

Greene County

Comprehensive Economic Development Plan



Executive Summary
July 2007



Project Advisory Team



GREENBUSINESS



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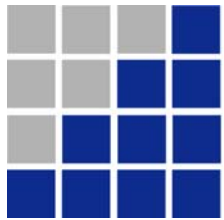
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Presentation Agenda



- Economic Development Plan Impetus and Objectives
- The Planning Process
- A Vision for Greene County's Future
- Pertinent Issues and Relevant Findings
- Economic Development Goals
- Plan Implementation

Why does Greene County need an Economic Development Plan?

- Global competition for private investment is intense
- Business growth can provide a healthy and stable tax base
- Planning identifies needed investments

Planning Objectives



- Determine the right land use mix that will create a long-term stable tax base while preserving environment and community character
- Expand recreational opportunities and facilities to serve residents and their children
- Develop programs that could better help existing businesses grow

Planning Objectives *continued*



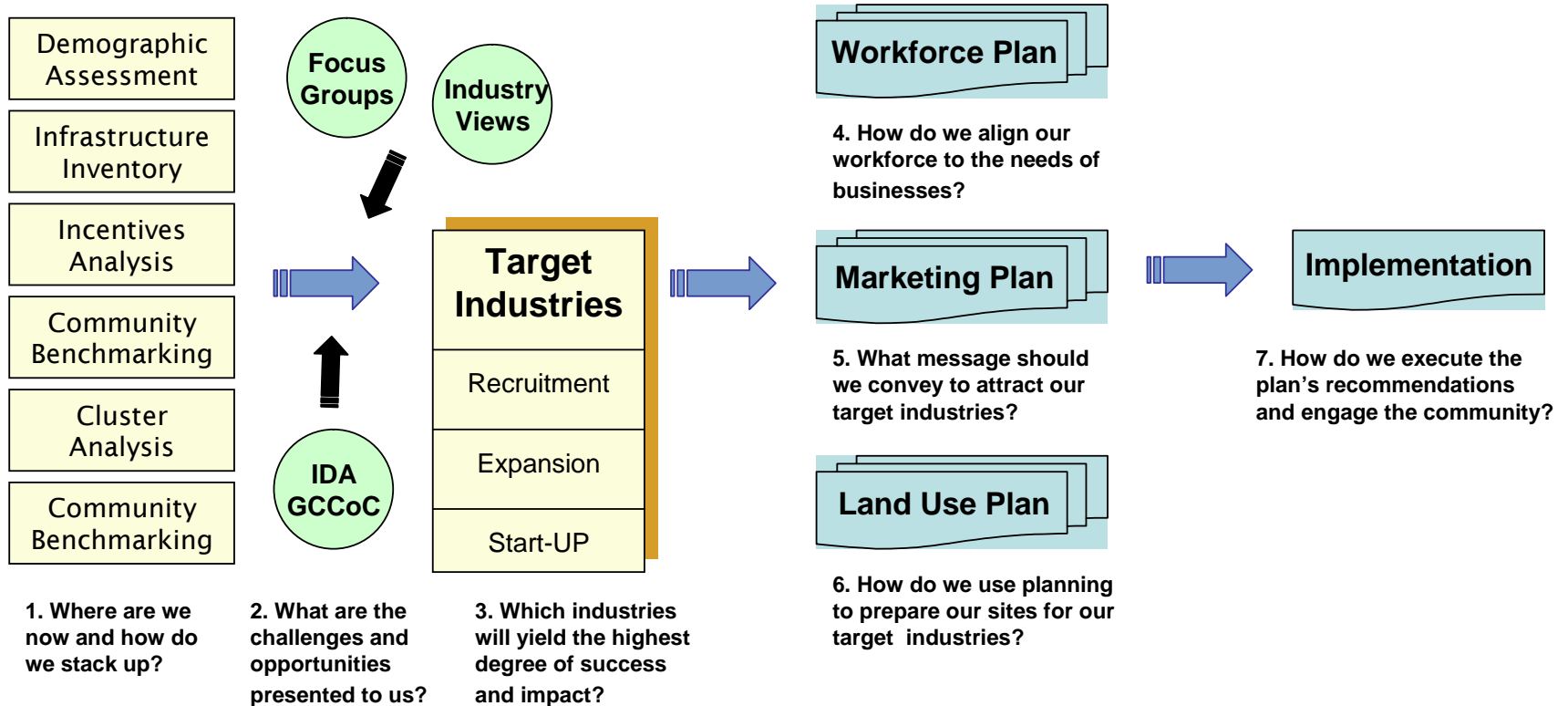
- Identify industries in which Greene County has a competitive advantage
- Support a tourism industry renaissance
- Identify suitable sites for future commercial and industrial development

Planning Objectives *continued*



- Support telecommunication infrastructure investments necessary for conducting commerce in the 21st century
- Identify projects and programs that warrant federal, state and local investment

Greene County's Planning Process



Greene County's Planning Process *continued*

- Reached out to residents, business owners, municipal leaders and other stakeholders
- Engaged in a discussion of the County's current economic condition
 - Issues to be resolved
 - Realistic opportunities for economic growth
 - Development of a clear vision
 - Goals and actions that would lead to its achievement
 - Develop consensus necessary for the implementation phase

Greene County's Vision in 10 to 20 Years



- Home to a balanced portfolio of businesses
- Healthy growth while preserving quality of life through model policies and sound development principles
- Well-trained workforce that supports the strategic industries

Greene County's Vision *continued*



- Tourism as a vibrant year-round industry
- Agriculture and forestry produce for local and regional markets, as well as to serve as basis for local value-added processing
- Population is a mix of long-time and new residents, once-seasonal homeowners now here year-round, recent college graduates, artists, performers and writers

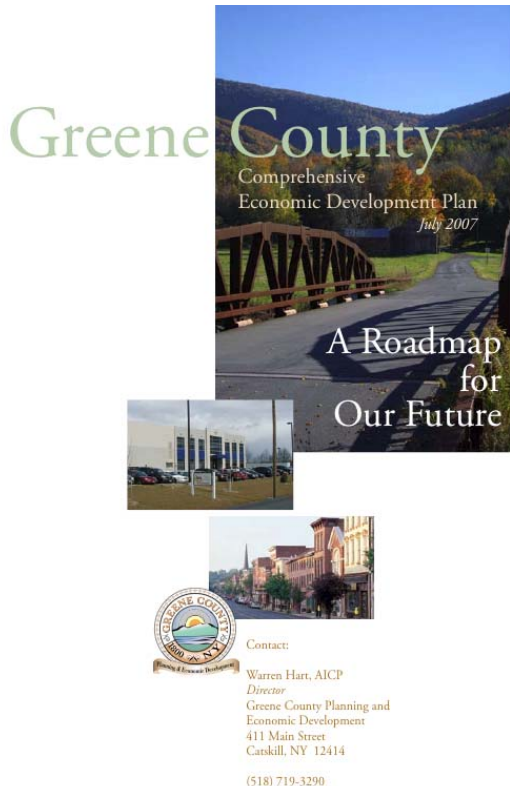
Greene County's Vision *continued*



- Towns and Villages as vibrant places to live and work
 - wide range of housing options
 - recreational opportunities
 - access to health care and amenities
 - revitalized Main Streets
 - reliable telecommunications infrastructure

- Land use decisions rest with local communities, but strong partnerships exist with the County for planning and economic development

Pertinent Issues/Findings and a Plan of Action



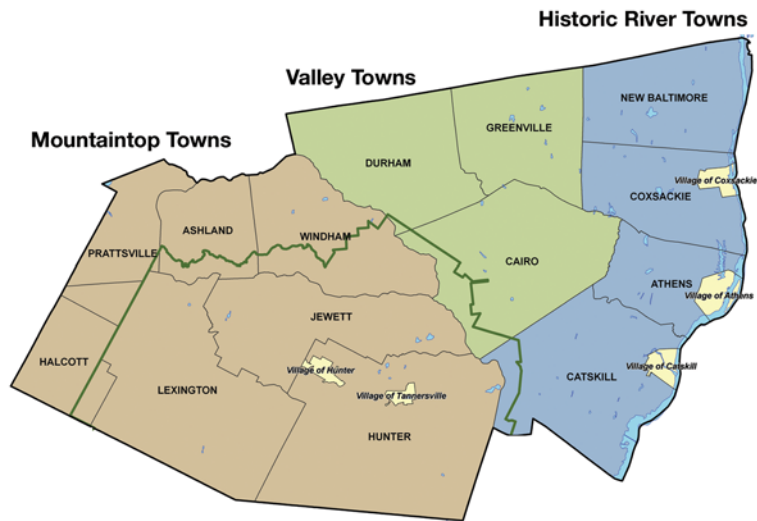
- Assessment of research and public input
 - Led to emergence of economic development themes
- Goals were formulated to address issues identified
 - Several objectives and action items related to each goal were also developed to form the Plan

1. Business Development & Target Industry Attraction Findings



- Transportation corridors, available commercial property and proximity to markets make Greene County an attractive location
- Rapid emerging technology sector growth to the north and south will eventually create opportunities for Greene County
- Misalignment of target industries and workforce

1. Business Development & Target Industry Attraction Findings



- Small businesses are a vital source of new jobs for Greene County residents
- Each of the three regions (Mountaintop, Valley and River Towns) has its own unique assets, requiring tailored economic development programs

1. Business Development & Target Industry Attraction Findings *continued*

- A number of private industry sectors with expansion and attraction potential were identified
 - Traditional Manufacturing: Food processing, printing, plastics and rubber
 - Advanced Manufacturing: Fabricated metals, medical devices and electronics
 - Emerging Technologies: Nanotechnology, energy production and biotechnology
 - Technical/Professional Services: Back office and financial services

1. Business Development & Target Industry Attraction Findings *continued*



- Industries such as distribution and traditional manufacturing, already have a presence.
- Others, such as leading-edge technology companies and financial services back offices, will take time and enhancements in the local labor force.
- The County should work to attract a mix of large and small companies – pursue a “balanced portfolio” of diverse businesses.

1. Business Development and Target Industry Attraction Findings *continued*



- The scale and diversity of companies is important when considering the best location for a new business
- Continued support to new and existing small businesses is key to future economic growth and stability

Goal 1: Expand the quantity and quality of employment opportunities through the development of a balanced, diverse, and year-round economy.

Objectives include:

- Retain existing businesses through outreach and assistance
- Recruit businesses in the target industries
- Attract targeted businesses to the County's existing and future industrial parks
- Continue to support entrepreneurship and small business growth
- Support collaborative regional economic development efforts
- Support agriculture as an important industry

2. Tourism Findings



- Affordable air travel and changing consumer demands have made other destinations competitive
- Changing trends in the travel industry, a lack of retail and dining options and outdated lodging facilities are weaknesses that must be addressed
- The tourism industry has benefited from its proximity to the NY/NJ metropolitan area
- As the largest private industry sector, it offers an opportunity for economic growth

Goal 2: Generate long-term revenue growth in the tourism industry as a strategy for economic development. Objectives include:

- Develop new destination venues
- Promote Greene County as a four-season vacation destination
- Support efforts to adapt attractions and accommodations to the expectations of the travel market



Tourism Objectives *continued*



- Use the Internet more effectively in marketing
- Develop retail amenities and services for tourists
- Create more awareness of the County among overseas travelers
- Establish ways to evaluate and measure the tourism industry's contribution to the local economy

3. Land Use and Regional Planning Findings



- Balancing growth and preservation are important to Greene County residents
- Residents have clearly indicated the desire to maintain the County's rural, mountain and historic character
- Sound planning creates attractive communities and a sound fiscal condition
- County now has a plan for industrial park development, including how its new Empire Zone fits in

3. Land Use and Regional Planning

Findings *continued*



- County officials understand the environmental constraints associated with development
- Because the County does not have unlimited land suitable for development, it must take care in allocating its land.
- Smart growth concepts, design standards and the appearance of community gateways should be given careful attention

Goal 3: Preserve and enhance the physical and environmental characteristics that make Greene County a distinct and identifiable place. Objectives include:

- Encouraging more densely settled development within existing hamlets
- Developing model planning tools for municipalities
- Identifying and implementing regulatory policies to achieve desired community development as defined by each municipality
- Identifying incentives to promote investment in established communities and designated growth areas

Land Use and Regional Planning Objectives *continued*



- Promoting policies to improve the general appearance of the County and prevent blight
- Support the revitalization of downtowns and Main Street areas
- Continue to balance economic growth with preservation of the community's natural environment, quality of life, and rural character
- Assisting municipalities in adopting local comprehensive plans

4. Workforce Findings



- Misalignment between the targeted industries identified for attraction and current available workforce training programs
- A high rate of residents (42%) employed in higher paid professions are commuting to surrounding counties

4. Workforce Findings *continued*



- There are a limited number of employment opportunities for those with two- and four-year degrees
- The skill, labor quality and attitude of Greene County's workforce was rated by employers as poor
- The quantity of available labor is making it difficult for employers to fill openings

Goal 4: Develop a skilled and educated workforce that will meet the needs of existing businesses and emerging industries in Greene County. Objectives include:

- Maintain or create programs to address the training and education needs of Greene County businesses and residents
- Enhance the roles of Columbia-Greene Community College, the Workforce Investment Office, Questar III/BOCES, and school districts in preparing students for today's knowledge-based economy

Workforce Objectives *continued*



- Address gaps in education and training to respond to the needs of target industries
- Highlight the positive aspects of Greene County's workforce and educational system
- Facilitate the development of business consortia to jointly access training resources
- Identify and pursue new funding sources

5. Quality of Life Findings



- The quality and availability of housing, public services, recreation facilities, and cultural and entertainment venues have become important components of a healthy economy
- County needs to enhance its quality of life amenities to attract employers
 - variety of housing options
 - retail facilities
 - youth sports complexes
 - a mix of cultural and recreational activities
 - pedestrian and bike trails

Goal 5: Improve the quality of life in Greene County by upgrading and expanding community services, facilities and amenities. Objectives include:



- Support efforts to improve the quality, availability and accessibility of health care services
- Support efforts to improve the quality of school districts and better promote their successes
- Support efforts to develop recreational and community facilities
- Support efforts to increase shopping and dining options in appropriate areas
- Promote the development of an array of housing options to meet the demand of various households and income levels

Quality of Life Objectives *continued*



- Improve the condition and supply of existing housing
- Develop catalytic projects that will enhance quality of life, such as
 - new health care centers
 - sports complexes
 - art and cultural centers
 - hotel training school or culinary institute

6. Infrastructure and Public Facilities Findings



- Shovel-ready sites are available and plan is in place to develop additional property
- However, topography and environmental features limit the amount of developable space
- Additional property ideal for commercial and industrial development should be identified now to ensure that future needs can be met

Goal 6: Develop a steady supply of commercial and industrial land, sites and buildings that support the needs of existing and emerging businesses in Greene County. Objectives include:

- Continue to pursue “shovel-ready” status for parks
- Identify additional sites for future business and industrial park development
- Ensure an adequate supply of affordable flexible space for small and start-up businesses
- Encourage adequate infrastructure to support business expansion and new development opportunities

7. Telecommunications, Findings



- Greene County's location in "Tech Valley" gives it an inherent strategic advantage
- However, telecommunication service is not adequate in several communities
- An advanced telecommunications network, particularly broad-band, is now required in today's business environment

Goal 7: Support the creation of reliable, high-quality telecommunications infrastructure that meets the needs of existing and emerging industries in Greene County, ensures connectivity, and allows all communities throughout the County to participate in economic development. Objectives include:

- Encourage current telecom providers to fill connectivity gaps and improve service to all areas of the County, especially
 - Mountaintop region
 - Jefferson Heights
 - Leeds
 - Palenville
 - Tannersville

Telecommunications Objectives *continued*



- Extend wireless Internet technology to underserved areas
- Continue to build partnerships with telecommunications providers and the State of New York
- Identify funding sources to help expand telecommunications infrastructure



Implementation

– *the Road Ahead*

- The Plan is the County’s road map to achieving its desired future
- The County Legislature, GreeneBusiness Partnership and other organizations and leaders must become the Plan’s champions and managers
- These leaders should consider how each decision will affect the County’s ability to achieve the objectives in this Plan