



About the Plan

- Chemung County's First Comprehensive Plan.
- Develop a communications brand and identity and educational materials to support the planning initiative.
- Catalogue existing environmental, historical, agricultural, demographic and socio-economic trends in the County.
- Develop a vision, short, and long-term goals for the future of the County.
- Develop implementation strategies and recommendations including identification of projects, programs, and initiatives to facilitate various goals.
- Provide a framework for future budget decisions / allocation of funding towards priority projects and initiatives.

The Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan

- Develop a unified vision for the growth, development, protection, and future of the County.
- Create a road map for a variety of infrastructural, economic, and community-oriented projects.
- Support communities and municipalities in pursuing grant funding opportunities.
- Guide future land use decisions and development with the needs and desires of the community at the forefront.
- Provide a framework for future budget decisions / allocation of funding towards priority projects and initiatives.

Comprehensive Plan Scope of Work

- The scope of the work for the Chemung County Comprehensive Plan includes the following tasks:
- Task 1: Review of Existing Planning Documents and Kick-off Meeting
- Task 2: Develop Communications Brand and Identity
- Task 3: Develop Educational Materials
- Task 4: Public Outreach/Engagement
- Task 5: Inventory & Analysis
- Task 6: Implementation Strategies and Recommendations
- Task 7: Draft Comprehensive Plan
- Task 8: Final Plan, Prepare State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) & Adoption

Implementation Strategies and Recommendations

- Utilize the information and findings from public engagement, inventory, and analysis.
- Develop an implementation strategy that identifies short-, medium-, and long-term projects, programs, and initiatives to align with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Include time frames for implementation.
- Prepare an implementation matrix to identify the recommend key projects, programs, and initiatives, potential grant funding sources, and responsible parties.

AGRICULTURAL AND FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

About the Plan

- Existing “Agricultural Economic Development Plan” adopted in 2011.
- Data gathering and analysis to document local conditions, production, current and potential markets.
- Identify potential farmland based on soil classification, inclusion in New York State Agricultural Districts, land receiving Agricultural Assessments, and underutilized but viable farmlands.
- Create a series of implementation strategies and recommendations for supporting the County’s agricultural industry over the next ten years.
- Analyze existing regulatory frameworks and regulations that govern the agricultural economy in the county.



Tractor In Grape Vineyard

Agricultural Planning Milestones

- 1971: Implementation of Article 25AA of the Agriculture and Markets Law in New York State, which authorized preservation and protection of agricultural lands and products.
- 2011: Adoption of the “Chemung County Agricultural Economic Development Plan”.
- 2017: Chemung County Legislature votes to consolidate Chemung County’s five agricultural districts into one Consolidated District.
- 2018: Publication of the “Chemung County Report for the Consolidation of Agricultural Districts (1-5)”.
- 2023: Begin development for the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan.



Chemung County Landscape

Goals of the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan

- Examine the existing state of Chemung County’s agricultural economy.
- Identify farmland that should be protected.
- Identify strategies to invigorate the County’s agricultural economy.
- Analyze planning and land use programs for Farmland Protection Plan consistency.





About the Plan

- An Existing Plan: 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan adopted in 2019.
- Analyze the existing transportation system and infrastructural / natural / cultural systems that influence the system.
- Create a series of strategies for transportation investments over the next twenty years.
- Create a financial plan with projects over a twenty-year period.
- Identify implementation strategies and recommendations for short-, medium- and long-term projects, programs and initiatives.



Elmira North Main Street Cultural Connector

Elmira-Chemung Transportation Council (ECTC) Planning Efforts

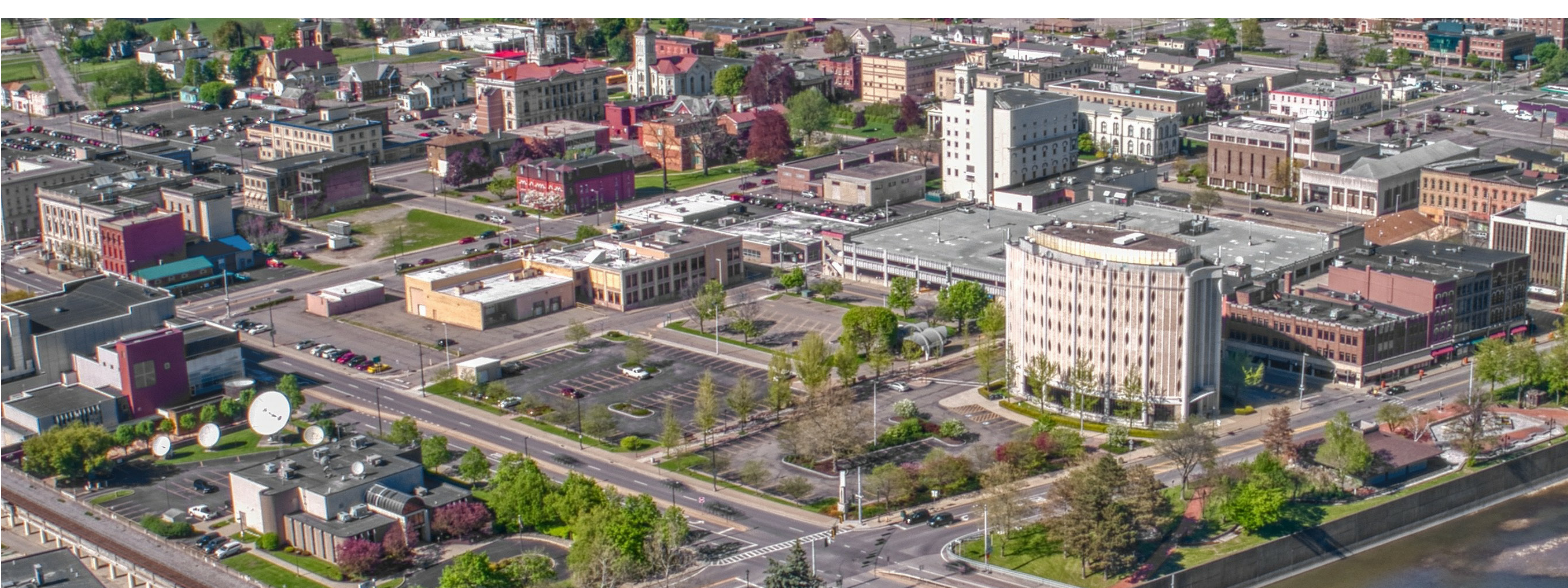
- 2019: Long Range Transportation Plan.
- 2022: Transportation Improvement Program (2022/23 - 2026/27).
- 2022: Elmira-Chemung Transportation Council Regional ITS Architecture.
- 2022: Chemung County Coordinated Transportation Plan.
- 2023: Unified Planning Work Program 2023-2024.

Safety	To achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads.
Infrastructure Condition	To maintain the highway infrastructure asset system in a state of good repair.
Congestion Reduction	To achieve a significant reduction in congestion on the National Highway System.
System Reliability	To improve the efficiency of the surface transportation system.
Freight Movement & Economic Vitality	To improve the national freight network, strengthen the ability of rural communities to access national and international trade markets, and support regional economic development.
Environmental Sustainability	To enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.
Reduced Project Delivery Delays	To reduce project costs, promote jobs and the economy, and expedite the movement of people and goods by accelerating project completion through eliminating delays in the project development and delivery process, including reducing regulatory burdens and improving agencies' work practice.

Federal Priorities identified in the "2040 Long Range Transportation Plan" adopted in 2019.

2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (adopted in 2019)

- ECTC is required to update the Long-Range Transportation Plan no less often than every five years.
- Recommended Future Transportation Strategies in the Near-Term (next five years),
- Mid-Term (next 6-10 years), and Long-Term (>10 years).
- 2040 LRTP included 37 Near-Term, 20 Mid-Term, and 18 Long-Term Future Transportation Strategies (some Strategies were classified in multiple categories).
- Included recommendations for "New Mobility" incorporated technology in transportation network, including for curbside management, parking management, connected corridors, mobility as a service, and inclusive and universal design.
- Examined impact of transportation system on the manufacturing, food, and agricultural industries and on bolstering entrepreneurship.



COUNTY GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATION

What We've Learned

Chemung
County
includes

1 city
11 towns
4 villages

Some of the regional challenges facing the County, according to survey-takers:

- Homelessness
- Health (mental and physical health, substance abuse, etc.)
- Aging population
- Housing costs & choices
- Rising taxes
- Aging infrastructure

Addressing many of the land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, health, and environmental issues in Chemung County requires a coordinated, regional approach.

What We've Heard

- *Be a model for other communities through creative, innovative solutions*
- *Look at other communities and what has worked there (follow best practices)*
- *Improve outreach and communication from the County to residents*
- *Increase trust in government and institutions and prioritize clarity in decision-making*
- *Support and provide resources to towns outside the urban areas who may be struggling*
- *Promote coordination between organizations to identify and address regional issues*
- *Consider public private partnerships - leverage public funds to grow private investment.*
- *Encourage residents to stay in the county and help it grow and flourish*
- *Conduct public outreach early in planning and economic development processes*
- *Improve inter-municipal planning*
- *Raise awareness of County resources, programs, and services*

Guiding Principle

Ensure government officials are good fiscal stewards and provide adequate support, funding, administration, and regulation of County processes and facilities.

Goals & Recommendations

Support municipalities in pursuing and executing grant-funded projects

Foster greater intermunicipal coordination between County and municipalities.

Identify opportunities to combine services between County and/or municipalities.

LAND USE & INFRASTRUCTURE/SERVICES

What We've Learned

nearly
72%

of Chemung County's population lives outside the City of Elmira

Commercial and Industrial uses make up

only
2.3%

of Chemung County's total land area

all **16**

of the municipalities in the county have a zoning code in place

What We've Heard

- *Preserve & maintain open spaces and natural resources*
- *Develop downtowns (villages, hamlets, etc.) and create a sense of place*
- *Targeted neighborhood improvements*
- *Limit sprawl by encouraging adaptive reuse, development on vacant land already in developed areas, and cluster development*
- *Consider adaptive reuse of underutilized properties (ex: Arnot Mall)*
- *Assist municipalities with comprehensive planning and zoning updates*
- *Implement planning best practices*
- *Pursue partnerships with developers to pursue redevelopment initiatives*
- *Explore pre-permitting on strategic sites to streamline development*
- *Ensure adequate infrastructure for new industries*
- *Plan for resiliency for critical infrastructure such as roads and bridges (e.g., in response to flooding issues)*
- *Increase options for Internet service providers*

Guiding Principle

Promote intentional growth that meets the needs of a changing demographic, and enhances quality of life without straining existing infrastructure capacity.

Goals & Recommendations

Support municipalities in long-range planning efforts, including comprehensive planning and zoning.

Continue to support partner organizations in expanding broadband across the county.

Identify opportunities to combine services between County and/or municipalities.

Identify opportunities for new housing development that meets the needs of the county.

Continue to budget for and implement upgrades to the county's wastewater system.

Coordinate with service providers to identify sites suitable for future development.



What We've Learned

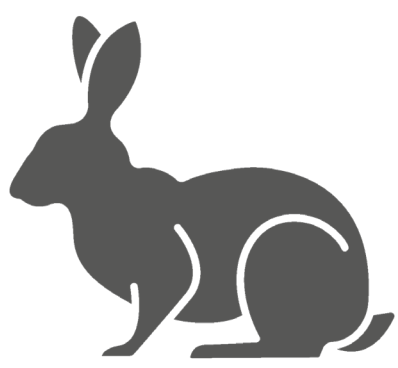
over 93% of Chemung County's land area is devoted to agriculture (22.8%), forests (61.8%), brushland, and other natural and open space

The top priorities for environmental protection in the county are:

protecting water quality & watersheds



preserving natural habitats & biodiversity



promoting sustainable development practices



The top priorities for parks & recreation are:

improving existing parks facilities and amenities



expanding trail networks for hiking and biking



What We've Heard

- Protect natural resources, especially lakes, rivers, and other bodies of water
- Protect green space, especially County/local parks, and expand parkland where possible (Park Station Campground)
- Increase land trusts
- Implement erosion control measures
- Address challenges from mineral extraction industries (i.e. gravel mining)
- Increase urban tree planting
- Support Tanglewood Nature Center & Museum
- Improve pedestrian/bicyclist access to trails, parks, etc. and expand the Rails to Trails network
- Invest in outdoor recreation

Guiding Principle

Preserve and protect existing natural resources and enhance passive and active recreational opportunities, while protecting communities from natural hazards.

Goals & Recommendations

Continue to partner with New York State Parks and the NYSDEC to encourage camping, hiking, cycling, birdwatching, hunting, fishing, and more.

Identify opportunities to improve accessibility at County parks to ensure equitable access to the County's recreational resources.

Assess opportunities to expand and protect open space and natural resources.

Strengthen strategic partnerships with other entities to expand and enhance recreation opportunities across the county.

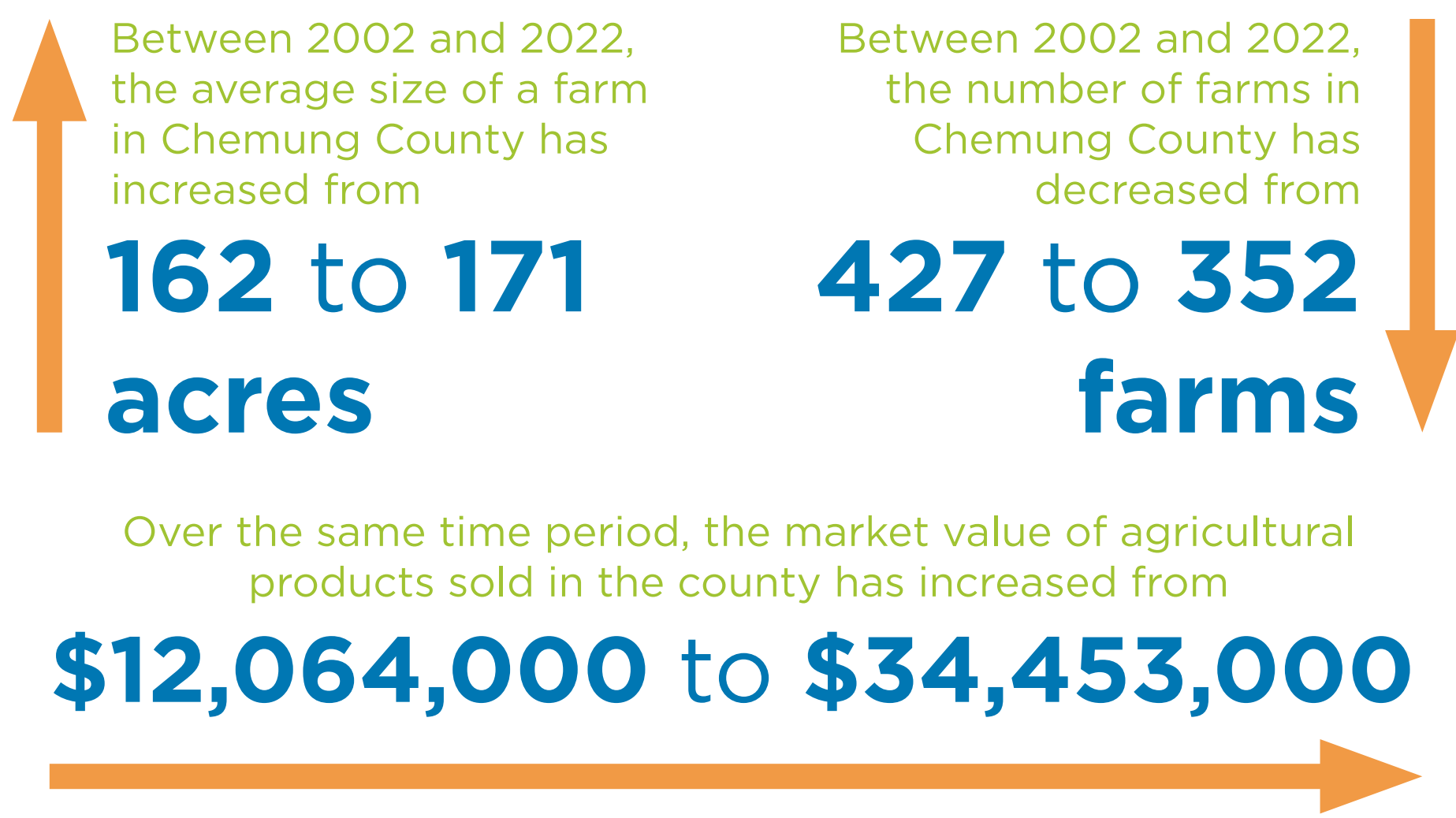
Continue to protect water resources, including lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, and floodplains with appropriate regulations.

Continue to protect communities from the impacts of weather-related events including flooding, ice, wind, fire, etc.

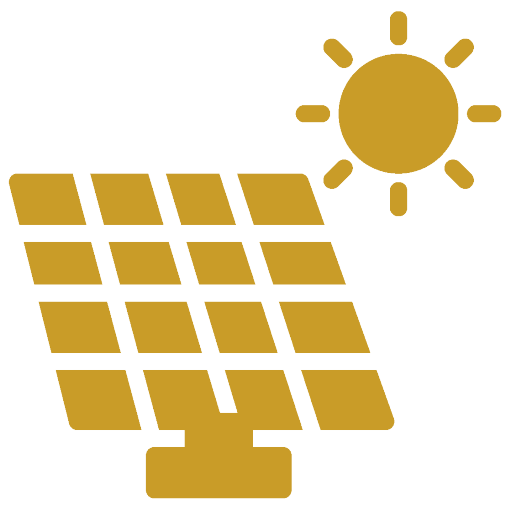
Continue to protect critical habitats and rare and endangered plant and animal species.



What We've Learned



54% of those surveyed felt preserving farmland should be a top priority for Chemung County's future



Solar is one of the County's biggest hot-button issues

28%

of those surveyed felt advancing solar opportunities on farmland should be a top priority for Chemung County's future

25%

felt it should not be a priority at all

What We've Heard

- *Preserve & protect farmland*
- *Keep farming sustainable*
- *Address impact of solar and wind projects on farmland*
- *Promote local ag-adjacent businesses including restaurants, farms, wineries, and breweries*
- *Help expand local agricultural products and promote specialty farming*
- *Enhance connections between growers and local restaurant industry*
- *Capture more local dollars for agricultural products*
- *Educate farming community on succession planning*
- *Offer training and job fairs for agricultural vocations*
- *Less government regulation, lobby for legislative changes*
- *Develop a USDA kitchen/training space/butcher/cold storage at the Fairgrounds*

Guiding Principle

Preserve the agricultural character of the County, support farming, and plan for a changing agricultural future.

Goals & Recommendations

Provide more educational resources for the agricultural community to increase opportunities for new farmers and support the next generation.

Support farms in diversifying their operations to meet changing needs and markets.

Explore opportunities to expand facilities at the Chemung County fairgrounds to support local farming operations.

Prioritize the preservation of viable and active farmland through land use regulations and protections.

Support municipalities in formulating goals around solar development and creating clear regulations to achieve those goals.

Support municipalities in formulating goals around cannabis production and creating clear regulations to achieve those goals.

Develop a county-wide marketing strategy to promote local agricultural businesses and products, including farms, wineries, breweries, and more.

Help facilitate connections between farmers, producers, and consumers to expand agricultural business opportunities.



What We've Learned

Chemung County is rich in history and cultural resources, including:

- Military history (Civil & Revolutionary War)
- Aerospace history (Soaring Capital)
- Literary history (Mark Twain)
- Agricultural history
- Architectural history (7 historic districts)
- Transportation history (rail)
- Arts & culture (Clemens Center, Arnot Art Museum)
- And more!

Preserving historic and cultural resources is important, but not the top priority of most people in Chemung County

40%

felt preserving historic buildings and sites, supporting local arts and cultural organizations, and promoting cultural events and festivals should be a top priority

27%

felt developing heritage tourism opportunities should be a top priority

What We've Heard

- *Preserve and promote existing historic and cultural institutions including the Clemens Center and Arnot Art Museum*
- *Promote coordination between cultural institutions*
- *Make Elmira an arts destination*
- *Promote Mark Twain heritage*
- *Celebrate aerospace history and Soaring Capital identity*
- *Invest in historical museums*
- *Bring more awareness to historic rail*
- *Protect Sullivan's monument*
- *Co-advertise historic and cultural offerings with outdoor recreation opportunities*

Guiding Principle

Celebrate the history and culture of Chemung County by preserving and enhancing historic and cultural resources and protecting the unique character of Chemung County.

Goals & Recommendations

Foster greater coordination between the County and local historic organizations to promote historic resources.

Continue to identify historic properties and neighborhoods that may be eligible for state and national register listing, thereby increasing access to tax credits for preservation.

Create educational materials and support to help owners of historic properties take advantage of state and federal tax credit programs.

Consider providing grant funding for critical repairs of historic properties to encourage their preservation and keep them occupied.

Consider partnering with public and private agencies to pursue acquisition of historic properties for county use.

Continue to support the Chemung County Fair as an important cultural event in the region.



What We've Learned

Top Priorities for Economic Development, according to survey-takers that chose "top priority":



only **5%** of those surveyed said they were "very satisfied" with economic growth and tourism in the County

What We've Heard

- Expand training opportunities and leadership programs including BOCES technical education, trades training, career shadowing and internships, Chamber of Commerce leadership program, etc.
- Advertise Elmira and Chemung County as a destination between Toronto and NYC
- Increase retail choices
- Welcome new businesses
- Market local amenities and recreation opportunities to potential employers
- Capitalize on remote work opportunities
- Encourage more high-paying jobs
- Increase funding for child care (including for second and third shift workers)
- Support an aging workforce through adult education, tuition assistance, and jobs for seniors
- Increase awareness and marketing of local assets, especially unique assets (e.g., Park Carousel)
- Regional collaboration for tourism initiatives
- Develop cohesive branding for attractions

Guiding Principle

Promote economic growth and development by supporting existing businesses and an evolving workforce, capitalizing on tourism assets, and embracing emerging industries.

Goals & Recommendations

Encourage emerging industries to establish in Chemung County - including manufacturing, technology, cannabis, etc.

Attract a talented workforce by taking a comprehensive approach to economic development and considering the needs of today's workers.

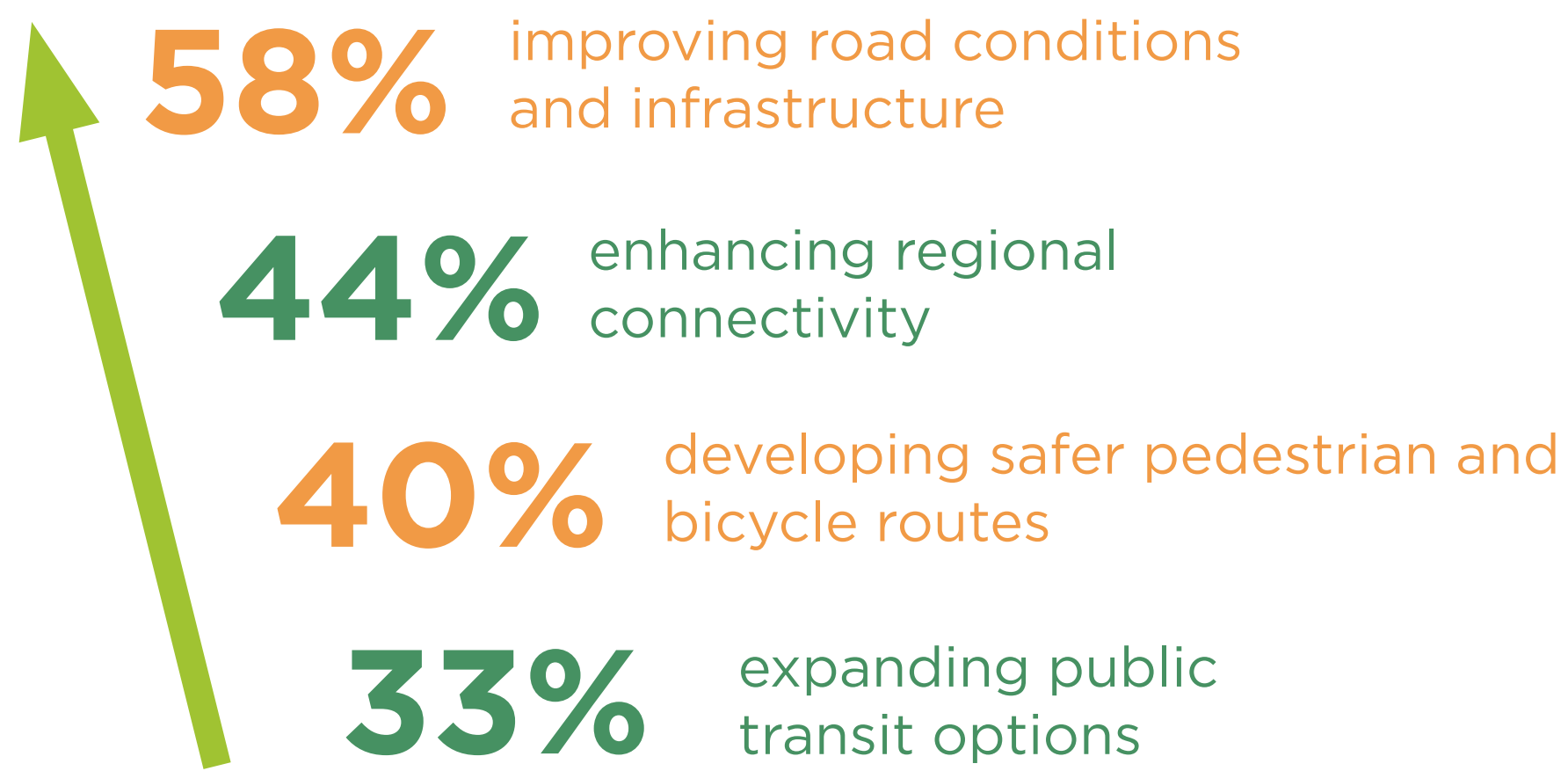
Broaden prospective career paths for young adults through educational opportunities and career development support.

Bridge workforce accessibility gaps, including transportation/transit services, childcare, workforce training, and workforce housing.



What We've Learned

Top Priorities for Economic Development, according to survey-takers that chose "top priority":



Most of the public roadways in the county are owned by Chemung County or the City of Elmira.

The Elmira Chemung Transportation Council (ECTC) is responsible for the planning & programming of any transportation project that receives federal funding.

What We've Heard

- Expand transportation options for both local and cross-county travel and reduce car dependency
- Implement Complete Streets
- Ensure safe, reliable, and accessible transportation for seniors
- Expand bicycle infrastructure and trails, particularly in suburban and rural areas
- Regulate electric bikes and scooters and educate bicyclists on the rules of the road
- Build park and ride lots
- **Long Range Transportation Plan Goals:**
 - Ensure the safety and security of the transportation system for all users
 - Invest in the transportation system infrastructure to bring all facilities and modes into a state of good repair
 - Actively operate the transportation system to maximize efficiency and reliability of travel
 - Promote connectivity among all modes of transportation to meet the region's mobility and accessibility needs
 - Ensure the efficiency of freight movement throughout the region to maximize support of the economy
 - Integrate transportation and land use planning to promote economic development, sustainability, and enhanced livability

Guiding Principle

Maintain existing transportation infrastructure, enhance transportation network connectivity, and promote safe and efficient multi-modal mobility.

Goals & Recommendations

Expand bicycle and trail network throughout Chemung County.

Upgrade and/or replace missing sidewalks and those in disrepair, prioritizing accessibility and connectivity, especially in city, town, and village centers.

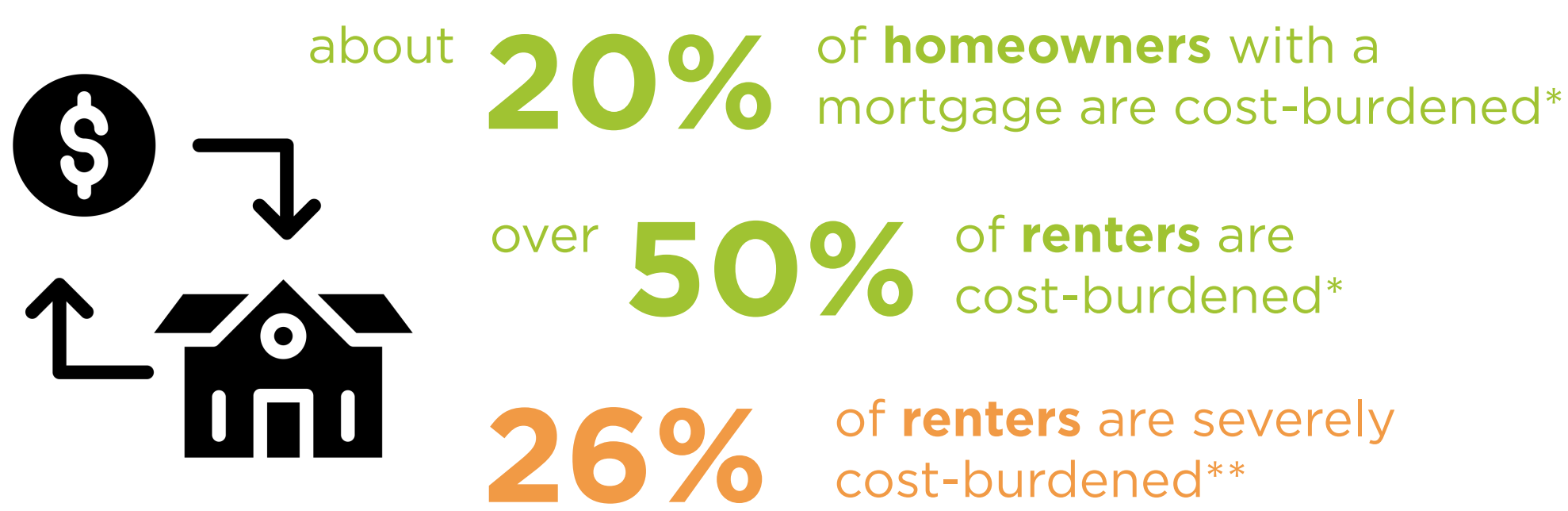
Implement Complete Streets elements on roadways with capacity and opportunity for enhanced transit, bicycle, and pedestrian use.

Continue to update complementary planning documents, including the Long Range Transportation Plan and Bike Ped Plan.



What We've Learned

Housing affordability is a significant issue



* **Cost-burdened** - spending 30% or more of income on housing costs
** **Severely cost-burdened** - spending 50% or more of income on housing costs

Housing supply & demand are mismatched



An aging population coupled with decreasing household sizes have created increased demand for “missing middle” housing (cottages, townhomes, multi-family dwellings, etc.)

What We've Heard

- Expand the variety of housing types in the county (price, size, type, etc.)
- Improve housing affordability
- Provide more options for seniors to downsize
- Preserve historic homes by providing incentives to improve older housing stock and funding for critical repairs
- Increase funding and supportive care services to address the needs of the homeless population
- Expand services to help keep people in their homes
- Mitigate the negative impacts of absentee landlords
- Address limitations of code enforcement
- Expand or increase funding for land bank
- Encourage better agency collaboration to address housing issues
- Consider allowing tiny homes / ADUs to provide smaller, more affordable housing options
- Increase climate resiliency of housing

Guiding Principle

Provide a range of housing choices and neighborhood densities for people with a variety of household types, income levels, phases of life, and living preferences.

Goals & Recommendations

Ensure that land use regulations allow for the development of “missing middle housing.”

Consider allowing Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and develop consistent guidelines that can be implemented by individual municipalities wishing to allow ADUs.

Pursue grant funding to provide support for owners of older homes in need of critical repairs.

Continue working with public entities such as the State of New York and organizations like Habitat for Humanity to provide programs and resources that encourage homeownership.

Provide information and resources about local, state, and federal homebuyer assistance programs.

Continue to provide information and resources about New York State's Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) for eligible residents.



What We've Learned

Public health is a serious issue in Chemung County. In 2021...

about **33%** of residents were considered **obese**, compared to **29.2% in NYS**

27.3 per 10,000 adults were hospitalized for **chronic respiratory disease**, compared to **16.2 in NYS**

298.9 per 10,000 adults died of **diseases of the heart**, compared to **212.7 in NYS**

Chemung County had the **lowest life expectancy in NY**, at **76.4 years** compared to **80.3 years in NYS**

The average Chemung County resident has **5.4 poor mental health days** per month, compared to **4.2 days in NYS**

Other factors impacting physical and mental health in the County include:

- Lead exposure
- Environmental hazards
- Crime
- Traffic
- Substance abuse

What We've Heard

- *Ensure access to quality healthcare for all by bringing specialists to the community instead of having to drive to Rochester*
- *Develop youth programs in addition to sports programs (arts, drama, music, etc.)*
- *Retain Chemung County Nursing Facility (CCNF)*
- *Increase staff resources for the Office of Aging*
- *Create mentorship programs for youth*
- *Expand senior services to allow seniors to age in place*
- *Connect residents to state resources for the elderly*
- *Expand quality childcare options*
- *Promote diversity in youth and senior services*
- *Create youth activity centers*
- *Provide more supportive services for the homeless population*

Guiding Principle

Invest in improving health outcomes for all residents by ensuring access to healthcare services and prioritizing community health in broader decision-making.

Goals & Recommendations

Continue to pursue state funding for the Chemung County Nursing Facility

Continue to pursue state, federal, and donor funding to support the Chemung County Department of Aging and Long Term Care.

Continue to produce the monthly Nutrition Newsletter through the Chemung County Department of Aging and Long Term Care.

Update the Chemung County Age-Friendly Community Action Plan (last updated 2015).

Continue to work with organizations including the Salvation Army and Catholic Charities to provide resources and support for those experiencing domestic violence and/or homelessness.

Enhance programming at the Chemung County senior and community centers to promote a healthy lifestyle for children, adults, and seniors.