

REGIONAL BUSINESS PLAN FOR FULTON AND MONTGOMERY COUNTIES



...Creating a Business Friendly Climate...

AUGUST, 2011

I. INTRODUCTION:

Fulton and Montgomery Counties have strong historical and geographic linkages. Both Counties were originally part of a larger Tryon County. Eventually, both Counties were formed and now share a common boundary. Over the years, the two (2) Counties have worked together on various initiatives most notably being Fulton - Montgomery Community College (FMCC) and the Hamilton Fulton Montgomery County BOCES (HFM-BOCES). Both Counties are similarly sized, have similar economic bases, and are currently facing similar economic challenges like high unemployment, job losses and high property taxes.

The Fulton and Montgomery Region (Region) has experienced high unemployment rates and the loss of manufacturing jobs. They have also experienced success in revitalizing segments of their local economies. These successes have been achieved through planning, investment in economic development and having a strong inventory of shovel-ready sites.

Because of their planning and investments, Fulton and Montgomery Counties have achieved a great deal of economic development success with its industrial/business parks. The availability of shovel-ready sites has been critical in the two (2) Counties' efforts to successfully attract new businesses into the two (2) Counties and helping existing businesses already in the region to expand.

The New York State Legislature recent adoption of a State-mandated tax cap will have drastic and far reaching impacts on the Region's local governments and public schools. The tax cap will force changes to how local governments and schools function and operate. Fulton and Montgomery Counties must plan for these changes to ensure that the Region continues to move forward. The adoption of a Regional Business Plan will help guide and direct the change that is forthcoming.

In spite of the Region's past successes, the competition to retain existing and create new jobs is stronger than ever. While individual communities can compete for new businesses, they may be better served by developing a regional approach to business retention and economic development. Some communities have already taken a regional approach to development and have been successful such as Hudson Valley Partnership, the Center for Economic Growth and Tech Valley. In addition, Governor Cuomo is also advocating a regional approach to economic development in New York State through the creation of Regional Economic Development Councils.

The Region has many large and small existing businesses. The Region's first economic development priority must be to keep those existing businesses and jobs. The growth of most local economies happens through the support of existing companies. Area CEOs have stated that in order for existing businesses in the Region to prosper, the Region must better educate and train a workforce capable of working in a 21st Century Workplace and reduce the high property tax burden.

In addition to retaining existing businesses, the Region must also attract new business and jobs. In order to successfully attract new business, the Region must collaborate. Business and industry owners and developers do not focus on a specific community in which to locate their companies or projects. Rather, they consider a strategic location or region that will provide them with the geographical advantage, natural resources, access to educational institutions, quality of life and a labor pool that will give their business an advantage over their competitors.

The Fulton and Montgomery Region has advantages and assets desired by business and developers. Our close proximity to New York City, Boston, Montreal, Buffalo, and other metropolitan markets coupled with our quick access to the New York State Thruway and other interstate highways, affords the Fulton and Montgomery County region a geographical advantage. In addition, our municipal water and wastewater treatment facilities can service the needs of a multitude of industry sectors. Fulton and Montgomery Counties also have close proximity to institutions of higher education. All of these assets make the Fulton and Montgomery County region attractive to a variety of businesses including the high tech industry and companies that supply these industries.

In order to maximize this Region's opportunities, our elected officials, in conjunction with the business community, must collaborate and plan regionally. For that reason, a group of local economic development, planning, and education professionals (Team) along with the CEO's of many businesses in the Region have developed this Regional Business Plan for consideration by the elected officials in Fulton and Montgomery Counties. This Team consisted of:

Ms. Deborah Auspelmyer	President, Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce
Mr. Wally Hart	President, Fulton County Chamber of Commerce
Dr. Patrick Michel	District Superintendent, HFM-BOCES
Mr. James Mraz	Director of Planning, Fulton County
Mr. Michael Reese	President, Fulton County Economic Development Corp.
Mr. Ken Rose	Director of Planning and Economic Development, Montgomery County
Dr. Dustin Swanger	President, Fulton-Montgomery Community College

II. THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE REGION’S INDUSTRIAL/BUSINESS PARKS:

One of the Region’s economic success stories has been the development of its business and industrial parks. There are currently six (6) such parks located in the Region:

Fulton County	Montgomery County
Crossroads Industrial Park (CIP)	Florida Business
Crossroads Business Park (CBP)	Florida Business Expansion
Johnstown Industrial Park (JIP)	Glen Canal View

These six (6) parks contain 1,285 acres of land. At present, 1,045 or 81% of these acres have been developed leaving only 240 acres remaining in the two (2) Counties.

A. Fulton County:

Park	Original # Acres	# Acres Developed	# Acres Available
CIP	54	44	10
JIP	294	258	36
CBP	77	8	69
Total	425	310	115

B. Montgomery County:

Park	Original # Acres	# Acres Developed	# Acres Available
Florida Business	633	626	7
Florida Business Expansion	133	45	88
Glen Canal View: Phase I	94	64	30
Total	860	735	125

At present, the following businesses are located in the Region’s industrial/business parks:

A. Fulton County:

A. Johnstown Industrial Park:

- Benjamin Moore
- Catalyst International NY, LLC
- Coast Distribution
- Core-Mark
- Electrometrics
- Euphrates
- Exel
- FAGE

- Marck Recycling
- Pioneer Windows
- Univar
- Wal-Mart Food Distribution

B. Crossroads Industrial Park:

- Dixon Value
- Gen-Fame
- Falk
- Northern Architectural Systems
- Swany

C. Crossroads Business Park:

- EPIMED
- Office Building

B. Montgomery County:

A. Florida Business:

- Target Distribution Center
- Beechnut

B. Florida Business Expansion:

- Hill & Markes

C. Glen Canal View:

- American Ornamental
- DAIM Logistics, Inc.

The investments made by local municipalities and both Counties into building these Parks has generated significant economic benefits for the Region. In 2010, the 24 businesses identified above had a combined annual payroll of approximately \$110 million and employed approximately 2,900 people. The 1,285 acres of land in these parks was originally vacant land with minimal assessed valuations which generated only a small amount of property tax revenues. Today, the businesses in these Parks paid, in 2011, over \$5.6 million in property taxes to local taxing jurisdictions as shown below:

Fulton County: \$3,851,582 : Total Property Taxes Paid in 2011

Park	Total Assessed Valuation	Property Taxes Paid				# Jobs as of 12/31/10
		2010-11 School	2011 County	2011 City	2011 Town	
CIP	\$11,785,300	\$ 179,038	\$ 103,522	\$ 255,859	N/A	114
JIP	\$74,531,581	\$1,390,150	\$ 779,338	\$1,061,347	N/A	1,479
CBP	\$ 2,330,000	\$ 27,337	\$ 15,925	\$ 39,066	N/A	77
Total	\$88,646,881	\$1,596,525	\$ 898,785	\$1,356,272	N/A	1,670

Montgomery County: \$1,753,656 : Total Property Taxes Paid in 2011

Park	Total Assessed Valuation	Property Taxes Paid				# Jobs as of 12/31/10
		2010-11 School	2011 County	2011 Local/Fire	2011 Town	
Florida Business	\$122,529,788	\$ 951,840	\$ 634,560	\$123,714	\$ 30,000	1,043
Florida Business Expansion	\$24,000	\$ 719	\$ 557	-	-	160
Glen Canal View	\$367,460	\$ 6,606	\$ 5,181	-	\$ 479	19
Total	\$122,921,248	\$ 959,165	\$ 640,298	\$123,714	\$ 30,479	1,222

Total # of Jobs..... 2,892

The total local public investment made into developing these six (6) parks was approximately \$10.1 million. The Region’s return on this investment has been significant. This \$10.1 million investment is now providing approximately 2,892 jobs, generating over \$110 million/year in payroll and providing \$5.6 million per year in local property tax revenues.

III. REGIONAL BACKGROUND:

A. Opportunity:

One reason for developing this Regional Business Plan is to take advantage of existing opportunities in the Capital District Region. Technology companies are growing in the Capital Region as a result of the Tech Valley Initiative. There has been favorable growth of companies from biotechnology to nanotechnology all across the Capital Region. The Fulton and Montgomery Region can align itself with the Capital District and take advantage of this Tech Valley Initiative. The Capital District and the Fulton-Montgomery Region share media markets and federal representation. Additionally, many residents of the Fulton-Montgomery Region travel daily to the Capital Region to work. Leveraging the growth of the Capital Region is a natural extension.

Thirty miles to the east of Fulton and Montgomery Counties, GLOBALFOUNDRIES is building a Chip Fab plant in Malta, New York. With projected investment of \$7 billion, it is currently the largest economic development project in the United States. At a Community Forum held on March 23rd at the Broadalbin-Perth High School, representatives from GLOBALFOUNDRIES, The Center for Economic Growth, and others discussed the tremendous opportunity this project brings to this Region. Also stressed was the importance of having a Regional Business Plan.

Fulton-Montgomery Community College is educating and training the local workforce for existing companies in the Region and technology-based companies through the Center for Engineering and Technology. Additionally, Fulton-Montgomery Community College is working with the Hudson Valley and Schenectady County Community Colleges on curricula to further strengthen its ability to provide training for the 21st century workplace.

B. SWOT Analysis:

In order to develop a Regional Business Plan, it is critical to recognize the Region's existing Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) that may affect our outcome and success. The Team performed this SWOT analysis and determined the top factors that must be taken into consideration as goals and objectives were developed. This list is not intended to be exhaustive but to include those factors considered by the Team to be most important.

1) Top Regional Strengths:

- a. Location – Close proximity to I-90, I-87 and I-88 which provide quick and easy access to markets throughout the Northeast.
- b. Land - available and affordable
- c. Many year-round outdoor recreational activities
- d. Low cost of living

2) Top Regional Weaknesses:

- a. Availability of employable 21st Century workforce.
- b. Inadequate inventory of “shovel ready” sites
- c. High property taxes caused, in part, by state and federal mandates
- d. Deteriorated downtowns and large pockets of blight in cities, towns and villages.
- e. Inadequate number of social venues appealing to professionals
- f. Limited resources for Economic Development

3) Top Regional Opportunities:

- a. GLOBALFOUNDRIES Project and opportunity to attract supply chain businesses.
- b. Develop technology infrastructure for the future
- c. Current budget crisis creates atmosphere for change
- d. Cooperative planning and marketing - pool resources
- e. Development of Rt. 30, 30A and 67 corridors

4) Top Regional Threats:

- a. Keeping the workforce educated and trained for the 21st Century Workplace
- b. Keeping a trained workforce in the Region and not having them move out of the area for opportunities elsewhere.
- c. Lack of political cooperation between municipalities and too many local governments
- d. NYS fiscal crisis
- e. Prevailing Wages

IV. VISION STATEMENT:

The Regional Business Plan represents a blueprint for achieving future economic success for the Fulton-Montgomery County Region. The following Vision Statement expresses the future vision of the Fulton and Montgomery County Region that would be achieved by implementing this Regional Business Plan:

The Fulton-Montgomery County Region is a progressive community providing a friendly climate for business growth and retention, a variety of entertainment venues for social gathering, an educated and trained workforce and a diverse housing stock to meet the needs of the different lifestyles of its residents.

V. **THEMES AND GOALS:**

There are two (2) overarching themes of this Regional Business Plan:

A. **Create a Business Friendly Climate for the Region:**

Creating and sustaining a “Business Friendly Climate” is critical to the Region’s economic success and will encourage businesses to remain, locate, grow and develop. The goal of creating a “Business Friendly Climate” drives all of the other goals and objectives included in this Plan.

B. **Retain Existing Businesses in the Region:**

The growth in most local economies comes from the expansion of existing businesses. While attracting new businesses into the Region is important, equal attention must be given to retaining existing businesses.

To achieve success, the Regional Business Plan includes six (6) primary goals:

Goal 1: Educate and Train the Region’s Students for the 21st Century Workforce.

Students in the Region must be properly educated and trained to be employable in today’s job market. The Region’s School Districts must prepare students for the 21st Century workplace and be prepared to work in a variety of industries including distribution, agricultural, food production, high technology, and service industries.

Goal 2: Develop Large and Small Shovel-Ready Sites.

It is critically important for the Region to have and maintain a strong inventory of both large and small sites with the infrastructure in place, environmental impact studies completed, and land ready to develop. This method has worked for the region in the past. However, the Region’s inventory of shovel-ready sites is low.

Goal 3: Market the Region.

Marketing Fulton and Montgomery Counties, as a Region, rather than as two separate Counties will maximize available resources to retain existing businesses and attract new businesses. Pooling resources and partnering with the Economic Development Corporations, Chambers of Commerce and others to promote a positive image will benefit the Region. There are great opportunities to market retail, commercial, and light industrial sites along NYS Routes 30, 30A and 67. These corridors, which provide easy access to parking as well as “store front” locations that can be customer friendly for businesses, represent key areas for future development in the Region.

Goal 4: Improve the Region’s Quality of Life.

In order to maintain and enhance a quality workforce, it is important to enhance the Region’s quality of life by expanding and diversifying the housing market, enhancing recreational and social venues, and implementing downtown redevelopment plans. The Region has a number of quaint villages and cities that have rich histories, architecturally significant buildings, a downtown with great potential. The Region’s economic stability and growth should be enhanced by addressing the infrastructure, appearance, and issues facing downtown areas. These downtown areas influence the image of the Region. Downtown redevelopment plans should be designed to attract patrons and residents into these areas.

Goal 5: Extend Water, Sewer, Utilities, and Broadband Service throughout the Region.

The Cities and Villages in the Region own valuable water and wastewater treatment facilities. Yet, these Cities and Villages do not have vacant land within their borders to develop. The vacant land available to develop lies in the Towns. In order for the Region to grow and prosper, the Cities and Villages must work collaboratively with Towns to allow the extension of water and sewer services to the vacant land that is available to develop.

Goal 6: Lower Local Property Tax Burden in the Region.

State and Federal mandates are a major financial burden to local governments in the Region and are the main reason why the Region’s property tax rates are high. The Region must reach out to Albany and Washington and ask for specific mandate relief designed to reduce the local property tax burden.

The Region must implement meaningful reductions in the cost of government to lower the property tax burden. There are too many governments, agencies, authorities, districts, etc. for the Region’s tax base to support. By enhancing efficiencies, collaboration, intermunicipal cooperation and consolidation, the Region can reduce the local property tax burden.

VI. REGIONAL BUSINESS PLAN:

This section of the Regional Business Plan provides a description of each goal and prescribes specific objectives to be taken to attain each goal.

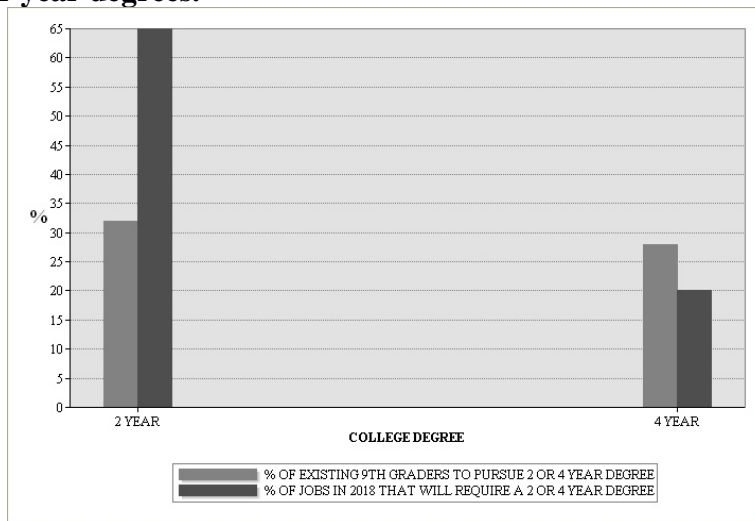
The goals and objectives identified in this Plan are all interrelated and intertwined. They are all important and need to be addressed in order to achieve the Region's Vision Statement and to create a business friendly climate.

Goal 1: Educate and Train the Region’s Students for the 21st Century Workforce:

Local CEO’s are concerned about the quality of the workforce produced by local school districts. Too many students are deficient in basic skills like coming to work, arriving to work on time, showing respect and following basic instructions. In addition, graduation rates are far too low resulting in students not receiving the training and skills necessary to be a part of the 21st Century workforce. 21st Century workers need skills like organization, communications, problem solving, analytical thinking, creativity, math and science. The Region’s public schools must emphasize teaching these 21st Century skills.

The Hamilton Fulton Montgomery Business Education Alliance (HFMBEA) is encouraging students to stay in school to graduate and encouraging School Districts to update curriculum and teaching methodologies to educate and train the Region’s workforce for a technology economy.

The following chart summarizes the results of national survey which showed that, in 2018, 65% of the new jobs to be created in the United States will require a 2-year degree, yet only 32% of today’s students who will be graduating in 2018 will be pursuing 2-year degrees.



The property tax cap will have significant impacts on the Region’s School Districts. School Districts must quickly understand its impacts and work collaboratively to find regional solutions, operational efficiencies and cost saving measures. Even though the Region’s schools have fiscal challenges, they must better educate and train students to be prepared to enter a workforce that local businesses need.

Objective	Responsible Organization
<p><i>1. In response to the State-mandated property tax cap, HFM-BOCES, in conjunction with the Region's School Districts, should, by the start of the 2012-13 school year, develop and implement a Regional Educational Plan.</i></p>	<p>HFM-BOCES and Local School Boards</p>
<p><i>2. HFMBEA must continue to raise the awareness of the value of education and work with the Region's School Districts to develop and implement plans to educate and train students to enter the 21st Century Workforce. The HFMBEA should:</i></p> <p>a. In the fall of 2011, conduct the first Annual Education and Economic Development Summit of all School Districts, CEO's and local governments in the Region. The purpose of the Annual Education and Economic Development Summit should be to discuss:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The needs of the Region's existing businesses regarding the quality of the workforce. 2) The importance of education and training the Region's workforce as it relates to economic development. 3) Identify educational initiatives to pursue. 	<p>HFMBEA and Local School District</p>
<p>b. In the spring of 2012, conduct the first Annual Superintendents and School Board President Summit. The purpose of this Annual Summit should be to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Have superintendents and School Board Presidents meet with economic development officials and the CEO Roundtable to discuss educational and training issues and needs. 2) Identify educational policies, initiatives and programs to pursue. 	<p>HFMBEA, Local School Superintendents and School Board Presidents</p>

<p>c. By the start of the 2012-13 school year, every School District in the Region should have developed internship opportunities with a minimum of 5 businesses in the Region to provide students opportunities to further their education with hands-on business experience.</p>	<p>HFMBEA and Local CEO's</p>
<p>d. Schedule CEO's from the Region to conduct annual presentations at School Board meetings and in classrooms to discuss:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The importance of becoming educated and trained for 21st Century workforce. 2) School curriculum. 3) Availability of internship sites at Region businesses. 	<p>HFMBEA, Local School Boards and CEO's</p>
<p>e. Schedule guest lecturers to make presentations to local School Districts on importance of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Becoming educated and trained for 21st Century workforce. 2) Graduating high school. 	<p>HFMBEA and Local School Superintendents</p>
<p><i>3. By the end of 2011, all School Boards in the Region should endorse and adopt objectives 1 and 2 above.</i></p>	<p>Local School Boards</p>
<p><i>4. Formalize a permanent CEO Roundtable.</i></p> <p>By the spring 2012, a CEO Roundtable, consisting of CEO's from businesses in Fulton and Montgomery Counties should be created. The CEO Roundtable should serve as a voice for existing businesses in all economic development and education-related initiatives.</p>	<p>CEO's in Region</p>
<p>Result: By the start of the 2013-14 school year, public education in the Region will have been restructured in response to the State-mandated tax cap and schools will now be educating and training students for the 21st Century workforce.</p>	

Goal 2: Develop Large and Small Shovel Ready Sites:

Having a strong inventory of shovel-ready sites has been the single, most important reason this Region has been able to attract new businesses and get existing businesses to expand. Local economic development officials are very concerned with the low inventory of shovel-ready sites in the Region. The existence of a strong inventory of shovel-ready sites will allow the Region to pursue businesses interested in locating in New York State. In the absence of these sites, the Region does not have an opportunity to compete.

Objective	Responsible Organization
<p><i>1. Develop Large Shovel-Ready Sites</i></p> <p><i>a) By the end of 2011, Fulton and Montgomery Counties, City of Johnstown and Town of Mohawk should commit to implement the proposed Regional Business Park Project.</i></p> <p><i>b) By Fall, 2012, complete all preliminary engineering and environmental studies and begin actively marketing the Regional Business Park.</i></p> <p><i>c) By the end of 2011, obtain the commitment from New York State to allow the former Tryon School to be redeveloped into a Business Park.</i></p> <p><i>d) By Spring of 2012, both County Planning Departments should complete reports that identify all other potential large shovel ready sites that have water, sewer, broadband and roads available.</i></p> <p><i>e) By the Summer of 2012, both Counties should complete their review of these reports and identify those sites to pursue as shovel-ready sites.</i></p>	<p>Fulton and Montgomery Counties, City of Johnstown and Town of Mohawk</p> <p>Fulton and Montgomery Counties, City of Johnstown and Town of Mohawk</p> <p>Fulton County Board of Supervisors</p> <p>Fulton and Montgomery Planning Departments, Boards of Supervisors and Local Governments</p> <p>Fulton and Montgomery County Boards of Supervisors and Local Governments</p>

<p>2. Develop Small Shovel Ready Sites</p> <p><i>a) By the Spring of 2012, both County Planning Departments should complete reports that identify all potential small shovel ready sites.</i></p> <p><i>b) By the Summer of 2012, both Counties should complete their review of these reports and identify those sites to pursue as shovel-ready sites.</i></p>	<p>Fulton and Montgomery County Planning Departments, Boards of Supervisors and Local Governments</p> <p>Fulton and Montgomery County Planning Departments, Boards of Supervisors and Local Governments</p>
<p>Result: By the end of 2012, the Region will have significantly increased its inventory of shovel-ready sites to offer to new or expanding businesses.</p>	

Goal 3: Market the Region:

NYS Empire State Development has Fulton and Montgomery Counties located in the Mohawk Valley Region. This Region includes four (4) counties west/south of the two (2) Counties. Fulton and Montgomery Counties, however, are more closely linked with the Capital District Region.

The Region must invest into developing a Marketing Plan. The Region needs to begin pooling its investment into marketing and develop a permanent source of funding for marketing. The Schenectady Metroplex Development Authority is an example of an entity with a permanent source of funding for marketing. Metroplex is funded through dedicated sales tax revenues. It receives 70% of one-half of 1 percent of the County's sales tax revenues received. This permanent source of funding allows Metroplex to develop long-term marketing initiatives because of the existence of a permanent funding source. This Region needs a comparable funding source.

The Region must market and promote a positive image of the area. In addition, comprehensive planning must be promoted to develop positive visions for our communities and major travel corridors.

The communities in the Region must have up-to-date Comprehensive Plans and land use controls.

Objective	Responsible Organization
<p><i>1. Fulton and Montgomery Counties should convince Empire State Development to place the two (2) Counties into the Capital District Region.</i></p>	<p>Fulton and Montgomery Counties' Boards of Supervisors, Local Governments, EDC's, Chambers of Commerce and CEO's</p>
<p><i>2. Fulton and Montgomery Counties should appropriate money into their 2012 budgets to develop a Regional Marketing Plan.</i></p>	<p>Fulton and Montgomery Counties' Boards of Supervisors</p>
<p><i>3. By the end of the second quarter of 2012, Fulton and Montgomery Counties should hire a professional marketing consultant to work with both Counties to develop a Regional Marketing Plan.</i></p>	<p>Fulton and Montgomery Counties' Boards of Supervisors</p>

<p>4. By December, 2012, Fulton and Montgomery Counties should complete a Regional Marketing Plan. The Plan at a minimum should include:</p> <p><i>a. A structure for marketing the Region.</i></p> <p><i>b. A plan to create permanent source of funding for marketing the Region. Potential funding sources include:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A Hotel tax with 100% of tax proceeds dedicated to implementing marketing the Regional Marketing Plan. 2) Each County considers dedicating a portion of its sales tax revenues to implementing the Regional Marketing Plan. 3) Others. <p><i>c. A plan to promote a positive message about the Region.</i></p> <p><i>d. A plan to market sites for housing in the Region.</i></p> <p><i>e. A plan to promote and enhance the Region's social life, recreational activities, restaurants and other venues and, in particular, those venues hidden in local neighborhoods and not easy to find.</i></p> <p><i>f. A plan to promote and market redevelopment of Region's downtowns.</i></p>	<p>Fulton and Montgomery Boards of Supervisors</p>
<p>5. By the end of 2012, Fulton and Montgomery Counties, local municipalities, the EDC's and Chambers of Commerce in both Counties adopt the Regional Marketing Plan and appropriate money into their 2013 Budgets to implement those components of plan requiring investments by local municipalities.</p>	<p>Fulton and Montgomery Counties' Boards of Supervisors, Local Governments in the Region, EDC's and Chambers of Commerce</p>

Goal 4: Improve the Region’s Quality of Life:

While some identify the Region’s quality of life as an asset for those seeking to raise a family, local CEO’s have identified the Region’s quality of life as a liability to retaining young professionals. The Region’s social life and cultural opportunities do not favorably compare to those available in surrounding Saratoga and Albany Counties. For these reasons, many executives and upper management of local businesses live outside the Region. In addition, local CEO’s advise that the Region’s lack of a diverse housing stock is a negative quality of life issue. The predominant housing type in this Region is single-family homes. While its availability and low cost is an asset, the lack of alternate forms of housing is a quality of life liability. There are few options other than single family housing for young professionals. This market tends to enjoy luxury apartments, condos, etc. rather than houses. They do not want to be burdened with yard work and upkeep. In addition, seniors are looking at venues outside the Region that offer assisted living for those who want to be independent.

The Region has numerous downtowns, but few offer the types of attractions and amenities that attract residents and visitors for social gatherings, shopping, dining, banking or other similar uses. These aging downtowns negatively impact the Region’s quality of life. It is imperative for the Region to have healthy and vibrant downtowns.

Objective	Responsible Organization
<p><i>1. Fulton and Montgomery Counties appropriate money in their 2012 budgets to conduct a Housing Study. The Housing Study should at a minimum include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a. Identify what markets exist for various housing types in the Region.</i> <i>b. Identify and market municipal sites for housing development.</i> <i>c. Identify existing buildings for “re-use” as lofts, condos, etc.</i> <i>d. Identify potential housing developers to construct new housing or renovate existing buildings.</i> 	<p>Fulton and Montgomery Counties’ Boards of Supervisors</p>

<p>2. By end of second quarter of 2012, Fulton and Montgomery Counties hire professional consultant to work with the Counties and local governments to prepare Housing Study.</p>	<p>Fulton and Montgomery Counties' Boards of Supervisors</p>
<p>3. By end of 2012, complete Housing Study.</p>	<p>Fulton and Montgomery Counties Boards of Supervisors</p>
<p>4. In 2013, Implement Housing Plan:</p> <p><i>a. Local governments should update local Zoning Ordinances to allow sites to be developed for housing.</i></p> <p><i>b. Incorporate into Regional Marketing Plan initiatives to promote and market housing sites and findings of Housing Study.</i></p>	<p>Local Governments in Region</p> <p>Fulton and Montgomery Counties Boards of Supervisors</p>
<p>5. Revive Downtowns:</p> <p><i>a. Commencing immediately, Fulton and Montgomery County Chambers, EDC's and Planning Departments should collect and distribute to Cities and Villages information on downtown redevelopment including:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Information regarding how other communities successfully restored their downtowns. 2) Tactics to restore and revise downtown. 3) Conferences/seminars regarding downtown redevelopment. 4) Grant/loan programs for downtown redevelopment. 	<p>EDC's/Chambers of Commerce and Planning Departments in Fulton and Montgomery Counties</p>

<p><i>b. In Spring 2012, conduct a Downtown Redevelopment Summit to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Discuss existing issues and concerns facing downtowns in the Region. 2) Discuss ideas and opportunities for redeveloping downtowns. 3) Review case studies of successful downtown redevelopment projects in New York State municipalities. 	<p>Local Governments and Planning Boards and Chambers of Commerce in Fulton and Montgomery Counties</p>
<p><i>c. By end of 2012, each City and Village should complete a Downtown Redevelopment Plan for their Downtowns. Each Plan should:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify a vision statement for the downtown. 2) Identify what businesses/residents to attract into downtowns. 3) Identify marketing initiatives to promote downtowns. 4) Identify grant funding that could be applied for to assist property owners with the cost of repairing and restoring properties. 5) Identify potential tax incentives that could be provided to encourage the restoration of downtown buildings. 6) Identify a Land Use Plan for downtown. 	<p>Local Governments, EDC's, Chambers of Commerce, Planning Boards and Planning Departments in Fulton and Montgomery Counties</p>
<p>Result: By the end of 2012, the Region will have completed a Market Study identifying the types of housing needed. The Regional Marketing Plan will include marketing initiatives to promote the development of new housing types identified in the Housing Study. In addition, Cities and Villages in the Region will have finalized Downtown Redevelopment Plans.</p>	

Goal 5: Extend Water/Sewer/Power/Broadband Service Throughout the Region:

The Region has an abundant supply of water and wastewater treatment services available to support growth and development. There are also abundant supplies of water and wastewater available in many other surrounding counties. Most of the Region's water and sewer services are owned and operated by cities and villages. The Region also has vacant land available to develop. Most of this vacant land is located outside of cities and villages and in the towns. The problem is that existing water and wastewater services are not currently available where the vacant land exists for potential development. It is often a political challenge to get local governments to cooperate and work together to allow for municipal water and sewer services to be extended into the towns. In the absence of this political cooperation, development opportunities are lost resulting in lost opportunities to create new jobs, property taxes and user fees.

There is one specific example of how the lack of political cooperation has resulted in an archaic provision in a decade's old contract to continue to be used as an impediment to positive growth. The 1964 Gloversville-Johnstown Joint Sewer Contract governs how the Cities of Gloversville and Johnstown's sewer systems and the Joint Wastewater Treatment Plant operate. There is a provision in this 47-year old contract that requires one (1) City to approve the extension of a sewerline outside of the corporate boundaries of the other City. This provision has a history of being used for political purposes. The most recent example was the Wal-Mart Supercenter Project. This contract must be changed to remove the opportunity for politically-motivated reasons to be used to determine whether a sewerline should be extended outside of one (1) City's boundaries for an economic development project.

CEO's have expressed concerns over the availability of high-speed broadband capacity as an impediment to economic growth. Existing businesses utilize and rely on high-speed Internet service to conduct all aspects of their business. At present, there are problems and issues with the availability and capacity of broadband that's available here in the Region. CEO's have expressed similar concerns with the availability and reliability of the Region's electrical services.

Objective	Responsible Organization
<p>1. Water</p> <p><i>a. Immediately conduct a Water Summit. The purpose of this Summit would be to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Discuss with owners of municipal water supply systems their concerns/issues with extending their water supply system outside their corporate boundaries. 2) Identify opportunities for municipal cooperation. 3) Discuss options for increasing safe yields of existing municipal water systems and allocating said increased yields to areas outside corporate limits. 4) Discuss implementing County/Regional Water Authorities. 	<p>Fulton and Montgomery Counties' Boards of Supervisors and EDC's</p>
<p>2. Sewer</p> <p><i>a. By end of 2011, modify Section 13 of the May, 1964 Gloversville-Johnstown Joint Sewer Contract by:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Eliminating the ability for one city to withhold approving another city's desire to extend a sewer line outside its city for political reasons. 2) Designate the Joint Sewer Board as the entity to determine if one (1) city can extend its sewer line outside the city. 3) Stipulating that the Joint Sewer Board's decision should be based on whether there is capacity at the Plant to handle the additional sewer loadings/flow. 	<p>Cities of Gloversville and Johnstown</p>

<p>3. Electrical Power</p> <p><i>a. In 2012, prepare Report on Region's Electrical Power Problems and Needs.</i></p> <p>1) The Chambers of Commerce in both Counties should conduct survey of existing businesses to obtain their input on electrical problems currently being experienced, as well as future needs/concerns.</p> <p>2) Based upon input received, prepare Summary Report on Region's electrical power problems and needs.</p> <p>3) Submit Summary Report to National Grid and Public Service Commission (PSC).</p> <p><i>b) By end of 2012, invite National Grid and PSC Representatives to attend CEO Roundtable to review Report on Region's Electrical Power Problems and Needs.</i></p>	<p>Fulton and Montgomery Counties' Chambers of Commerce</p>
<p>4. Broadband</p> <p><i>a. In 2012, prepare a Report on Region's Broadband Problems and Needs.</i></p> <p>1) The Chamber of Commerces in both Counties should conduct a survey of existing businesses, local governments and schools to obtain their input on broadband problems and needs.</p> <p>2) Based upon input received, prepare Summary Report on Region's broadband problems and needs.</p> <p>3) Submit Summary Report to Frontier, Time Warner and Verizon.</p> <p><i>b. By end of 2012, invite Frontier/Time Warner/Verizon representatives to attend a CEO Roundtable to review the Summary Report on Broadband Problems and Needs.</i></p>	<p>Fulton and Montgomery Counties' Chambers of Commerce</p>
<p>Result: By the end of 2012, plans will have been put into place to extend/upgrade water, sewer, utilities, broadband services through the Region.</p>	

Goal 6: Lower Local Property Tax Burden:

Clearly, a deterrent to economic growth is the excessive tax burden placed on businesses and residents in New York State. The Fulton and Montgomery County Region feels this tax burden, perhaps more than other areas of the State due to being a sparsely populated region. State mandates continue to stress county, city, and school district budgets.

The property tax cap will create major challenges to local governments in the Region. The biggest challenge local governments will initially face is simply understanding what the tax cap is, what it means, how it will impact budgets and how to deal with these impacts.

In order to become a more business friendly region, and state, efforts must be made to reduce the number of mandates placed on municipalities and school districts. Additionally, opportunities to collaborate/consolidate should be explored on the local and regional level in order to gain efficiencies and reduce costs.

The Region suffers significantly from the negative impacts of the local property tax burdens place on residents and businesses. While local governments and school districts have a direct role in this matter, the State and federal mandates that local governments must deal are a major cause of this tax burden. Local governments and school districts must become more efficient, collaborate, merge or consolidate to reduce this massive tax burden.

The perceived lack of political cooperation permeating the Region continues to portray a negative quality of life image. Local elected officials must work to eliminate this negative image.

Objective	Responsible Organization
<p>1. Prepare Regional Mandate Relief Report.</p> <p><i>a. In Spring of 2012, conduct a Regional Mandate Relief Summit:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Invite County, City, Town, School Districts, Hospitals and CEO's to attend to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identify the specific state and federal mandates that are creating the greatest negative impacts. b) Estimated the annual cost of these mandates. c) Recommend changes to decrease impact of mandate. <p><i>b. By the Fall of 2012, prepare Regional Mandate Relief Report and submit to the Region's State and Federal elected officials.</i></p> <p><i>c. In first quarter of 2013, conduct follow-up Summit to review Report. Invite State/Federal elected officials to attend.</i></p>	<p>Fulton and Montgomery Counties' Boards of Supervisors and Chambers of Commerce</p> <p>Fulton and Montgomery Counties' Boards of Supervisors</p> <p>Fulton and Montgomery Counties and Chambers of Commerce</p>
<p>2. Property Tax Cap Summit.</p> <p><i>a. In Fall of 2012, conduct a Property Tax Cap Summit. All local governments and School Districts in Region should be invited to attend to learn about impact of the cap and discuss/show ideas on how to deal with it.</i></p>	<p>Fulton and Montgomery Counties' Boards of Supervisors, Local Governments and School Districts</p>

<p>3. Commencing immediately, Fulton and Montgomery Counties should conduct studies that evaluate the feasibility and potential costs savings to:</p> <p><i>a. Consolidate or decentralize Town and County Highway Departments.</i></p> <p><i>b. Public Transportation Services.</i></p> <p><i>c. Consolidate or decentralize police departments and County Sheriff's Departments.</i></p>	<p>Fulton and Montgomery Counties' Boards of Supervisors and Local Governments</p>
<p>4. Commencing immediately, Cities of Johnstown and Gloversville should conduct Studies that evaluate the feasibility and potential cost savings to:</p> <p><i>a. Consolidate Public Works Departments.</i></p> <p><i>b. Consolidate Police Departments.</i></p> <p><i>c. Consolidate Fire Departments.</i></p>	<p>City of Gloversville and Johnstown's Common Councils</p>
<p>5. Commencing immediately, HFM-BOCES should conduct a study on consolidating School Districts in the Region.</p>	<p>HFM-BOCES</p>
<p>Result: By the end of 2012, the Region will have adjusted to the impacts of the State-mandated Tax Cap, restructured governmental operations to become more cost effective and efficient, convinced the State to reduce/eliminate costly State mandates and lowered the local property tax burden.</p>	

The implementation of the Goals and Objectives identified in this Plan will require a commitment and investment of funds by local governments and counties in the Region. If this Region is going to move forward, these investments must be made.