# SENECA FALLS

## Strategic Plan for Economic Development & Commercial Revitalization Plan

**May 2007**

camoin associates
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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# Executive Summary

The Town and Village of Seneca Falls commissioned Camoin Associates (CA) to prepare a Plan that will guide the community in pro-actively building a vibrant and diverse economy. An Economic Development Committee comprised of two Town Councilpersons, two Village Trustees and three local residents oversaw this planning process and provided guidance and feedback to CA.

Based on the *2006 Comprehensive Plan* and research conducted during this economic development planning process, CA worked with the Committee to devise a comprehensive economic development vision that distinguishes Seneca Falls' from its competitors by building on its unique characteristic as home to the birthplace of the women's rights movement. This vision contemplates much more than just using women's history as a tourism attraction. It is intended to serve as a foundation that the community can use to brand itself as the international center for women's growth and development and around which it can build a set of activities and programs which will be attractive to innovative people and companies, to forward-thinking CEOs, to visitors seeking inspirational experiences, to artists and musicians, the list goes on and on. ***The following statement reflects what the community hopes to look like after pursuing this vision for ten years:***

*"In 2017, Seneca Falls is recognized internationally as a center for education and activities related to women's history, growth, development and human rights. Companies, large and small, share and support our community's focus on the advancement of women, while maintaining our exceptional quality of life. Travelers from around the world learn about women's roles in history and discover how they themselves can continue a heritage of contribution. Visitors can experience the legacy of the women's rights movement by patronizing the numerous museums, inns, restaurants, shops, spas, wineries and businesses supporting those committed to women's achievements."*

CA also worked with the Committee to devise economic development and commercial revitalization goals in line with the vision. The goals and corresponding actions included in this Plan are organized as follows:

*Part I: Strategic Plan for Economic Development*
1. Set up a Structure for Economic Development
2. Build Regional Partnerships
3. Establish Seneca Falls' Brand: International Center for Women's Growth & Development
4. Help Existing Businesses Grow
5. Attract New Businesses
6. Improve Tourism Marketing & Visitor Attraction
7. Improve Quality of Place

*Part II: Commercial Revitalization Plan*
8. Improve Land Use & Regulatory Controls
9. Carry out Marketing & Programmatic Initiatives for Commercial Revitalization
10. Focus on Specific Areas for Commercial Revitalization
11. Improve Housing Stock

The goals and actions included in both parts of this Plan are summarized in table format in *Appendix I: Action Plan Matrix*. The findings of the research conducted for this Plan are summarized in *Appendix II: Findings Report*.

In addition to the vision statement, goals and action plan, ***the Economic Development Committee developed this list of six top priority action items for the community to focus on:***

1. Retain existing businesses (with an emphasis on ITT's Fall St. and Bayard St. operations).

2. Consolidate Town, Village and County services.

3. Lower the local tax rate (Village, Town, School).

4. Streamline the site review, zoning and planning processes.

5. Capitalize on new technologies being developed in the area by working with Seneca Meadows and the Cornell Agriculture & Food Tech Park.

6. Attract new business to our vacant/available properties such as the Gould Hotel and Deer Run Park.

# Introduction

"Come, come, my friend, wipe the dew off your spectacles, and see that the world is moving."
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Ms. Stanton could not have said it better: the world is moving. And like many central upstate New York communities, Seneca Falls has felt the impact of the rapidly changing global economy. The community has experienced economic decline in recent decades, primarily due to the loss of jobs in manufacturing caused by structural economic changes outside of its control. Today, as Seneca Falls seeks to promote economic growth for its citizens, it finds itself among hundreds of other communities looking to capitalize on a limited pool of economic opportunities.

Within this context, the Town and Village of Seneca Falls commissioned Camoin Associates to prepare a Plan to guide the community in pro-actively pursuing economic development in keeping with its character and small-town feel. An Economic Development Committee comprised of two Town Councilpersons, two Village Trustees and three local residents oversaw this planning process and provided guidance and feedback to Camoin Associates.

This Plan has two parts. *Part I, Strategic Plan for Economic Development*, focuses on broad objectives such as retaining existing businesses and helping them grow, while attracting new industries that can diversify and strengthen Seneca Falls' economy. *Part II, Commercial Revitalization Plan*, hones in on activities that should be undertaken to revitalize commercial areas in the community. The initiatives included in both parts of this Plan are presented in table format in Appendix I: Action Plan Matrix.

As part of this economic development planning process, Camoin Associates conducted interviews with regional economic development organizations, tourism professionals, university and NYS Center of Excellence representatives, State economic development and labor officials, industry trade groups, and local business leaders; reviewed a myriad of publications, articles and Internet sources; and analyzed employment and labor force trends data from the New York State Department of Labor. Major findings of this research are summarized in Appendix II: Findings Report.

The Economic Development Committee hosted a public workshop in late October 2006 to receive input from the community on the types of economic development initiatives that should be included in this Plan. Using the feedback from this public workshop in conjunction with the research described above, Camoin Associates worked with the Committee to devise a road map of concrete initiatives to be undertaken to achieve the community's economic development goals.

As the reader will find in the following pages, this Plan includes a great deal of fresh thinking, while at the same time building upon the economic development objectives identified in the joint *2006 Comprehensive Plan*. This document is intended as a supplement to the *Comprehensive Plan*.

## Vision Concept for Economic Development

Current thinking in economic development is that success revolves around clusters of activity and requires attracting and cultivating human creativity and talent. In order to apply these concepts to Seneca Falls, it requires the community to adopt a slightly new way of thinking about its future. Consider this new way of thinking similar to the process one would go through in starting a new business. One of the most important first steps is to identify a market niche—the quality that makes the business' product unique. This helps determine who the target is and how the product should be marketed.

The Economic Development Committee took this argument to heart and decided it was important to establish a clear and distinct economic development vision, despite the fact that the *2006 Comprehensive Plan* already included a broad vision for Seneca Falls in 2015. In contrast to the vision in the *Comprehensive Plan*, the economic development vision provides a specific theme to guide development efforts and can be used as the basis for marketing and branding activities the community undertakes in the future to attract visitors, businesses, investment, and residents.

In this vein, Camoin Associates worked with the Economic Development Committee to answer the

following question: what distinguishes Seneca Falls from the hundreds of other communities competing for the same businesses, visitors and private investment?

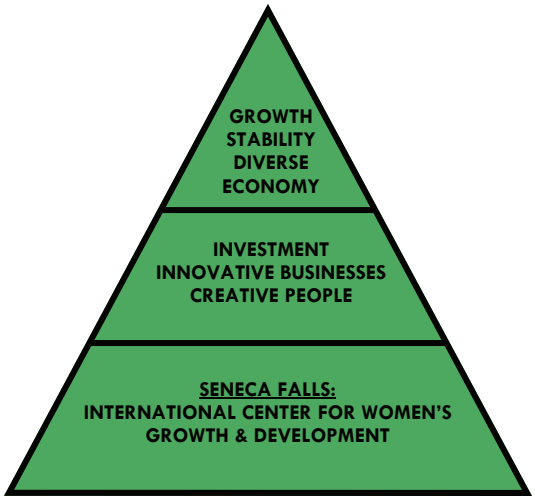
Seneca Falls' proximity to Rochester, Syracuse and Ithaca is neither unique nor offers a distinct competitive advantage for most businesses. The community's location on the canal and near the wineries is certainly an asset, but is not unique, as there are many other communities in the region with those attributes. Other strengths identified by the community in the *2006 Comprehensive Plan*, such as small town atmosphere, high quality of life, skill and diversity of residents and quality schools contribute to the community's attractiveness, but they do not distinguish it from other places. However, no other community in New York State, in the country, perhaps in the world, can claim as prominent a place in the history of the women's rights movement as Seneca Falls.

The 1848 Women's Rights Convention sparked changes that allowed for tremendous contributions by women in every aspect of life and work in the United States and around the world. Seneca Falls can build on this history and the upcoming expansion of the Women's Hall of Fame to foster a reputation as a community dedicated to the advancement of women, a brand that will be extremely attractive to innovative people and companies, to forward-thinking CEOs and entrepreneurs (or their spouses and partners), to travelers seeking inspirational experiences, to artists and musicians, the list goes on and on.

This approach creates a foundation that strengthens the traditional economic development initiatives included in this Plan by attracting creative people, businesses, investors and visitors to the community that will generate the revenue and investment needed to accomplish the community's long-term goals for growth, stability and a more diversified economy. Using the advancement of women theme, Camoin Associates worked with the Economic Development Committee to craft the following economic development vision statement:

**Economic Development Vision Statement**

"In 2017, Seneca Falls is recognized internationally as a center for education and activities related to women's history, growth, development and human rights. Companies, large and small, share and support our community's focus on the advancement of women, while maintaining our exceptional quality of life. Travelers from around the world learn about women's roles in history and discover how they themselves can continue a heritage of contribution. Visitors can experience the legacy of the women's rights movement by patronizing the numerous museums, inns, restaurants, shops, spas, wineries and businesses supporting those committed to women's achievements."



# Part I: Strategic Plan for Economic Development

## 1.0 SET UP A STRUCTURE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**1.1 Consolidation of Town & Village** - One weakness identified in this Plan is the high tax burden, especially in the Village. The Town & Village should explore obvious areas for consolidation of services and act upon those issues immediately. In the long-term, local officials should continue to work together to consolidate the Town & Village into one efficient unit of local government to lower the tax burden on residents and businesses.

Priority: High
Lead: Town & Village Boards
Timeframe: Ongoing

**1.2 Lower Local Tax Rates** - In addition to consolidating services, Town, Village, School and County officials should work together to explore all possible ways to lower the local tax burden to make our community more attractive to new residents and businesses.

Priority: High
Lead: Town, Village, School and County Boards
Timeframe: Ongoing

**1.3 Local Development Corporation (LDC)** - One goal identified through this planning process was to establish a local development corporation (LDC) for the Town and Village that would have the legal authority to acquire, sell, lease or mortgage property, things which municipal governments are not able or equipped to do but which modern economic development initiatives often require. The Town and Village Boards took this goal to heart and have already approved the establishment of an LDC, approved the by-laws, applied for incorporation and appointed initial Board members.

The next step is to hire an Economic Developer to be the director of the LDC. The Economic Developer will be charged with implementing this Plan. The LDC should be staffed with experienced economic development professionals. This will require allocating sufficient resources to the LDC to pay competitive salaries.

Priority: High
Lead: Town & Village Boards
Timeframe: Month 01

**1.4 Performance Measurement for Economic Developer** - The LDC Board should set up a clear reporting structure for the new Economic Developer and institute a performance measurement system that includes an annual work plan with specific goals and appropriate metrics to measure progress in meeting those goals. The goals and timeframes established in this Plan will serve as a guide for the Economic Developer's annual work plan and will allow local officials to measure his/her performance.

Priority: High
Lead: LDC Board
Timeframe: Month 01

**1.5 Secure Funding for the Local Development Corporation -** The LDC will need adequate funding to carry out the goals established in this Plan. The LDC Board, Grants Consultant and Town & Village Boards should work together to identify appropriate funding sources for the LDC, including Community Development Block Grant funds, other grants and general funding from the municipalities.

Priority High
Lead: LDC Board, Grants Consultant, Town & Village Boards
Timeframe: Beginning in month 03 and on-going after that

**1.6 Familiarize the Economic Developer with the Community** - The LDC Board, Mayor and Town Supervisor should bring the new Economic Developer on a series of tours throughout the Seneca Falls area to familiarize him/her with important sites and the layout of the Town and Village. This should occur within the Economic Developer's first week on the job and could incorporate lunch meetings with local civic groups.

Priority: High
Lead: LDC Board, Economic Developer, Mayor and Town Supervisor
Timeframe: Month 01

**1.7 Dialogue with Key Constituencies** - Another important component of setting up a structure for success is reaching out to key constituencies in the Town and Village to build consensus on various initiatives. This will entail convening regular meetings with the Women's Hall of Fame and the National Park Service, local women's organizations, community groups such as Rotary and Kiwanis, and local business leaders to share information, discuss concerns and brainstorm mutually agreeable solutions. This should occur within the Economic Developer's first few weeks on the job. Follow-up meetings should take place at least on an annual basis, but preferably more often.

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Month 02

**1.8 Educate our Community about our Vision and Plan** - In order for this Plan to be successful, we must build broad-based support in our community for the vision and initiatives developed through this planning process. The LDC should consider hiring a professional communications strategist to assist in this effort.

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer, LDC Board
Timeframe: Ongoing

**1.9 Form Volunteer Groups to Help with Economic Development** - Seneca Falls is fortunate to have a tremendous amount of talent and energy in our community. We should provide local residents interested in helping to achieve the goals of this Plan with a structure through which they can participate. The Economic Developer should form volunteer committees to help with specific initiatives laid out in this Plan.

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Month 04

## 2.0 BUILD REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The interviews conducted by Camoin Associates revealed an opportunity for Seneca Falls to build key partnerships to pursue its economic development objectives. In today's global marketplace, it can be difficult for one small town alone to gain the attention of industry representatives and site selectors or to pursue major development projects. However, there are a number of regional economic development organizations and neighboring municipalities that Seneca Falls' new Economic Developer can reach out to for networking, technical advice, financing, contacts for business attraction and joint marketing opportunities, among other things. The following is a list of entities that the Economic Developer should introduce him/herself to and create a contact to utilize going forward. The Economic Developer should maintain contact with all these groups, at least on an annual basis and use them as a resource.

**2.1 Genesee / Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council** - Become part of their annual priority-setting process to ensure that relevant economic development projects for Seneca Falls are included in Council's annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which is a pre-requisite for funding from the federal Economic Development Administration. Also make use of their trainings, data & mapping resources and revolving loan fund, and participate in their local government workshops and regional roundtables.

**2.2 Empire State Development Upstate Co-Chair** - Governor Spitzer recently appointed a new co-chair at Empire State Development Corporation to focus exclusively on economic development issues in Upstate. Seneca Falls should reach out to his office in Buffalo on a regular basis to raise the profile of the community among State policymakers.

**2.3 Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance (FLTA)** - This organization works with local tourism promotion agencies to market the region overall to travelers and also conducts market research that can help local communities take advantage of changes in the travel market. The Economic Developer should introduce him/herself to Mike Rusinko, FLTA President and maintain regular contact with the group.

**2.4 New York AgriDevelopment Corporation (NYADC)** - Meet regularly with NYADC representatives to share information, make use of their contacts for marketing and business attraction and explore financing options available for major projects.

**2.5 Seneca County Chamber of Commerce** - As the organization representing many local businesses, the Chamber of Commerce is a key partner.

**2.6 Waterloo, Geneva, Romulus and other nearby municipalities** - Convene semi-annual meetings to exchange information, work jointly on relevant projects and join forces for marketing.

**2.7 Seneca County IDA** - Meet regularly with the Director, conduct joint marketing of: available sites, business development programs, revolving loan fund, Empire Zone benefits and other existing tax incentives. Encourage IDA Director to share leads and coordinate mission trips. IDAs are the primary contacts for site selectors and state and regional organizations with industry leads, so maintaining a strong relationship with the Seneca County IDA is important.

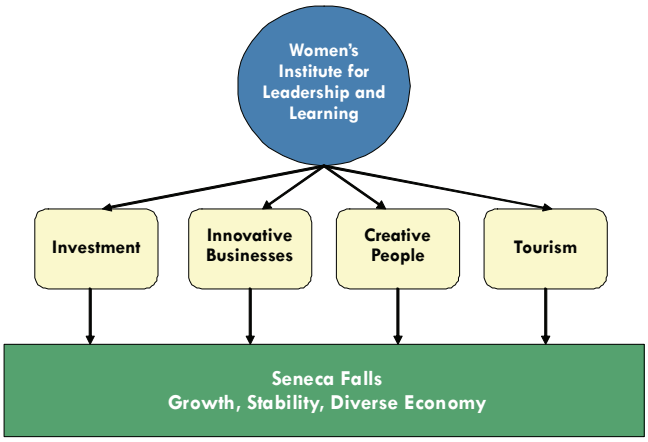
**2.8 NYS Urban Council** - Reach out to them for advice in establishing a Main Street program.

**2.9 Central Upstate Regional Alliance** - Participate in the Alliance by seeking out one of the Seneca County representative seats or maintaining a close working relationship with those representatives.

**2.10 Greater Rochester Enterprise & Syracuse MDA** - Meet quarterly with these groups to exchange information and seek advice on specific initiatives, particularly business attraction, general marketing and financing options.

## 3.0 ESTABLISH A BRAND FOR SENECA FALLS

As discussed in the introduction, one of the most important things Seneca Falls can do to lay a strong foundation for economic development efforts is to establish a brand that will attract visitors and businesses and enhance its reputation as a community that offers an outstanding quality of life. Given Seneca Falls' significant connection to the women's rights movement, the community should capitalize on that extremely unique asset and work to establish Seneca Falls as the international capital for women's history, growth and development, as well as to build on its connection to the movie "It's a Wonderful Life."




**3.1 Establish a Non-Profit Organization Focused on Women's Issues** - To propel its brand identity forward, Seneca Falls should establish an international non-profit organization, which could be called something like the Women's Institute for Leadership and Learning (WILL). Through partnerships with the Women's Hall of Fame, National Park Service, the Women's Interfaith Institute, area colleges and university, and other women's organizations in the community and around the world, this new non-profit could coordinate programming and opportunities for girls and women to further advance their contributions to society in fields and topics such as leadership, public service, entrepreneurship, business management, health and wellness, athletics, science and technology and others. Programs would include workshops, seminars, international exchanges, film festivals and other events hosted in Seneca Falls. These events could be used as a marketing tool to attract earned media by regional, national and international press.

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer, LDC
Timeframe: Month 18

**3.2 Attract Earned Media -** Use the seminars and events hosted by the non-profit center described above to attract earned media from local, regional, state and national news media organizations about Seneca Falls.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Director of non-profit
Timeframe: Ongoing

**3.3 Work with Existing Local Women's Groups** - The Museum Trail Organization currently brings together the directors and department heads of existing local women's groups. If Seneca Falls is going to undertake an effort to brand itself as the international capital for women's history, growth and development, it should start by building stronger relationships and increasing coordination among existing women's groups. The Economic Developer should introduce him/herself to these groups and coordinate on programmatic activities that can help build Seneca Falls' brand.

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Month 02

**3.4 Outreach to Young People** - Given the trend of young people leaving upstate NY, Seneca Falls should target part of its branding efforts toward young people. One way to do this is to build an outreach strategy with colleges and universities in the greater region and eventually all over the country. The hook could be a scholarship contest for women sponsored by the new non-profit organization and a few corporations (local, regional and national). Prize includes money for school and paid attendance at one of the seminars or workshops hosted by the new non-profit. An effort should be made to stay in communication with the scholarship winners throughout their college careers, sending them information about job opportunities and quality of life in Seneca Falls to

attract them to the community after they graduate.

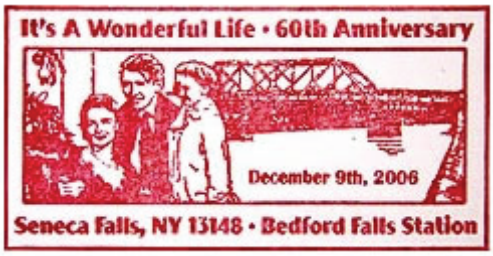
Priority: High
Lead: Non-profit from #3.1
Timeframe: Month 24

**3.5 Outreach to Women's Organizations** - The new non-profit organization should also build an outreach strategy with women's organizations and women's studies programs to publicize events, contests and Seneca Falls in general. Examples of organizations to reach out to are: Center for the Advancement of Women, Soroptimist International, National Organization for Women, National Association of Women Business Owners, News On Women, The Women's Congress, Women In Technology International, National Council of Women's Organizations, etc.

Priority: High
Lead: Non-profit from #3.1
Timeframe: Ongoing

**3.6 Contest for Best Women's Business Plan** - The community should sponsor a national contest for best women's business idea or business plan to raise Seneca Falls' profile as a community dedicated to the advancement of women. The new non-profit organization could solicit corporate sponsorships for the prize money and could publicize the contest in women's magazines, business journals and Internet sites of women's organizations. The winner would travel to Seneca Falls to receive their prize and the awards ceremony could be hosted by a member of the Women's Hall of Fame.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Non-profit from #3.1
Timeframe: Month 30




**3.7 Enhance Connection to "It's a Wonderful Life"** - This is an important festival because it brings people to downtown Seneca Falls during the winter off-season. The Economic Developer and organizing committee for the festival should work together to promote the event more widely.

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer, IAWL Committee, LDC
Timeframe: Ongoing

**3.8 Support Women Entrepreneurs** - Seneca Falls should create a business incubator or technical assistance program focused on women entrepreneurs. While this program could be open to all entrepreneurs, a focus on women-owned businesses would help solidify Seneca Falls' brand.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Month 60

## 4.0 HELP EXISTING BUSINESSES GROW

One of the most important things any community can do to promote economic growth and create new jobs is to keep and grow the businesses already in the community. This sentiment was reflected in the comments received from residents during the October 2006 public workshop and was identified as a priority by the Economic Development Committee.

**4.1 Business Retention & Expansion Program** - One of the first steps the community should take is to develop a formal Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) Program. This would primarily be the responsibility of the new Economic Developer and would entail conducting regular meetings with businesses (annually at a minimum, more frequently with the larger employers) to survey them about their future plans and the challenges they face and to connect them with the local and regional resources they need to grow, such as financing for expansion, employee training or other technical assistance. Training on using technology and the Internet to enhance existing businesses could play a role.

As part of the BR&E Program, the Economic Developer should work with the local school district, BOCES and area community colleges to ensure that curricula and course offerings reflect the needs of local employers.

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Month 05

**4.2 Tourism Industry Discussion Group** - Camoin Associates' research revealed a need for some kind of support system for the community's tourism-related businesses to orient them to changes in the travel market and help them take advantage of growth opportunities. To achieve this, the Economic Developer should work with the Chamber of Commerce to establish a Seneca Falls Tourism Industry Discussion Group for local lodging facilities, restaurants and other tourism related businesses. This will facilitate information sharing, build partnerships and will allow the Economic Developer to learn about the challenges these businesses face and what resources or technical assistance they might need. The Discussion Group will also increase general awareness of the range of tourism activities and services offered by local businesses so that proprietors and staff can make recommendations to visitors seeking information and will also emphasize general concepts such as extending business hours in a sustainable way and encouraging employees to use non street-front parking to save room for customers.

| Priority Unmet Needs of Visitors | |
|---|---|
| More fine dining options | 35% |
| Overnight canal / lake barge cruises | 28% |
| September wine festival | 27% |
| Lakefront spa / resort | 27% |

*Source: Finger Lakes Association (now Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance)*

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Month 12

**4.3 Meet with ITT Leadership** - Through the interview with local representatives of ITT/Goulds, the Economic Development Committee learned that building a relationship with ITT's leadership in White Plains, NY would be extremely advantageous at this juncture. To begin this process, the Economic Developer should arrange a meeting with Gretchen McClean and other ITT officials to discuss their future plans and concerns, to share information and for the Town and Village to express its desire and willingness to work with the company in the future with the goal being to maintain their presence in Seneca Falls. This meeting should lay the groundwork for future meetings with ITT leadership.

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer, Town Supervisor and Mayor
Timeframe: Month 03

**4.4 Invite ITT Leadership to October 2007 Hall of Fame Induction** - One of the ways in which establishing Seneca Falls as the international center for

women's history, growth and development is intended to help the community achieve economic growth and stability is by making it stand out as an interesting and attractive place to people in influential positions. ITT has facilities in almost 100 communities across the country. Seneca Falls can immediately start to distinguish itself from these other communities by involving ITT leaders in upcoming activities at the Hall of Fame, specifically the October 2007 induction ceremony. The LDC should arrange a special contingent to invite ITT leaders to the ceremony and host them while they are here. A meet and greet with local officials, business owners and organizations should also be arranged during ITT's visit.

Priority: High
Lead: Special contingent arranged by the LDC
Timeframe: Month 05

**4.5 Addressing At-Risk Companies** - If one of Seneca Falls' major employers is at-risk of re-locating, the Economic Developer should work with the company and the Seneca County IDA to determine if financial assistance for a major facilities upgrade or expansion project can induce them to remain in Seneca Falls. If so, the Economic Developer and the IDA should work together to include such a project in the annual priorities listed in the Genesee/ Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council's (G/FLRPC) annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which serves as the basis for federal funding from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for the Finger Lakes region. Emphasis and focus on the needs of ITT/Goulds is key.

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer & Seneca County IDA
Timeframe: Month 12

**4.6 Tourism Industry Enhancement Program** - Based on the outcomes of the Tourism Industry Discussion Group described above, Seneca Falls may want to develop a Tourism Industry Enhancement Program that provides financing and technical assistance to tourism-related businesses. One option is to work with the Seneca County IDA to tailor part of its existing Microenterprise Assistance Program to the needs of tourism-related businesses, or Seneca Falls could apply for a grant to fund its own program. For example, the program could purchase data from a marketing research firm on the preferences of visitors to Seneca County and offer workshops to orient the services/products of local businesses to specific segments of the visitor market. The program could also offer customized assistance with web design, on-line reservation capability and search engine optimization and could provide low-interest financing for projects to expand or upgrade facilities. Funding for this type of program is available from the NYS Office for Small cities

Priority: Medium
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Month 48

**4.7 Help Grow ITT's Shared Services Group** - The Shared Services Group at ITT/Goulds' Bayard St. location, also known as the Finance Resource Center (FRC), provides centralized administrative services to a number of ITT facilities throughout the U.S. (things like payroll, accounts payable, accounts receivable, etc). The presence of this group in Seneca Falls has been growing over the last few years and there is potential for future growth due to the lack of other similar competing businesses in the area, which makes the price of labor for these office jobs relatively inexpensive for ITT, and the fact that the Bayard St. location has available space that can be converted to office use. The Economic Developer should work with ITT officials to explore ways to expand the Shared Services Group's presence in Seneca Falls.

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer, LDC
Timeframe: Ongoing

**4.8 Deliver Low-Cost Energy to Local Businesses** - The cost of utilities is high for many businesses across New York State. The LDC, Town Board, Seneca County IDA should work with Seneca Meadows to explore ways to provide low-cost energy to local businesses, especially ITT/Goulds and other large local employers with that use large amounts of energy.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Town Board, Seneca County IDA, LDC and Seneca Meadows
Timeframe: Ongoing

## 5.0 ATTRACT NEW BUSINESSES

**General Activities:** In addition to increasing awareness of Seneca Falls among regional economic development organizations as described in "2.0 Build Regional Partnerships," the Economic Developer should undertake the following general business attraction tasks:

**5.1 Marketing Brochures** - Prepare basic marketing brochures for small, medium and large business attraction; for conference and seminar attraction; local/regional tourism attraction; and regional/national/international tourism attraction. Hire a professional design firm to design a logo incorporating the advancement of women theme and use the new logo in all brochures.

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer, LDC
Timeframe: Month 08

**5.2 Website** - Analyze the existing presence of economic development information on SenecaFalls.com and form a plan for more effective presence. Information on the site should include basic demographic statistics and projections (population, age distribution, income levels), details on the surrounding area (canal, wineries, Wildlife refuge, other activities), average housing costs, statistics on area schools, a summary of available business assistance and tax incentives and detailed spec sheets on available industrial sites and buildings. The site should provide links to the school district, local attractions, realtors, and other amenities. Links to Greater Rochester Enterprise, Syracuse MDA, NY AgriDevelopment Corporation and other relevant regional economic development actors should be included. Contact information should be listed for the Economic Developer, the Seneca County IDA, and the Seneca Chamber of Commerce.

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer, LDC
Timeframe: Month 07

**5.3 Downtown First-Floor Use** – In order to preserve the viability of downtown as a visitor destination and a place where residents enjoy shopping and dining out, the community should limit first-floor use in downtown to retail, restaurants, or other tourism-related businesses whenever possible so that prime commercial space is available for the new businesses the community hopes to attract to downtown. Tourism related businesses should be encouraged to occupy canalside storefronts. The community should also consider signage on the canal that designates the Seneca Falls canal harbor as the "Gateway to Wine Country."

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer, Village Board
Timeframe: Ongoing

**Specific Business Types to Attract:** Based on the research and community input gathered as part of this planning process, a number of business types have been identified as priorities for targeted attraction efforts. The Economic Developer should therefore focus his/her attention on the following:

**5.4 Small, Boutique Retail Shops** – The downtown already features a few small, unique retail shops. The addition of a few more could help establish the critical mass of interesting shops necessary to keep visitors downtown for a few hours.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Month 36

**5.5 Hotels, inns and spa resorts** – The community has been eager to find a developer to renovate the Gould Hotel for some time and this should remain a priority. Pursuing redevelopment of the Gould as a

hotel combined with other attractions or amenities, such as a day spa, wine-themed restaurant, and a movie theater or performance space, is more likely to make the project eligible for tax-exempt financing by the Seneca County IDA than simply renovating it for continued use as a hotel only. Determination that a project will result in a tourism destination facility is necessary for any retail-related project to be eligible for tax-exempt financing. Using the IDA or the community's LDC to acquire site control and possibly assemble adjacent properties would make the project even more attractive to potential developers.

The Economic Developer should also reach out to the Institute for Hospitality Entrepreneurship at Cornell and other hospitality schools to establish industry contacts and to make presentations to students on opportunities to open inns and spas in Seneca Falls.

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Ongoing

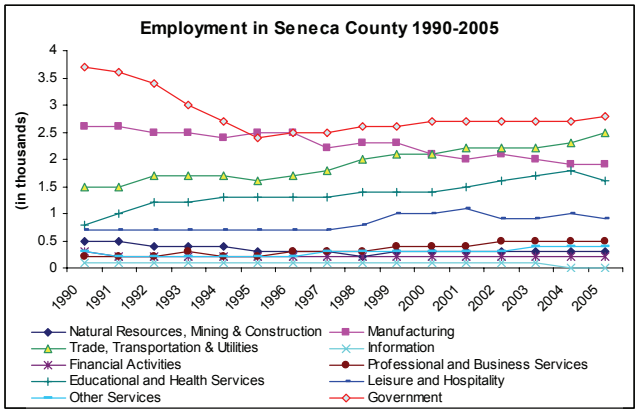
**5.6 Restaurants** – Tourism industry officials interviewed recommended attracting a handful of mid-range and upper end restaurants that feature local wines and local produce. The Economic Developer should attend career fairs of hospitality schools (Cornell, RIT, Culinary Institute, Paul Smith's) to build contacts within the industry and to market Seneca Falls to students as an ideal location to start a restaurant.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Month 36

**5.7 Marina** – The *2006 Comprehensive Plan* included attraction of a marina as a priority. A "transient" marina with a maximum of approximately 20 docks could complement existing boater amenities in the community without creating the undesirable effects of a large-scale marina. Possible locations discussed in the context of the *Comprehensive Plan* were on Van Cleef Lake at the end of Fall Street or along Bove Drive. Along with other proposed development projects, the Economic Developer could use the LDC to secure funding, assemble properties and promote the plan to private developers. Funding from the State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation is available for these types of marina projects.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Economic Developer, Grants Consultant
Timeframe: Month 40

**5.8 Large Retail Stores Complementary to Offerings in Waterloo** - Work with Waterloo officials to establish a target list of retailers that will create a seamless retail corridor serving locals and visitors alike. Consider targeting women-focused retailers and using the "advancing women" theme as a marketing hook. Create a list of state and regional retail developers and start building relationships with them to attract the target retailers identified. Rely on Greater Rochester Enterprise and Syracuse MDA for advice and contacts; send basic marketing materials




to the contact list; attend retail trade shows; and become a member of the International Council of Shopping Centers.

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Ongoing

**5.9 Call Center or Distribution Center** – Pursue a national retailer to locate their call center or distribution facility in Seneca Falls. Work with the County IDA and regional organizations to identify an appropriate site (possibly along Route 414 because easy Thruway access is critical). Work to make the site ideal for a distribution facility and shovel-ready (pre-approved, infrastructure access, etc.). Foster relationships with Empire State Development, national

commercial real estate firms and site selectors to increase awareness of the site.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Month 36

**5.10 Women artisans** - Build an outreach campaign with local colleges to attract artists, particularly women, to Seneca Falls. The outreach campaign could include a brochure to be sent to local colleges that features the community's new logo and advancement of women theme; describes the County's Microenterprise Assistance Program; and describes the new Seneca Falls Tourism Industry Discussion Group (see #4.2). The campaign could also include in-person meetings with directors of art programs at area colleges to encourage them to discuss the community's offerings with students.

Seneca Falls should also explore the creation of an artists' loft program to create a handful of studio/ residential spaces for artists downtown. State funding for this type of program can be pursued from the NYS Office for Small Cities or through a legislative member item.

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer, Grants Consultant (on funding for artists' loft program)
Timeframe: Month 28

**5.11 Agri-business & Food Production** - Establish a relationship with the Cornell Agriculture & Food Technology Park in Geneva ("The Technology Farm") because firms that grow out of the Park's incubator may be good candidates for the Seneca Meadows Renewable Resources Park (especially energy-intensive, environmentally conscious firms). Work with the Technology Farm to understand the needs of these businesses. Reach out to Greater Rochester Enterprise, Syracuse MDA and NYS AgriDevelopment Corporation for advice and assistance in marketing to large, national firms. Bring a representative of the Renewable Resources Park to meetings with industry officials to describe what the Park has to offer.

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Month 02

**5.12 New Theme for Deer Run Park** - In addition to focusing on attracting businesses in the industries specified above, the community should consider working with the Seneca County IDA to explore establishing a new focus and theme for the Deer Run industrial park.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Economic Developer & Seneca County IDA
Timeframe: Ongoing

**5.13 Explore Feasibility of a Spec Building** - Based on the possibility of firms from the Technology Farm in Geneva outgrowing the incubator facility and looking for suitable space nearby, the community should explore the feasibility of constructing a spec building to provide space suitable for some of these firms. The Economic Developer should do research and work closely with Technology Farm officials to assess the feasibility of this action.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Month 36

**5.14 Activities and Businesses for Children & Families** – Community input from the *Comprehensive Plan* revealed a desire to augment activities for families with children, which will benefit residents and visitors alike and increase the number of amenities the community can use in marketing efforts.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Ongoing

## 6.0 IMPROVE TOURISM MARKETING & VISITOR ATTRACTION

While it is important to help existing tourism related businesses thrive and to attract new hospitality businesses that will provide a wider range of amenities for visitors, it will do little good if there are no new visitors coming to the community to patronize those businesses. Another important component in strengthening the tourism sector of the local economy is to expand tourism marketing and visitor attraction activities to draw new customers to Seneca Falls.

**6.1 Press Release System** - In an effort to increase promotion of Seneca Falls' tourism offerings, festivals and other events, the Economic Developer should design a system to distribute press releases to local, regional, national and international media organizations, which should include college newspapers and radio stations in the area. The system should have the ability to send information on specific events to target groups.

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Month 06

**6.2 Target Women Travel Market Segments** - Given the new focus on women's history, growth and development, Seneca Falls should develop an advertising strategy that specifically targets women travel market segments. Such a strategy should include a major on-line component since a majority of travelers today use the Internet for information gathering and booking. The advertising campaign should target women's tour and "girlfriend" travel sites, such as womenandwine.com and womenstravel-club.com, as well as other women's sites such as ivillage.com and oxygen.com. Any print media campaign should begin with a focus on the NYC/NJ metro area.

Priority: High
Lead: Heritage Area Director, LDC, Seneca 2000
Timeframe: Month 14

**6.3 Signage Plan** - Another important component of a tourism marketing campaign is to develop and implement a signage plan that will serve as a useful navigational tool for visitors. The plan should include directional signage for major art, cultural, historic, and outdoor attractions and local tourism related businesses and services. The signage plan should incorporate Seneca Falls' new logo and advancement of women theme.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Heritage Area Director, LDC, Seneca 2000
Timeframe: Month 22

**6.4 Transportation & Parking Study** - The community should prepare to accommodate an increase in traffic and parking needs as tourism enhancement efforts succeed and more visitors are drawn to Seneca Falls over time. The Economic Developer should spearhead a study of projected needs and potential solutions. Work with the Hall of Fame, National Park Service and tourism related businesses to understand the changing needs of their customers.

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer, Village Board, LDC
Timeframe: Month 24

**6.5 Marketing Partnerships** - Seneca Falls should explore a tourism marketing and branding partnership with Canandaigua and Skaneateles. These tourism focused communities to the east and west of Seneca Falls draw from the significant Rochester and Syracuse markets. With its new theme, Seneca Falls can entice some of these visitors to expand their travel itinerary to include a stop in Seneca Falls.

Priority: High
Lead: Heritage Area Director, LDC
Timeframe: Month 30

## 7.0 IMPROVE QUALITY OF PLACE

In addition to the branding and business retention and attraction efforts discussed above, there are a number of activities that Seneca Falls should undertake to further strengthen its image as an attractive place to live and work.

**7.1 Town-wide Wireless Network** - One quality of place improvement in Seneca Falls would be a Town-wide wireless network that provides Internet access for all residents and businesses in the Town and Village. Funding for this type of initiative is available through the NYS Wireless Communities Program, or the community could attract a private partner to help fund it. Free access for small and medium-sized businesses could be helpful in attracting new businesses to the community and this initiative received positive responses from residents participating in the development of this Plan.

Priority: High
Lead: Town & Village Boards, Grants Consultant, LDC
Timeframe: Month 24

**7.2 Vacant Industrial Buildings and Sites** - Seneca Falls needs to address the number of old, vacant industrial buildings, such as the old Seneca Machines building on 5 & 20 coming into the Village and the old Sylvania building, that detract from the image the community wishes to convey to outsiders. The Economic Developer should work with the community's Boards and Grants Consultant to identify appropriate sites for remediation and redevelopment and apply for funding from the Environmental Protection Agency, the NYS Brownfields Opportunities Assistance Program and the Restore NY Program, as appropriate.

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer, Grants Consultant
Timeframe: Month 28

**7.3 Bike & Pedestrian Trail** - The community should rally solidly behind efforts by the Cayuga-Seneca Trail organization to complete the bike and pedestrian trail that has been under consideration and planning for the past five years. The final trail is envisioned to run from the lakefront in Geneva to Waterloo, Seneca Falls and then to the Montezuma Wildlife Refuge. The majority of the trail will be off-road, following the Cayuga/Seneca River. This amenity would be a huge quality of life enhancement that the community can also use in marketing efforts. The Town & Village Boards should intervene where possible and appropriate to help facilitate land acquisitions and should offer support facilities as major stops along the trail.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Town & Village Boards
Timeframe: Ongoing

**7.4 Downtown Streetscape Plan** - Seneca Falls should continue to develop a downtown streetscape plan that incorporates new signage and other enhancements based on the community's advancement of women theme. New streetscape improvements are currently underway with a recent Department of Transportation grant, but a comprehensive plan to redevelop the downtown streetscape does not currently exist. This action is vital to support many initiatives in this Plan. The Economic Developer should coordinate this effort and gather feedback from downtown businesses and residents to determine the overall streetscape design. Professional landscape architects and designers should be contracted to assist in this process.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Ongoing

**7.5 Canalside Facilities for Boaters** - Many boaters request bathroom, shower and laundry facilities. Installing and marketing such facilities could help draw more boaters into Seneca Falls for longer stays.

Priority: High
Lead: Town & Village Boards, LDC
Timeframe: Month 26

# Part II: Commercial Revitalization Plan

The initiatives spelled out in Part I focus on overarching economic development issues that should be addressed, such as business retention, business attraction and overall marketing efforts. Part II provides a set of initiatives intended to promote commercial revitalization in general, as well as in specific geographic areas of Seneca Falls.

## 8.0 IMPROVE LAND USE & REGULATORY CONTROLS

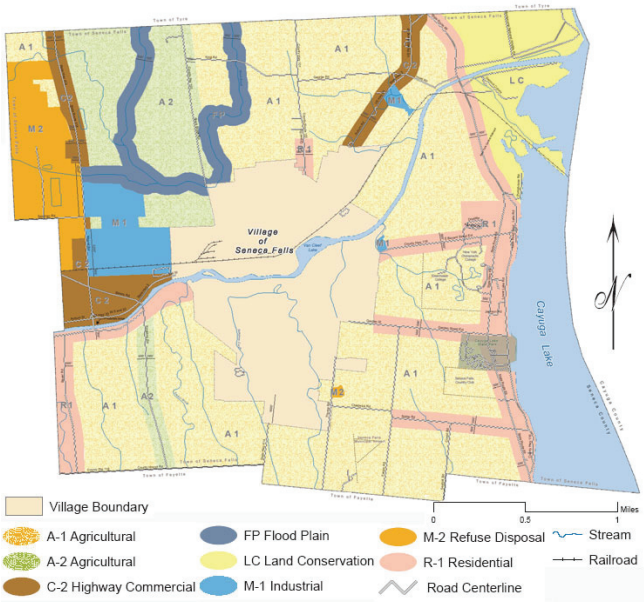
**8.1 Permitting & Site Review** – Seneca Falls needs to work on being more efficient when it comes to courting potential businesses. Streamlining the permit approval and site review processes would be a step in the right direction.

The Economic Developer should work with the Town and Village Planning Boards on making these processes more efficient, including the Historic District review process. The goal should be to make Seneca Falls known as having the most rapid approval process in upstate NY. This effort should also address the perception that the Historic District Commission is not business-friendly and ensure that historic preservation guidelines are enforced fairly, with the overall goal being to allow for redevelopment of vacant buildings for viable commercial uses downtown. The permit process should be laid out clearly on-line and all forms and instructions should be downloadable.

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer, Planning Boards
Timeframe: Month 16

**8.2 Land Use & Zoning Revisions** – Both the Town and Village should ensure that their zoning codes reflect current land use theory, which emphasizes mixed-use districts rather than separating uses, as was prevalent in the past. The Planning Boards should work in conjunction with the Economic Developer to hire a land use attorney to review the zoning codes to ensure they are up-to-date and that they allow for the initiatives contained in this Plan.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Economic Developer, Planning Boards
Timeframe: Ongoing



## 9.0 MARKETING & PROGRAMMATIC INITIATIVES FOR COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION

**9.1 Property Tax Exemption** – New York State law allows local governments to grant partial tax exemptions to encourage investments in commercial properties, known as the "485(b)" tax exemption. Seneca County's 485(b) law applies to all municipalities in the County and provides a partial exemption from County, Town, Village and School District real property taxes for improvements to commercial or industrial properties of more than $10,000. The maximum exemption equals 50% of any increase in value in the first year following completion and declines by 5 percentage points in each of the succeeding 9 years. Seneca Falls should actively market the availability of the 485(b) exemption to encourage investment in commercial or industrial properties.

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Ongoing

**9.2 Business Improvement District** – The Economic Developer should enter into active discussions with local businesses about creating a Business Improvement District (BID) to finance beautification efforts, signage, gateway improvements, and other unique improvement needs determined by the BID. Ideally this district would encompass gateway areas into Seneca Falls in addition to the downtown in order to maximize funds available and ensure that efforts are coordinated and complementary.

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Month 12

**9.3 Commercial Building Improvement Program** - Establish a Commercial Building Improvement Program (CBIP) to assist property owners in making interior commercial space renovations. The Village has started this with its recent Main Street Grant, but the community could jointly seek GOSC funding to support expansion of the program in future years.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Economic Developer, Grants Consultant
Timeframe: Month 24

**9.4 Main Street Program** - Build on existing Main Street activities and formally adopt a "Main Street Program" using the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Four-Point Approach to commercial district revitalization to improve downtown (www.mainstreet.org). Bring together downtown merchants, property owners, the Historic District Commission, museums, and residents as part of this process to bring them on board with the advancement of women theme and start organizing promotional activities. The geographic area of the new Main Street Program should include the Sackett Business District. The Main Street Program could be administered by the Village or a separate non-profit organization established with the express purpose of carrying out activities related to revitalizing Fall Street and the Sackett Business District. If a Business Improvement District is established as recommended in #9.2, the Main Street Program could be part of the BID.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Economic Developer, Historic District Commission
Timeframe: Month 20

**9.5 Vacant & Underutilized Parcels** - Identify vacant and underutilized parcels and buildings for new, market-rate or workforce residential development and commercial development. Like many older upstate communities, Seneca Falls has lost residential and commercial structures to deterioration and fire over the years. Economic conditions and land use regulations have not supported redevelopment of these vacant or underutilized parcels. Identifying these parcels, packaging incentives and promoting their redevelopment will encourage private investment.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Month 40

## 10.0 SPECIFIC AREAS FOR COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION

In addition to the general commercial revitalization efforts described above, Seneca Falls should also focus particular attention on these specific areas for commercial development:

**10.1 Fall Street Wine Center** – Partner with the Cayuga and Seneca Wine Trails to build and operate a mini-interpretive center on Fall Street. Focus on featuring stories of women wine-makers in the Cayuga and Seneca Wine Trail vineyards if possible. This facility could be a starting point for bus tours and those who visit the wine trails throughout the region. It would help Seneca Falls become "The Gateway to Wine Country."

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Month 18

**10.2 Liberty Plaza** – In order to redevelop this plaza into a niche retail facility, the Economic Developer should become familiar with the property owners and management team and should partner with them in marketing available space to particular types of retailers. Work with Waterloo as noted in #5.8 to develop a list of target retailers that will complement, not compete with, offerings in Waterloo.

Priority: High
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Month 40

**10.3 Route 20 North of the Village to Route 318** – This portion of Route 20 can develop into a successful business corridor. Commercial development in this area should be focused on recreation, niche retail, and tourist oriented businesses, as well as businesses that accommodate local residents. Ensure that design guidelines are in place that result in new buildings that blend with the historic character of the Village.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Ongoing

**10.4 Balsley Road from Route 414 south to 5 & 20** This area is likely to be one of the most viable areas in the Town for commercial development in the coming years and many visitors to Seneca Falls will take this road on their way into the Village. The Town should ensure that design guidelines will result in buildings that blend with the historic character of the community.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Economic Developer, Town Planning Board
Timeframe: Ongoing

**10.5 Route 5 & 20 Gateway into the Village** – Many visitors enter Seneca Falls via this route, so it is important that the gateway's appearance be aesthetically pleasing. Ensure that zoning and design guidelines are established that will foster attractive building character.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Economic Developer, Village & Town Planning Boards
Timeframe: Ongoing

## 11.0 IMPROVE HOUSING STOCK

A deteriorating housing stock detracts from the image of a vibrant community. There are a number of programs that Seneca Falls can initiate to address this issue.

**11.1 Community Foundation for Housing Improvements** - Establish a community foundation to finance housing improvements for low-income property owners, such as exterior paint, roofing or other structural repairs. The Hunter Foundation in Greene County, NY is a good model (www.Hunterfoundation.org). The community foundation should partner with the Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation's home repair program where possible.

Priority: High
Lead: Town & Village Boards, Private Citizens, Local Businesses, Religious Community
Timeframe: Month 28

**11.2 Retirement Housing Community** – The community should pursue a developer for a retirement housing community within walking distance from downtown and implement the necessary zoning changes to accommodate such a facility. This may require property assembly and zoning density incentives. There is a need to offer alternative housing options for aging local residents and empty nesters that want to remain in the community. This would work to free up housing stock for young families in need of single family homes. The community can also market to retirees from metropolitan areas throughout the Northeast.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Economic Developer, Planning Boards
Timeframe: Month 60

**11.3 Mixed Housing Types** - Modify zoning to allow for a variety of mixed housing types along the canal and in commercial zones. Add mixed housing uses (single-family, two-family, senior citizen and multi-family) along the proposed Waterfront Overlay or change the use table for those districts to allow these uses. This means allowing for these types of housing uses in the C-2 areas.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Economic Developer, Planning Boards
Timeframe: Ongoing

**11.4 Housing Development on Route 318 Corridor** The community should pursue a housing development for the Route 318 Corridor between Gravel Road and 5 & 20 to accommodate new families moving into the area as development efforts bear fruit. This could become a thriving residential area to support new businesses on Routes 5 & 20.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Economic Developer
Timeframe: Month 60

**11.5 Tax Exemption on Housing Improvements** - Consider adoption of a real property tax law that provides tax exemptions on residential housing improvements. To be equitable, the Town and Village would need to offer this to all residential property owners if they decide to implement such a program. This would exempt all or a portion of the increase in property taxes that result from property investment/ improvements. This item was popular with community members who submitted feedback on this Plan.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Town & Village Boards
Timeframe: Month 24

**11.6 Housing Rehabilitation Program** - Pursue GOSC and NYS HOME Program funding for housing rehabilitation in targeted sections of the Town and Village. While these programs are focused on low and moderate income substandard housing conditions, they can provide needed funding to preserve the community's housing stock. The Town & Village could outsource this function or run the program through a housing authority.

Priority: Medium
Lead: Economic Developer, Grants Consultant
Timeframe: Month 14

# Appendix I
# Action Plan Matrix

| | Goal / Action | Priority | Lead | Type | Timeframe | Action/Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.0** | **Set up a structure for economic development** | | | | | |
| 1.1 | Consolidation of Town & Village | High | Town & Village Boards | Goal | Ongoing | Immediately explore and act upon obvious areas for consolidation of services. Continue working together to consolidate all services to lower the tax burden on residents and businesses while creating one efficient local government. |
| 1.2 | Lower Local Tax Rates | High | Village, Town, School & County Boards | Goal | Ongoing | Work on all possible ways to lower the tax burden on existing residents and to make our community more attractive to new residents and businesses. |
| 1.3 | Establish a Local Development Corporation (LDC) for property assembly, ownership and development tool. | High | Town & Village Boards | Goal | Month 01 | Apply for incorporation of LDC, approve by-laws, appropriate funding and choose initial members. |
| 1.4 | Establish a performance measurement system for the new Economic Developer | High | LDC Board | Goal | Month 01 | Goals and timeframes listed in this document will serve as a measure of the new Economic Developer's performance. |
| 1.5 | Secure Funding For Local Development Corporation (LDC) | High | LDC, Grants Consultant, Town & Village Board | Goal | Month 03 & Ongoing | Through CDBG funds, other grants and general funding from the municipalities. |
| 1.6 | Arrange a series of tours throughout Seneca Falls to farmiliarize the new Economic Developer with important sites and layout of the Town/Village. | High | LDC, Economic Developer, Mayor, Town Supervisor | Goal | Month 01 | This should occur in the first week that the economic developer is in their position. These tours could be incorporated with lunch meetings with local civic groups. |
| 1.7 | Build consensus for initiatives by convening regular meetings with key local constituencies, the Hall of Fame and National Park Service, including local women's organizations and community groups. | High | Economic Developer | Partnership | Month 02 | Plan on meeting with local civic groups such as Rotary and Kiwanis, local business owners and established organizations such as the NPS and Hall of Fame in the first weeks of taking the new position. Continue these meetings on at least an annual basis. |
| 1.8 | Educate business owners and members of our community about our vision and strategy. | High | Economic Developer, LDC | Strategy | Ongoing | Consider hiring a professional communications strategist to help craft our message and develop talking points to be used in public meetings. This can be acomplished in a one-day session. |
| 1.9 | Form volunteer groups of local residents willing to help with Economic Development. | High | Economic Developer | Goal | Month 04 | These groups could be used to help achieve many of the goals in this plan. There is a tremendous amount of talent and ambition in our community and we should utilize our greatest resource, our active citizens. |
| **2.0** | **Build Regional Partnerships** | | | | | |
| 2.1 | Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council | High | Economic Developer | Partnership | Month 02 | Introduce yourself to this group and create a contact that you can utilize going forward. Maintain contact with this group, at least, on an annual basis and use them as a resource. |
| 2.2 | New Upstate Co-Chair (Chairman for upstate economic development) at Empire State Development in Buffalo | High | Economic Developer | Partnership | Month 02 | Introduce yourself to the new upstate co-chair and create a contact that you can utilize going forward. Maintain contact with this individual's office to make sure they are aware of our efforts. |
| 2.3 | Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance | High | Economic Developer | Partnership | Month 02 | Introduce yourself to this group's president, Mike Rusinko, and create a contact that you can utilize going forward. Maintain contact with this group, at least, on an annual basis and use them as a resource. |
| 2.4 | New York AgriDevelopment Corporation (NYADC) | High | Economic Developer | Partnership | Month 02 | Introduce yourself to this group and create a contact that you can utilize going forward. Maintain contact with this group, at least, on an annual basis and use them as a resource. |

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| 2.5 | Seneca County Chamber of Commerce | High | Economic Developer | Partnership | Month 02 | Introduce yourself to this group and create a contact that you can utilize going forward. Maintain contact with this group, at least, on an annual basis and use them as a resource. |
| 2.6 | Waterloo, Geneva, Romulus and other nearby municipalities. | High | Economic Developer | Partnership | Month 02 | Introduce yourself to the leadership in these communities and create a contact that you can utilize going forward. Maintain contact with this group, at least, on an annual basis and use them as a resource. |
| 2.7 | Seneca County IDA | High | Economic Developer | Partnership | Month 01 | Introduce yourself to this group and create a contact that you can utilize going forward. Work closely with the IDA on joint-initiatives and programs. |
| 2.9 | NYS Urban Council | High | Economic Developer | Partnership | Month 02 | Introduce yourself to this group and create a contact that you can utilize going forward. Maintain contact with this group, at least, on an annual basis and use them as a resource. |
| 2.9 | Central Upstate Regional Alliance | High | Economic Developer | Partnership | Month 02 | Introduce yourself to this group and create a contact that you can utilize going forward. Maintain contact with this group, at least, on an annual basis and use them as a resource. |
| 2.10 | Greater Rochester Enterprise & Syracuse MDA | High | Economic Developer | Partnership | Month 02 | Introduce yourself to this group and create a contact that you can utilize going forward. Maintain contact with this group, at least, on an annual basis and use them as a resource. |
| **3.0** | **Establish a brand for Seneca Falls** | | | | | |
| 3.1 | Establish a non-profit organization to coordinate programming and opportunities for women and girls to further advance their contributions to society. | High | Economic Developer, LDC | Goal | Month 18 | Utilize area colleges and universities, the Hall of Fame, National Park Service & IDEA Center. This organization will perform a vital role in helping us to achieve our vision. |
| 3.2 | Use the seminars and events hosted by the organization to attract earned media. | Medium | Director of Institute | Strategy | Ongoing | This is a vitaly important item. We need to promote events that are held here more effectively. |
| 3.3 | Work with local women's organizations through the Museum Trail Organization to encourage coordination on programmatic activities that can help build Seneca Falls' brand as a center for education and activities related to women's history, growth and development. | High | Economic Developer | Partnership | Month 02 | Introduce yourself to this group and create a contact that you can utilize going forward. Maintain contact with this group, at least, on an annual basis and use them as a resource. |
| 3.4 | Create a scholarship contest for women and use it to build an outreach strategy with colleges and universities to attract young people to Seneca Falls. | High | Non-profit from #3.1 | Goal | Month 24 | Invite scholarship finalists/winners and their families to Seneca Falls for a conference/seminar for presentation of the finalists' work, discussion of related issues and awards ceremony. |
| 3.5 | Build an outreach strategy with women's organizations and women's studies program coordinators to publicize events, contests and Seneca Falls in general. | High | Non-profit from #3.1 | Strategy | Ongoing | Research and contract organizations who may share the same values or goals set forth in our Vision Statement. |
| 3.6 | Sponsor a national contest for best women's business idea or business plan. | Medium | Non-profit from #3.1 | Goal | Month 30 | This contest should be focused on gaining national attention and press. Finalists and their families should be invited to Seneca Falls for a conference/seminar, presentations and awards ceremony. |
| 3.7 | Work to enhance and expand our connection to the movie "It's A Wonderful Life" and the weekend celebration held in December. | High | Economic Developer, IAWL Committee, LDC | Strategy | Ongoing | This is an important event as it brings people to Seneca Falls and downtown during the tourism "off-season" and during the holiday shopping season. |
| 3.8 | Establish an incubator or technical assistance program focused on women entrepreneurs. | Medium | Economic Developer | Goal | Month 60 | By Month 60 we should be able to more easily attract women's entrepreneurs and an assistance program will help us capitalize on our established brand and identity. |

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| **4.0** | **Help existing businesses grow and remain in Seneca Falls** | | | | | |
| 4.1 | Develop a formal Business Retention & Expansion Program. | High | Economic Developer | Goal | Month 05 | Form Effective Program. Training on using technology and the Internet to enhance existing businesses could play a role. |
| 4.2 | Work with lodging, restaurant and other tourism related business owners to establish a Seneca Falls Tourism Industry Discussion Group. | High | Economic Developer, Chamber of Commerce | Goal | Month 12 | Establish viable group. Use the Chamber of Commerce as a resource. This group could discuss issues such as extending store hours downtown, including weekends, to encourage employees to use off-street parking, and to produce innovative marketing strategies. |
| 4.3 | Arrange a meeting with leadership at ITT in White Plains, NY. Specifically with Gretchen McClean of ITT. | High | Economic Developer, Town Supervisor, Mayor | Goal | Month 03 | To discuss their concerns, share information and express our willingness to work with them in the future. Attempt to lay the groundwork for future meetingS with ITT leadership. |
| 4.4 | Invite Gretchen McClean to the Hall of Fame induction ceremony in October 2007 and for future induction ceremonies. | High | Special contingent arranged by LDC | Goal | Month 05 | Make their visit pleasant and make them a part of the ceremonies. Host a meet and greet to introduce Gretchen McClean and other ITT leaders to local officials and business people. |
| 4.5 | Add major firms at-risk of leaving to the priorities listed in the Genesee/ Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council's annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy document (CEDS). | High | Economic Developer & Seneca County IDA | Goal | Month 12 | Identify major firms at risk of leaving. Emphasis and focus on ITT/Goulds. |
| 4.6 | Develop a tourism industry enhancement program to provide business technical assistance and financing to existing tourism business owners. | Medium | Economic Developer | Goal | Month 48 | This program could include education on using technology and the Internet more effectively. |
| 4.7 | Work with ITT Leadership on the local and corporate level to explore ways to grow the Shared Services Group on Bayard St. or to lease available space in the Bayard St. facility. | High | Economic Developer, LDC | Strategy | Ongoing | The Shared Service Group at ITT/Goulds Bayard St. location is one of the fastest growing segments of the Seneca Falls/Auburn operations of ITT. Also, at the Bayard St. location there is available space available for lease. |
| 4.8 | Explore ways to deliver lower-cost energy to local businesses, specifically ITT/Goulds. | Medium | Town Board, Seneca County IDA, Seneca Meadows, LDC | Strategy | Ongoing | Work with Seneca Meadows and explore other resources for providing low-cost energy to ITT/Goulds and other locations in Seneca Falls. |
| **5.0** | **Attract new businesses** | | | | | |
| 5.1 | Prepare basic marketing brochures | High | Economic Developer, LDC | Goal | Month 08 | Individual brochures for small business attraction, medium sized business attraction, corporate sized business attraction, conference & seminar attraction, local tourism attraction, and regional/national/international tourism attraction. |
| 5.2 | Website Update / Analysis / Redesign - Ec. Development Section | High | Economic Developer, LDC | Goal | Month 07 | Analyze economic development web presence on SenecaFalls.com and form plan for updated, more effective presence. |
| 5.3 | Encourage the use of first-floor use in downtown to retail, restaurants, or other tourism-related businesses to ensure that prime commercial space is available for the new businesses the community hopes to attract to downtown. | High | Economic Developer, Village Board | Strategy | Ongoing | Canalside storefronts should encourage tourism related businesses. Consider signage to designate our canal harbor as the "Gateway to Wine Country". |
| 5.4 | Attract additional small, boutique retail shops for downtown. | Medium | Economic Developer | Goal | Month 36 | Find and attract viable retail shops for downtown. |
| 5.5 | Attract hotels, inns, spa resorts. | High | Economic Developer | Strategy | Ongoing | Find and attract viable hotels, inns or spas to the downtown area. Keep Gould Hotel a priority. Reach out to hospitality schools. |
| 5.6 | Attract a handful of mid-range and upper end restaurants that feature local wines and produce. | Medium | Economic Developer | Goal | Month 36 | Attract viable restaurants. |
| 5.7 | Attract a transient marina with 20 docks maximum and pursue funding from State Parks & Recreation. | Medium | Economic Developer, Grants Consultant | Goal | Month 40 | Work to develop a small marina that is functional, yet non-intrusive to the peaceful nature of the Van Cleef Lake area. |
| 5.8 | Work with Waterloo officials to identify/attract retail stores that are complementary to offerings in Waterloo. | High | Economic Developer | Partnership | Ongoing | Partner with Waterloo in an effort to attract viable retail businesses. |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5.9 | Pursue major national retailer for call center or distribution facility. | Medium | Economic Developer | Goal | Month 36 | Identify potential retailers and develop strategies to attract them to Seneca Falls. |
| 5.10 | Build an outreach strategy with local colleges to attract women artisans. Consider an artists' loft program. | High | Economic Developer, Grants Consultant (on | Goal | Month 28 | Create viable artisan' loft program. Work with art departments at local universities for ways we can support their programs. |
| 5.11 | Establish relationship with Cornell Agriculture & Food Technology Park in Geneva ("Technology Farm") to attract firms that grow out of the Park's incubator. | High | Economic Developer | Partnership | Month 02 | Introduce yourself to the leadership at the AgTech Park and create contacts that you can utilize going forward. Maintain contact with this group, at least, on an annual basis and use them as a resource. |
| 5.12 | Work with County IDA to consider renaming and establishing a new focus and theme for the Deer Run industrial park. | Medium | Economic Developer and Seneca County IDA | Strategy | Ongoing | Evaluate Deer Run Park and adjust strategies to attract more businesses. |
| 5.13 | Explore feasibility of constructing a spec building at Seneca Meadows or Deer Run designed to suit food production for smaller firms. | Medium | Economic Developer | Goal | Month 36 | Gather information and explore the feasibility of using this strategy to attract new businesses. |
| 5.14 | Augment activities/businesses for families with children. | Medium | Economic Developer | Strategy | Ongoing | Work with organizers of all local events and programs geared towards families, children and students. |
| **6.0** | **Improve tourism marketing & visitor attraction** | | | | | |
| 6.1 | Develop & utilize press release system | High | Economic Developer | Goal | Month 06 | For all events, lectures, festivals, exhibits, etc. in Seneca Falls. Include area college newspapers & radio stations along with traditional media. Have the ability to send events to specific groups such as local, regional, national and international media. |
| 6.2 | Develop an advertising strategy that targets women travel market segments. Should have a major on-line component. Print media campaign should begin with a focus on NYC/NJ metro area. | High | Heritage Area Director, LDC, Seneca 2000 | Goal | Month 14 | Research & implement cost-effective ways to market to potential tourists in NYC metro area. |
| 6.3 | Develop and implement a signage plan. | High | Heritage Area Director, LDC, Seneca 2000 | Goal | Month 22 | Signage that emphasises our brand and serves as a useful navigational tool for visitors to Seneca Falls. |
| 6.4 | Explore larger transportation/parking study to allow for growth in tourism sector. | High | Economic Developer, Village Board, LDC | Goal | Month 24 | Parking has been a problem for downtown businesses for years. We need to implement solutions and be prepared to accommodate any parking requirements for downtown/Village events and any increase in regular tourism related parking needs. |
| 6.5 | Explore regional tourism marketing and branding partnership with Canandaigua and Skaneateles. | High | Heritage Area Director, LDC | Partnership | Month 30 | Make contact with counterparts in Canandaigua and Skaneateles to begin discussions of branding partnership. Be sure that Seneca Falls is still able to stand apart from Canandaigua and Skaneateles on our own merits and offerings. |
| **7.0** | **Improve quality of place** | | | | | |
| 7.1 | Implement a Town-wide wireless network. | High | Town & Village Boards, Grants Consultant, LDC | Goal | Month 24 | Set-up the infastructure to offer free or low-cost broadband internet to residents, businesses and visitors within the Town limits. This item has been a favorite in community focus groups and could have a wide-ranging positive impact. |
| 7.2 | Identify vacant industrial buildings and sites for remediation and redevelopment and apply for funding. | High | Economic Developer, Grants Consultant | Goal | Month 28 | Lay the groundwork and identify properties to apply for funding. Once available funding is secured begin restoring these properties and marketing them to potential tenants/developers/businesses. |
| 7.3 | Support efforts by the Cayuga-Seneca Trail organization to complete the bike & pedestrian trail. | Medium | Town & Village Boards | Partnership | Ongoing | Offer support faclities in Seneca Falls as major stops on the new trail. |
| 7.4 | Continue development of a downtown streetscape redevelopment plan based on the new vision. | Medium | Economic Developer, LDC | Strategy | Ongoing | Maintaining and enhancing the asthetic beauty of our downtown area is vital to many initiatives in this document. |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7.5 | Explore the feasibility of installing canalside shower, laundry and bathroom facilities. | High | Town & Village Boards, LDC | Goal | Month 26 | Waterloo has facilities at Oak Island. This has been a request of many boaters for the past several years. |
| **8.0** | **Improve land use and regulatory control** | | | | | |
| 8.1 | Streamline site plan review and permit approval process, including the Historic District review process. | High | Economic Developer, Planning Boards | Goal | Month 16 | We need to become more efficient in the courtship of potential businesses to Seneca Falls. Streamlining this process would be a step in the right direction. The permit process should be laid out clearly online and all forms should be downloadable. This process should be transparent and consistent. |
| 8.2 | Ensure that zoning codes emphasize mixed-use districts. | Medium | Economic Developer, Planning Boards | Strategy | Ongoing | |
| **9.0** | **Carry out marketing and programmatic initiatives for commercial revitalization** | | | | | |
| 9.1 | Market the availability of the 485(b) real property tax exemption to encourage investment in commercial or industrial properties. | High | Economic Developer | Strategy | Ongoing | |
| 9.2 | Create a Business Improvement District (BID) with local businesses to finance beautification efforts, signage, gateway improvements, and other unique improvement needs determined by the BID. | High | Economic Developer | Goal | Month 12 | Create viable group |
| 9.3 | Establish a Commercial Building Improvement Program (CBIP) to assist property owners in making interior commercial space renovations. | Medium | Economic Developer, Grants Consultant | Goal | Month 24 | Establlish viable program |
| 9.4 | Further enhance and utilize national Main Street Program to improve the downtown districts. | Medium | Economic Developer, Historic District Commission | Goal | Month 20 | The Main Street Program already exists and should be fostered and improved. This is a comprehensive program covering many aspects of Main Street Revitalization. |
| 9.5 | Identify vacant and underutilized parcels and buildings for new, market-rate or workforce residential development and for commercial development. | Medium | Economic Developer | Goal | Month 40 | Identifying parcels, assembling them and packaging incentives will raise interest of developers. |
| **10.0** | **Focus on specific areas for commercial revitalization / development** | | | | | |
| 10.1 | Partner with the Cayuga and Seneca Wine Trails to build and operate a mini-interpretive / distribution center on Fall Street. | High | Economic Developer, Seneca 2000 | Goal | Month 18 | We would like this facility to be a starting point for bus tours and those who visit the wine trails throughout the region. This would help us become perceived as "The Gateway to Wine Country." |
| 10.2 | Redevelop Liberty Plaza as a niche retail facility. | High | Economic Developer | Goal | Month 40 | Become farmiliar with ownership/management of Liberty Plaza, know what spaces are available and market them to retailers. |
| 10.3 | Route 20 North of the Village to Route 318 - Focus on recreation, niche retail and tourist-oriented businesses, as well as businesses to accommodate residents. Ensure that design guidelines are in place that result in new buildings blending with the historic character of the Village. | Medium | Economic Developer | Strategy | Ongoing | This portion of route 20 can develop into a successful corridor for business. Keep this in mind while attracting new businesses and searching for suitable property and sites. |
| 10.4 | Balsley Road from Route 414 south to 5 & 20 - Ensure that design guidelines are in place that will result in new buildings blending with the historic character of the community. | Medium | Economic Developer, Town Planning Board | Strategy | Ongoing | As a large percentage of visitors will enter Seneca Falls via this route it is important that the theme and presence of businesses is asthetically pleasing. |
| 10.5 | Route 5 & 20 gateway into the Village - Ensure that zoning and design guidelines foster attractive building character. | Medium | Economic Developer, Town & Village Planning Boards | Strategy | Ongoing | As a large percentage of visitors will enter Seneca Falls via this route it is important that the theme and presence of businesses is asthetically pleasing. |

| 11.0 | Improve Housing Stock | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11.1 | Establish a community foundation to finance housing improvements for low-income property owners, such as exterior paint, roofing, other structural repairs. | High | Town & Village Boards, Private Citizens, Local Businesses, Religious Community | Goal | Month 28 | Establish foundation |
| 11.2 | Pursue a developer for a retirement housing community. | Medium | Economic Developer, Planning Boards | Goal | Month 60 | This community can market to retirees from metropolitan areas throughout the northeast. |
| 11.3 | Modify zoning to allow for a variety of mixed housing types along the canal and in commercial zones. | Medium | Economic Developer, Planning Boards | Strategy | Ongoing | |
| 11.4 | Pursue a housing development on the Route 318 corridor, between Gravel Road and Routes 5 & 20. | Medium | Economic Developer | Goal | Month 60 | This underdeveloped land can become a thriving residential area supporting new businesses on Routes 5 & 20. |
| 11.5 | Consider adoption of real property tax law that provides tax exemptions on residential housing improvements. | Medium | Town & Village Boards | Goal | Month 24 | Adopt law. This item was especially popular with the community members who attended public focus groups or submitted their feedback on the plan. |
| 11.6 | Pursue GOSC and NYS HOME Program funding for housing rehabilitiation in targeted sections of Town and Village. | Medium | Economic Developer, Grants Consultant | Goal | Month 14 | Lay the groundwork and identify targeted sections and apply for funding. |

# Appendix II
# Findings Report

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following table concisely summarizes Camoin Associates' findings in the form of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats). This table is not meant to duplicate the SWOT analysis conducted as part of the Comprehensive Plan, although there is some overlap. Instead, we approached this exercise purely from an external economic development standpoint and identified those SWOT characteristics most relevant to the community's economic health.

| STRENGTHS | WEAKNESSES |
|---|---|
| • Women's rights history<br>• Emerging agriculture, food & alternative energy cluster<br>• Wineries<br>• Community's historic character<br>• Proximity to 3 metropolitan centers<br>• A number of development projects already underway (Women's Hall of Fame, other Seneca Knit projects, etc.)<br>• New York Chiropractic College<br>• Empire Zone<br>• Cayuga-Seneca Canal & Cayuga Lake<br>• Developable property & plenty of space<br>• Highway and rail access | • Lack of coherent marketing strategy, both for business attraction and tourism<br>• No strong, distinctive brand or identity<br>• Lack of effective economic development structure<br>• Downtown businesses not tourism-oriented<br>• High taxes in the Village<br>• Lack of participation in local and regional partnerships<br>• Location: competition with Canandaigua and Skaneateles for Rochester and Syracuse tourism markets, distance from major metropolitan commercial activity and labor pools<br>• Perception of burdensome site review process<br>• Blighted commercial, industrial and residential properties<br>• Real and perceived obstacles to redeveloping historic downtown properties |
| **OPPORTUNITIES** | **THREATS** |
| • Build on expansion of Women's Hall of Fame & women's rights history to create a brand that will attract innovative businesses and people<br>• Capture spin-off firms from Cornell Ag & Food Tech Park to fill IESI Park<br>• Proximity to wine trails and visitors<br>• Changing tourism markets – older consumer looking for more historic and cultural attractions<br>• Projected increase in visitors to new Women's Hall of Fame | • Inability to define a new and different vision that distinguishes Seneca Falls from other small communities in the region<br>• Loss or downsizing of Goulds Pumps or other significant employers<br>• Continued struggle of Western and Central NY economies<br>• Increased competition for regional and national tourism markets<br>• Continued exclusion from regional economic development planning and initiatives |

## INTRODUCTION

This findings report summarizes the research that Camoin Associates conducted in October and November 2006 and forms the basis for the vision statement and strategy matrix developed jointly by Camoin Associates and the Economic Development Committee.

Before starting its research, Camoin Associates thoroughly reviewed the 2006 Comprehensive Plan document, particularly the SWOT analysis and goals and strategies, and used it to guide research efforts into emerging technologies and industries in the region, innovative public-private partnerships, tourism enhancement, effective marketing techniques, tax incentive programs and other relevant activities.

Camoin Associates conducted 19 interviews with regional economic development organizations, tourism professionals, university and NYS Center of Excellence representatives, state economic development and labor officials, industry trade groups, and local business leaders, including ITT/Goulds and IESI Seneca Meadows, and reviewed a myriad of publications, articles and Internet sources (see the Appendix at the end of this report for a complete list of interviews). In addition, Camoin Associates analyzed employment and labor force trends data from the New York State Department of Labor to supplement the data analysis already conducted as part of the Comprehensive Plan.

A traditional approach to economic development planning would yield a set of recommendations focused on infrastructure improvements and other bricks and mortar projects, as well as marketing and attraction strategies to entice businesses to locate in Seneca Falls. Our approach to strategic economic development planning combines those traditional components with more contemporary and innovative thinking in economic development about the importance of building clusters of similar and related businesses/activities and cultivating human creativity and talent in successful economic development efforts.

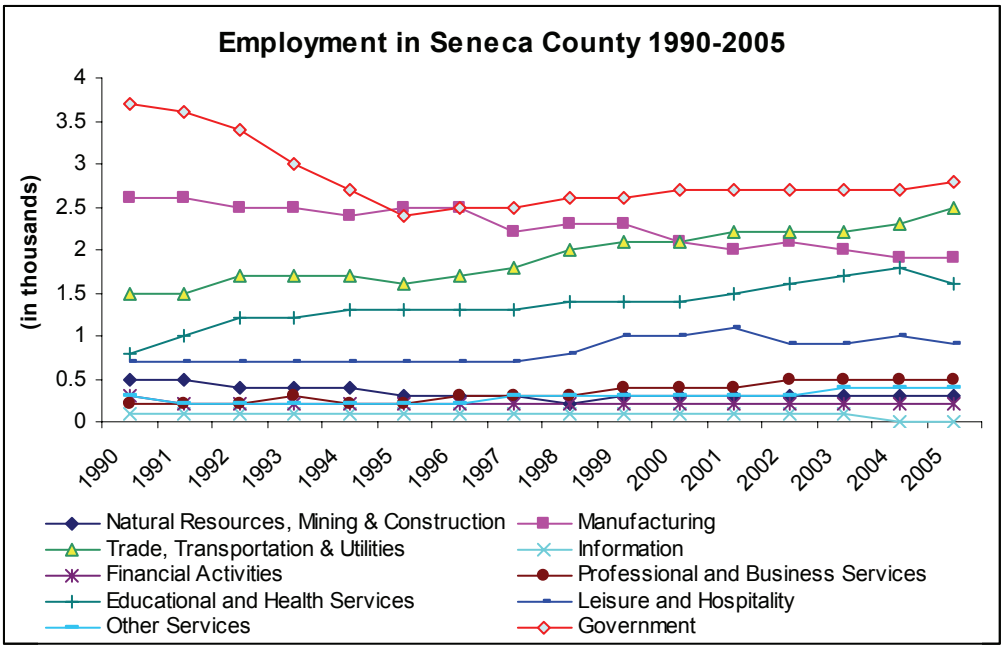
Camoin Associates considered the Comprehensive Plan in combination with the research conducted over the past few months in an effort to define a vision concept for Seneca Falls, an overarching brand that will tie various economic development initiatives together and distinguish Seneca Falls from other communities competing for the same economic opportunities. Camoin Associates subsequently devised a number of short, medium and long-term economic development initiatives built around the central vision concept, which are described in detail in the Plan document and in the strategy matrix in Appendix I.

## ECONOMIC AND LABOR FORCE TRENDS

While the Comprehensive Plan included a good deal of data, the project team found a need to analyze additional economic and labor force trends in order to paint a realistic picture of the economic landscape that Seneca Falls faces and to help identify the types of businesses that the community should consider targeting in its retention, attraction and development efforts. A variety of workforce and industry data useful for this purpose is collected by the New York State Department of Labor (DOL) and was used by Camoin Associates for this analysis.

### Seneca County

DOL makes available county-by-county historical employment data by major industry sector going back 15 years. Overall non-farm job growth in Seneca County between 1990 and 2005 was 3.75%. Job growth statewide during that same period was roughly the same at 3.85%. As shown in the graph below, in 2005 the top five non-farm employment sectors in Seneca County were, in the following order: 1) government, 2) trade, transportation and utilities, 3) manufacturing, 4) educational and health services, and 5) leisure and hospitality.




*Source: NYS Department of Labor, Camoin Associates*

Government and manufacturing both experienced significant declines during the 15 year period shown above. Employment in government declined by 24%. According to DOL, their data on "government" employees includes the Seneca Army Depot, all employees of public schools and colleges (including New York Chiropractic College) and all state and local municipal employees within the County. The decrease in government sector employment

shown in the graph above is primarily due to the closure of the Seneca Army Depot in the early 1990s, after which point government sector employment leveled out. Employment in the manufacturing sector declined by 27% from 1990 to 2005, and this downward trend is likely to continue as large manufacturers seek productivity improvements and lower-cost labor overseas.

By contrast, the other top three employment sectors in Seneca County experienced steady growth since 1990. Employment in trade, transportation and utilities, which includes retail and wholesale trade and distribution grew by 67%. The number of jobs in educational and health services grew by 100%. Although the leisure and hospitality sector employs a smaller segment of the population, it grew by 29% since 1990, albeit with a slight decline between 2001 and 2005.

The Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) produced by DOL provides a more detailed look back at the county level on employment changes during the period 2000-2005, which allows us to take a closer look at what has happened in four of the largest employment sectors in the County.

- ***Manufacturing***

As shown in the table below, employment in the manufacturing sector in Seneca County decreased by nearly 8% between 2000 and 2005, but the number of firms actually increased, indicating that manufacturing firms are maintaining a presence in the county, but that they are employing fewer people overall. In New York State, manufacturing declined by over 22% during the same period, so while Seneca County lost a significant number of manufacturing jobs, it fared better than the State as a whole.

Two subsectors of manufacturing appear to be on the rise in Seneca County: beverage & tobacco product manufacturing and miscellaneous manufacturing. The number of firms and jobs in the beverage & tobacco subsector increased, but it is worth noting that wages in this subsector are low relative to others. The growth in miscellaneous manufacturing appears to be attributable to the addition of one company that employs nearly 150 people. While the number of firms in the machinery manufacturing subsector remained steady, 221 jobs were cut between 2000 and 2005, reflecting the trend for leaner manufacturing processes due to technology improvements.

**Changes in Employment in Manufacturing - Seneca County**

| | # Firms | | Employment | | Change | | Ave Wages | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2000 | 2005 | 2000 | 2005 | # | % | 2000 | 2005 |
| Manufacturing - Total | 37 | 38 | 2,058 | 1,895 | -163 | -7.92% | $41,330 | $43,854 |
| Food Manufacturing | 6 | 4 | 153 | 68 | -85 | -55.56% | $48,174 | $19,819 |
| Beverage & Tobacco Product Manufacturing | 5 | 8 | 102 | 141 | 39 | 38.24% | $14,553 | $16,495 |
| Printing and Related Support Activities | N/A | 3 | N/A | 37 | N/A | N/A | N/A | $17,535 |
| Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing | 3 | N/A | 16 | N/A | N/A | N/A | $19,539 | N/A |
| Machinery Manufacturing | 9 | 9 | 1,323 | 1,102 | -221 | -16.70% | $46,327 | $54,417 |
| Miscellaneous Manufacturing | 3 | 4 | 58 | 205 | 147 | 253.45% | $29,792 | $34,408 |

*Source: NYS Department of Labor QCEW, Camoin Associates*

Also of note is that while food manufacturing clearly declined both in terms of jobs and wages, the DOL and regional economic development organizations discussed below have identified this as a growth area. This discrepancy warrants further investigation to determine if food manufacturing is an appropriate target sector for Seneca Falls.

- ***Trade, Transportation and Utilities***

The trade, transportation and utilities sector includes all wholesalers, retailers and distributors. As shown in the following table, all three subsectors grew between 2000 and 2005. The retail subsector added 370 new jobs, which appears to be spread out among the many kinds of retailers in Seneca County. As is common knowledge, wages in retail are typically low relative to other jobs – this rings true in the data shown here for Seneca County. It should be noted that wages for motor vehicle and parts dealers, as well as non-store retailers are highest among retail jobs in Seneca County. Non-store retailers include mail-order houses, vending machine operators, home delivery sales, door-to-door sales, party plan sales, electronic shopping, and sales through portable stalls (e.g., street vendors, except those selling food). Establishments engaged in the direct sale of non-store products, such as home heating oil dealer and newspaper delivery are also included in this subsector.

**Changes in Employment in Trade & Transportation - Seneca County**

| | # Firms | | Employment | | | Ave Wages | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2000 | 2005 | 2000 | 2005 | % Change | 2000 | 2005 |
| Wholesale Trade - Total | 22 | 25 | 156 | 211 | 35.26% | $25,550 | $27,766 |
| Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods | 12 | 11 | 52 | 57 | 9.62% | $33,043 | $31,490 |
| Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods | 5 | 5 | 15 | 22 | 46.67% | $27,174 | $33,265 |
| Electronic Markets and Agents/Brokers | 5 | 10 | 89 | 133 | 49.44% | $20,899 | $25,051 |
| Retail Trade - Total | 160 | 172 | 1,658 | 2,028 | 22.32% | $17,419 | $20,356 |
| Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers | 24 | 21 | 163 | 225 | 38.04% | $27,194 | $31,067 |
| Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores | 11 | 12 | 87 | 88 | 1.15% | $16,909 | $14,911 |
| Electronics and Appliance Stores | 4 | 4 | 12 | 14 | 16.67% | $14,938 | $24,278 |
| Building Material & Garden Supply Stores | 8 | 12 | 117 | 137 | 17.09% | $26,475 | $25,685 |
| Food and Beverage Stores | 18 | 21 | 318 | 362 | 13.84% | $19,669 | $22,446 |
| Health and Personal Care Stores | 8 | 8 | 56 | 69 | 23.21% | $16,997 | $23,125 |
| Gasoline Stations | 16 | 15 | 138 | 267 | 93.48% | $13,650 | $17,300 |
| Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores | 39 | 46 | 416 | 500 | 20.19% | $12,414 | $15,559 |
| Sporting Goods/Hobby/Book/Music Stores | 8 | 6 | 29 | 35 | 20.69% | $10,834 | $11,951 |
| Miscellaneous Store Retailers | 17 | 14 | 102 | 65 | -36.27% | $14,789 | $15,261 |
| Nonstore Retailers | 3 | 9 | 21 | 57 | 171.43% | $33,957 | $32,715 |
| Transportation and Warehousing - Total | 17 | 17 | 174 | 212 | 21.84% | $29,000 | $32,515 |
| Truck Transportation | 14 | 12 | 140 | 158 | 12.86% | $31,790 | $36,970 |

*Source: NYS Department of Labor QCEW, Camoin Associates*

The table above reflects growth in employment in the transportation and warehousing subsector and relatively high average wages. The number of transportation and warehousing firms in the County stayed the same between 2000 and 2005, but over 35 new jobs were created. Average wages in this subsector were approximately $32,500 in 2005. Average wages for workers in truck transportation, which falls under this category, were even higher at almost $37,000. Both the Finger Lakes Regional Director for Empire State Development and the Director of the Seneca County IDA stated in interviews that the

trade and transportation sector is a solid growth sector in the region that Seneca Falls could focus future attraction efforts on, particularly for a distribution or call center of a major retailer.

- ***Health Care***

As shown in the following table, growth in the health care sector is attributable to large increases in employment in nursing and residential care facilities and entities offering social assistance services. This trend is likely to continue because the Seneca County population, like that of most communities across the nation, will age rapidly between 2011 and 2029 as the baby-boomers reach retirement and beyond.

This pattern is likely to be more pronounced in upstate New York communities, which are shown to be aging more rapidly than the national population. In 2000, the share of the upstate New York population aged 65 and over was 14.4%, two percentage points higher than the nation.[1] The U.S. Census Bureau projects that by 2030, 20.8% of upstate New York's population will be aged 65 and over. The reason this aging trend is more pronounced in upstate New York is that younger adults, particularly those aged 20-34, have been leaving the region while the rest of the population continues to age in place.

| Changes in Employment in Health Care and Social Assistance - Seneca County | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | # Firms | | Employment | | | Ave Wages | |
| | 2000 | 2005 | 2000 | 2005 | % Change | 2000 | 2005 |
| Health Care and Social Assistance | 59 | 64 | 1,097 | 1,368 | 24.70% | $18,916 | $25,688 |
| Ambulatory Health Care Services | 27 | 25 | 379 | 155 | -59.10% | $21,724 | $34,307 |
| Nursing and Residential Care Facilities | 14 | 13 | 419 | 767 | 83.05% | $18,466 | $28,334 |
| Social Assistance | 18 | 26 | 300 | 446 | 48.67% | $15,933 | $18,143 |

*Source: NYS Department of Labor QCEW, Camoin Associates*

- ***Leisure & Hospitality***

The table below reflects a decline in employment in the leisure and hospitality sector in Seneca County between 2000 and 2005. As noted above, this sector experienced a decline after 2001, possibly due to the initial impact 9/11 had on travel nation-wide. This decline affected all subsectors, although food services and drinking places did exhibit slight growth. As discussed below in the analysis of data for the Finger Lakes region, the personal care services sector, which includes travel and tourism is expected to grow significantly between 2002 and 2012, despite the decline the sector has experienced over the last four years.

[1] "The Aging of Upstate New York," *Upstate New York At-A-Glance*, July 2006. Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Buffalo Branch.

| Changes in Employment in Leisure & Hospitality | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | # Firms | | Employment | | | Ave Wages | |
| | 2000 | 2005 | 2000 | 2005 | % Change | 2000 | 2005 |
| Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation | 12 | 9 | 81 | 79 | -2.47% | $16,766 | $18,877 |
| Amusement, Gambling & Recreation Inc | 10 | 7 | 72 | 69 | -4.17% | $16,553 | $18,593 |
| Accommodation and Food Services | 69 | 67 | 932 | 819 | -12.12% | $13,749 | $11,508 |
| Food Services and Drinking Places | 64 | 63 | 710 | 720 | 1.41% | $9,943 | $10,800 |

*Source: NYS Department of Labor QCEW, Camoin Associates*

## Finger Lakes Region

The DOL also provides data on a regional level, which enables us to understand the broader economic environment around Seneca Falls. The DOL divides the State into ten distinct regions for purposes of workforce and industry data collection. Seneca County falls within DOL's Finger Lakes region, which includes Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming and Yates counties.

| Finger Lakes Region Job Losses from September 2005 to September 2006 | |
|---|---|
| Industry Sector | # Jobs |
| Manufacturing | (3,900) |
| Construction | (1,000) |
| Professional and business services | (900) |
| Leisure and hospitality | (600) |
| Trade, transportation & utilities | (500) |
| Educational & health services | 3,900 |
| Other | (100) |
| **Net Loss** | **(3,100)** |

*Source: NYS Department of Labor, Camoin Associate*

Between 2000 and 2005, total private sector employment decreased by 4.1% (20,000 jobs) in the Finger Lakes region. Between September 2005 and September 2006, employment in the region declined by 0.7%, or 3,100 jobs. As shown in the table to the left, significant losses in the manufacturing sector exceeded job growth in educational and health services, resulting in the net job loss for the year. In contrast, since September 2005, the number of private sector jobs statewide increased by 65,300 or 0.9%.

According to DOL, the Finger Lakes economy is in transition. While it was once dominated by a few large manufacturers, the region's economy is becoming more diversified, with most new job creation attributable to a mix of small manufacturing firms and firms in a variety of service providing industries, particularly health services and education.[2]

| Production Sectors in Finger Lakes with Employment Growth | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sector | Employment | | Change | |
| | 2002 | 2012 | Level | % |
| Food Processing Workers | 2,680 | 2,830 | 150 | 5.60% |
| Textile, Apparel, and Furnishings Workers | 2,150 | 2,670 | 520 | 24.19% |
| Other | | | | |
| Painters, Transportation Equipment | 170 | 220 | 50 | 29.41% |
| Paper Goods Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders | 690 | 730 | 40 | 5.80% |

*Source: NYS Department of Labor*

The table on the next page shows DOL's projections for

[2] Marino, Tammy. "The Finger Lakes: A Region in Transition." *Employment in New York State*, NYS Department of Labor, July 2006.

changes in employment in the Finger Lakes between 2002 and 2012. These projections are based on staffing patterns derived from surveys of New York employers and past and current industrial and occupational trends. These projections illustrate likely employment patterns, barring major changes from past trends. The table on the following page is arranged to show the largest growth sectors at the top and the sectors projected to lose employment at the bottom.

As reflected in the following table, the top five projected growth industries are: education, sales, food preparation and serving, healthcare support, and healthcare practitioners. Production occupations, the category that includes all manufacturing jobs, will suffer the most significant job losses, followed by architecture and engineering.

Although production-related occupations overall are projected to decrease, jobs in food processing and textiles, apparel and furnishings, and two other relatively small production subsectors are likely to grow, as shown in the prior table.

**Finger Lakes Employment Projections 2002-2012**

| Sector | Employment | | Change | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2002 | 2012 | Level | % |
| Education, Training, and Library Occupations | 53,440 | 63,140 | 9,700 | 18.2 |
| Sales and Related Occupations | 57,520 | 63,470 | 5,950 | 10.3 |
| Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations | 40,760 | 46,380 | 5,620 | 13.8 |
| Healthcare Support Occupations | 17,650 | 21,400 | 3,750 | 21.2 |
| Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations | 27,100 | 30,830 | 3,730 | 13.8 |
| Construction and Extraction Occupations | 20,250 | 23,610 | 3,360 | 16.6 |
| Personal Care and Service Occupations | 15,910 | 19,100 | 3,190 | 20.1 |
| Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations | 19,940 | 22,830 | 2,890 | 14.5 |
| Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations | 14,730 | 17,340 | 2,610 | 17.7 |
| Management Occupations | 27,900 | 30,490 | 2,590 | 9.3 |
| Computer and Mathematical Occupations | 13,270 | 15,710 | 2,440 | 18.4 |
| Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations | 22,500 | 24,760 | 2,260 | 10 |
| Community and Social Services Occupations | 10,590 | 12,810 | 2,220 | 21 |
| Transportation and Material Moving Occupations | 30,660 | 32,600 | 1,940 | 6.3 |
| Business and Financial Operations Occupations | 17,390 | 19,310 | 1,920 | 11 |
| Protective Service Occupations | 13,460 | 14,820 | 1,360 | 10.1 |
| Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations | 6,570 | 7,520 | 950 | 14.5 |
| Legal Occupations | 3,160 | 3,500 | 340 | 10.8 |
| Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations | 5,650 | 5,890 | 240 | 4.2 |
| Office and Administrative Support Occupations | 100,000 | 99,020 | -980 | -1 |
| Architecture and Engineering Occupations | 14,100 | 12,810 | -1,290 | -9.1 |
| Production Occupations | 59,000 | 51,820 | -7,180 | -12.2 |

*Source: NYS Department of Labor, Camoin Associates*

These projections for continued declines in manufacturing accompanied by growth in service industries are consistent with two overarching trends in upstate New York and the nation in general: a decline in manufacturing due to productivity improvements and international trade and a population that is growing older and wealthier, which demands ever more health care, social assistance and personal care services.

## REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Interviews with regional economic development organizations revealed that there is a tremendous amount of economic development activity taking place at the regional level that Seneca Falls can participate in to strengthen its economy. One interesting advantage that Seneca Falls may have is that it is located in the overlapping boundaries of two distinct regions—the Finger Lakes and Central New York—and can select which economic development initiatives underway in each region match its goals.

### Greater Rochester and the Finger Lakes

Seneca Falls is on the eastern-most edge of the 9-county region known as Greater Rochester and the Finger Lakes, which includes Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming and Yates counties.

- ***Finger Lakes Partnership***

The major economic development initiative underway in the region is the Finger Lakes Partnership, a 21-member group comprised of public officials, business leaders, academic institutions and non-profit economic development organizations. Members of the Partnership include:

*Public/private entities:*

- Greater Rochester Enterprise
- Infotonics Technology Center (Center of Excellence at Canandaigua)
- Rochester Business Alliance
- Cornell Agriculture and Food Tech Park

*Academic Community:*

- University of Rochester
- Rochester Institute of Technology
- Finger Lakes Community College
- Monroe Community College
- Genesee Community College

*Government:*

- City of Rochester
- Monroe County
- Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (represents the 9 counties)
- Empire State Development
- Workforce Investment Boards (WIB) of Monroe County/Rochester, Genesee, Livingston, Orleans, and Wyoming Counties, as well as the Finger Lakes WIB

The Partnership was born in 2004, when Infotonics Technology Center and Greater Rochester Enterprise (GRE), a public-private regional economic development organization founded in 2003, commissioned a report by the U.S. Council on Competitiveness. The report, "Fanning the Flames of Economic Progress: Igniting Greater Rochester's Entrepreneurial Economy," concluded that the region has many assets necessary to support innovation and entrepreneurship, particularly a highly educated and technically competent workforce. The report finds that a major weakness of the region is that it lacks collaboration and sharing of best practices among regional stakeholders, which has created a barrier to building an innovative and entrepreneurial culture.

The Partnership used the report findings as the basis for its application for federal funding under the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) program, a new federal initiative that focuses on the role of talent development in driving regional economic competitiveness. The Partnership's WIRED application cited numerous troubling trends in the region that their project would seek to address, including:

- The population growth rate in the Finger Lakes during the 1990s was slower than in every state except North Dakota and West Virginia.
- The number of people ages 20-34 in the Finger Lakes declined by over 22% during the 1990s and is projected to decline by another 0.4% from 2003 to 2008, compared to 2.5% projected growth in this age group in the U.S.
- Approximately 105,000 people in the region, 20% of the workforce, are underemployed, which means that they are employed below their previous job levels or educational training.
- In 2004, Rochester ranked 172nd out of 200 cities for five-year job growth according to the Milken Institute's Best Performing Cities Index.
- Between 1990 and September 2005, the number of jobs in the manufacturing sector in the Finger Lakes decreased by 36.7%.

Much of the current thinking in economic development focuses on the concept of industry clusters, defined by one study as "geographic concentrations of competing, complementary, or interdependent firms and industries that do business with each other and/or have common needs for talent, technology, and infrastructure. The firms included in the cluster may be both competitive and cooperative. They may compete directly with some members of the cluster, purchase inputs from other cluster members, and rely on the services of other cluster firms in the operation of their business."[3]

The Finger Lakes Partnership identified five industry clusters to target for growth and expansion, based on its analysis of the region's resources and the potential to stimulate high wages and advancement opportunities for its workforce. Those target clusters are:

[3] The Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota. 1999. *Industry Clusters: An Economic Development Strategy for Minnesota, Preliminary Report.*

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Optics & Imaging
- Biotech & Life Sciences
- Food & Agriculture
- Alternative Energy

In 2006, the Partnership was awarded a $15 million WIRED grant to support activities that promote its four overarching goals: 1) energize the region's entrepreneurial economy; 2) catalyze regional innovation; 3) empower workers to succeed in the global economy; and 4) build 21st century innovation infrastructures.

The Partnership's governing board approved a set of 12 initial projects to be undertaken using WIRED funds, all of which cut across the four overarching goals of the initiative and promote the development of the five industry clusters. These projects include establishing an employee training scholarship program for businesses; creating an entrepreneurs network; setting up a regional apprentice system; creating an M.S. degree in Science and Technology Commercialization at the University of Rochester; and a number of other projects aimed at helping inventors and small high-tech firms commercialize their products and grow their business.

In addition, GRE is charged with heading up the Partnership's business attraction and retention/expansion programs. GRE is developing its knowledge-base of the region's assets in targeted clusters, identifying high-growth subsectors of those clusters and leading companies within those subsectors, performing research on those companies and setting up mission trips of economic development professionals, senior business leaders, and government officials to visit target companies. GRE will also develop predictive analysis tools to identify companies with high likelihood of expansion or contraction so that resources can be focused where needed. Matthew Hurlbutt, Managing Director for the Partnership, noted in our interview that it could be important to Seneca Falls to establish a strong working relationship with GRE to take advantage of its analytical strengths and marketing prowess.

The potential for Seneca Falls to work with GRE and the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council warrants further description of these two organizations.

- ***Greater Rochester Enterprise (GRE)***

Greater Rochester Enterprise (GRE) is a regional economic development organization supported by over 70 public and private partner investors, including area developers, major corporations, site selectors, county and other local development agencies, and individual citizens. Seneca County IDA is one of GRE's partner investors. According to its mission statement, GRE's primary goals are to "retain and expand existing businesses and to professionally market this region as a competitive, vibrant and high-profile place for business location and growth."

GRE works directly with companies looking to locate in the region, site selectors, developers and existing businesses looking to expand. They provide detailed demographic, statistical, comparative and industry specific information about the region; research and identify sites and buildings; help identify financing and grants for projects; facilitate meetings between businesses and appropriate government officials; coordinate meetings with service providers, such as legal, accounting and banking; assist with workforce and recruitment training needs; and provide detailed information about living in the region, including housing, schools and cultural amenities. GRE also publishes a monthly newsletter and organizes seminars with site selectors, developers and other leaders in private industry and the public sector.

In terms of marketing, GRE attends a number of tradeshows and does a lot of cost-per-click Internet advertising. Their focus is regional, which typically means they do not market individual communities. Their ads promote various characteristics of the Rochester area in general, such as a highly educated workforce, shovel-ready sites, plenty of available space, accessibility, etc. They normally send out any leads they receive to the nine County IDA directors with the RFP attached.

According to Staci Henning, Director of Marketing and Public Relations at GRE, it would be useful for the new Seneca Falls Economic Development Director to meet with GRE and provide them with a written description of what kind of space and amenities are available in the Town and Village so that when a lead comes in, GRE can determine if Seneca Falls might be a good match. It would also be worthwhile to foster a close working relationship with the Seneca County IDA so that when they receive an appropriate lead, they will forward it on to Seneca Falls.

- ***Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FLRPC)***

A Regional Council is a public organization created to foster coordination among neighboring counties and to provide a regional approach to planning issues crossing local boundaries. There are nine such councils in New York State. The Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FLRPC) was established in 1977, and serves the same nine-county region covered by the Finger Lakes Partnership described above. There are 32 voting members of the Council representing the participating counties, the City of Rochester, and the community at-large. These members include chief elected officials, local legislators, department heads, and key community leaders in the region. The Seneca County IDA is a voting member of the Council.

The primary functions of G/FLRPC include Local, Regional and Water Resources Planning; Regional Economic Development, Strategic Planning, Program and Grant Development; Surveys; and Data, Technology, and Resource Center. David Zorn, Executive Director of G/FLRPC, offered the following more specific description of the activities they carry out:

- As the planning entity for the Federal Economic Development District of the Finger Lakes, they produce a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) each

year, which lists priority capital projects that they will pursue federal funding for. For example, Palmyra got a $25 million facilities upgrade project for a major manufacturer as one of the main CEDS priorities in 2005, and G/FLRPC applied for over $12 million in federal funding on behalf of that project.

- They run a regional revolving loan fund, which gives loans between $20,000 and $200,000 for manufacturing or service-related businesses.
- G/FLRPC conducts Main Street revitalization planning for municipalities.
- They operate a data technology and resource center where municipalities can get maps, demographic and socio-economic projections.
- They maintain an "Energy Smart" program that brings NYSERDA and Department of Energy grant programs to the region
- G/FLRPC hosts local government workshops for municipalities in the region every six months and organizes occasional regional roundtables open to any local government officials in the region.

Zorn suggests that the new Economic Development Director for Seneca Falls participate in the Council's local government workshops and regional roundtables and that they work with the Seneca County IDA to ensure that their priorities are considered during the annual CEDS process.

**Syracuse and Central NY**

In addition to being part of the Finger Lakes region, Seneca Falls lies on the western-most edge of the 12-county region served by the Metropolitan Development Association of Syracuse and Central New York, Inc. (MDA), which includes Cayuga, Cortland, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, Seneca, St. Lawrence, and Tompkins counties.

For over 40 years, Syracuse MDA has been the Central Upstate NY region's primary business, leadership and economic development organization and the principle private sector vehicle for the implementation of key development projects in the region. MDA membership is limited to the top 100 CEOs in the region, so it is a very high-profile group. However, according to interviews with MDA representatives, the organization also sees itself as a marketing tool for local communities. Due to the high profile of its members, MDA has access to numerous national developers and site selectors. MDA sees one of its roles as trying to match local needs with the development objectives of its high powered partners.

While MDA has maintained its traditional work assisting companies in the region to plan and complete major projects that retain or create jobs and result in new investment in facilities, equipment and employee training, the organization has also developed other approaches and projects along the way.

In 2004, Syracuse MDA launched the Essential New York Initiative, basically a new regional economic development strategy aimed at accelerating the transition of the region to a knowledge-based economy. The Essential New York Initiative marries traditional economic

development, bricks and mortar projects with a focus on attracting creative, entrepreneurial people to the region. As Irwin Davis, President of MDA, said in his interview with Camoin Associates, "An economic development consultant can identify industry clusters for growth, but if you can't attract creative people to work in those industries, you won't grow."

The Essential New York plan identified six industry clusters that the region will seek to grow:

- Biosciences
- Digital and electronic devices
- Environmental and energy systems
- Information and communications technology
- Packaging
- Precision Metalworking

The Central Upstate Regional Alliance is a relatively new organization, established by the MDA in 2004 as the governing body for regional collaboration and branding projects stemming from the Essential New York Initiative report. The Alliance is a 37-member consortium of regional leaders from business, academia and the public sector, including at least three representatives from each of the 12 counties in the region. Seneca County's current representatives are: Glenn Cooke, Seneca County IDA; Robert Kernan, Jr., Chair Seneca Falls Savings Bank; and Frank Nicchi, President of the New York Chiropractic College.

According to an interview with Rob Simpson, project manager for the Essential NY Initiative at MDA, Seneca Falls can participate in the Alliance by either seeking out one of the Seneca County representative seats or at the very least, maintaining a close working relationship with those representatives. He thought that one of the seats may be opening up soon, but he could not confirm that. This is something that the new Economic Development Director could pursue further.

The primary activities of the Alliance to date include:

- ***Promotion of student internships in the region*** – Project ION (Internship Opportunities Now) was launched in 2004 and features a website www.Project-ION.com that lists over 550 internship opportunities with firms in the region. The thinking behind this initiative is that students who intern with companies in Central New York are likely to work for that company after graduation. According to a 2004 survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, nearly 60% of employers end up offering full-time positions to students who intern with them. And more than 85% of employers who hire a former intern find that these employees have a higher retention rate than other employees.[4]

[4] www.Project-Ion.com

- ***On-line community for technology companies and entrepreneurs*** – Another website project, www.EssentialConnections.org, was designed to be the meeting place for the region's growth-oriented businesses, entrepreneurs and researchers. The site offers profiles of technology businesses, research organizations and academic institutions and provides a forum for peer networking for companies in the region, as well as a place for them to find information on the latest research taking place in the area, economic development resources and potential business partners. No information was found to help determine how successful this project has been (i.e., how many companies use the website, has it generated any business or research partnerships, etc).

- ***Leadership in branding efforts*** – An ongoing project of the Alliance in 2006 is to engage business leaders and citizens in crafting a compelling and creative brand identity for the region. An on-line survey was conducted during winter 2006 to collect ideas on what the region's brand should be from anyone interested. A marketing firm was chosen by the Alliance to use the input gathered through the survey to craft the regional brand identity. Requests for an interview with the president of the Alliance were not successful, and based on information available on-line it is unclear exactly where this initiative stands at the current time.

- ***Emerging Business Competition*** – This competition is open to any business within the 12-county region and has two categories: 1) Emerging Business: any company formally incorporated by January 15, 2007 with a revenue stream between $0 and $2.5 million, and 2) Business Idea: anything, open to the general public. First prize for Emerging Business is $100,000. First prize for Business Idea is $2,500. The goals of the competition are to stimulate job creation and business development by providing financial and in-kind resources to companies in the Central Upstate New York region; increase the entrepreneurial culture and visibility of entrepreneurial activity in the region; increase investment-grade deal flow in the region; and identify several high growth potential business opportunities in Central Upstate and connect them to a wide range of business development and capital resources both during the competition and beyond.

In addition to sponsoring the Central Upstate Regional Alliance, the MDA carries out or coordinates a wide range of other economic development programs. The following is a brief description of MDA activities with likely relevance to Seneca Falls.

- ***NYS Urban Council*** - The New York State Urban Council is a loose-knit, 300 member, not-for-profit organization created in 1991 to facilitate and encourage the revitalization and development of central business districts in cities, towns and villages across New York State. The Council serves as a forum for downtown practitioners and economic development professionals and assists communities in developing successful downtown revitalization strategies. Membership is open to all downtown organizations and individuals working to improve central business districts. The Council is a valuable resource because it links communities with some of

the best economic development and revitalization talent in the state through its board of regional vice presidents, which volunteer their time to advise Council staff in responding to individual requests for community assistance.

Irwin Davis, President of MDA, is also President of the NYS Urban Council. Both he and Rob Simpson of the MDA suggested in separate interviews that when the Seneca Falls Economic Development Director comes on board, he or she should contact Dan Young, Program Manager at the Urban Council to discuss how the organization can best assist Seneca Falls in its revitalization efforts.

- ***New York AgriDevelopment Corporation (NYADC)*** - In June, 1999, the MDA joined with several leading agricultural companies and their business partners in forming a new organization to stimulate statewide business growth in the food and agricultural sector. NYADC's formal mission is to "increase the number and profitability of agribusiness companies, the number of people employed by those companies, the level of investment in agriculture projects and ventures, and the viability and visibility of agriculture in New York State." Thirteen firms, including major food processors and farm credit organizations are represented on NYADC's Board and have committed resources to fund the organization. The MDA provides day-to-day administrative support for NYADC.

  Major initiatives underway include creation of a private/public equity fund for early stage agribusiness or food processing ventures; targeted communications and interaction with global and national agriculture and food processing firms seeking access to the northeast U.S. market; and providing support and financing for major renewable energy projects that will impact the agricultural sector.

- ***Grants for Growth*** – This grant program was launched by MDA in 2005 using a $1 million state grant and is currently in its third round. The program offers up to $50,000 in matching funds for innovative applied research projects between universities and industry that have the potential to improve business competitiveness and create jobs. Examples of winning projects to date include a research venture between the Fountainhead Group and Cornell University to create a mechanism for more effective and exposure-free pesticide and herbicide applications; a project by O'Brien & Gere and Clarkson University to develop a new approach to wind-power generation with the potential for gains in energy output; and a project between JGB Enterprises and Syracuse University on the design and testing of advanced materials for use in commercial and defense-related applications.

- ***40 Below*** – This project was launched in November 2004 when various organizations including the MDA, *The Post-Standard*, The Institution of a Now Culture (ThINC), CNY EDGE, Syracuse University, Leadership Greater Syracuse and others hosted a half-day summit in Syracuse of more than 630 young professionals, artists, entrepreneurs and citizens interested in improving the quality of life in the Central New York region.

The independent organization called 40 Below was born out of this summit. The organization's mission is "to connect, engage and empower young adults in Central Upstate New York; to leverage the collective talents and passions of the under-40 demographic to make this region a more vibrant place to live, learn, work and play; and to make the region a beacon for talent and to give current Central Upstaters a sense of belonging, worth and community that will entice them to build their lives here."

40 Below now has a Steering Committee and numerous task forces focused on issues such as civic engagement, training for young entrepreneurs, mentoring, downtown public arts, adaptive re-use, and marketing. Recent accomplishments include the formation of Adapt CNY, a 501(c) (3) organization with plans to buy the abandoned Wilson Building in downtown Syracuse and convert it to apartments and retail space; the provision of over 10 scholarships to minority entrepreneurs to attend the Syracuse University Entrepreneurship Bootcamp; and creation of new public art in downtown Syracuse through a window mural painting project in abandoned storefronts.

## POTENTIAL GROWTH SECTORS FOR SENECA FALLS

Interviews with economic development officials, business leaders and other actors in the region offer insight into potential areas where Seneca Falls might concentrate efforts for future economic growth and development.

### ITT/Goulds

ITT is the largest local employer in Seneca Falls. As part of the research conducted for this planning effort, members of the Economic Development Committee, along with Camoin Associates, interviewed three local ITT representatives: Doug Bingler, Brad Jones and Ron Golumbeck. The following summarizes what the Economic Development Committee learned:

- ITT employs approximately 800 people at the plant and corporate offices in Seneca Falls; 400 in Water Systems in Auburn; and another 125 in the Shared Services Group in the Bayard Street facility for a total of over 1,300 employees in Seneca County.

- The Seneca Falls ITT facility is just one of almost 100 ITT facilities across the country. Seneca Falls should work to build a relationship with ITT leadership to show them that there is something that distinguishes Seneca Falls from all these other communities.

- The presence of ITT's Shared Services Group, also known as the Finance Resource Center (FRC), has grown in Seneca Falls over the past few years. The Shared Services Group provides centralized administrative services to a number of ITT facilities throughout the U.S. (things like payroll, accounts payable, accounts receivable, etc). The growth of this group in Seneca Falls may be due to two things: 1) a lack of competing administrative and back office businesses in the Seneca Falls area, which makes the price of labor for these office jobs relatively inexpensive for ITT; and 2) the fact that the Bayard Street facility has a good deal of vacant space that can be converted to office use. This may be an area for potential future growth of ITT's presence in Seneca Falls.

- The benefit period of the Bayard Street facility's Empire Zone certification is about to expire. In addition to this benefit, the State has been willing to work with ITT in the past to help them stay in Seneca Falls.

- Access to lower-cost energy would be extremely welcome by ITT. Utilities are one of their biggest costs in Seneca County. In other states where ITT operates, utilities are up to 40% cheaper.

## Agriculture, Food Processing & Alternative Energy Cluster

Based on our research and interviews it appears that a natural cluster of activities is forming in the Seneca Falls area that combines agriculture, food processing and alternative energy. This cluster has three distinct but related centers at present: Cornell's Agriculture & Food Technology Park in Geneva, the Seneca Meadows Renewable Resources Park in Seneca Falls, and the Seneca Army Depot in Romulus.

- ***Cornell Agriculture & Food Technology Park***

Camoin Associates interviewed Dr. Bob Seem, President of the Board of Cornell's Agriculture and Food Technology Park (a.k.a. the "Technology Farm") in Geneva. The one building currently in the 72-acre park is the Technology Farm's 20,000 square foot, multi-tenant Flex Technology building. A small part of the building houses the Technology Farm's administrative offices, while the rest of the building is dedicated as flex incubator space for agriculture and food related businesses. The flex space has all the utilities coming down from the ceiling so they can move new firms in and out or expand a firm's space as their needs change.

Two more buildings are currently on the drawing board for the park. Plans for a new $25 million, 60,000 square foot USDA Grape Genetics Research Center have been underway for a number of years now and construction is expected to begin soon. The new Center will expand the activities of the scientists at the USDA Plant Genetic Resources Unit currently located at Cornell's Agriculture Experiment Station. These scientists collaborate with researchers at Cornell in conducting research on grape breeding, cultivation, crop protection and wine science.

In September 2006, Governor Pataki announced $40 million for construction of a new, food safety laboratory under the purview of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets to be completed in 2009. The lab will provide analytical testing for all food safety and security programs in New York State and will have expertise in food chemistry, food microbiology, and pesticide residue. The lab will test samples collected by Agriculture and Markets as part of scheduled surveillance programs of food vendors, as well as samples taken as part of investigations of disease outbreaks and consumer complaints. The lab also provides specialized analytical services to various state and federal agencies.

According to Dr. Seem, there are no other plans for additional buildings in the park at this time. The park has plenty of land available and in the future can consider subletting land or building another facility and leasing that space to new companies coming in or to firms that grow out of the incubator space. However, Mr. Seam expressed a preference for leasing land or new building space to agriculture or food research firms only and encouraging firms in production to spin off and move out of the park. He anticipates that production-related firms spinning off the incubator will need to lease building space that will allow them to re-establish production quickly after moving out of the incubator and that they are not likely to be interested in building a new facility.

- ***IESI Seneca Meadows Renewable Resources Park***

Camoin Associates also interviewed Don Gentilcore of IESI about progress in development of the 250-acre Renewable Resources Park (RRP) across the road from the Seneca Meadows Landfill, future plans for the Park, and ease of doing business in Seneca Falls.

Mr. Gentilcore described the Park as still in the very initial stages of development. They are currently expanding the gas line from the landfill to the Park and relocating the electric generator on the Park property, as mandated by law. They anticipate that their first tenant, H2Grow (a hydroponic tomato grower), will be able to start construction of their facility in summer 2007.

H2Grow is expected to employ approximately 150 people when their facility is up and running. The company was attracted to the Park because it will cut their energy costs by 25% in the winter months when they have to rely solely on their greenhouse for production. Mr. Gentilcore feels that there is a niche market for the Park: environmentally responsible companies that need a lot of refrigeration or are major gas consumers, particularly agri-business firms. He believes there is sufficient demand in the Seneca Falls area for the kind of renewable energy they are producing and cited the development of the Technology Farm, all the research going on at Cornell on new agriculture and food related technologies, as well as the diverse agricultural sector already in the area as potentially generating tenants for the Park. He also cited the recent decision to locate the Empire Bio Fuels plant at the Seneca Army Depot as evidence of a growing alternative energy cluster in the area.

Mr. Gentilcore's vision for the park in 10 years is that it is full of environmentally friendly agribusiness firms looking for less expensive energy, which together employ a total of 400-500 people.

In terms of additional infrastructure at the Park, Mr. Gentilcore said they intend to build a rail spur out to the rail line abutting the property, which will make the Park even more marketable.

When asked specifically about marketing strategies for the Park, Mr. Gentilcore said that because they have been so focused on getting the infrastructure up and getting their first

tenant ready for construction that they have not focused much on the marketing side yet. He said that he has worked with the County IDA to market the site's offerings, but not in any systematic way. He also indicated that it would be helpful if the new Economic Development Director could assist them with marketing activities in the near future.

When asked about his experience developing the Park, Mr. Gentilcore said one of the biggest challenges was going through the state and local approval processes. He said that the Town just instituted a new site review process that he feels will be even more onerous than the one that was in place when he first started working on the Park. However, he also said that having an Economic Development Director in place who can act as the point of contact with businesses and walk them through the approval process will be a big improvement.

- ***Seneca Army Depot***

Another potential center of activity in agribusiness and alternative energy is the massive, 10,000+ acre Seneca Army Depot. Most of the Depot is now owned by the Seneca County IDA, which has focused its energies on redeveloping it, although environmental groups would like to see most of the site turned into a wildlife preserve. In an interview, Glenn Cooke, Seneca County IDA Director stated that redevelopment efforts are moving forward and that the IDA plans to target businesses in the alternative energy and agribusiness sectors to develop the site.

Since portions of the Army Depot were used to deconstruct and explode munitions by the U.S. Army for decades, it requires a good deal of remediation. Jack Kinnicutt, Finger Lakes Regional Director for Empire State Development, noted that there really are no other industrial sites around to rival the Depot in size and that if clean-up efforts move forward, the Depot will be a major force for economic development in the area. According to Glenn Cooke, the federal government will be paying for the clean up.

The large amount of available land at the Depot could be a big advantage in attracting some large corporations to the area. According to Staci Henning, Director of Marketing and Public Relations at Greater Rochester Enterprise (GRE), the large companies that GRE typically gets leads from are primarily looking for a lot of space. After that, they seek rail and highway access and a skilled labor force.

She cited as an example the recent decision of Barilla America, Inc., maker of America's top-selling brand of pasta, to build a new production and distribution facility in Avon, NY, which is in Livingston County. A major factor in their decision was the availability of a large amount of land with both rail and highway access. While the Depot does have a lot of land to offer, the contamination issue, possible opposition from environmental groups, and the fact that there is no direct access to the Thruway could make it less attractive. That last point may be moot if plans for a by-pass to the Thruway move forward.

Despite some of the uncertainty about the Army Depot, in August 2006, Empire Biofuels LLC announced plans to invest $87 million to build a 50 million gallon per year corn-to-ethanol refinery on a western portion of the property. According to a press release from Governor Pataki's office, the project is expected to create 60 new jobs. The Town of Romulus was awarded a $356,000 Restore NY grant in October 2006 to demolish two buildings on the site to make room for the ethanol plant. Groundbreaking for the plant is expected as early as this spring.

## Tourism Cluster

Tourism and hospitality is not a target industry cluster for the regional economic development organizations discussed above. However, this sector is definitely a potential area for growth for Seneca Falls because of its inherent tourism assets, particularly its connection to the women's rights movement, its location on the canal, and its proximity to the Finger Lakes and wine country. Interviews with local and regional tourism professionals reveal significant room for expansion of the tourism sector. The following section discusses national travel trends, provides some insight on tourism in upstate New York and the Finger Lakes and then touches on the activity taking place in Seneca Falls that the community can potentially build upon.

- ***National Travel Trends***

| Domestic Leisure Travel Volume, 1999-2004 | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Year** | **Person-trips (in millions)** | **Percent Change** |
| 1999 | 848.6 | -- |
| 2000 | 865.7 | 2.0% |
| 2001 | 895.5 | 3.4% |
| 2002 | 912.3 | 1.9% |
| 2003 | 929.5 | 1.9% |
| 2004 | 944.3 | 1.6% |

*Source: TIA Research Department, Travelscope, "The Power of Travel 2006."*

Leisure travel now accounts for 81% of all U.S. domestic travel. The table at left shows the volume of domestic leisure travel from 1999 to 2004 in millions of person-trips. A person-trip is one person on one trip 50 miles or more away from home, one way or including one or more overnights. As evidenced by the data, leisure travel shows consistent growth.

While the leisure travel industry has experienced steady growth, it has also encountered significant changes during the past decade in terms of what travelers are looking for in a destination, how travelers collect information about potential destinations and make travel arrangements, and what kinds of marketing travelers respond to most effectively. The following summarizes the major trends that should be considered in the context of developing strategies to enhance Seneca Falls' tourism industry:

- There are more wealthy Americans today than ever before. In 2005, the number of millionaires had grown to over 2 million and 13% of households had an annual income of $100,000 or more. As a result of this wealth, demand for luxury products

has reached unprecedented levels.[5] In addition, 30% of consumers say that individual customization is what draws them to a brand today (as opposed to only 6% in 1997) and 35% say environmentally friendly products are worth the extra money.[6]

- Nationally, the number of hotel paid room-nights attributable to leisure travel is increasing, while business travel is decreasing, according to D.K. Shifflet & Associates. In the high-end hotel segment, gains in the leisure travel market have offset the weakness in business travel. More Americans that used to travel abroad are now staying in the U.S. in upscale accommodations.[7]

- The Internet is now the primary means by which consumers gather travel-related information. According to the Travel Industry Association of America, an estimated 56% of the U.S. adult population uses the Internet (120 million people) and there are more than 44 million online travel bookers. These "on-line travelers" are not only looking for special deals and promotions; they also want to find high quality, easily accessible information about their potential destination. Use of search engines, such as Google and Yahoo, is the preferred method of 52% of leisure travelers to find information about their destination.[8]

- Spending on "health and wellness," which encompasses everything from spa treatments and massage therapy to organic foods, has emerged as a major industry, with a market estimated between $300 and $400 billion.[9] The spa industry has grown significantly in the U.S., serving nearly 45 million customers each year and generating $11.2 billion annually.[10] Accordingly, health and wellness is a major attraction for vacation travelers today. Travelers often incorporate spa visits in with other activities while on vacation and 33% of leisure travelers now say that access to a spa is a primary consideration in making their travel plans.[11]

- In addition to spa travel, vacationers in many demographic clusters are increasingly pursuing experiential or enrichment activities, according to the Travel Industry Association of America and other travel market research companies. Tourism entities selling complete vacation packages that feature an experience such as cooking school, learning adventures that teach a new skill or sport, educational programming around cultural, heritage or environmental themes, and even volunteer work are becoming more and more popular.

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[5] Richard K. Miller and Associates, *Consumer Behavior 2006*, a marketing report which integrates the full spectrum of applied consumer psychology and purchasing influences with recent major consumer surveys.
[6] Ibid.
[7] D.K. Shifflet and Associates, Ltd., DKSA Domestic Performance data. Summit Presentation to American Hotel & Lodging Association, November 2005.
[8] "Online Travel Worldwide Report," E-Marketer.com, December 2005.
[9] *Consumer Behavior 2006*.
[10] *The Power of Travel 2006*, Travel Industry Association of America.
[11] *Meredith Travel Marketing Newsletter*, December 2005.

- A recent study found significant differences between Baby Boomers and Generation X regarding their travel product preferences. Baby Boomers tend to be more business and service-oriented, want more security, and prefer an extremely comfortable bed. Gen Xers like more cutting-edge electronics and machines, more "free stuff," such as Internet access, and a "great bathroom with a Jacuzzi."[12]

- Women are a major target market, as research has shown they have a significant influence on family vacation spending decisions and are increasingly leaving their spouses and children behind and vacationing with friends instead.[13] Meredith Travel Marketing reports that 1 in 5 women now leave men behind when going on vacation and that 18% of women took a trip with women only in the past three years. In addition, *Consumer Behavior 2006* reports that women drive 85% of new spending on luxury items.

- A report on family vacation travel prepared by the Travel Industry Association of America found that most family travelers rated "value for the money" (91%) and "variety of things to do" (89%) as somewhat important or very important in selecting their travel destination. As expected, most of those with children (86%) rated "activities for children" as important.[14]

- Another trend to consider is that vacationers continue to seek out the less-traveled and emerging destinations to seek respite from their busy everyday lives. As a result of the hectic schedules of many consumers, tourism businesses can attract customers by bundling desired touring, attractions, activities, cuisine and lodging, which makes it easy to plan and book a vacation.

These national trends are helpful to understand. Unfortunately, our research revealed that there is little information of a similar nature on visitors to Seneca Falls. Developing an in depth understanding of the kind of experience that visitors who travel to Seneca Falls are looking for will help target investments to projects that will bring in new visitors and entice visitors already coming to Seneca Falls to stay longer and spend more money.

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[12] D.K. Shifflet and Associates, Ltd., DKSA Domestic Performance data. From Summit Presentation to American Hotel & Lodging Association, November 2005.
[13] *Consumer Behavior 2006.*
[14] *The Meredith Family Vacation Study 2003: A Special Study of Family Vacation Travel.* Travel Industry Association of America, March 2004, p. 51.

- ***Tourism in Upstate NY***

An interesting report by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York's Buffalo Branch points out that tourism is an important component of the upstate economy, even though it continues to make up a relatively small portion of total employment.

The Bank's report states, "A strong local tourism industry diversifies the economic base, creates amenities and is frequently an important contributor to growth…"[15] However, the report also raises the point that, while tourism contributes to growth, wages in tourism-related industries tend to be low and employment is often seasonal.

The rapid growth in the tourism industry nationally has caused many localities to emphasize tourism in their economic development planning initiatives. Many regions all over the country are using the same strategies and creating additional attractions in order to grow their tourism industry. Although there is room for growth in the industry, the fact that so many regions are focused on tourism also means that there is more competition for tourist dollars now than ever before. This highlights the importance of creating unique attractions and using distinctive marketing techniques in efforts to enhance the local tourism industry.

- ***Tourism in the Finger Lakes***

In the fall of 2001, Randall Travel Marketing conducted a comprehensive assessment of tourism in the Finger Lakes on behalf of the Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance (formerly the Finger Lakes Association or FLA). The study included a survey mailed to 2,000 people who had requested visitor information from the FLA. Approximately 340 surveys were returned, which is a response rate of 17%. The following survey findings highlight important trends in travel to the region:

- Origin of Visitors - 64% of visitors come from within the Finger Lakes region or within a 4-5 hour driving radius, which includes New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Ohio. 91% of visitors travel to the Finger Lakes by car.

- Age of Visitors - Over 75% of travel parties consist of adults only. The average age of visitors to the region is 52 years old.

- Activities Visitors Enjoy - The table below shows the top five activities that visitors to the Finger Lakes enjoy. Survey respondents were asked to choose all activities that applied, so the numbers in the table below do not add up to 100%.

[15] "Tourism's Role in the Upstate New York Economy," *The Regional Economy of Upstate New York*, Spring 2004, Buffalo Branch, Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

| Activities Visitors Enjoy | |
|---|---|
| Shopping | 31% |
| Driving/sightseeing | 28% |
| Winery | 25% |
| Walking Downtown | 24% |
| State Park | 21% |

*Source: Finger Lakes Association (now Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance)*

- Unmet Needs – The table below shows the amenities that survey respondents would like the Finger Lakes to offer.

| Priority Unmet Needs of Visitors | |
|---|---|
| More fine dining options | 35% |
| Overnight canal / lake barge cruises | 28% |
| September wine festival | 27% |
| Lakefront spa / resort | 27% |

*Source: Finger Lakes Association (now Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance)*

- Visitor Spending – On average, visitors to the Finger Lakes spend approximately $258 per day in the local economy. The table below summarizes average daily expenditures. The average length of stay was three nights.

| Average Daily Expenditures | |
|---|---|
| Lodging | $81 |
| Food/Meals | $46 |
| Shopping (other than wineries) | $44 |
| Transportation / Fuel | $30 |
| Shopping at wineries | $30 |
| Attractions / amusements | $27 |
| Total | $258 |

*Source: Finger Lakes Association (now Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance)*

- ***Tourism Activity in Seneca Falls***

Tourism currently makes up a relatively small part of the Seneca County economy. According to the New York State Department of Labor, in 2005, travel and tourism jobs represented only 3% of total employment in Seneca County. Camoin Associates conducted a number of interviews with local and regional professionals involved in tourism and found some significant opportunities for growth in the tourism sector.

*Women's Hall of Fame*

Perhaps the most significant opportunity is the expansion of the Women's Hall of Fame. The Hall's new home in the Seneca Knitting Mill will provide ten times more exhibit space than they have right now. The Hall currently draws approximately 15,000 visitors per year to Seneca Falls. Executive Director, Billie Luisi-Potts, cited the planning study the Hall commissioned for its expansion, which estimates that in five years the number of visitors per year will be 50,000 and in ten years it will be 100,000. It will require a good deal of planning on the part of Town and Village in order to accommodate these visitors.

Ms. Luisi-Potts stressed the importance of developing a coordinated transportation plan for the Seneca Falls Heritage Area, something similar to Cooperstown, which has parking lots outside the Village area with trolleys that transport people back and forth to cut back on traffic and reduce pressure for parking in the Village.

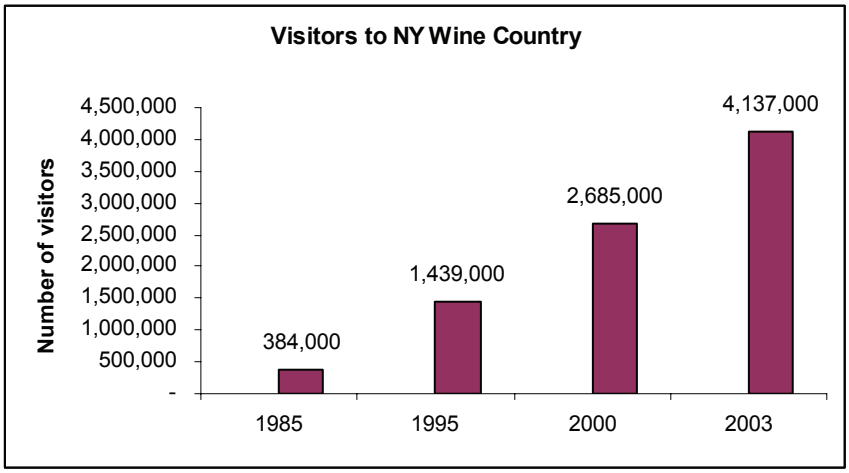
One point of particular interest is the Hall's ability to draw large numbers of visitors from all over the country. Based on an analysis of addresses of the people who attend the Hall's induction ceremonies, Ms. Luisi-Potts estimates that 60% of those visitors travel by plane to get to Seneca Falls. Apparently, the Hall creates a visitor base in communities that are/were home to an inductee, no matter how far away from Seneca Falls that may be. At the present time, the Hall only hosts an induction ceremony once every two years because they have so little exhibit space remaining for displays about new inductees. Once they have moved into their new building, they will be able to do inductions every year.

Ms. Luisi-Potts also emphasized the need for additional hotels, a concern echoed by other interviewees. She stated that there are currently only 360 hotel beds in the entire county and that all the hotels in the area are booked six months in advance of an induction ceremony at the Hall. Visitors have to go as far away as Auburn to find lodging.

*Winery Tourism*

The other major tourism growth area is promotion of the region's wine industry. As noted in the Comprehensive Plan, the community has yet to take advantage of its location in the Finger Lakes Wine region, which means it is probably missing out on a great deal of economic activity.

The wine industry in New York State has experienced tremendous growth during the past 20 years. NYS Department of Labor data show that statewide winery employment has increased tenfold since 1985 and that in Seneca County alone, 39 new wineries opened during the period from 2000 to 2005. As the wine industry has grown, so has related tourism, as shown in the graph below.




*Source: New York Wine & Grape Foundation*

Despite the growth in the wine industry in Seneca County, Seneca Falls does not seem to have captured spending from many of the visitors coming to the area for winery tours. According to Jim Trezise, President of the NY Wine & Grape Foundation, a good approach for Seneca Falls would be to focus partnership efforts on the wineries in the Cayuga Wine Trail due to its proximity and the need for local communities pursuing wine-related tourism to hone in on a niche, even within the Finger Lakes. Mr. Trezise suggested that if Seneca Falls were to pursue the idea of an interpretive center, as mentioned in the Comprehensive Plan, they should keep it small and focused on the Cayuga Wine Trail because the region in general is becoming "cluttered" with interpretive centers. He also cautioned that adding a wine retail shop could be tricky, depending upon the willingness of the local wineries to allow someone else to sell their wine for them, which can keep visitors from actually going to the wineries themselves.

Mr. Trezise also emphasized the reality that wine country visitors are looking for a wine and culinary experience, not simply things to see and do. In this regard, one of the best things he feels Seneca Falls can do is to attract a few good restaurants that use local ingredients, feature local wines, but are not outrageously pricey.

Another suggestion by Mr. Trezise is that the Town and Village do some education with local businesses on the wine industry and the wineries in the area so that they can make recommendations to visitors who ask.

## APPENDIX
## LIST OF INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

**Economic Development Organizations**

- Glenn Cooke, Director, Seneca County IDA
- Jack Kinnicutt, Finger Lakes Regional Director, Empire State Development
- David Zorn, Executive Director, Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council
- Irwin Davis, President, Metropolitan Development Association of Syracuse and Central New York, Inc.
- Rob Simpson, Essential NY Project Manager, Metropolitan Development Association of Syracuse and Central New York, Inc.
- Staci Henning, Director of Marketing & Public Relations, Greater Rochester Enterprise
- Tammy Marino, Finger Lakes Region Labor Analyst, New York State Department of Labor
- Matthew Hurlbutt, Managing Director, Finger Lakes Partnership

**Local Business**

- Doug Bingler, Brad Jones and Ron Golumbeck from ITT/Goulds
- Dr. Bob Seem, President of the Board, Cornell Agriculture and Food Technology Park in Geneva
- Don Gentilcore, IESI Seneca Meadows Renewable Resources Park
- Nancy Mangano, Executive Director, Seneca Knit LDC

**Tourism & Hospitality**

- Mike Rusinko, President of Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance
- Jim Trezise, President of the NY Wine & Grape Foundation
- Billie Luisi-Potts, Executive Director, Women's Hall of Fame
- Christina Selvek, Director, Seneca Falls Heritage Area

**Universities & Colleges**

- Peter Van Tyle, Director Institutional Advancement, New York Chiropractic College
- Emily Franco, Director of the Alliance between Cornell School of Hotel Administration and the Culinary Institute of America
- Joe Strodel, Director of Corporate Relations, Cornell School of Hotel Administration / Institute for Hospitality Entrepreneurship

**Centers of Excellence**

- Mark Boysel, Business Development Director, Infotonics Technology Center (Center of Excellence at Canandaigua)