



Principles

To create an effective comprehensive plan, we gather public input both at face to face meetings and via surveys, analyze reams of economic and demographic data, inventory our physical assets, assess the challenges facing us, determine our desired destination, and then plot a course for the community. Why should we do all this work? Because all successful ventures are based on a plan.

We plan our careers, we plan our retirement, and we even plan our vacations. Businesses need plans to get financing from a bank. Imagine building a house without a plan.

How ‘comprehensive’ is this plan? If we truly took a *comprehensive* approach, this document would be thousands of pages long and take years to prepare. Instead, we chose to focus on those policies and projects that are carried out by County government and our local partners.

In developing the plan, there are certain self-evident principles that will guide our efforts. These common sense ideas were culled from current planning theory and they represent the best practices in the profession today. These are:

The community must be resilient. This community will face environmental and economic challenges, and we need to be able to rebound and respond. These challenges may arise globally, regionally or locally. Some of these challenges have already begun to manifest themselves here in Broome County. This includes a trend of increasing precipitation resulting in more frequent flooding and at higher levels, the impact of globalization on local economic competitiveness, and the increased demand for senior housing and services brought on by the aging of the local population.

Part of the planning process is to assess threats and compare them to the assets we have. The more we understand about the challenges that we expect to face, the better we can prepare. One element of preparation is to encourage diversity. This can include:

- Hosting a mix of employers in a variety of industries will ensure that we better weather economic storms
- Providing a diversity of housing options will allow us to respond to evolving demands



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- Having a range of transportation choices will allow us to adapt to changing energy supplies and land use patterns in a fiscally conservative manner

Communities that are ‘company towns’ have a large percentage of their economic base held by one employer and are vulnerable to downturns for that business. We saw that to some degree with the downsizing that took place at IBM Endicott in the 1990s. Endicott was the birthplace of one of the largest and most successful firms in the world, but they are now home to just a few thousand ‘IBMers’. This downsizing had a devastating effect on the workforce, suppliers and subcontractors, and the local tax base. It also dealt a major blow to the psyche of the community which saw its identity linked to that of IBM.

Endicott rebounded somewhat when a consortium of local business leaders bought the IBM real estate and created a company (Endicott Interconnect) that now occupies a significant portion of the former IBM campus. Now as Endicott Interconnect pursues exciting new technologies such as thin film solar and advance medical sensing devices, and their sister company Huron Real Estate attempts to lease space in the former IBM campus, the Village of Endicott has a new vitality.

Present needs must be met without compromising our ability to meet future needs. A plan, by its nature, should look to the future. But there are immediate demands on our resources. We need to make sure that any effort or initiative put forth in the plan, can be sustained long term.

Limited resources should be conserved and leveraged. All resources have limits, so it is essential that we maximize the return on our investments. One way to do this is by channeling development into areas where adequate infrastructure already exists. The ultimate limited resource is land, and when land is consumed for development we need to ensure that it is being put to its highest and best use.

Natural and cultural resources should be preserved and enhanced. We are blessed in this community with an abundance of natural and cultural resources. Our rivers (Susquehanna, Chenango, Tioughnioga, Otselic and Delaware) support walking trails, fishing, recreation, and destination tourism. Dozens of local buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places, and these sites add immense value to the community. These resources can be threatened by poor development, or they can attract investment to the County.

Public health and healthy communities should be promoted through planning tools and strategic public investments. As planners, we have tools such as land use reviews that can be used to make communities more walkable, and therefore



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healthier. In addition, there are public investments made in infrastructure and locating of facilities that can be designed to contribute significantly to community sustainability.

Collaboration is key. Many see municipal home rule as an obstacle to countywide planning in New York. And it is true that Broome County's resources and authority are limited. However, the Department of Planning and Economic Development enjoys a good working relationship with the towns and villages. We have prepared the municipal comprehensive plans for many of the Towns and one Village and we work closely with others on a wide variety of issues. For this plan to be successful, we will need to draw on numerous local partners for implementation.