

# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

**BROOME COUNTY PLANNING  
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Jason Garnar  
County Executive**



**Beth Lucas  
Director of Planning**



# MISSION

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

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



## STAFF

### PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Beth Lucas, Director
- Lora Zier, Senior Planner
- Stephanie Brewer, Senior Planner
- Gillian Sloan, Planner
- Christina Cramer, Program Coordinator
- Lori Darling, Senior Account Clerk

### GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

- Douglas English, GIS Administrator
- Joseph Gaynor, GIS Specialist
- Brian Damour, GIS Technician

[www.gobroomecounty.com/planning](http://www.gobroomecounty.com/planning)



## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

2021 was a year of rebuilding for the Planning Department and Broome County. The COVID-19 Pandemic and its aftereffects brought continued and new challenges that impacted operations and Department priorities, but also brought opportunities for Planning to impact the future of our County and local communities. The Department remained focused on initiatives to enhance community development, support local communities, modernize infrastructure and services, and overall enrich and improve the lives of residents. Internal promotions and new staff have helped us better meet the new and changing needs of the community and collaborate with partner departments and municipalities.

The mission of the Planning Department is to provide the tools that the County and local communities need to thrive and be successful in a way that reflects our shared vision for the future, respects our rich history, and takes advantage of available opportunities for progress and growth. Through a dedicated staff and continued partnerships, several significant projects have brought positive impacts on the community throughout 2021. These include:

- Addressing impacts of the pandemic through the COVID Business Recovery Fund and initiation of the Broome County Broadband Feasibility Study.
- Focusing on housing issues through initiatives to provide legal aid and relocation assistance and supporting the Broome County Land Bank and Community Land Trust as partners for housing projects.
- Continued community improvements through parks enhancements such as the Dorchester Park Pathways to Play project, and community placemaking through the Innovation Districts Murals and Mosaics program.
- Ongoing management of the County's Small Community Fund awarded to a broad variety of local initiatives including local parks improvements, enhancing community facilities, providing needed equipment and more.
- Continued collaboration to meet departmental needs for GIS services, including updates associated with the COVID dashboard to keep people informed about COVID-19 risk and vaccination data.

Heading into 2022, Planning looks forward to continuing the initiatives highlighted in this annual report as we move toward the vision for a better Broome County and shape our future, built on the unique people, places and neighborhoods that make it great.

Sincerely,



Beth A. Lucas  
Director of Planning

# COVID RECOVERY

## BROOME COUNTY COVID-19 RECOVERY FUND

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic emerged in the U.S. causing unprecedented economic impacts. In Broome County, all non-essential businesses were closed for more than two months leading to record high unemployment rates. In April 2020, the County's unemployment rate reached 17.2% which was significantly higher than the unemployment rate from the previous month (5.4% - March 2020). Almost two years later, employment levels have returned to pre-pandemic levels, but businesses are still struggling with the long-term impacts of the pandemic.

The Leadership Alliance's Broome County COVID-19 Impact Report surveyed hundreds of businesses to determine business needs as a result of the pandemic. Among the needs identified in the report were access to capital, access to supplies, and guidance on modernization. The Impact Report also revealed about 80% of businesses surveyed saw decreased staff levels during the pandemic and nearly all businesses surveyed indicated money in the form of grants or loans has helped or would be helpful in bringing employees back.

In response to these identified needs, the Planning Department partnered with The Agency (IDA/LDC) to apply for a CDBG-CV grant to assist small businesses adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In September, Broome County was awarded \$1,000,000 to support the Broome County COVID Business Recovery Fund. The Fund will help to businesses respond to the financial hardships they are facing due to the pandemic, and better prepare their business for future events. Project expenses may include, operating costs, adaptive business improvements, payroll, marketing, equipment purchases, sanitation supplies, PPE, etc. The Planning Department will work closely with The Agency to implement the program.

Planning assisted The Agency with the development of the program guide and application, completed a Tier 1 Environmental Review, and completed other grant administration activities towards the issuance of the Release of Funds notice from the funding agency. The Broome County COVID Business Recovery Fun program will run through the beginning of September 2022.

**BROOME COUNTY COVID RECOVERY FUND**

**WHAT: SMALL BUSINESS GRANTS UP TO \$50,000**  
**WHY: PROVIDE BUSINESSES WITH 25 OR FEWER EMPLOYEES NEGATIVELY IMPACTED BY COVID-19 PANDEMIC WITH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

**ELIGIBLE USES OF GRANT FUNDING**

- FURNITURE & FIXTURES
- MACHINERY & EQUIPMENT
- WORKING CAPITAL
- MARKETING
- PAYROLL
- PPE
- RENT/MORTGAGE
- UTILITIES
- E-COMMERCE
- TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
- AND TRAINING.

Eligible activities must generate jobs for, and/or respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**THE AGENCY**  
BROOME COUNTY IDA / LDC



# BROADBAND

## COUNTY-WIDE BROADBAND FEASIBILITY STUDY

In the summer of 2021 Planning began development of the Broome County Broadband Feasibility Study in partnership with Southern Tier Network, Inc. (STN). STN is a nonprofit, open access fiber broadband network that operates and leases bandwidth on its middle mile, dark fiber network infrastructure. STN is open to a range of service providers, including internet providers, enterprise-class services, cellular carriers and dedicated health and education networks. This model enables service providers and other users to utilize the STN infrastructure to expand and reach less marketable service areas more rapidly. This makes it a good option for connecting rural areas where it may be more difficult to generate revenue supporting individual investment.

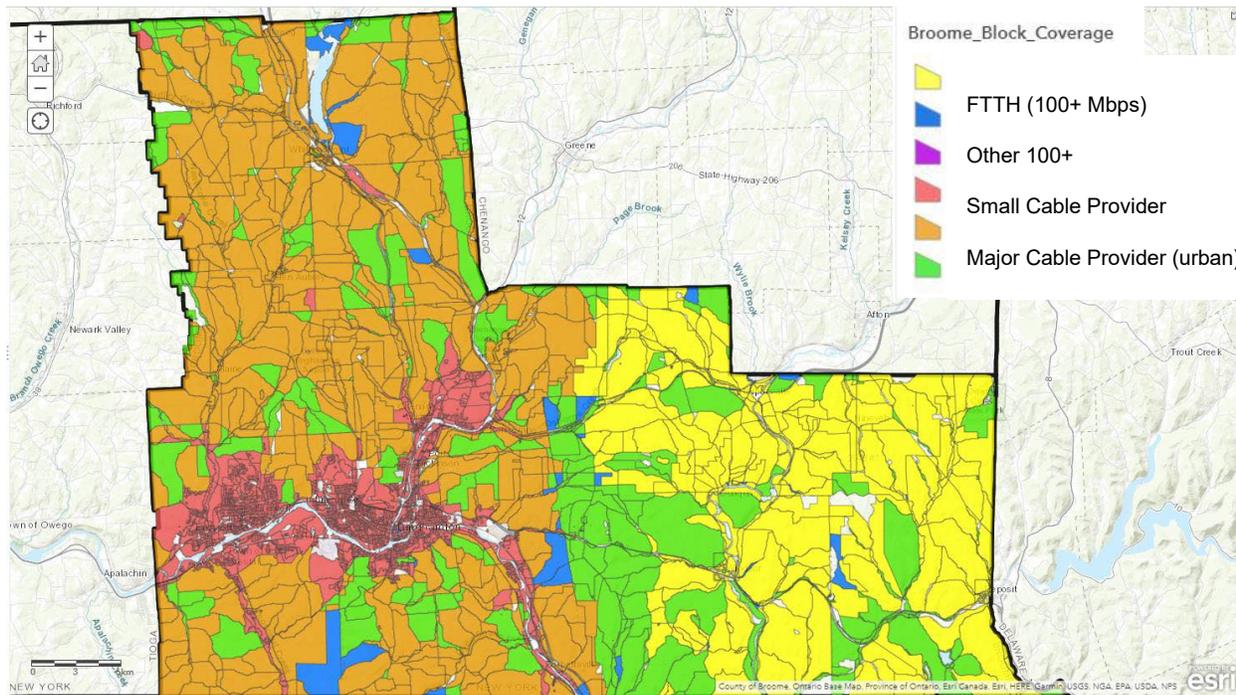
Broome County is working with STN on a project to identify areas within the County that are underserved in their level of broadband access, and opportunities for expansion of STN infrastructure to reach these areas. This consists of development of a broadband market assessment and development of a high-level design for expansion of the open-access broadband infrastructure. Specific objectives of the study include:

- Quantify the underserved market defined as areas lacking access to broadband at or above 100/100 Mbps download/upload speeds
- Study areas where a single provider exists with high (noncompetitive) prices
- Develop a high level design for STN expansion to underserved areas as a roadmap for prioritizing broadband improvement projects and obtaining funding for broadband enhancement.

An initial market assessment was developed based on data available from federal, state, and local sources that provide information on the coverage areas for various providers, areas currently funded for expansion by a private ISP and results of various local outreach efforts to gain insight into the reality/perception of broadband service at the household level. However, the results presented were inconsistent with the connectivity experience of residents. Therefore, a more detailed assessment was developed to identify an accurate, reliable broadband map using real-world network performance data to better illuminate the current broadband situation in the County and allow us to move more confidently forward with prioritization/implementation of broadband expansion projects. In addition to the previously analyzed data, the detailed market assessment included information obtained from a leading speed test provider to gain insight into the performance, quality, and accessibility of networks. The insights gained from this more detailed analysis were:

- The more detailed assessment showed an increased underserved market in rural areas by ten times, increasing the number of underserved households from 441 housing units to 5,911 housing units (see map below).
- Some providers have speeds that generally underperform versus what is advertised.

- Some limited expansion of fiber broadband has taken, but several blocks can be re-classified as underserved due to a lack of ISP presence or ISP offering lower performing technologies alongside fiber within a block.



Based on the new information the study recommendations were refined as follows:

- Prioritize expansion to underserved areas as based on the more refined market assessment.
- Expansion to reach the underserved areas may also provide opportunities to provide enhanced choice for those areas that are served but have limited choice in service providers.
- Complete a high-level network design based on these findings – reaching the approximately 5,900 underserved homes.

With the complete market assessment, in 2022 we will begin development of the high-level network design to fill the identified broadband gaps in the County as described above. This high-level design will cover the necessary engineering and planning components, including project cost estimates, providing the data necessary to proceed with funding requests or other investments. This phase of the project is important as it will clearly define the fiber expansion route and costs, as well as operational recommendations. This information is critical as a basis illuminating a demonstrable benefit of funds and establishing a realistic design and budget, components that are critical in applying for and obtaining implementation funding.

# INNOVATION DISTRICTS

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

## MURALS AND MOSAICS PROGRAM

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

In 2021, the Planning Department worked closely with the various artists and property owners participating in Round 1 of the iDistricts Public Art Program. Virtual meetings were held during the month of February to introduce the partners and to provide an overview of the program. Throughout the spring and summer, the Planning Department established agreements with both the property owners and artists and to coordinate the permitting and approval process for the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the local municipalities. Three mural projects were completed during the summer of 2021, adding approximately 2,450 square feet of mural space in the iDistricts. The murals were met with a lot of excitement from the community.

During the Fall of 2021, Broome County released a second Call for Walls to solicit interest from property owners within the iDistricts. Five new locations were identified for Round 2 of the iDistrict Public Art Program.



## IDISTRICTS ART PARKS

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

In 2021, the Planning Department worked closely with project partners to advance the design of the Johnson City iDistrict Art Park. The Planning Department applied for an Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) grant through the Consolidated Funding Application process to secure additional funding for the project, but ultimately the project was not selected for award. Broome County will continue to work with project partners to develop a final design that best meets the needs of the community with funds from the Greater Binghamton Fund and a grant to the Village of Johnson City. During the Fall of 2021, Broome County worked with the Village of Endicott to select a site and develop a Request for Proposals for the Endicott iDistrict Art Park. LaBella Associates was selected for the project which will begin in February 2022.



The third art park will be located in Government Plaza in downtown Binghamton, highlighting existing sculptural artwork with opportunities for additional art to be added. The Plaza houses the County Office Building, Binghamton City Hall, and the regional New York State Office Building. The site features an extensive two-level public plaza for which Broome County provides operations and maintenance services. The design improves the overall aesthetics and functionality of the property and integrates green infrastructure. The project is being funded in part by the GBF grant, with significant funding from the NYS Green Innovation Grant Program. While the design for the project was completed in late 2020, the continued rising costs of the post-COVID construction environment led to significant budget limitations for construction. The department expects to apply for additional funding in 2022 with the expectation of moving the project forward to construction in 2023.

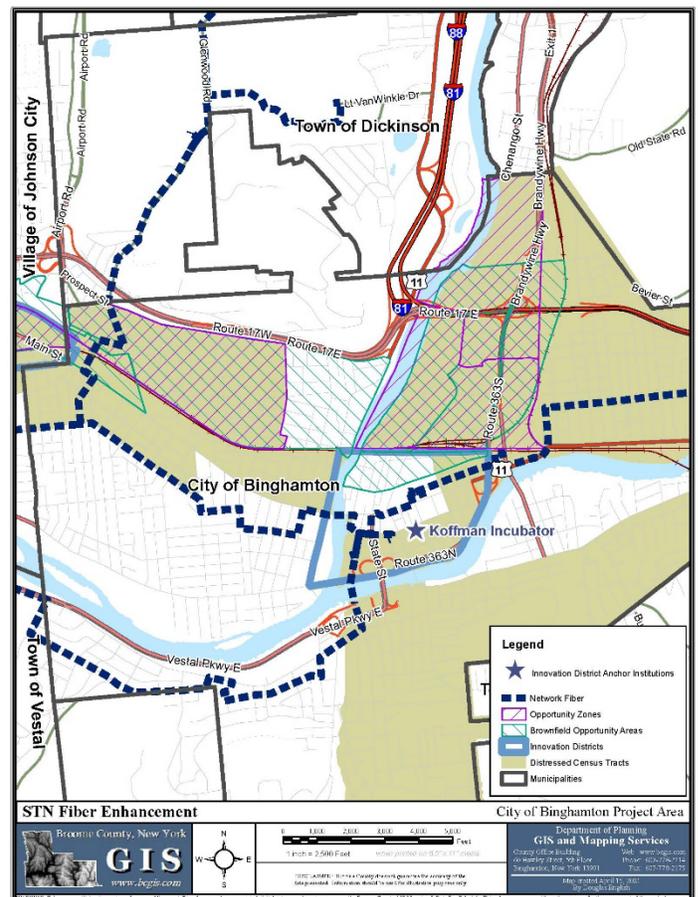
## STREETSCAPING IMPROVEMENTS

Planning also continued to coordinate with the three local municipalities on their funded streetscaping improvements as part of the Greater Binghamton Fund. Broome County Planning had assisted the municipalities in development of the EJ BOA Revitalization Strategy and the Endicott iDistrict Revitalization Strategy. These documents identified improvements that would become the basis for the local applications to improve the condition of these vital downtowns. Broome County also coordinated with the City of Binghamton for placement of public art through our grant to complement the Deco District improvements, implementing a plan developed through County funding in part. Planning collaborated with these entities throughout the year as project planning moved forward and will continue into the coming year.

## IDISTRICTS FIBER ENHANCEMENT AND SMART CITIES PLAN

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

A significant priority of the innovation district is investment in infrastructure that meets the needs of the modern economy and supports revitalization and private investment. A fiber network with adequate capacity and affordability can provide the backbone to economic development and improved quality of life. Through this planning process Broome County will work with partners to identify strategic facilities and development sites where access to the open-access fiber network may enhance site marketability or provide opportunities for growth, expansion, or efficiency improvements of existing operations. The study will also assess how expansion of the open-access fiber infrastructure can provide enhanced opportunities for integration of smart cities technologies within the Innovation Districts. The project is expected to be complete by the end of 2022.



# PARKS AND RECREATION

The Broome County Parks Plan was adopted by the Broome County Legislature in 2019. The intent was to develop recommendations and actions to be used to improve our parks facilities and pursue grant opportunities through the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) and other funding sources. In partnership with the Departments of Parks and Public Works, Planning worked on implementation in 2021 through projects to improve these vital County assets.

## DORCHESTER PARK

In 2020, Broome County initiated planning for the Pathways to Play project at Dorchester Park in the town of Triangle. This project will make accessibility improvements to the park's playground and waterfront. These improvements include replacing existing playground equipment in one of the park's play areas with a universal design playground, installing an ADA kayak launch at the boat rental area, purchasing a beach wheelchair, and adding paved connective pathways to the new amenities.

In 2021, the Planning Department worked with the US Army Corps of Engineers and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation to obtain the necessary reviews and permits for the project. The Planning Department coordinated the bid process to purchase an accessible kayak launch for Dorchester Park's boat rental area. Kay-Akcess, who has provided similar accessible dock facilities for various parks in our region, was selected for the project. In addition to the accessible kayak launch, an all-terrain beach wheelchair was purchased for Dorchester Park. The Planning Department coordinated with DPW and Parks on site prep activities including installing a concrete buttress for the accessible kayak launch and clearing for the playground area. The playground and accessible kayak launch are expected to be installed in the Summer of 2022.



## STURGES STREET PARK

Planning partnered with the Department of Public Works on a project to renovate a property on Sturges Street in Binghamton into a pocket park in remembrance of child crime victims. The property at 6-1/2 Sturges Street is sadly known for the tragic loss of 12-year old Cheri Lindsey who was killed there in March 1984. In early 2020 Broome County purchased the property from the City and contracted to have the existing house demolished later that summer. The next step in the transformation of this north-side residential property is the adaptation of the lot into a small community space featuring a pocket park and memorial garden. In 2021 the Departments worked together toward a concept and design for the park to be known as the Forget-me-not Memorial Garden. The project is expected to be constructed in Spring/Summer of 2022.

## CHUGNUT TRAIL

The Planning Department continued to partner in the design of the Chugnut Trail extension located in the Village of Endicott and Town of Union. The existing trail is a one-mile paved trail located along the Susquehanna River behind Union-Endicott High School. The planned trail components will extend the Chugnut Trail from its current ending point, at the Vestal-Endicott Bridge, to Nanticoke Creek. This crosses Broome County owned properties along the river at Round Top and Grippen Parks.

The Planning Department was awarded a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission to construct a portion of the trail connecting Grippen and Roundtop Parks, increasing their value to the community as riverfront assets. The project includes the paved trail along the riverfront and a natural surface hiking trail leading people up the hill to the main part of Roundtop park. The project also integrates additional riverfront amenities funded by a State and Municipal Facilities Grant located at Grippen and Roundtop Parks.

Planning worked with the partner municipalities on finalizing the trail design and submittal for permits. We expected permits to be granted in 2022 enabling us to move forward with construction. This will compliment Planning's work in partnership with the Endicott Rotary who volunteered to create the hiking trail from the new scenic outlook at Round Top down the hill to Grippen Park. When the paved trail is constructed, this will be an important link between the two parks.

## GO ALL OUT BROOME

In 2021 there was continued promotion of outdoor recreation opportunities through Go All Out Broome. Go All Out provides readily accessible information for residents and visitors related to outdoor recreation as a tool for tourism, economic development, wellness, alternative transportation, and other related initiatives through Facebook, Instagram, and the website: [www.GoAllOutBroome.com](http://www.GoAllOutBroome.com).



While staff limitations made it difficult to create significant new content, Planning continues to use Go All Out resources to promote outdoor events and activities which have proven even more significant in this age of social distancing. We continued to partner with the Triple Cities Hiking Club on the Broome County Dozen Hiking Challenge, a program to highlight twelve unique hiking spots throughout the County and reward participants with a patch showing that they have completed the challenge. The project is a true partnership with information housed on [goalloutbroome.com](http://goalloutbroome.com) and promoted by Go All Out and all submissions being managed by the TCHC.

We plan to continue promotional activities through events in the community and social media. Go All Out will be a key part of promoting many of the new parks and waterfront improvements going on at the County including new boat launches, scenic outlooks, playgrounds, and trails. We also plan to add more data to the interactive map on the website.

# LOCAL WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PLAN



The Planning Department received a grant from the NYS Department of State for developing a County-wide Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) to update the 2011 County-wide Inter-municipal Waterfront Access Plan and prepare a River Trails Plan.

The project includes updating the current plan, including identification of implementation projects in waterfront areas. We will also create a River Trails Plan that will lay out details associated with wayfinding for recreational river use, evaluation of existing services, solutions for identified hazard locations, and development of a river guide showing the river trails, access points, amenities, and services for use in awareness and promotion.

Planning began development of the LWRP with the assistance of our contractor, Bergmann Associates in 2020. Initial stages of plan development included formation of a steering committee for the plan made up of municipal representatives of the waterfront communities and stakeholders with an interest in waterfront development, recreation, tourism, and other related areas. We also began holding individual meetings with the involved municipalities to get their feedback on waterfront areas of interest and their ideas for potential projects. The plan saw significant progress in 2021 with development of the draft inventory and analysis, project profiles and other key sections.

In August, Planning and Bergmann held several in-person public input workshops with ideas for potential projects. These were held at the Vestal Rail Trail, Otsiningo Park during Broome Bands Together, and at the Farmers Market in the Village of Windsor. These were great opportunities to interact with the public and get their feedback on their waterfronts.

Moving into 2022 we have submitted several plan sections to the NYS Department of State (granting agency) and await their approval. We also are getting started in development of the River Trails Plan (also referred to as the Blueway Plan) looking to establish a brand for the Blueway Trail for kayaking and boating, development of a river guide and a plan for potential enhancements to better encourage recreational river use.



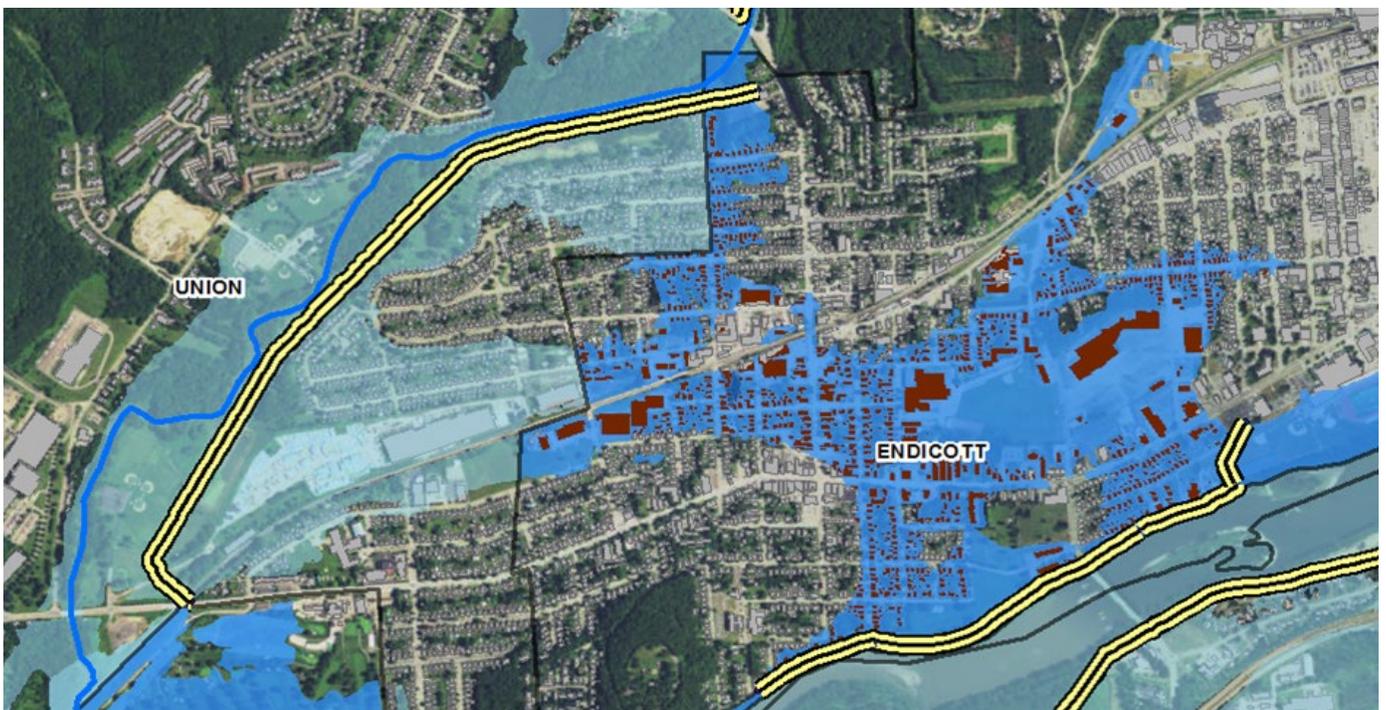
# FLOODING AND HAZARD MITIGATION

Flooding and hazard mitigation have continued to be a priority for the County and Planning Department in 2021. A variety of localized and flash-flooding events in 2021 have continued to highlight the need for local collaboration on these issues. Through the Broome County Flood Task Force and Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee, Planning has continued to update and coordinate the local municipalities regarding hazard mitigation and flooding. We continue to provide information and assistance about relevant policy changes and funding opportunities related to flood mitigation and other hazards. The Department also continued working with municipalities on reviewing and updating the status of projects identified in the 2019 Hazard Mitigation Plan. Some specific issues addressed this year included:

## LEVEE ACCREDITATION

In March, the Planning coordinated a meeting of the Flood Task Force to discuss the results of the US Army Corps of Engineers' Upper Susquehanna River Basin Comprehensive Flood Damage Reduction Feasibility Study, the 2018 Levee Analysis and Mapping Process (LAMP) reports, implications on the issue levee accreditation, and options for addressing this issue.

The Task Force welcomed representatives from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation who gave an overview of the studies as well as and discussed options for moving forward include pursuit of accreditation for those communities with freeboard, pursuit of D-zone designation for freeboard deficient levees, pursue projects to raise levees, or taking no action, resulting in the addition of areas behind levees into the floodplain upon remapping. The group also heard from a consultant, currently working with the City of Binghamton, regarding their process for accreditation.

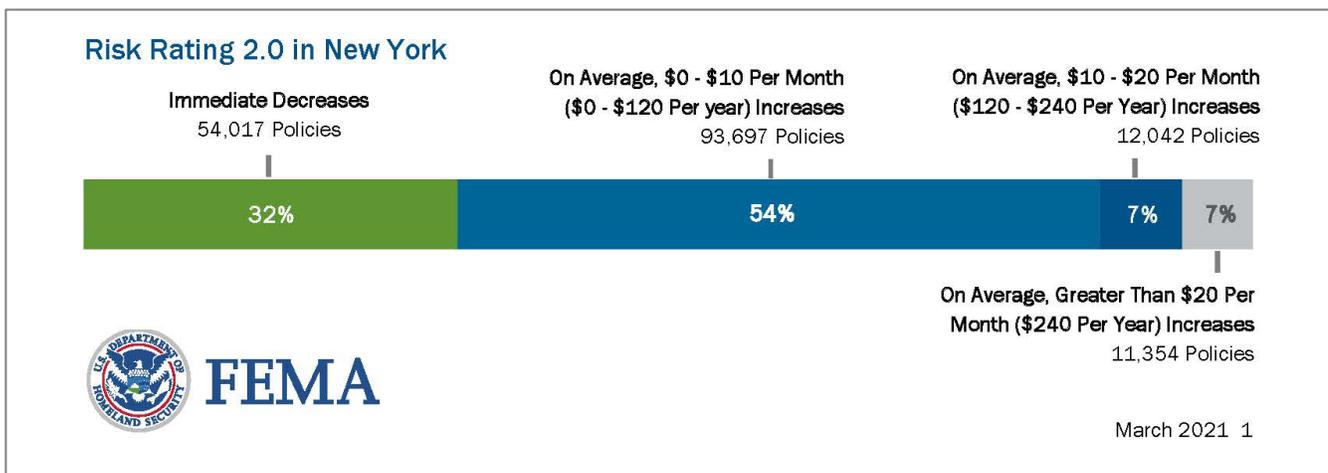


## FLOOD RISK MAPPING

In fall, planning met with representatives from the DEC to discuss their plan to initiate the “Base Level Engineering” (BLE) process for Broome County. The data prepared provides flood hazard information to community officials and allows them to interact with analysis results and review areas identified as prone to flooding. Communities can access and use data prior to updates to their regulatory Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), providing flood risk information that may be immediately used for floodplain management, land use discussions, hazard mitigation planning, and mitigation strategies, as well as providing a basis for more informed development, and supporting grant submissions and assessments related to flood mitigation planning and projects. While there is currently no timeline established by FEMA for development of new, official flood maps, this process could begin after BLE is complete.

## RISK RATING 2.0

In 2021, Planning also worked on informing local municipalities of significant changes to the FEMA Flood Insurance Program. Risk Rating 2.0 is a new methodology for pricing flood insurance, intended to ensure that flood insurance rates reflect an individual property’s risk. Currently, FEMA’s rating methodology is a “one-size-fits-all” approach that prices flood insurance based on which flood zone a property is mapped in by FEMA. Under Risk Rating 2.0, flood insurance rates will be decided at the individual property level to give policyholders a more accurate and transparent picture of flood risk for their home. FEMA will now consider new factors when calculating flood insurance rates, including the different types of flooding that impact a property (including riverine and flash flooding), the distance a property is from a source of flooding, and the cost to rebuild or restore that property. Some elements of flood insurance will not change with Risk Rating 2.0. For example, the mandatory purchase requirement will still be in place, along with the premium cap that limits rate increases to no more than 18% per year.



# AGRICULTURE

In 2021 the Planning Department continued to work as part of the Ag Task Force to address issues surrounding agriculture and agricultural economic development in Broome County. In 2019, the Planning Department completed an update the County’s Agriculture Economic Development Plan which was adopted by the Legislature and the Task Force works together toward implementing the Plan.

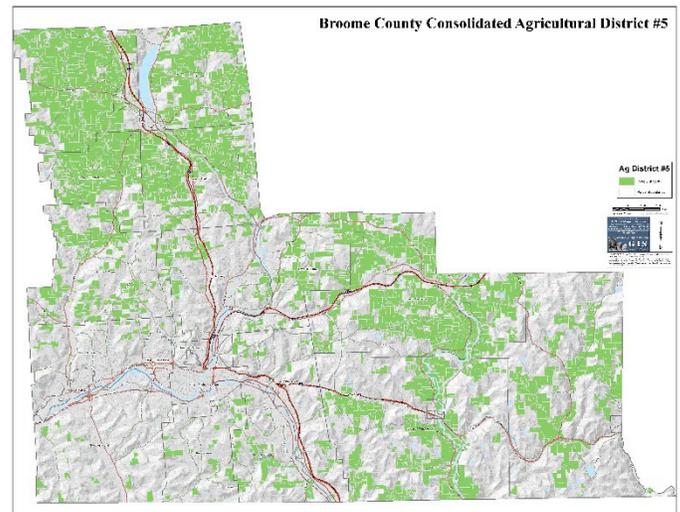
## AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS – ANNUAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD

While actions to modify the Agricultural Districts are reviewed and approved by the Ag and Farmland Protection Board, Planning staff coordinates activities related to administration of the Agricultural District program in coordination with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County. In 2021, we once again worked with the Board on outreach and processing of annual additions to the agricultural districts. The annual enrollment period is an opportunity for property owners to have their property designated as being part of the agricultural district and receive the protections that are afforded as such. In 2021, there were a total of four (4) additions totaling approximately 323 acres. These were processed and submitted to the State for their official approval and integration into the official agricultural district map.

## AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS EIGHT-YEAR REVIEW

In 2021, Broome County initiated the Eight-Year Review Process as required by the NYS Agricultural & Markets Law. During the month of August, Broome County Planning and CCE Broome hosted three informational meetings regarding the agricultural district review process. Approximately twenty (20) people attended and had the opportunity to ask questions, request assistance with the Agricultural District Review Worksheet, and learn more about the agricultural districts and eight-year review process.

As part of the eight-year review process, the Planning Department developed the Eight-Year Review Report. While developing this report, the Planning Department completed a GIS analysis to identify parcels no longer being used for agricultural purposes, assessed and described the state of agriculture in Broome County, and identified recommendations for the district. The Planning Department worked closely with CCE Broome, Broome County GIS, Broome County Real Property, and the Broome County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board to prepare the report. The final list of proposed modifications to the district and eight-year review process will conclude in Spring 2022.





# BROWNFIELDS

## EJ INDUSTRIAL SPINE BROWNFIELD OPPORTUNITY AREA (BOA)

In 2021, the Planning Department developed the final components of the Endicott-Johnson Industrial Spine Brownfield Opportunity Area – Step 3. Upon closeout, the Planning Department used \$303,067 in grant funds and \$33,888 of in-kind services to create a series of plans and reports were developed that outline a cohesive strategy for urban design, regulatory changes, and guiding investment within the Village of Johnson City.

As a result of these efforts, the Planning Department and the BOA steering committee developed six documents that makeup the plan: Endicott-Johnson Industrial Spine Revitalization Strategy, Downtown Johnson City Design Guidelines, Village of Johnson City Design Standards, Johnson City Rail Trail Feasibility Study, Johnson City Historic Preservation Guidebook, Johnson City Business Improvement District (BID) Analysis, and the Goodwill Theatre Architectural Master Plan. Each document identifies revitalization strategies and redevelopment projects that will help transform downtown Johnson City into a place where people will choose to live, work, and play.

### Historic Preservation Guidebook

In 2021, the Planning Department assisted the project consultants and the Village with the Johnson City Historic Preservation Guidebook and educational webpage ([www.jcpreserves.com](http://www.jcpreserves.com)). These resources are intended to be a reference tool for local property owners involved in rehabilitation and preservation projects and for municipal officials who make decisions pertaining to these types of projects. The Guidebook also contain a model regulatory procedure to guide the Village in creating a Local Historic District. Overall, the Guidebook will guide a consistent approach towards historic building treatments contributing to a more cohesive and attractive downtown area.

### Business Improvement District (BID) Opporunity in the Village of Johnson City

In 2021, the Planning Department worked closely with the project consulutants and the Village to develop a Business Improvement District (BID) Analysis for downtown Johnson City. The purpose of this report is to educate the Village and property owners about BIDs, outline the steps to create a BID, assess the feasibility of a BID in Johnson City, and gather input from property owners about a future BID. In addition, community handouts were developed to assist the initiation of the BID formation process. The Planning Department helped organize two virtual informational meetings to gather feedback on the possibility of forming a BID in downtown Johnson City and mailed postcards to property owners within the downtown area.

### Environmental Assessments

#### *2 Titchener Place*

In late 2021 Broome County foreclosed on 2 Titchener Place, a 3-acre site previously home to the Titchener Company’s metal plating facility. The site is considered strategic due to its size and central

location in the heart of the Clinton Street commercial corridor. The site was abandoned in 2004 and was briefly owned by Broome County around 2015. While it was sold to a developer with plans for the site at that time, these fell through, with the property once again ending up under County ownership. This has provided an opportunity to do the planning and development work needed to bring this site into productive reuse in line with plans developed by the City of Binghamton's First Ward BOA Plan.

Previous Phase 1 Environmental Assessments have been conducted at the site, recommending development of a Phase 2 assessment. However, these have not move forward from past efforts. An opportunity to conduct a new assessment, along with additional needed assessments arose through a grant awarded to the Agency to do this type of work at various sites throughout the County. Planning, Real Property and the Executive Office have met with the Agency to discuss options for moving forward under that grant and have plans to develop an updated Phase 1 assessment, the needed Phase 2 assessment, and a full redevelopment plan for the site. Planning will partner with the Agency to move the project forward, providing any existing documentation and data and coordinating various stakeholders in the planning process.



# CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITIES

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

Upcoming state-level policy changes through the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act are expected to enact ambitious goals for reducing green-house gas emissions state-wide in the coming years. In anticipation of this, Planning has added an additional Senior Planner position to our team for 2022 with the intent of focusing on meeting these challenges through upgrades to County facilities and operations through new planning initiatives and identification of funding opportunities.



## LIGHTING RETROFIT

As a Clean Energy Community, Broome County received a grant to retrofit interior lighting at the County Office Building with more efficient LED light fixtures, managed by Planning. This project was completed in 2020. It is anticipated that this changeout will result in significant energy and cost savings at that facility. With the success of this project, Buildings and Grounds is interested in working together to identify funding for similar projects at additional facilities.



In 2021, Planning worked with Buildings and Grounds to allot additional funding to implement a similar lighting retrofit at an additional building, the historic Broome County Courthouse building on Court Street. Planning worked with NYSERDA to make the needed changes to allocate remaining grant money to this project. It is expected that these changes will be approved, and installation will move forward in 2022.

## FLEET ELECTRIFICATION

In late 2021 Planning, along with representatives from the Division of Engineering and the Executive Office began discussions regarding the electrification of our county fleet, among other issues related to County procurement of vehicles. As an initial step in this effort the Planner began developing a framework for a County Fleet Inventory with the goal of collecting all the relevant information about County vehicles in one location. The group expects to move this forward in 2022, collecting information from relevant County departments and identifying next steps for our fleet.



# HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Planning continued to focus on initiatives related to housing and community services in 2021. In 2020, Planning added a new position, the Program Coordinator, to support County efforts in this area. The role of the Program Coordinator is to utilize available funding and coordinate community stakeholders to improve living conditions for, expand economic development opportunities for, and provide new or improved public facilities in areas of low and moderate income persons, as well as developing safe housing throughout the county. The Broome County Land Bank Corporation (BCLBC), a nonprofit corporation, was established by Broome County in 2013 under the New York Land Bank Act. Planning supports the Land Bank's efforts by providing a home to the organization and partnering on various activities. The mission of the Land Bank is to foster economic and community development by acquiring, holding, managing, developing, and marketing distressed, vacant, abandoned, and under-utilized properties.

## SAFE HOUSING TASK FORCE

The Safe Housing Task Force is a collaborative coalition, administered by the Program Coordinator, that brings together department representatives, community leaders, and local housing experts to implement projects and programs that promote stable, decent, and affordable housing in Broome County. The Task Force continued to focus on the impacts of COVID on housing - for both tenants and landlords - with the uncertainty surrounding the eviction moratorium and rental assistance. The Program Coordinator worked closely with DSS and United Way on outreach regarding New York's Emergency Rental Assistance Program.

## ANTI-DISPLACEMENT

Through the efforts of the Program Coordinator, Broome County's project team was awarded funding as part of New York State Attorney General's Anti-Displacement Learning Network for preventing displacement and encouraging safe, permanent housing. The first round of funding ensured the full staffing of Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York's pro-bono housing program and provided additional funding for Legal Services of Central New York to hire new staff to cover housing cases when the moratorium expires. Coordinated Care Services, Inc hired a local team to launch a relocation assistance program. The second round of funding will seed the Broome County Housing Trust fund, hosted and managed by the Community Foundation. The first funding cycle will be launched in early 2022. The Program Coordinator will work alongside the Community Foundation to secure ongoing sources of funding so this fund can be a long-term benefit to Broome County.



Throughout the year, the Program Coordinator leveraged data and partnerships to submit multiple applications for funding for youth homelessness services, low-income housing development, and more. Funding for an Executive Director for the Southern Door Community Land Trust was secured. The Program Coordinator is preparing for multiple applications in 2022, including funds for an independent, comprehensive housing study.

The Program Coordinator also transitioned into the role of Runaway and Homeless Youth Coordinator, which includes coordination between local RHY program and New York State, including Countywide annual reports, assisting development of services, and involvement in the Broome County Youth Bureau.

## **LAND BANK CDBG GRANT**

In early 2021, Planning partnered with the Broome County Land Bank on a joint application to the New York State Department of Homes and Community Renewal (NYS DHCR) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for Housing Activities. Broome County and the Land Bank were awarded \$1 million in July 2021 to acquire, rehabilitate, and sell four single-family affordable homes. The Land Bank will be partnering with The SEPP Group who will oversee construction and qualify interested buyers who meet income and affordability standards not exceeding 80% of the Area Median Income. The term of the grant is from June 2021 to June 2023. While the Land Bank will oversee primary administration of the grant as a sub-recipient, Planning will oversee administrative tasks related to compliance with environmental review requirements, fair housing tasks, and other tasks related to grant administration.





# OCCUPANCY TAX

In 2021, the Director continued administration of the Hotel Motel Occupancy Tax Fund. The total Hotel Motel Occupancy tax, a tax on stays in the County's hotels and motels, is 5%. Of this, 3% of funds go to the contract agencies for economic development and tourism. The remaining 2% is allotted for three purposes, economic development and marketing, brownfields, and the Small Community Fund. Expenditure of these funds is determined by the Hotel Motel Committee consisting of representatives from various County departments and officials. Planning provides administrative assistance to this committee through management of applications to the fund, coordination of the group, and management of the finances with the assistance of the Budget Director.

The status of the fund is directly related to the success of our local hotels and motels, so when the COVID pandemic hit in early 2020, the County was forced to put a halt on submittal of applications, and unfortunately no additional awards could be made through the end of 2020. However, in 2021 the fund saw a rebound, providing an opportunity for the programs and projects funded through the program to move forward once again.

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

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING

This fund supports projects anywhere in the County that can demonstrate a positive impact on the local economy and tourism. These may be projects that bring in visitors from other areas, improve community character, or support efforts to leverage private investment, among others. Projects, programs, and events that received Economic Development and Marketing funds from the fund in 2021 included Dicks Sporting Goods Open, Spiedie Fest, Luma and matching funds for Visit Binghamton's NYS tourism grant. Unfortunately, several of the smaller events were still on hold due to the continuing pandemic. We expect that many of those will return in 2022 with a request for funding.

## SMALL COMMUNITY FUND

This fund supports small projects to enhance community character or smaller contributions that leverage other funds for larger projects. The intent of this program is to highlight the importance of our diverse communities to the local economy. Projects funded in the 2021 round of the program include the follow:

- Town of Dickinson Community Park Improvements
- Town of Fenton Town Hall Upgrades
- Ridge Riders Snowmobile Club Equipment Purchase
- Town of Vestal Ethel Place Park Improvements

- Village of Lisle Village Park Improvements
- Batting Cage Improvements at the Conklin Fairgrounds
- Port Dickinson Park Basketball Court Renovations
- Village of Windsor Parking Lot Improvements
- Waterman Conservation Center trail improvements at IBM Glen
- Floor Rehabilitation at the Amos Patterson Museum
- Equipment purchase for Windsor Emergency Services
- Town of Chenango Community Room Improvements
- Deposit Community Park walking trail and amenities
- Upgrades at the Broome County Fairgrounds
- Equipment and Marketing for JC Senior Center Community Room
- Binghamton Township Historical Society equipment and upgrades
- Police Athletic League camp improvements

## **GUIDELINES AND APPLICATIONS**

In late 2021 Planning initiated an effort to better streamline the programs and application process for projects funded through these programs. This effort will Development of new program guidelines and applications has begun and will continue into early 2022 for implementation. We expect that this will establish a clearly outlined program for grantees and a manageable process for staff. Ultimately, Planning would like to work with Information Technology on development of an electronic grant submission portal later into 2022.



# LOCAL LAND USE

## COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

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

### Village of Port Dickinson Comprehensive Plan

Working closely with the Comprehensive Plan Committee, the Broome County Planning Department made substantial progress on the Village of Port Dickinson Comprehensive Plan. Using a variety of data sources, this plan examines the existing conditions for a range of physical, social, and economic matters and makes recommendations to achieve the Village's goals for the future. The Plan's chapters include Public Input, People, Housing, Workforce, Environment, Transportation, Public Services and Facilities, Land Use, Local Laws, COVID-19 Impacts, and Recommendations. In November 2020, a draft of the comprehensive plan was made available on the Village's website for public review. In February 2021, the plan was official adopted by the Village of Port Dickinson.

## MUNICIPAL TRAINING

New York State requires all zoning and planning board members to receive 4 hours of training each year. In 2020 due to Covid-19, we reimagined the municipal training and went to a virtual format. This new format will enrich our library of municipal training materials available on our website.

In 2021 we continued our commitment to provide municipalities training opportunities. Director Beth Lucas served as a panelist on the Winter 2021 Virtual Housing Summit Series with other County Planning Directors, the Southern Tier 8 Regional Board, and the Appalachian Regional Commission. This training series convened a diverse group of community stakeholders on a bi-weekly basis from November to February to learn about rural America's hidden housing crisis and the Southern Tier's most pressing housing issues. Municipal board members received credit for attending and the Broome County Planning Department provided the certificates and helped with the distribution of the invitations, registrations, and promotion.

In 2021 we continued to make our training video recordings and PowerPoint presentations available to those board members who could not attend and to inform the municipalities of the New York State Department of State, NYSERDA, New York Planning Federation, and other planning agency virtual training opportunities.

In 2021 we partnered with Cornell Cooperative Extension for a training on Renewable Energy Leasing on Agricultural Lands which included speakers from Coughlin & Gerhart, New York Agriculture and Markets, and the New York State Farm Bureau.

In 2021 we also began planning for our 2022 virtual training webinars which will include NYSERDA (Battery and Solar Energy Systems), New York State Department of State (Affordable Housing and Aging in Place), Broome County Office for Aging (Universal Design), Coughlin & Gerhart (Zoning and Planning for Cannabis), and collaboration again with Cornell Cooperative Extension (Planning and Zoning for Agriculture).

## **LAND USE REVIEWS (239)**

The Department has a legal obligation to conduct reviews and render advisory opinions on land-use proposals covered under NYS General Municipal Law 239 (l) and (m). The Department received 188 projects for review and completed reviews and provided opinions on 181 of these projects in 2021 plus we completed reviews on 6 projects carried over from 2020 for a total of 187 opinions issued in 2021.

## **BROOME COUNTY CONSTRUCTION DATA REPORTS**

The Department prepared the 2020 Construction Data Report in 2021. This report, available on Planning's website, provides an indicator of countywide growth and development patterns and trends, residential and nonresidential building data from municipalities, and tables and charts documenting annual building permit activity within the municipalities. The construction data is available on our website.

## **STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW ACT (SEQRA)**

Planning continued to complete SEQRA reviews and provide technical assistance to Broome County departments for the compliance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) as it pertains to County projects. In 2021, the Planning Department prepared the SEQR for the annual additions to the Agricultural Districts and the County's Sturges Street Memorial Garden project.

## **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

The Broome County Planning Department understands the importance of public engagement, and values the opinions of our residents, businesses, and other organizations. In 2021, Broome County held three in-person agricultural district meetings, two virtual meetings for the Village of Johnson City Business Improvement District Feasibility Study, along with two virtual meetings and three in-person public workshops for the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. Over the course of the past year, the Planning Department's social media page, made 36 posts that were viewed 14,246 times and engaged 1,076 people. We will continue to use social media and other public outreach tools to engage our community.

## STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

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

The Director of Planning continued to serve as the Chair of the group for 2021 and a representative for Broome County along with Engineering. Planning specifically is responsible for documenting activities related to public education and public participation activities conducted throughout the year for the Annual Report required by New York State. The annual report is a compilation of the activities of all regulated municipalities under the state regulations, as well as Coalition wide activities for submittal to the NYSDEC.

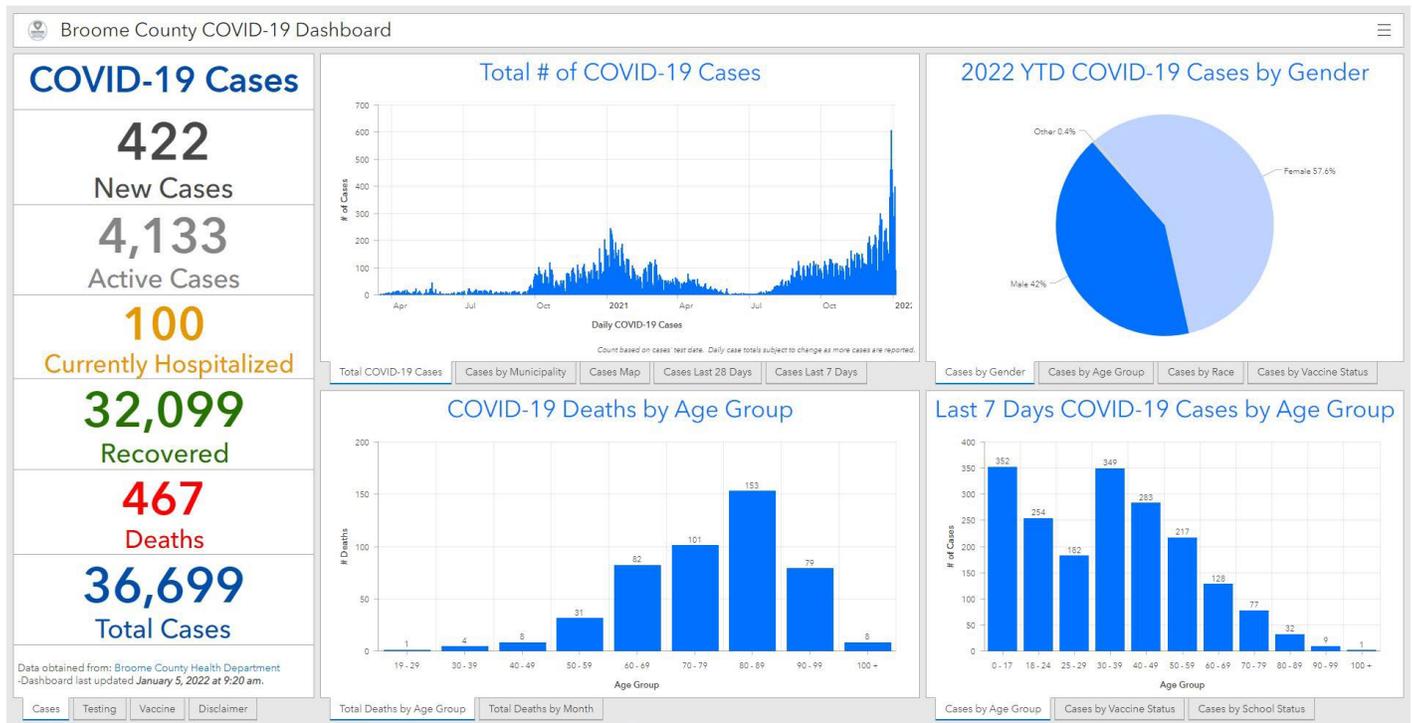
Public education and participation activities typically include attendance at local events, such as the annual Earth Fest, and coordination of the annual Riverbank Cleanup. Planning continued to use resources from the BTSC's public education campaign, "Water from Rain", [www.waterfromrain.org](http://www.waterfromrain.org).



# GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

## GIS PORTAL WEBSITE AND MAPPING APPLICATIONS

The GIS Portal website and mapping applications continue to be highly-demanded online county resource. In 2021 the GIS Portal website received over 317,000 visits by nearly 107,000 unique users. This represents a -7.4% decrease in visits and a -4.5% decrease in unique users over 2020. The most viewed resource on the site was the *Parcel Mapper* with over 200,500 views (+1.7%). Parcel detail sheets were another popular resource with nearly 104,000 views (+1.3%). The *Election Mapper* saw a large drop in views over 2020 at nearly 2,800 (-38.2%), likely due to 2020 being a Presidential Election year. PDF tax maps were viewed over 9,700 times (+12.7).



The COVID dashboard was redesigned in late September to include more demographic, vaccine, and testing information. The mobile version was also redesigned. These dashboards were viewed nearly 1 million times and averaged nearly 2,700 views per day. The process of updating the data used in the dashboards was also streamlined. The GIS Division now determines the municipality based on case address instead of the Health Department. This change saves the Health Department a great deal of time and is a more efficient use of existing county resources.

The GIS webserver and GIS server software version were both updated in Spring 2021 in part to enable more secure encrypted https connections vs. unsecured http connections. As part of this

change, the webaddress of the GIS Portal website was changed to <https://gis.broomecountyny.gov> and the Portal landing page was slightly redesigned.

Other online GIS items of note: iDistricts were added as a layer in the Parcel Mapper; the demographic information app was updated to reference newer 2014 – 2018 American Community Survey data; an app was created for the County Legislature for the purpose of redistricting; 2020 land use and 2001, 2006, 2011, and 2016 land cover PDF maps were added to the GIS Portal Map Library; the Construction Report and Election Results dashboards were updated with 2020 data; the Promise Zone web app was updated with new information.

## COUNTY DEPARTMENTS

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

- *Emergency Services*: continued to assign all 911 addresses within the county; continued to support 911 dispatch mapping; worked with Susquehanna County, PA to edgematch and edit 911 address-related data in preparation for Next Gen 911; mapped Deposit Fire hydrant locations.
- *Sheriff's Office*: developed a Part I Crimes dashboard; continued to provide weekly, monthly, and year-to-date maps and data for long term, strategic/administration planning; continued to provide access to online web maps using ArcGIS Online.
- *Security*: provided maps for various county events like Dick's Open, Spedie Fest, and the Greater Binghamton Air Show.
- *Real Property*: continued to support tax mapping functions; continued to provide PDF tax maps and access to RPS data online through Image Mate Online from the GIS Portal website.
- *Planning & Economic Development*: continued to update 239 review information in the parcel data and the 239 review layer in the *Parcel Mapper*; supported ag district consolidation effort with various maps and data; provided various maps and/or data for different projects and grants, including data for the County Broadband study.
- *Health*: redesigned and continue to update the COVID dashboards; geocoded and provide other COVID-related maps and data such as geocoding vaccine recipients.
- *Elections/Legislature*: supported County Legislature redistricting efforts by creating an app for this purpose and by generating maps and statistics from officially submitted maps; fulfilled various map and data requests for Elections and the Legislature; verified voter addresses for Elections; produced maps of annual additions to agricultural districts for the Legislature.

## CITY OF BINGHAMTON

In 2021 over 400 GIS projects and 1 map print were provided to the City of Binghamton. Some highlights include:

- *Police*: incidents and cases dashboard updated daily; continued collaborating with SUNY Cortland to predict aggravated assaults using Risk Terrain Modeling (RTM); continued to provide technical support to the City's Environmental Policing Task Force; continued to provide weekly, monthly, and year-to-date map, charts, and graphs for long term, strategic/administration planning; provided support for the City Crime Intelligence Center; utilized ArcGIS Online to create web maps for police use; participated in various meetings.
- *Planning*: added the new Main Street National Register Historic District to the layer in the *Parcel Mapper*; provided mapping for various projects and grants; continued to provide updated data and server map services for the City's Building Blocks application.
- *Building & Code*: provided various maps and data.
- *Binghamton School District*: provided updated polling place maps.



# ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL



The Broome County Environmental Management Council (EMC) serves as a citizen advisory board to county government on environmental matters. The EMC conducts environmental research and planning, reviews environmental plans, reports, and impact statements, and helps raise awareness through public participation and education programs. Planning provided technical, bookkeeping, and other support services. The EMC typically meets bimonthly. Planning generally provides administrative support to the EMC through meeting organization, membership administration, and other tasks. However, due to limited staff resources in 2021 and the impacts of COVID, this became even more limited. Board members stepped in to take on some of the administrative tasks throughout the year. However, when able to hire a new Planner in September, this additional capacity allowed for increased staff support to the EMC.

The annual EMC Riverbank Cleanup went forward in October with volunteer members of the Riverbank Cleanup Committee organizing and holding the event. Tasks included pairing groups with locations and coordination for trash collection. The event helps promote the preservation of water quality and helps the County to meet our requirements under state and federal stormwater regulations.

In addition, the EMC established two new working committees. One focused on Climate Smart Communities. The EMC is Broome's officially designated Climate Smart Community Task Force. The goal of this group is to evaluate opportunities to move the County forward in our climate action goals as a bronze certified Climate Smart Community. The second group is the Zero Waste Committee focusing on opportunities to advise on opportunities to enhance waste management policies and programs that provide alternative outlets for waste (through recycling, composting and other means), thus reducing the volume of trash in our community.

# SUSQUEHANNA HERITAGE AREA

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



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

## GRANT FUNDING

The two counties and all 39 municipalities and non-profit agencies are eligible to apply for state heritage area funding. The planning department coordinates the commission review of the projects applying for heritage area, historic preservation, and parks environmental protection fund grants; reaches out to the municipalities and nonprofit agencies informing them of the grants; facilitates the meetings with the commission, advisory board, and applicants; gives the applicants technical assistance in meetings and emails; reviews the projects for consistency with the *Susquehanna Heritage Area Management Plan*; and prepares the commission resolutions of endorsement and support for the applications. In 2021, the planning department coordinated the review for two projects: *Roberson Museum and Science Center Carriage House Preservation Plan* to restore these buildings to prevent further deterioration and *Owego Police Station Historic Preservation Project* to restore, repair, and improve this historic building. In December 2021, both projects received funding.

## EDUCATION, MARKETING AND PROMOTION

The Planning Department provides direction and coordination for the local participation in the *New York State Path Through History Weekends* – a bi-annual statewide event to promote the historical and cultural resources of New York State. Planning staff partner with Visit Binghamton to provide local meetings, technical assistance, and direction for the local programming and reach out to Broome County municipalities and historical and cultural groups to garner their interest and

participation. Planning, GIS, and Print Shop staff design the interactive map, handout, poster, and event descriptions designed to promote these sites and events and to raise awareness of the historical and cultural resources of Broome County and the Susquehanna Heritage Area. Broome County Planning uses the Go All Out Broome website to promote these two annual events and the Broome County Executive Office hosts the press conference held at Roberson Museum Mansion.

For more than 25 years Broome County has provided the jeweled buttons for the Ride the Carousel Circuit with the Planning Department coordinating this effort and each year partners with Visit Binghamton to promote this program.

## **MUNICIPAL AND NON-PROFIT REPRESENTATION**

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

## **COMMISSION AND ADVISORY BOARD MEETINGS AND MEMBERSHIP**

In 2021, due to Covid-19 the Planning Department partnered with the City of Binghamton and Tioga County to hold virtual meetings which included discussion of the new grant opportunities and projects going forward in the new year and update of the Susquehanna Heritage Area Management Plan Amendment.



## REGIONAL COLLABORATION

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

## BROADBAND

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

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT PORTFOLIO

Through another collaborative effort lead by Southern Tier 8, Broome County has participated in an effort to better establish a portfolio of strategic developments sites and work together on activities to support site development, move sites toward shovel ready status, and promote site development opportunities. One of the activities this group worked on was development of a regional Opportunity Zone portal to attract private investment and create jobs in distressed communities. The goal of the effort is to create tool that communities can use to highlight the region and match potential projects with investors. Through this effort Broome County continues to work with other planning and economic development professionals to collect information move these efforts forward.



# BOARDS AND MEMBERSHIPS

Planning staff served on the following boards and committees in 2020:

- Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board
- Agricultural Task Force
- Aging Futures Partnership
- BMTS Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee
- BMTS Planning Committee
- Broome County Chronic Disease Leadership Team
- Broome County Community Health Assessment Steering Committee
- Broome County Environmental Management Council
- Broome County Flood Task Force
- Broome Tioga Stormwater Coalition
- Census Complete Count Committee
- Communities Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD)
- Department of Public Art
- Greater Binghamton Fund Work Group
- Greenway Steering Committee
- Headwaters River Trail
- Local Emergency Planning Committee
- NYS DEC Region 7 Open Space Committee
- Southern Tier 8 Regional Planning Development Board
- Susquehanna Heritage Area Commission and Advisory Board
- New York State Path Through History Local Committee