatory & Science Center opened in 1974 to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the birth of Mikolaj Kopernik, the man known to the world as Copernicus. The facility is located on Underwood Road in Vestal. Kopernik is the first science laboratory facility in New York State designed for K-12 teachers, students, and their families. Its mission is to offer hands-on learning and exploration using advanced astronomical equipment.

Discovery Center of the Southern Tier: The Discovery Center of the Southern Tier is located in Ross Park in the City of Binghamton. The Discovery Center was established to develop and promote the well-being of children in the Southern Tier through participatory programming. It is a hands-on interactive museum for children and family.

Historic Carousels: One of the best known attractions of Broome County are the six hand carved carousels that continue to operate for free each summer. Donated by George F. Johnson between 1919 and 1934, the carousels attract visitors from the region and across the country. The carousels are located in parks in Binghamton, Johnson City, Endicott and the town of Union .

- Recreational Facilities

Chenango Valley State Park: Chenango Valley State Park is the only state park in Broome County. Located in the town of Fenton, the park is over 950 acres and has 185 campsites, 24 cabins, an 18-hole golf course, picnicking, fishing, boat rentals, trails, biking, and cross country skiing.

Otsiningo Park: Otsiningo Park was built by the New York State Department of Transportation and improved and maintained by Broome County Parks. The park has 7.3 miles of walking/biking trails, community gardens, playgrounds, softball, soccer and volleyball. The park is heavily attended, with approximately 1.5 million visits per year. Otsiningo is host to the annual Spiedie Fest and Balloon rally which brings approximately 100,000 paying visitors to the park.

- Performing Arts and Major Event Venues

Broome County Forum: The Broome County Forum Theatre is a restored vaudeville house that is the home to the Binghamton Philharmonic Orchestra's Pops Series, the Tri-Cities Opera, and the Broadway Theatre League. The theater



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has 1,527 seats and is located at 236 Washington Street in downtown Binghamton.

Anderson Center for the Arts: The Anderson Center for the Arts is a complex of three theaters on the campus of Binghamton University. The Watters Theater holds 558, and the Chamber Hall seats 408. The largest theater in the center is the Osterhout Concert Theater. The rear wall of the Osterhout is a retractable glass panel wall that can be opened onto an outdoor amphitheater extension. Indoors, this theater holds 1,170 with an additional 1,500 open-air seats when the rear wall is retracted. The Anderson Center was opened in 1985.

Veteran's Memorial Arena: The Broome County Veterans Memorial Arena is a 5,000 seat arena when configured for hockey, and this can grow to 7,000 with the floor seating in place. It was built in 1973 as a result of a nationwide design competition, and has served as a venue for a wide variety of sporting events, trade shows, concerts and community events. The Arena is now home to the Binghamton Senators of the American Hockey League.

NYSEG Stadium: NYSEG Stadium is a dedicated baseball stadium located in downtown Binghamton. The park is the home field of the Binghamton Mets of the double-A Eastern League. The ballpark opened in 1992 and has a seating capacity of 6,012 fans. The seating is divided into box seats, reserved grandstands, and six luxury boxes. The stadium was known as simply Binghamton Municipal Stadium for its first nine years of existence, but in 2001, the naming rights were sold to the New York State Electric and Gas company, a division of Energy East.

Binghamton University Events Center: The Events Center is a multipurpose facility on the Binghamton University campus that hosts everything from banquets and trade fairs to NCAA athletics. Opened in 2004, the Events Center has 156,000 square feet of floor space. Seating ranges from 5,500 for athletic events such as basketball up to 8,000 when the full floor seating is used.

- **Susquehanna Heritage Area Visitor Centers**

Binghamton Visitor Center: The Binghamton Visitor Center is located on the Front Street campus of the Roberson Museum and Science Center. The Binghamton Visitor Center has interactive computer kiosks, a changing exhibit gallery and a 50-seat theater. The gallery focuses on the industrial development of the region and the architectural, social and cultural heritage of the community. The



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Binghamton Visitor Center was opened in 1996. Annual visitation is approximately 45,000 on average.

Endicott Visitor Center: The Endicott Visitor Center was opened in 2003 in Old Colonial Hall, a historic building located at 300 Lincoln Avenue in the village. The building functions not only as an orientation point for visitors, but also as a community meeting facility. Annual visitation averages approximately 10,000 people per year.

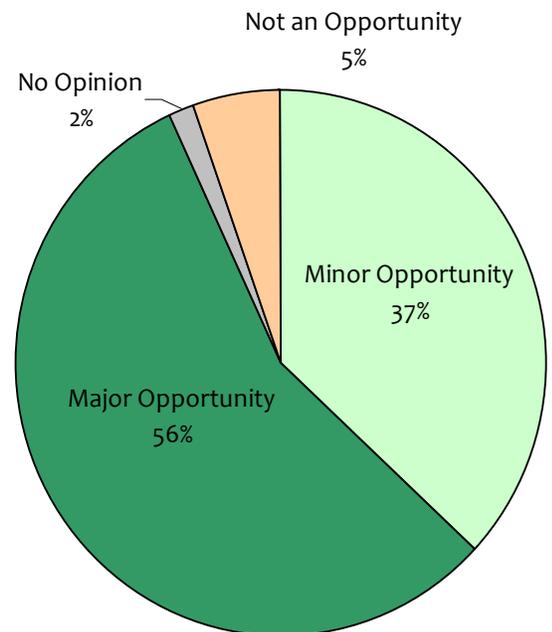
In addition to the primary destinations, there is an abundance of secondary sites that either serve smaller, niche audiences or have not grown enough yet to be a primary destination. These include 25 art galleries, performing arts centers such as the Cider Mill Playhouse, the Endicott Performing Arts Center (EPAC), the Schorr Family Firehouse Stage, Little Theater at Broome Community College and the Know Theater, and museums such as TechWorks! and the Bundy Museum. These facilities are overwhelmingly concentrated in the urban core, but there are notable exceptions in the outlying villages such as Windsor Whip Works (Village of Windsor) and Deposit State Theatre (Village of Deposit).

Several communities in the County have sought to capitalize on the arts and culture for economic development by fostering shopping and cultural districts. By branding and marketing themselves, these areas draw visitors to clusters of small shops, restaurants or galleries. Three of the most successful of these ventures are the State Street Artist's Row in Binghamton, which is the site of a monthly First Friday Art Walk, Little Italy in Endicott which hosts an annual St. Anthony's Feast Day, and the Goodwill Theatre District in Johnson City, a growing collection of performing arts venues, and Binghamton's Clinton Street Antique Row, a mile-long collection of antique shops and second hand furniture dealers. In each of these cases, the host community has provided some level of support through marketing, streetscape improvements, and financial assistance.

Farmers Markets

Broome County residents have a strong interest in farmer's markets and farm stands. On the comprehensive plan survey, 93% of respondents

Preserving Agriculture and Promoting Farm Stands and Farmer's Markets





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thought that preserving agriculture and promoting farm stands and farmer's markets was a major (56%) or minor (37%) opportunity. There are currently nine small, seasonal farmers markets in Broome County. Six are concentrated in the Triple Cities area, with outlying markets located in the villages of Windsor, Whitney Point, and Deposit. The markets typically open in late May or early June and run through October. Each market has either a one or two-day operating schedule with limited hours of operation. The markets offer a variety of fruits and vegetables, herbs, meat, flowers, homemade soaps and crafts, wines, baked goods, jam, honey, and maple syrup.

In 2009, Broome County Planning hired Market Ventures, Inc., a specialty consulting firm that focuses on public and farmer's markets, to assess the feasibility of a year-round regional farmer's market for this area. The Market Ventures report covered market research of supply and demand, competitive analysis, research into comparable facilities around the country, site selection and design description, recommendation of a management structure, and a financial analysis. Their conclusion was that there is sufficient consumer demand and a large enough pool of interested vendors to make a year round Farmer's Market at Otsiningo Park a success. Their report can be viewed at gobroomecounty.com/planning/pubs Based on this report, Broome County Planning began preparing grant applications to build the facility.

In close collaboration with local farmers, Cornell Cooperative Extension and a representative of the Statewide Association of Farmer's Markets, Broome County Planning engaged Keystone Associates to prepare a conceptual plan for the Farmer's Market in Otsiningo Park. The final conceptual plan calls for 36 vendor slots, a 400 square foot retail store component, and an area that can potentially be used for a commercial kitchen. It will be constructed adjacent to the existing rest rooms in the northern end of Otsiningo Park which formerly served as a NYSDOT rest stop.

Broome County Planning secured a \$400,000 grant from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation towards the cost of construction of the market. Construction is expected to start in 2013. The regional farmer's market will not replace any of the existing seasonal markets except for the one currently operating in Otsiningo Park.

Additional agri-tourism and agri-businesses resources are discussed in 'Working Landscapes'.



Special Events

There are numerous primary and secondary events held throughout the County which honor our heritage and exhibit our recreational assets. The primary events are characterized by being ongoing over a long period of time, have an established place in the calendar, draw tens of thousands of visitors including a substantial number from outside the area, and have a regional and even national name recognition. The primary special events in the County are:

- Dick's Sporting Goods Open: This event is part of the Professional Golf Association (PGA) Champions tour. It is traditionally held in June each year at the En-Joie Golf Course in Endicott, which is part of the legacy of Endicott-Johnson. The Dick's Open has changed over the years from a PGA tournament event to being part of the 'Champions' tour of former PGA golfers aged 50 and over. The Dick's Open now hosts a popular Friday night concert. The organizers do not release attendance figures for the five day of the event.
- Spiedie Fest and Balloon Rally: The annual Spiedie Fest and Balloon rally began as a Spiedie sandwich cooking competition in 1983, and has grown into a primary event which is attended by upwards of 100,000 visitors. The Spiedie Fest has numerous vendors, a large concert and hot air balloon launches over the course of the three day event. It is held annually on a weekend in August at Otsiningo Park, a county-operated park just north of Binghamton.
- Chris Thater Memorial Race: The Broome County STOP-DWI program sponsors an annual bicycle and running event centered around Recreation Park in Binghamton. The Thater races bring in more than 1,000 elite athletes from 20 countries and 30 states. In addition to the competition, the event has bands, exhibits and vendors. Attendance is approximately 10,000.
- Holiday Classic Basketball Tournament: For 20 years, the Holiday Classic Basketball Tournament has promoted an anti-substance abuse and anti-drunk driving message for student athletes. High schools from across the country have sent teams to compete in this 3-day event. The tournament takes place in the week between Christmas and New Year's each year, and attracts approximately 10,000 attendees including athletes. The Holiday Classic is held at the Broome County Veterans Memorial Arena.
- Tournament of Champions: A sister event to the Holiday Classic is the Tournament of Champions. This softball tournament for female athletes has taken place the first week of July each year for over a decade. There are approximately 4,000 attendees, including 700 athletes, for this 3 day event. The Tournament of Champions is held at the County-owned BAGSAI softball complex in the town of Dickinson.



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In addition to the primary special events, the community hosts a number of smaller events which showcase our cultural and ethnic heritage. These include, the LGT Tennis Challenger, Two Rivers Ethnic Festival, Broome County Fair in Whitney Point, July Fest in Downtown Binghamton, Apple Fest in Endicott, Carousel Days in Johnson City, the Window on the Arts in Windsor, Binghamton Bridge Pedal, the Blues on the Bridge in Binghamton, and the Deposit Lumberjack Festival. These events enjoy varying degrees of support by the local and county government including financial assistance and staff time to aid with organizing the event.