Orange County
Economic Development Strategy

Orange Blossoms: Economic Development in the 21st Century
Orange County Department of Planning
Adopted July 1, 2015
ORANGE COUNTY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

ADOPTED JULY 1, 2015

Steven M. Neuhaus, County Executive

David E. Church, AICP, Planning Commissioner

Orange County Planning Board

Susan G. Metzger, PhD., Chair
John Dodson, PE (through 2014)
Gerald Jacobowitz, Esq. (through 2014)
David Niemotko, RA, AIA
Michael Sweeton
Denise Ribble (through 2012)
Constantine Sidamon-Eristoff (through 2011)

Irving Zuckerman, Vice Chair
Timothy E. Gottlieb
Elaine McClung
Greg Townsend (through 2014)
Richard Ostner (through 2013)
Donald Serotta
Benedetto Papaleo
Joseph Joy

In Collaboration With:

Orange County Partnership
Orange County Office of Business Assistance
Orange County Citizens Foundation
Orange County Chamber of Commerce
Orange County Arts Council
Orange County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board
Orange County Association of Towns, Villages and Cities

County Staff involved in Strategy Development

Megan Tennermann, AICP, Planner; Jennifer MacLeod, AICP, Planner;
Susan Hawvermale, Coordinator, Orange County Tourism

For more information, including copies of this plan, please contact the
Orange County Planning Department at 124 Main Street, Goshen NY 10924
Phone: (845) 615-3840 Email: planning@orangecountygov.com
Website: www.orangecountygov.com/planning
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1. Attract and Assist Businesses  
2. Improve Economic Development Capacity  
3. Strengthen Key Industries  
4. Create a Supportive Culture for Small Businesses

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**Why This Plan? Why Now?**

Orange County has tremendous assets for economic development. To take full advantage of these assets and participate fully with our public and private partners including New York State, we need to focus our economic development efforts in a comprehensive, efficient strategy across our large and diverse county. At the same time, we need to protect these assets—our open space and scenic vistas, our connections to the Hudson Valley and the Northeast, our quality of life—now and in the future, to ensure that Orange County remains a great place.

The foundation for this Plan is **START Orange County**.  
1. **Shovel Ready**, promote and fast track smart, shovel ready sites.  
2. **Team Up** and collaborate with our communities on strategies to attract jobs and investment.  
3. **Agriculture** can remain an integral part of our overall economic stability by bolstering farm to market opportunity.  
4. **Reward** performance not promises for activities receiving financial support including tax exemptions. And **5. Tout** existing local businesses, big and small.
Key Industries of Orange County *(to be updated following release of 2012 Economic Census)*

**Agriculture**—is still the largest nonresidential land use (in acres) throughout the County. It has also been a foundation sector of our economy for centuries. As of the 2012 Census of Agriculture, Orange County’s 658 farms sold $100.7 million worth of products, and ranked 4th in the state for vegetable sales.

**Arts**—The 2007 Economic Census shows nearly 2,000 artists and arts businesses in Orange County, earning over $145 million in revenue. Orange County is the home of many world-class visual and performing arts companies and other businesses.

**Manufacturing and Technology**—Orange County has 589 manufacturers who made over $2.6 billion according to the 2012 Economic Census. As part of the Hudson Valley Economic Development Corporation, Orange County is a partner in the New York BioHud Valley initiative, which offers a way to enhance our thriving medical industry and support the emerging technology industry in the County at the same time.

**Medical**—At $1.7 billion in revenue, health care and social services was our fourth-largest industry in the 2007 Economic Census. In 2011, the Orange Regional Medical Center became the first new hospital built in New York in 20 years, and over half the Class A office space built or leased since 2000 has been medical offices.

**Tourism**—Over four million visitors came to Orange County in 2012 and generated more than $430 million in revenue, supporting over 9,000 jobs. Three out of the top five tourist attractions in upstate New York are located in Orange County.
Economic Development Goals for Key Industries

**Goal 1: Attract and Assist Businesses**

- *All Sectors*—encourage local business development through entrepreneurial assistance programs
- *Agriculture*—expand local and regional market; create supportive program for young farmers; create succession plans for existing farms
- *Arts*—increase regional market; enhance connections with NYC, Hudson River School; direct film productions to our industry cluster.
- *Manufacturing/Technology*—increase presence and support for food companies and other manufacturing to support key industries
- *Medical*—complete strategic plan for medical industry vitality
- *Tourism*—increase County overnight visitors; expand marketing of County as getaway destination for all Northeast.

**Goal 2: Improve Economic Development Capacity**

- *All Sectors*—increase access to capital investment; improve infrastructure and housing to meet needs of growing workforce; streamline County approvals process
- *Agriculture*—create food systems and food processing infrastructure; increase opportunities to create value-added products
- *Arts*—facilitate connections between artists and private-sector corporations; increase opportunities for public art.
- *Manufacturing/Technology*—increase access to technology infrastructure.
- *Medical*—increase opportunities for research and innovation
- *Tourism*—invest “bed tax” revenue in increased marketing and other efforts.
Goal 3: Strengthen Key Industries

- **All Sectors**—create workforce training programs tailored to each sector; develop “Orange County brand”; create education programs for public officials and members of municipal boards about needs of key industries.
- **Agriculture**—improve infrastructure and delivery systems in rural areas.
- **Arts**—improve connections between primary industries and their supporting businesses.
- **Manufacturing/Technology**—increase opportunities to develop research and development facilities, including wet labs.
- **Medical**—improve technology infrastructure to facilitate data sharing
- **Tourism**—build on strategic location of County as prime “staycation” locale; develop strategy building on regional strengths, for example: wineries, cideries, distilleries, micro-breweries, and other alcoholic beverage crafters, marketed as “Napa East”

Goal 4: Create a Supportive Culture for Small Businesses

- **All Sectors**—streamline regulatory review and procedures for smart, desirable business. Improve access to capital including NYS SBDC grants.
- **Agriculture**—increase local, regional and statewide marketing for local products; continue TDR/PDR programs Countywide for continued viability of family farming.
- **Arts**—support efforts of existing artists’ cooperatives with technical assistance and project funding; make “arts community” design guidelines and policies available to municipalities.
  - **Manufacturing/Technology**—set up local capital investment program, including nontraditional funding opportunities such as microloans.
  - **Medical**—increase support for preventive care providers (visiting nurse services, etc.) and for small independent medical practices.
  - **Tourism**—facilitate shared services (accounting, legal, etc.) among small tourism-related businesses; increase mapping and signage for agribusinesses and other local attractions
**Sampling of Recommendations for Action**

**Within the Next Six Months to One Year, Orange County Should:**

1. Implement a **coordinated process** among County agencies for reviewing development projects.
2. Work with **economic development agencies and interests** to identify quality of life issues and cooperate in resolving those issues through direct grants, public-private partnerships, and other measures as appropriate.
3. Determine the types of **barriers facing smart desirable businesses** looking to locate or begin in Orange County and work toward removing those barriers; seek help from Small Business Administration.
4. Work with the Orange County Partnership, Orange County Chamber of Commerce and Orange County IDA to **grow the inventory of Shovel Ready sites** needed in the County.
5. Assess development potential of each property in the existing **inventory of County-owned and government-owned property**; work toward the most efficient use with the best public value for each property.
6. Establish a **web portal** of comprehensive information of policies, codes, and permits needed by businesses, entrepreneurs and others.
7. Develop **model codes and plan language** to support smart, desirable business uses as part of a balanced growth strategy and a complete community. Provide language and technical assistance to municipalities for updated codes and procedures to create a supportive culture for smart businesses. Include in this guidance for more effective and efficient reviews when required under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).
8. Direct **County financing and support** to projects and municipalities that support the above actions and can show performance.

**Within the Next One to Two Years, Orange County Should:**

1. Work with Orange County Tourism, the Chamber of Commerce, the Partnership, the Orange County Industrial Development Agency, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and the Orange County Citizens Foundation to **market our quality of life** to businesses looking to relocate.
2. Develop specific strategies to **increase tourism**, both on a County and a regional level.
3. Help municipalities evaluate ways to **get visitors downtown** by increasing public transit opportunities as well as designing Complete Streets. Inter-municipal cooperation is key to these efforts.
4. **Develop incentive programs** for adaptive reuse of existing facilities, green infrastructure, and downtown revitalization, using private, nonprofit, state and federal funding. Begin by developing a list, updated regularly, of existing funding opportunities and make that list available to municipalities and nonprofits.
5. Develop industry-specific **economic strategies for key industries** in Orange County. Seek input from agencies such as the Council of Industry, the County IDA and the Chamber of Commerce.
6. Encourage and assist **industry-specific business clusters** to support our existing key industries.

**Within the Next Three to Five Years, Orange County Should:**

1. Provide standards and procedures for creating **Arts Districts** in our cities and villages.
2. Examine results of the first two years of programming in order to capitalize on our successes and revise our less-successful programs. Enhance our capacity for **creativity and innovation**.
3. **Establish an Economic Investment Fund**—matching local, state, federal or private sources—to support the above actions by developing or upgrading physical and data infrastructure. Partner with the County IDA on funding.
ORANGE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

Orange County is revolutionary, in all senses of the word. Chartered in 1683, Orange County has borne witness to the end of the American Revolution, the beginning of the Hudson River School of landscape painting, and the birth of the environmental movement on Storm King Mountain. We have a distinguished military record; for over 200 years, West Point has trained the best and brightest for service. Our vibrant creative offerings range from one of the world’s leading sculpture parks to the world’s largest private holding of important original documents to one of the nation’s leading performance bands. Farmers in Orange County have been vital to food access in New York City for nearly 300 years, ranging from wagons during harvests through the formerly daily “milk trains” to their presence in Greenmarkets in Times Square today. Our proximity to New York City and location in the beautiful Hudson Valley have made us a longtime destination for retreat and relaxation.

Orange County is attractive to businesses for the same reasons that it is attractive to residents, and more. Our vast ethnic and cultural diversity are a draw for residents and employers seeking a variety of cultural traditions, but also our municipalities vary greatly in their characteristics: urban and rural, high and low-density development, extremely poor and very wealthy, young to older, and land uses covering the full spectrum from agricultural to commercial to residential to industrial. Our extensive transportation network is chief among the County’s attractions for employers; three major interstate highways that run through the County, and within six hours’ drive, a business can reach markets totaling more than 50 million people in the US and Canada. We are the northwestern-most county served by train in the service area of the New York City Metropolitan Transit Authority; coupled with robust commuter bus services, this makes us a refuge for New York City’s workforce. The Hudson River is also key to the regional transportation network; shipping has occurred on the river since the Hudson Valley was first settled, and continues today as an alternative to rail or truck transport. The freight rail transportation system is active and well-supported, with at least several trains daily along the west bank of the Hudson. Air freight is also well supported, with the addition of Stewart International Airport to the responsibility of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

Orange County is typically considered to be the northwestern boundary of the “commuting counties,” or those counties in which a resident can commute to New York City in a reasonable amount of time and without too much difficulty. New York City’s police and firefighters, are required to live in one of 12 counties in New York State, of which Orange County is the furthest northwest. In the metropolitan area, we also have the most housing affordable to those commuters; approximately 13,000 housing units were built during the recent housing boom of 2000-2006, increasing our housing stock by 10% in that timeframe. The housing crash of 2006-07, though still reflected in the credit crunch, is no longer reflected in housing prices, which have rebounded to near their level during the boom.
Current Status of Economic Development

The recession of 2007-2009 and the challenges of the housing market and the overall economy since have left an impression on the Hudson Valley and New York State. Although the recession is considered to be over, its effects are still felt in our lasting unemployment, tight credit market, low consumer spending, and reduced corporate spending, especially in the areas of research and development. Single-family homes on large lots remain the primary form of housing in Orange County, and prices of those homes have rebounded to near their pre-recession levels, rendering them unaffordable to families that work in the County or the Mid-Hudson region and make the County’s median household income or below. As of April 2014, the unemployment rate in Orange County was 5.1%, down from 7.1% in April 2013. Although the situation has improved in that banks are beginning to lend and consumer spending has increased year-over-year, those spending increases are slight at best and the loans are heavily restricted, placing a larger cost burden on the middle class.

In order to spur investment and job creation and better coordinate economic development efforts, Governor Cuomo created ten Regional Economic Development Councils coterminous with the boundaries of the State Department of Labor regions. Orange County is part of the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council (MH REDC), with the Counties of Dutchess, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, and Westchester. The MH REDC completed its five-year economic development plan in November 2011, and posted their progress reports in 2012 and 2013. The policies of Orange County, including the Comprehensive Plan and its supplemental chapters, the Orange County Design Manual, and the Orange County Greenway Compact are in agreement with the strategies and policies supported by the MH REDC.

Getting Started

The Orange County Planning Board, in beginning this process, determined that we first needed to agree upon goals that would define the direction of this strategy. Following discussions with the Orange County Partnership and business leaders throughout the County in a variety of industries, the following themes emerged:

1. Attract and Assist Businesses—the County needs to balance economic growth through attracting outside businesses with assisting the businesses already present and improving the economic climate for them.

2. Improve Economic Development Capacity—the County and its municipalities need to make it easier for businesses to relocate to our area or thrive in a competitive start-up environment, by ensuring sufficient water and sewer capacity, easy access to transportation, full wireless technology service, and an array of housing options for new employees.

3. Strengthen Key Industries—the County needs to work with employers to provide workforce training and educational programs for residents, to increase the pool of skilled labor.

4. Create a Supportive Culture for Small Businesses—small businesses have higher costs and other specific needs; the County can provide general training and resources for business owners and municipal boards.
Key Industries

While all industries in the County are important to our economic health and well-being, we determined that the following industries are key to our short-term economic success:

- **Manufacturing and Technology**—in the information economy, technology will be vital to every industry. Manufacturing is our third-largest industry by revenue, and employs nearly 8,000 workers; biotech manufacturing was singled out as an emerging industry in the Mid-Hudson REDC plan.

- **Medical**—our fourth-largest industry by revenue (in 2007) is poised to grow with the new Orange Regional Medical Center and Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine.

- **Tourism**—more than 4 million visitors came to Orange County in 2012, spending over $430 million, supporting over 9,000 jobs and contributing more than $28 million in local tax revenue.

- **Arts**—revenue from this sector has increased over 600% since the 2002 Economic Census, and has continued to grow through the recession and slow recovery period.

- **Agriculture**—our largest nonresidential land use by acreage, and vital to our historic role as the region’s breadbasket.

Tourism, although one of our key industries, is not defined in the chart below because several of the industry categories defined by the Census Bureau contribute to tourism in some way. Any statistics presented relating to tourism as an industry have been provided by Orange County Tourism and compiled by the I LOVE NEW YORK program, with data from the New York State Departments of Finance and Labor.

**Table 1. Orange County Industries as of the 2007 Economic Census**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAICS Code</th>
<th>Industry Definition</th>
<th># Employer Establishments</th>
<th>Annual Payroll ($1,000's)</th>
<th># Paid Employees</th>
<th># Nonemployer Establishments</th>
<th>Total Industry Revenue ($1,000's)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>335,035</td>
<td>7417</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>6,859,160</td>
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<td>44-45</td>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>1,586</td>
<td>517,419</td>
<td>22,345</td>
<td>2,338</td>
<td>5,828,081</td>
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<td>31-33</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>321,046</td>
<td>7,510</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>2,364,644</td>
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<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Health Care and Social Assistance and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services</td>
<td>993</td>
<td>770,998</td>
<td>19,291</td>
<td>1903</td>
<td>1,761,302</td>
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<td>54</td>
<td>Real Estate and Rental and Leasing</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>233,460</td>
<td>5,365</td>
<td>3,396</td>
<td>742,671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Other Services (except public administration)</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>45,098</td>
<td>1,591</td>
<td>3,407</td>
<td>591,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Accommodation and Food Services</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>98,481</td>
<td>3,887</td>
<td>2,841</td>
<td>510,937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Administrative and Support Services et al</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>123,214</td>
<td>8,755</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>472,616</td>
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<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>137,775</td>
<td>5,421</td>
<td>1,762</td>
<td>424,238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Educational Services</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>27,241</td>
<td>1,455</td>
<td>1,440</td>
<td>145,287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>15,922</td>
<td>1,550</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>73,748</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: All industries except agriculture measured as part of the 2007 Economic Census, conducted by the United States Census Bureau. Agriculture data is from the 2007 Census of Agriculture, conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture. This table will be updated following the release of the 2012 Economic Census data.
## Overall State of the County Economy

### Strengths
- Highly trained workforce: BOCES provides vocational training on high school level and Laborer’s International Union Local 17 in Newburgh houses the union’s national training office.
- Open space: active preservation programs in our Towns and along all three rivers contribute to region’s scenic beauty.
- Transportation network: three major interstates, two airports, three rivers and active freight and passenger rail lines; access to over 50 million people in a 6-hour drive.
- Local arts scene: film production and associated industries growing rapidly with addition of new film office; Storm King Arts Center visitation is up nearly 80% since 2011.
- Civic engagement: active local-level groups on all levels ranging from Chambers of Commerce to youth soccer.
- Medical care: ORMC in Wallkill is first new hospital built in New York State in 20 years; almost all residents live within 10 miles of a hospital or urgent care clinic.
- Riverfront development: Newburgh Waterfront, parks in Cornwall and New Windsor and the Port Jervis Whitewater Park capitalize on our natural assets.

### Weaknesses
- Development potential: limited number of Shovel Ready sites.
- Housing options: lack of housing affordable to residents, esp. residents working in Orange County.
- Aging/inadequate infrastructure: problems at key locations; limited funds for major repairs, expansions, or other improvements.
- STEM programs: limited science, technology, engineering, and math education programs, especially college and graduate level.
- Public transportation: public largely unaware of intra-county public transit options.
- Education: Workforce requires increasingly specialized degrees and training programs unavailable in Orange County.
- Safety: Perceived drug/gang/other violent crime problems, esp. in cities.

### Opportunities
- Potential workforce: increased training and transportation improvements will allow City of Newburgh and Middletown residents to fully engage in workforce.
- Non-motorized transportation: trails are an asset for local businesses and residents’ quality of life; expansion of the trail system will increase recreational economic activity.
- Funding: database of startup/expansion funding programs will improve opportunities for new and existing businesses.
- START-UP NY: SUNY Orange and Mount St Mary College are eligible locations for new and existing businesses in emerging industries; program may expand to include Stewart Airport.
- Shared services: consolidation of school districts and other services will reduce municipal costs.
- Net export: increase export levels for goods and services by using existing systems for export of agricultural goods and for commuters.

### Threats
- State laws: NYS tax/regulatory structures, restrictions, mandates prohibitive for businesses.
- Home rule: layers of government and SEQR/DEC project review can lead to long and costly development process, inconsistent across County.
- Infrastructure: cost to maintain/expand capacity (energy, water and sewer, transportation, fiber optic/wireless technology) can increase business costs.
- Competition: Aggressive incentive programs offered by other counties and states.
- Transit: lack of direct “one-seat” train access to New York City; inadequate parking for otherwise convenient commuter bus service.
- Brain Drain: often-permanent loss of youth population to colleges elsewhere.
State of the Economy in Orange County Municipalities

In late 2011, the Orange County Planning Department investigated economic development activity in our municipalities, first by reviewing their codes and comprehensive plans, and second by surveying elected officials in each municipality about economic development—what the problems and opportunities are in their municipality, what their strengths are, and how the County could help with future development. The goal was to determine if the County’s municipalities currently have policies that support smart, desirable businesses.

Throughout this strategy, the term “smart, desirable businesses” is used. A smart, desirable business, in our view, is one that supports the local economy and is typically a company that is interdependent with other industries that already exist in the area. Doctor’s offices and medical supply stores would be smart, desirable businesses in a town near a hospital, for example. Other businesses might be desirable in some instances and not in others. In a village with a lot of office jobs, a coffee shop, deli, or other restaurant geared toward quick breakfast and lunch food service for busy professionals is supportive of the local economy where a bar or a restaurant geared toward leisurely dining might not be, but if the village wants to increase the number of people in its business district at night, that bar or restaurant could be the type of business that village would want to encourage.

Businesses in New York State have a high cost of operation. Tax rates are high; the average income tax rate in New York is the sixth-highest in the country according to Tax-Rates.org, and the Tax Foundation rates New York as 49th in their annual state business tax climate index. Municipal “home rule” in which each city, town or village has authority over issuance of building permit, site plan, special use permit, variance and other land use approvals can sometimes cause delays; often a project will still require review from County Planning and other county departments and state agencies, which can take additional amounts of time. Also, the State Environmental Quality Review Act requires all projects, other than those categorized as “Type II” actions, to go through an environmental assessment process. If a municipality determines that an action has the potential to have an adverse impact to the municipality or the land uses surrounding the project, the project sponsor may need to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, a process that can take up to two years and add substantial cost to the pre-development phase of the project. Municipalities walk a fine line between attracting and assisting businesses, which provide jobs and income to their residents and property tax revenue to the municipality, and maintaining the quality of life their residents value, which often depends on low traffic, low-density housing development, large tracts of open space, and good air and water quality.

Municipalities can assist businesses in their jurisdictions and attract new businesses to their locations in a number of ways. The code review explores a number of specific items that are important to create and maintain a thriving business climate; however there are also many other ways that municipalities can improve their processes and cooperate together on issues that will make them better places to do business.
Municipal Code Review
To conduct this code review, we first had to determine code and plan measures that are strongly associated with healthy business environments. According to the National Main Street Center, merchants in traditional downtown areas that have a coordinated Main Street strategy can double their sales, receipts and revenue compared to their earnings prior to adopting these strategies. A downtown with a design strategy—storefront awnings, street trees and streetlights, benches, wide sidewalks, municipal or shared parking lots and on-street parking, among other components—is more likely to generate foot traffic for its merchants because the downtown area itself is a pleasant place to walk.

The Orange County Design Manual includes a number of methods and tools that our municipalities can incorporate into a coordinated downtown development strategy. The Design Manual and many other resources are available from County Planning at www.orangecountygov.com/planning.

Findings
Too often, codes are out-of-date or include redundant and complicated language that does not support a culture for smart desirable business. For example, the code review revealed:

• Although mixed uses exist and are desirable in many locations, often codes limit or prohibit these uses.

This is important because: Mixed uses are a good way for a municipality to provide affordable housing for its workforce and ensure that there is activity in the downtown area at all times of the day. Increased street activity in walkable communities has been shown to decrease rates of both property and violent crimes, increase community and civic engagement, increase social equity for people without cars, and improve physical and mental health. Also, developing mixed uses in downtowns lessens the environmental impact of those uses, due to the existence of water and sewer infrastructure, power, trash pickup and other services.

• Every municipality in the County other than the Village of Kiryas Joel and the Town of Wallkill either permit shared parking arrangements for businesses on the same or adjacent lots, or provide at least one municipal parking lot.

This is important because: Shared or public parking lots in downtown areas allows for more foot traffic for businesses in those areas. Additionally, shared parking measures reduce the paved area in municipalities, limiting the amount of stormwater runoff and reducing the risks of flooding and other property damage.
• Most municipalities require a minimum number of parking spaces in their codes, as opposed to a median or maximum number. Also, the formulas for determining the number of parking spaces are generally weighted toward providing excess spaces.

_This is important because:_ Parking lots are usually designed for the heaviest use of a commercial building. Most of the time, those spaces are unused but must still be maintained with lighting, surface repair and plowing and sanding. Increased public parking and transit allow businesses to save money by reducing their parking spaces, allowing landscaping, transit and pedestrian access, onsite stormwater management and decreased maintenance costs.

• Most of the municipalities in the County have a “downtown” area, where businesses are concentrated and residents can meet many of their commercial needs, ranging from medical and professional offices to retail. In the towns, these areas are usually historic hamlets, such as Pine Bush or Campbell Hall

_This is important because:_ Typically, the physical infrastructure needed to support businesses already exists in the hamlets, villages, and city centers. Orange County Planning has identified “Priority Growth Areas”—places where we encourage municipalities to direct development activity—based partly on the presence of infrastructure. Targeted investment can increase the capacity and efficiency of existing infrastructure systems without the cost of constructing new systems. Investing in infrastructure improvements can increase the economic development capacity of these areas without substantially increasing traffic, water, sewer and other problems associated with development.

• Agriculture is a permitted use and recognized as a commercial use in nearly all towns in Orange County but prohibited or limited in most of the villages and all three cities.

_This is important because:_ Agriculture is a key industry in Orange County, with revenue of about $100.7 million in agricultural products, according to the 2012 Census of Agriculture. Also, our farms provide much of the scenic beauty of the County and contribute to our quality of life; about 17% of the County’s land area is actively farmed, and most of our 658 farms are family-owned and managed. However, agricultural operations often require large amounts of land area, which is not readily available in denser areas like cities and villages.

• More than half of the municipalities in the County have more special or conditional uses than permitted uses in their commercial zones.

_This is important because:_ Conditional or special uses require a review and permit from the municipal Planning Board, which adds expense and time to the development process. Conditional or special uses are prudent in many cases; some businesses or business categories need specific site conditions that are not available on every parcel, and many parcels are not able to support all businesses in a general category. However, in other cases, many conditional or special uses are similar enough to permitted uses in the same zone that the special uses could become permitted uses without detriment to the municipality; allowing those uses as of right would allow municipalities to streamline their permit approval process, reducing their costs and costs to developers in their municipalities.
**Economic Development Survey of Municipal Elected Officials**

In 2011, the Planning Department and Planning Board developed a short survey to administer to elected officials in all 42 of the County’s municipalities. Their responses led to these findings: recommendations based on these findings are at the end of this section.

**Findings**

- Many of the County’s rural municipalities have water surpluses, but lack funds to provide central water distribution—pipes, water treatment, etc.—and construct or expand sewer treatment facilities.
- Many of the more populated or more densely populated municipalities have issues with water supply or sewer treatment capacity, and have additional issues with traffic and road infrastructure.

*This is important because:* Infrastructure capacity is often the deciding factor in business construction or relocation. If Orange County cannot provide sufficient infrastructure, businesses looking to locate here will go elsewhere, and existing businesses looking to expand will leave the County.

**Possible Solutions Include:** Creating and funding a Capital Improvements Program for municipal infrastructure projects; dedicating a County bond issue toward infrastructure projects; providing technical assistance and support to municipalities for loan and grant applications; funding intermunicipal water connection projects through the Orange County Water Authority, such as those recommended in the County Water Master Plan.

- Municipalities in Orange County along the Thruway or the Metro-North line tend to be bedroom communities for commuters who work in Westchester, Rockland, New Jersey and New York City.
- The majority of Orange County’s out-of-county commuters travel alone in a personal vehicle.

*This is important because:* High volumes of traffic and long commute times can decrease perceived quality of life for commuters. Some commuters enjoy the community of public transit and the ability to use their travel time efficiently, and are able to schedule their trips on public transit. However, existing public transit options are not often considered by Orange County commuters as a viable alternative to driving. Improvements like more frequent trains and buses, and additional park-and-ride capacity for commuter buses and carpools would increase ridership in Orange County, the northernmost member of the Metropolitan Transit Authority.

**Possible Solutions Include:** Creating a central electronic resource for Orange County commuters to arrange carpools; working with Metro-North and the various bus lines serving the County to increase the frequency of transit services or otherwise improve transit options; opening additional park-and-ride lots for commuters who carpool. This may include construction of new parking lots, or implementing shared parking agreements with businesses and organizations that have unused parking capacity during standard commuting hours.

**Economic Development Survey of Interested Parties**

Throughout the process of formulating this strategy, the Orange County Planning Board has sought the advice and solicited the concerns of other organizations concerned with the economic wellbeing of Orange County, primarily the Orange County Partnership, the Orange County Citizens Foundation and the Orange County Chamber of Commerce. Although no formal survey was developed for these agencies and their membership, many concerns were raised over the course of multiple conversations. Additionally, these organizations have previously done work in these areas.
The Orange County Citizens Foundation creates a Quality of Life report every few years, with the most recent report published in 2015, and conducts an annual Placemaking conference, which brings architects and developers together with municipal and county staff, Board members, and elected officials to determine better ways to develop. The Foundation’s committees focus on agriculture, health care, finance, trails and a number of other ways to improve quality of life for Orange County residents.

According to their mission statement, “The Orange County Chamber of Commerce leads the way creating and supporting an environment in which business will succeed and the quality of life is enhanced.” The Chamber is the leading advocate for business concerns in the Hudson Valley, and its committees support small businesses, young professionals, and minority and women business owners through their advocacy work. The Chamber works closely with the County and local governments through their Government Initiatives and Education committee.

The Orange County Partnership is a private nonprofit economic development agency that serves as a resource for business development in Orange County. The Partnership works with businesses looking to expand within or relocate to Orange County by finding them appropriate locations. The Alliance for Balanced Growth is a cooperative effort between the Partnership and development professionals to advocate for responsible development in Orange County.

These organizations and their membership raised a number of important issues; addressing these issues will support our existing businesses, make it easier to attract new businesses, and thereby strengthen our key industries. These issues are discussed below.

Permit Streamlining and the SEQR Process
As discussed in the code review section, more than half of the County’s municipalities have more special or conditional uses than permitted uses in their commercial districts. Special or conditional uses are often necessary; not all land uses are suitable for all types of land. Other times, however, the special or conditional uses are sufficiently similar to the permitted uses that the land use requirements are generally the same, and the process to get a special or conditional use permit is simply one more layer of review.

To ensure that all uses requiring extra scrutiny are properly reviewed while not imposing additional costs and delay on projects that meet requirements, municipalities should review their codes with particular attention to the zoning use and bulk tables. The County can provide resources and technical assistance for this effort.

The requirements of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) are also essential but too often lead to protracted delay and indecision even when smart, desirable economic development is proposed. Businesses leaders regularly cite the unpredictability of the SEQRA process as a hindrance. The County can partner with NYS DEC and other interests to advance recommendations and procedures to improve effectiveness and predictability when actions are subject to SEQRA review. This should be matched to a municipality’s preferred land uses as defined in their Plans as well as matched to the Priority Growth Areas element of the County Comprehensive Plan.
**Intermunicipal Cooperation**

Municipalities can often find ways to cooperate in the interest of attracting businesses or cutting costs. One of the most effective ways to do this is by sharing services. A shared service agreement, such as for extension of water or wastewater services from a city or village into its surrounding town, shared police services between a village and a town, or combining two small school districts to reduce administration costs can often provide the same or better level of service while cutting costs for the municipalities or other public entities involved. Municipalities can encourage businesses, public buildings and other entities in downtown areas to adopt shared parking agreements; these agreements allow those entities access to additional parking without having to construct it themselves, keeps parking areas full at times other than the periods of operation for the use to which they are is attached, and encourages foot traffic in downtown areas. These and similar ideas are examined throughout the code review and discussions with elected officials.

**Infrastructure Improvements**

In 1999, the Orange County Partnership Infrastructure Subcommittee studied the issue of infrastructure capacity for its long-term impacts on economic development activity; they made many recommendations to the County and its municipalities, which were recognized but not acted upon. We continue to recommend that the County: find solutions for traffic bottlenecks like the Harriman Thruway exchange; seek alternative energy sources to reduce costs and environmental impacts; assist municipalities to develop agreements for shared services; help improve sewer capacity and delivery systems; and evaluate existing business parks, commercial zones and industrial sites for development potential, and assist in developing Generic Environmental Impact Statements for suitable sites, which will save time and money in the development process and help municipalities address issues both on and off those sites.

While all these infrastructure improvements continue to be necessary, the County and municipalities must also now consider technology infrastructure. Wireless facilities are available throughout the County and connectivity is nearly universal in the eastern half of the County. The northern reaches of Crawford and Wallkill as well as much of the County west of Middletown have much sparser wireless coverage, due in part to the mountainous terrain and the lower population density. Efforts should be made to attract wireless facilities or alternatives such as fiber optic cable services to the west part of the County, specifically the Towns of Crawford, Deerpark, Greenville, Minisink, Mount Hope, and Wawayanda. We further recommend continued advocacy on the part of the County toward the removal or reformulation of New York State regulations and mandates that constrain economic development in our municipalities.

**Housing**

Although the housing in Orange County continues to be the most affordable in the New York City commuting area, homeownership remains mostly out of reach to those residents who work in Orange County or the Hudson Valley. The average household in Orange County, whether owner or renter, pays 58% of their gross income in housing and transportation costs, with 36% going to housing; the general guideline for housing affordability is housing that costs 30% or less of a household’s gross income. Housing affordability is key to economic development, not only in the attraction of new businesses but also to entrepreneurship. The housing element of the County Comprehensive Plan calls for a full range of housing options; we recommend that these options include development of workforce housing, particularly in areas served by public transit, and mixed-use developments that allows small business owners to live above their businesses.
Orange County in the New Economy

Our health care industry continues to be one of our economic strengths, with the approval of Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine and other potential medical and nursing schools. Manufacturing will benefit from the trend in public funding to reward manufacturers who keep their operations in the U.S.; technology will benefit from the international trend toward the knowledge-based economy. Agriculture in Orange County takes advantage of the local food movement, bringing locally grown food to farmers’ markets and creating “pick-your-own” and farm share programs such as CSAs (community-supported agriculture), and has the potential to expand into niche markets like organic produce. The arts continue to grow in Orange County with coordinated efforts to increase visibility in New York City and improve local exposure by creating an “arts culture” in the area. Tourism can reinforce the efforts of all these key industries by attracting new visitors and residents to the County through reinvestment of some of the County’s bed tax in the tourism program.

Although the slow economic recovery has had a prolonged negative impact on the County, as it has everywhere else in the nation, the five industries that we have chosen to highlight in this strategy will be able to reinforce each other and to some extent support the other industries of Orange County through the remaining period of recovery and into a strong and robust economy.

Orange County in 2020

When the recommendations in this strategy are adopted and implemented, we can expect:

- Job growth
  - Manufacturing and technology are likely to see growth in green industries, based on government investment priorities at this time. Alternative energy technology, biotechnology, and improvements to reduce carbon emissions in manufacturing processes will be key elements for industry growth, although retention of our existing manufacturers is also vital. Attraction of energy and biotechnology manufacturers could result in job growth in this sector of up to 15%, providing up to 1,200 new jobs.
  - With Touro College opening in the fall of 2015 with approximately 500 students, we can reasonably expect up to a 10% increase in medical-sector employment, providing a possible 2,000 new jobs in faculty, residency program management, school administration, and services. Also as the population ages, we will need visiting nurse services, home monitoring systems and housing retrofits, creating jobs in nursing, construction, and IT to serve the 55,000 residents in 2020 who will be age 65 or over.
  - Investment of 5% of the County “bed tax” revenue in promotion could lead to a tourism increase of 20% by 2020, more than 5 million visitors, and increase tourism jobs by up to 12%, or 1,000 new jobs.

- Revenue can be expected to grow for all key industries
  - Agriculture can expect to increase its revenue due to increased production and distribution of value-added products such as baked goods and jams for fruit growers or cheeses for dairy farmers, which would result from construction of time-shared or traveling commercial kitchen operations.
  - Increased marketing activities for artists, film and local art will increase revenue, particularly when combined with other industries, such as plein air painting workshops on local farms or art therapy or performances in hospitals and other skilled care-facilities.
**General Recommendations**

A number of the recommendations in the following section are procedural, intended to make economic development more uniform and efficient across the County. Many of the issues raised in this strategy and supporting documentation require further study or cooperation from an outside agency, but implementation of these recommendations will put Orange County on a sound footing to ensure our economic health not only through this recovery period, but also through the next economic crisis we face. In all the recommendations throughout this strategy, if Planning is not listed as a responsible agency, we are still available and willing to assist as needed.

**Short-Term Recommendations—Actions to be completed within six months to one year following adoption of this strategy**

- Implement a coordinated review process among County agencies for reviewing development actions as required by New York State General Municipal Law Section 239, Health code, and other County obligations.
  - **Responsibility**: Orange County Planning, County Departments of Health and Public Works
  - **Cost**: Low

- Evaluate the existing “shovel-ready” sites in the County to ensure that all necessary services are provided. Assist partner agencies to work with municipalities in expanding and maintaining the list of Shovel Ready sites.
  - **Responsibility**: Orange County Office of Business Assistance, Orange County Partnership, Orange County Chamber of Commerce, Alliance for Balanced Growth, with County Planning
  - **Cost**: Low

- Give municipalities the results of the code and plan audit done for this strategy. Meet with interested municipalities to help them develop strategies to improve their downtowns and business districts.
  - **Responsibility**: County Planning
  - **Cost**: Low

- Institute an annual meeting—convened by the County Executive with the OC IDA and OC Partnership—of economic development-related interests, including County Planning, Orange County Tourism, the Association of Towns, Villages and Cities, the Alliance for Balanced Growth, the Orange County Citizens Foundation, and others in order to discuss and resolve issues related to economic development activity in Orange County.
  - **Responsibility**: County Executive with OC IDA, OC Partnership, OC Chamber
  - **Cost**: Low

- Assess development potential of each property in the existing inventory of County-owned and government-owned property; work toward the most efficient use with the best public value for each property.
  - **Responsibility**: Orange County Office of Real Property and County Planning
  - **Cost**: Low to moderate

- Determine barriers that exist for smart and desirable business development in Orange County; these barriers may include outdated and complicated code language, operational costs, and so on. Assist municipal officials to identify problems and solutions specific to their municipalities.
  - **Responsibility**: Municipal officials and boards, County Planning, the County Municipal Planning Federation.
  - **Cost**: Low

- Establish a web portal of comprehensive information of policies, codes, and permits needed by businesses, entrepreneurs and others. Build this from the new municipal resources page of the Planning Department website.
  - **Responsibility**: Municipal officials and staff, County Planning, OC Partnership
  - **Cost**: Low
• Assist municipalities to evaluate their existing business parks and potential sites for future nonresidential development; Generic Environmental Impact Statements may be developed for those sites.
  ◦ **Responsibility:** OC Partnership, Alliance for Balanced Growth with County Planning, and OC IDA
  ◦ **Cost:** Low to moderate

• Help municipalities and school districts develop shared services agreements to reduce costs, as has occurred in the Town and Village of Warwick, for example.
  ◦ **Responsibility:** County Planning, other agencies as required
  ◦ **Cost:** Low to moderate

• Develop model zoning and subdivision codes and language for municipal plans to support smart, desirable business uses. Provide language and technical assistance to municipalities.
  ◦ **Responsibility:** County Planning with Orange County Association of Towns, Villages and Cities (OCATVC) and County Municipal Planning Federation
  ◦ **Cost:** Moderate

• Direct County support and outside resources to projects and municipalities that support these actions.
  ◦ **Responsibility:** County Executive with County Planning and County Planning Board, START / planning grants program
  ◦ **Cost:** Moderate to high

**Medium-Term Recommendations—Actions to be completed within one to two years**

• Develop industry-specific economic strategies for key industries in Orange County, including supporting businesses or business clusters within those industries.
  ◦ **Responsibility:** OC Chamber, County Planning, leaders and interested agencies specific to each industry
  ◦ **Cost:** Low to moderate

• Assist municipalities to evaluate their procedures for new development, new construction activity and reuse of existing structures. Develop “best practices” models and make available to all municipalities.
  ◦ **Responsibility:** County Planning with County Municipal Planning Federation
  ◦ **Cost:** Low to moderate

• Create and dedicate strategic small planning grants to downtown revitalization projects.
  ◦ **Responsibility:** County Executive with County Planning Board
  ◦ **Cost:** Moderate

• Develop incentive programs for shovel ready sites, adaptive reuse of existing facilities, green infrastructure, and downtown revitalization activities.
  ◦ **Responsibility:** Orange County IDA, Orange County Partnership, County Planning
  ◦ **Cost:** Moderate (does not include cost of incentives)

• Develop solutions for existing traffic bottlenecks and other traffic problems.
  ◦ **Responsibility:** Orange County DPW, NYS DOT, County Planning Transportation Division
  ◦ **Cost:** Moderate (does not include capital costs or other costs of improvements)
Market our quality of life to businesses and education facilities not currently located in Orange County.

- **Responsibility:** OC Chamber, OC Partnership, and other organizations as appropriate.
- **Cost:** Moderate to high

Assist municipalities in attracting visitors to their downtowns by increased tourism marketing, increased public transit options, and designing Complete Streets for a better pedestrian experience.

- **Responsibility:** County Tourism, Orange County Partnership, Orange County Citizens Foundation, and others including County Planning, Orange County Chamber of Commerce, with municipalities
- **Cost:** Moderate to high

Improve water and sewer capacity and delivery in existing public systems; the County’s designated Priority Growth Areas shall be the County’s first priority for capacity and service improvements.

- **Responsibility:** OCWA, County Planning, DPW, existing municipal system service providers
- **Cost:** Moderate to high

Implement the recommendations of the Orange County Comprehensive Plan housing element; create individual municipal plans to provide a full range of housing options.

- **Responsibility:** County Planning, municipal officials and boards
- **Cost:** High

**LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS—Actions to be completed within three to five years following adoption of this strategy**

Evaluate results of all economic development work done as part of this strategy. Revisit this strategy with these results in order to capitalize on successes and revise less-successful programs.

- **Responsibility:** County Executive with County Planning, OC Partnership, OC IDA, OC Chamber
- **Cost:** Low

Work with interested municipalities to create Arts Districts in accordance with New York State programs.

- **Responsibility:** County Tourism with OC Arts Council and OCATVC
- **Cost:** Low to moderate

Work with New York City’s “Silicon Alley” businesses to bring technology businesses and their related manufacturing facilities to Orange County.

- **Responsibility:** OC Partnership, OC IDA with support from Central Hudson, Orange & Rockland, and other utility companies.
- **Cost:** Moderate to high

Encourage “visiting scholar” programs at colleges with art, medical and other schools in New York City.

- **Responsibility:** County Executive with OC Partnership, OC Chamber, Orange County Center for Business Innovation, County Office of Business Assistance, Orange County Arts Council, Orange County Citizens Foundation, SUNY Orange, Mount Saint Mary College, and other County businesses and nonprofits
- **Cost:** Moderate to high

Create infrastructure fund—matching state, federal or private sources—to support recommendations of this strategy, including transportation, water and sewer, energy and wireless technology infrastructure.

- **Responsibility:** County Executive with Orange County Legislature, OC IDA. County Planning Board
- **Cost:** High
THE INDUSTRY APPROACH

We determined early in our analysis of the existing Orange County economy that, while there is substantial industry diversity throughout the County, there were five industries that show both strong growth potential within the industry and increased economic activity in related industries: manufacturing and technology, medical/health care, tourism, arts, and agriculture. We recognize that there are other industries that contribute significantly to Orange County’s economic health and well-being, and that in the space of five years, other industries may emerge to dominate the County’s economy. However, the five industries in the County that we have chosen to highlight in this strategy all have history in the County and have already developed industry clusters, which increase the impact and importance of those industries.

Industries are specific branches of manufacturing, trade, or service. Businesses related to these specific industries often spring up in the same geographic area, such as doctors’ offices near hospitals; related and interconnected businesses in the same area are often referred to as an industry cluster. Development of industry clusters is desirable; associated businesses that are related to the primary industry often meet a need that allows the primary industry to operate or expand, and clusters can often be adapted to new uses when the needs of their industry change. For example, farm supply stores that specialized in large-animal feed and milking machines shifted their product lines to seeds, mulch and fertilizer when Orange County farms shifted toward vegetable and fruit cultivation.

In order to achieve our goals of attracting and assisting businesses and strengthening key industries, the County must assist our identified key industries to define their clusters and to work more efficiently toward maximizing the benefits of the industry cluster while not eliminating the benefits of industry competition. In order to best assist our key industries, the County will work with the Council of Industry, the Orange County Chamber of Commerce and business leaders in each industry to develop “cluster plans” that will allow the businesses in each key industry to thrive and will allow the industry to attract businesses that will contribute to development of a cluster. We have chosen to focus on the manufacturing and technology, medical, tourism, arts, and agriculture industries as key to the Orange County economy for the following reasons:

**Manufacturing and Technology**—Manufacturing and technology are natural industries for Orange County due to our available land and extensive transportation network. Manufacturing is our third largest industry, earning over $2.3 billion in revenue. Technology businesses have tremendous growth potential as we live in an increasingly electronic world, and a key component of the technology industry is biotechnology. We are ideally poised to take full advantage of this industry, given our existing manufacturing infrastructure and health care network. The presence of Stewart Airport also provides an opportunity for development of a specific avionics cluster, including all aeronautics-related manufacturing and technology development.

**Medical**—Health care is our fourth-largest industry; in 2007, the industry generated $1.5 billion in revenue and supported over 16,000 jobs. Medical offices account for over half the Class I office space built in Orange County since 2000, and in 2011, Orange Regional Medical Center in Wallkill became the first new hospital built in New York State in the last 20 years. The Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council has determined that the medical industry, due primarily to our large medical community that represents a diverse range of specialties, is Orange County’s primary industry, and therefore may assist the County to attract new medical businesses and support businesses to the County.
Tourism—Over four million visitors came to Orange County in 2010. According to New York State, visitors to Orange County spent over $384 million in 2010, which supported 8,635 jobs and contributed over $2.6 million directly to the County through the hotel occupancy tax. In 2009, Orange County instituted a 5% hotel occupancy tax, which generated a total of over $5.3 million in 2010 and 2011 directly for the County General Fund, and the visitors that stayed overnight generated further revenue through sales tax on their purchases. Research has shown that overnight visitors spend an average of three times the money spent by a visitor on a day trip. Increasing the number of overnight visitors to the County will not only generate additional direct revenue through the hotel tax, but will also increase sales tax revenue from associated visitor spending.

Arts—The 2007 Economic Census shows nearly 2,000 artists and arts businesses in Orange County, earning over $145 million in revenue. This represents an increase from the 2002 Economic Census of more than 600%, a demonstration of phenomenal growth for this sector. Orange County is the home of many world-class visual and performing arts companies and other businesses. The arts make an important contribution to our quality of life, and they are also key to our economic growth; 362,000 people traveled to Orange County to visit arts and culture organizations for cultural events, injecting $31.9 million directly into our economy.

Agriculture—Orange County’s traditional way of life for centuries contributes strongly to our quality of life, and is the largest nonresidential land use (in acres) in the County. According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, the County’s 658 farms sold $100.7 million worth of agricultural products, and ranked 4th in New York State out of 59 agriculture-producing counties for vegetable sales. The industry has grown in recent years; revenue from farm product sales increased about 36% between the 2007 and 2012 Censes of Agriculture, only partly due to inflation. Strong potential exists for growth in organic farm products and value-added products like fruit pies from an orchard or cheese from a dairy farm.

Orange County is home to many industries that do not fall into these five categories, and many of these other industries are thriving and worthy of our support. We have chosen to focus on strengthening these five industries, so that they will continue to grow and support their industry clusters, and allow us to evaluate how we can help other industries in the future.
Manufacturing and Technology

Manufacturing and technology in Orange County benefit from our unique ability to move goods quickly throughout the Northeast, the nation, and the world; our large amounts of undeveloped industrial land suitable for factory location; and our proximity to the New York City market.

Flexible Industrial Space
Manufacturing and distribution are dependent upon the availability of industrial space, suitable either for manufacturing or for temporary storage of goods prior to transport. The large warehouse and distribution centers that dominate Orange County’s industrial areas generally are between 50,000 and 1,000,000 sq. ft. in size, have ceiling heights between 22’ and 40’, and have a large number of loading docks. Another less visible category of industrial space is space suitable for smaller industrial users who need between 2,500 sq. ft. up to around 50,000 sq. ft. Often referred to “flexible” space, this category of space is often located in buildings designed to accommodate more than one occupant, and means that the air conditioned office and high-tech space within the building can range from zero to 100%, which requires the site to have more parking spaces than general industrial space.

Potential for Development in Technology Industry
Orange County has the opportunity to create new and expand existing research and development facilities for technological advancement, and expand the research and development network through the use of traditional venture capital financing as well as new micro-lending financing and other innovations. Changes in financing structure are especially helpful for small technology startups; the risk is negligible for investors since the amounts of money involved are typically quite small, but the product developer is then able to raise money to build a prototype or for other development purposes. The presence of Stewart Airport in Orange County provides an opportunity to work with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to create a specific industry cluster around manufacturing and technology needed for aeronautics. Avionics systems could be easily developed and tested here before being implemented at the three major New York City airports also owned by the Port Authority, which could build on our aeronautics-related manufacturing; Gillinder Glass manufactures the glass covers for runway lights used at two-thirds of U.S. airports, among other aeronautics-related businesses.

Laboratory Facilities
Technology requires experimentation and testing, like all science industries. Technology with biological or agricultural applications in particular requires laboratory facilities, including “wet labs” where chemicals, drugs, biological material or other matter are handled in liquid solutions or volatile phases. Such labs do not handle biohazards with more than a minimum potential risk of hazard to researchers or the environment, but they do require direct ventilation and specialized piped utilities such as water and various gasses. Wet lab facilities are necessary for research and development, but should naturally be very carefully located in order to minimize even the slight potential of risk associated with these facilities. Laboratory facilities are necessary for other manufacturing as well; Orange County has a number of manufacturers that produce artificial flavorings and perfumes for use in food manufacturing and cosmetics.

Based on these analyses and those contained in the supporting documentation for this strategy, we recommend the following actions specific to the manufacturing and technology industry.
**Recommended Actions**

- Develop list of existing flexible industrial buildings; include list as part of public education program about benefits of industrial development.
  - **Responsibility:** County Department of Real Property, County Planning, OC Partnership, Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress, OCMPF, OC Chamber
  - **Timeframe:** Short
  - **Cost:** Low

- Work with New York State Department of Transportation to keep all planned improvements on schedule.
  - **Responsibility:** Orange County Legislature, Orange County Executive, County Planning Transportation Division/Orange County Transportation Council
  - **Timeframe:** Short
  - **Cost:** Low to moderate (capital improvements funded by NYS Department of Transportation)

- Develop specialized workforce training for technology jobs with school districts, BOCES, and colleges.
  - **Responsibility:** County Planning, OC Partnership, SUNY Orange, BOCES, Mount Saint Mary College
  - **Timeframe:** Short to medium
  - **Cost:** Moderate

- Implement the recommendations of the affordable housing section of the Orange County Comprehensive Plan 2010 Update to attract technology companies and young, single-income workers.
  - **Responsibility:** County Planning
  - **Timeframe:** Short
  - **Cost:** Low to moderate

- Develop funding programs to finance small business startups, possibly including a capital investment fund or revolving loan program.
  - **Responsibility:** County Planning, OC IDA, Hudson Valley Economic Development Council (HVEDC)
  - **Timeframe:** Short
  - **Cost:** Low to moderate

- Assist Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to implement Stewart Capital Improvement Program; work with Port Authority and NYS Foreign Trade Zone to develop advanced manufacturing facilities.
  - **Responsibility:** County Planning, OC IDA, OC Partnership, OC Chamber, municipal boards
  - **Timeframe:** Short; ongoing
  - **Cost:** Moderate to high

- Partner with existing small businesses in the County to increase technology offerings, particularly green infrastructure and technology such as the development of alternative energy sources.
  - **Responsibility:** County Office of Business Assistance, OC Partnership, County Chamber of Commerce
  - **Timeframe:** Short to medium
  - **Cost:** Moderate

- Increase facilities and opportunities for small technology startups to share office space, services, and labs.
  - **Responsibility:** OC IDA, OC Partnership, County Chamber of Commerce
  - **Timeframe:** Short to medium
  - **Cost:** Moderate
**Medical and Health Care**

The medical industry has grown significantly in Orange County over the last ten years. From 2002 to 2007 as measured by the Economic Census, the number of health care establishments more than doubled, and their revenue increased by nearly 50%. This trend has continued to the present; more than half of the Class A office space constructed in Orange County in the last ten years has been occupied by medical offices. Orange Regional Medical Center (ORMC) in the Town of Wallkill, opened in August 2011 and consolidating operations from its two previous locations, is the first new hospital to be constructed in New York State in the last 20 years.

Medical facilities are located throughout the county with reasonable equity. Although there are clusters of offices around hospitals and in our larger or denser population centers, notably the “Medical Mile” on Crystal Run Road in the Town of Wallkill, most residents of Orange County have a medical care facility within 10 miles of their home. The Cities of Newburgh and Port Jervis have hospitals within their borders, ORMC is within two miles of the City of Middletown, the Village of Kiryas Joel opened a women’s health center in 2008, and urgent care clinics and hospitals are located in the Village of Warwick, the Town of Monroe, the Village of Highland Falls, the Town of Cornwall and the hamlet of Pine Bush, among other locations.

Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine opened to students at the former Horton Hospital campus in the fall of 2014; when fully operational, the medical school is expected to enroll more than 500 students and occupy up to 110,000 square feet of the existing complex. Mount Saint Mary College in Newburgh offers accredited Bachelor and Master of Science in Nursing degrees and post-master’s certifications for adult nurse practitioners and family nurse practitioners. SUNY Orange has an extensive health care program; they offer Associate of Applied Science degrees in dental hygiene, medical laboratory technology, nursing, occupational and physical therapy and diagnostic imaging.

**Current Challenges and Strategies**

The aging of the Baby Boom generation and the national focus on health care has brought much attention to the medical industry and its practices. By 2020, Orange County will be home to approximately 100,000 Baby Boomers aged 50 to 69. Aging brings increased health problems for all people; however the sheer size of the Baby Boom generation, increased health care costs for all services, and the changing face of Medicare and other forms of health insurance will all have serious lasting effects on the medical industry in Orange County. We should anticipate a substantial increase in people suffering from age-related conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, Alzheimer’s Disease and other forms of dementia, and most forms of cancer. Further, as the population ages, we will require more home-based healthcare solutions such as visiting nurse services, home-based monitoring systems and accessibility retrofits for housing. Primary care physicians that accept Medicaid and low-income patients, pediatric and adolescent sub-specialties, adolescent mental health care and behavioral health care for all ages, orthopedists, and dental care and preventive education are all areas in which Orange County needs more providers. Comprehensive electronic medical records will be necessary, to ensure that all members of group practices have patients’ full medical histories and to reduce duplication of services and inefficiencies of care. Other issues related to poverty and language barriers also need to be part of the discussion, such as the need for intra-and inter-county transit services to ensure that patients can get from one facility to another, and the need for health care providers to be representative of the populations they serve. The following recommendations can help meet our service gaps.
Recommended Actions

- Develop additional recommendations with assistance from the medical community as a supplemental report to this strategy, together with a plan for achieving the goals stated therein.
  - **Responsibility:** County Planning, County Office of Business Assistance, OC Partnership, Orange County Citizens Foundation (OCCF) Health Care Committee, OC Chamber
  - **Timeframe:** Short term
  - **Cost:** Low

- Increase and improve home-based and intermediate care facilities for the elderly and disabled, such as visiting nurse services, home health aide services, and adult day care programs.
  - **Responsibility:** County Health, Orange County Office for the Aging, County Planning with assistance from the Orange County Long Term Care Council
  - **Timeframe:** Short to medium term
  - **Cost:** Low to moderate

- Organize existing medical transportation routes into intra-county medical route for low-income, elderly and disabled persons to access medical treatment in multiple municipalities.
  - **Responsibility:** County Health, County Office for the Aging, County Planning Transportation and Transit Division/Orange County Transportation Council, OCCF, OC Chamber
  - **Timeframe:** Short to medium term
  - **Cost:** Moderate to high

- Assist with recruiting and retention of primary and specialty care providers prepared to work with the low-income and immigrant populations of the County, specifically primary care providers (including nurse practitioners) fluent in Spanish, French and Creole.
  - **Responsibility:** County Health, OC IDA, OC Partnership, OCCF Health Care Committee, other medical employer representatives
  - **Timeframe:** Medium term; ongoing
  - **Cost:** Low to moderate

- Engage medical facilities and workforce development agencies in strategies to attract and retain skilled workers, including skilled nurses and other skilled labor, IT workers, urgent and emergency room care.
  - **Responsibility:** County Planning, County Health, County Office of Business Assistance, OC Partnership, OCCF Health Care Committee, other medical employer representatives
  - **Timeframe:** Medium to long term
  - **Cost:** Moderate

- Attract additional medical, dental, or nursing educational facilities to Orange County.
  - **Responsibility:** County Planning, County Health, OC IDA, OC Partnership
  - **Timeframe:** Medium to long term
  - **Cost:** High
**TOURISM**

The scenic beauty and well known destinations of the Hudson Valley continue to help the tourism industry grow in Orange County. Home to three of the top five tourist attractions in New York State outside New York City (the United States Military Academy at West Point, Woodbury Common Premium Outlets, and Storm King Art Center), the county also boasts an excellent collection of wineries, historic sites, museums, farmers markets, farm to fork restaurants, parks, outdoor recreation, fairs, festivals, and events.

One in twelve United States residents lives within driving distance of Orange County. Located just fifty miles from Manhattan, many come from the New York City metro area for experiences not found in an urban setting: wineries, apple picking, hiking, canoeing and rafting, and more. Those traveling from further distances come to visit the county’s one-of-a-kind attractions such as West Point, Orange County Choppers, and Sugar Loaf Craft Village.

Tourism as a whole has a significant impact on the economy of the county. In 2012, more than 4 million tourists visited Orange County, spending over $430 million. This relative windfall contributed $28,785,397 in local taxes, lowering personal tax bills of residents. Overnight visitors to Orange County also paid the hotel occupancy tax, or “bed tax,” of 5% instituted by the County in 2009. In 2010, this tax generated over $2.6 million for the County general fund. In 2012 the figure was $2,867,763, an increase of 10% over the initial two year period. Over 9,000 people are employed in the tourism industry throughout the County, or 7% of workers in the County. Payroll for workers in the tourism field for 2012 was over $236 million.

For the county to continue its growth in tourism a broader reach is necessary to increase the number of visitors coming to the County. Since overnight visitors spend three times as much as day trippers, it would pay to invest in promotional programs that cast a wider net beyond the metro area, as tourism offices throughout the northeast vie for hotel guests and the revenue it brings to their counties. Attracting tourists also requires reinventing themes and itineraries to give new meaning to longstanding destinations.

Orange County could accomplish the following:

+ Banner ads on major media web sites (CBS, NBC, ABC, PBS, etc.) to expand beyond the metro area and into the Philadelphia, Boston, and Washington, D.C. markets promoting hotel stays

+ Television spots in the same markets touting Orange County as an overnight, weekend, and week-long destination

+ Radio advertising to entice people to spend more than one day

+ Attendance at consumer trade shows such as the Travel Show at the Javits Center in Manhattan, and group travel shows such as the American Bus Association, with a staff person dedicated to attending these shows and marketing the County to travel writers, which will increase our media visibility.

+ Advertising in print publications and on their web sites outside of New York State to attract the public
RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

• Organize a recreational page on the Tourism website concentrating on walking, hiking and biking trails with promotions to an urban population. Mapped routes of these trails that include locations of amenities along the way have seen a marked increase in demand.
  ◊ Responsibility: County Tourism, County Planning, Orange County Parks, Orange County Land Trust, OCCF, OC Chamber, OCTC, County Health Community Health Outreach
  ◊ Timeframe: Short
  ◊ Cost: Low to moderate

• Create culinary adventure tours centered around wineries, microbreweries, cideries and distilleries to participate in the “Napa East” program; create similar tours around farms, farmers markets, farm to fork restaurants and lodging facilities.
  ◊ Responsibility: County Tourism, County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB), Cornell Cooperative Extension, Hudson Valley Food and Beverage Alliance
  ◊ Timeframe: Short, ongoing
  ◊ Cost: Low to moderate

• Encourage place-based retailers and municipal and County Chambers of Commerce to participate in cooperative marketing promotions including printed or online brochures with locations and descriptions of local businesses, plus nearby lodging.
  ◊ Responsibility: County Tourism, OC Chamber, County Planning, OCCF, local Chambers of Commerce
  ◊ Timeframe: Short, ongoing
  ◊ Cost: Low to moderate

• Increase and improve mapping and signage for tourism destinations in the County. These improvements should also encompass mobile and GPS technology.
  ◊ Responsibility: County Tourism, County Planning, OC Chamber, with assistance from County IT
  ◊ Timeframe: Short
  ◊ Cost: Moderate

• Design and implement a broad marketing program to increase the County’s overnight visitors. The plan would build on the strategic location of the County within the Hudson Valley as a prime getaway destination for the entire Northeast. Emphasis would be placed on the affordability of a reverse commute to New York City where hotel rates have skyrocketed. The County could evaluate the feasibility of funding this program through the hotel occupancy tax; success of the program would be measured by the increase in hotel occupancy taxes collected.
  ◊ Responsibility: County Tourism
  ◊ Timeframe: Short, ongoing
  ◊ Cost: Moderate to high
• Develop and map water trails along each of the County’s three rivers. Encourage riverfront communities to include facilities for small watercraft such as boat launches, docks, and storage facilities in their waterfront plans to attract more boaters.
  ◊ **Responsibility:** County Planning, Orange County Land Trust  
  ◊ **Timeframe:** Medium  
  ◊ **Cost:** Low to moderate

• Work with museums, historic sites, arts venues and others to create themed destination trails and itineraries, similar to the “culture trails” proposed to be marketed through the Sullivan County casino. Identify retail sectors with high concentrations of similar products, which can be turned into trails and itineraries that cover areas such as pottery, antique shops within antique buildings, local processed foods such as maple syrup, etc.
  ◊ **Responsibility:** County Tourism with OCCF and OC Chamber  
  ◊ **Timeframe:** Medium, ongoing  
  ◊ **Cost:** Low to moderate

• Work with municipalities, small businesses and private developers to incorporate amenities, including restrooms and water stations, for walkers, hikers, and bicyclists along the Heritage Trail and other trails throughout the County.
  ◊ **Responsibility:** County Planning, OC Partnership  
  ◊ **Timeframe:** Medium  
  ◊ **Cost:** Moderate to high

• Create strategies to increase experiential tourism so that tourists can do more than just be viewers. Activities such as participating in the cooking demonstrations at Fort Decker, talking to one of the artists at Storm King Art Center, taking a behind the scenes tour of Museum Village, etc., bring the visitor closer to the experience.
  ◊ **Responsibility:** County Tourism with OC Chamber and OC Partnership  
  ◊ **Timeframe:** Medium to long  
  ◊ **Cost:** Moderate to high

• Work to promote the “shoulder season” (January through March), encouraging sites to offer special events and experiences to increase tourism traffic in these off months.
  ◊ **Responsibility:** County Tourism  
  ◊ **Timeframe:** Long, ongoing  
  ◊ **Cost:** Moderate
**Arts**

The arts, although long recognized as important to communities, have only recently been recognized as an economic engine, creating jobs and revenue and increasing tourism in an area. In 2010, the National Endowment for the Arts coined the term “creative placemaking” for a process in which partners from public, private, nonprofit and community organizations strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative places, in turn, foster cultural industries and entrepreneurs that generate jobs and revenue, create new products and services, and attract and retain unrelated businesses and skilled industries. Creative places can be encouraged by key land-use policies, such as allowing live-work spaces where artists can live and have their studios in the same place; these are known as Makers’ Spaces for creative industries at large, including technology developers and small manufacturers as well as creative artists. Makers’ Spaces decrease the distance between creator and market, and allows the public to participate in the act of product creation, whether that product is visual or performing arts, technology development, or otherwise. Space Create and Atlas Furniture in Newburgh are good examples of this.

In early 2010, the Orange County Arts Council formed an Economic Development Committee to examine the impact of the arts as an industry on the economy of Orange County. The committee has begun reaching out to businesses that are not part of the arts industry, to show those businesses how the arts can benefit them. This work was begun by the Arts and Agriculture working group, formed in 2011 through a series of charrettes that addressed ways in which the arts industry and the agricultural industry in Orange County can work more closely and more effectively together.

The Arts Council is exploring a number of ways that the arts can work cooperatively with other industries as an economic engine. The arts can work effectively with our other key industries in a number of ways:

- **Manufacturing and Technology**—Film production is growing rapidly in Orange County, allowing our technology businesses to be on the spot with graphic design, animation, and other technical solutions. We also have multiple manufacturers in the County that produce scenery, costumes and stage lighting.

- **Medical**—The arts play a well-documented role in the healing process, as a means of therapy, as part of a more relaxing treatment setting, and by allowing patients another means of expressing themselves.

- **Tourism**—Creative communities are a natural draw for tourists. Music festivals, theater productions and gallery shows routinely bring in out-of-town visitors; 362,000 in 2014, 90,000 of whom stayed overnight.

- **Agriculture**— Arts and agricultural are natural partners in Orange County; both benefit from easy access to New York City, rely heavily on the natural environment, are highly individual, and have similar needs for funding, specialized tools and materials, and marketing.

**Recommended Actions**

- Update list of artists and related businesses in Orange County and convert to online public database.
  - **Responsibility:** County Planning, OC Arts Council, OC Chamber
  - **Timeframe:** short term, with ongoing maintenance
  - **Cost:** low
• Build online database of artists and non-arts-related businesses who are willing and able to participate in arts-related tourist events.
  ◦ **Responsibility:** County Planning, OC Arts Council, OC Chamber, other organizations as needed
  ◦ **Timeframe:** short term, with ongoing maintenance
  ◦ **Cost:** moderate

• Develop model legislative code sections for arts activities in municipalities: sections should cover film, TV, and video production, such as the Blooming Grove film permit law; arts markets; live-work spaces; and other topics as appropriate. Offer those code sections to municipalities throughout the County.
  ◦ **Responsibility:** County Planning, with assistance from OC Arts Council
  ◦ **Timeframe:** short-to-medium term
  ◦ **Cost:** low

• Create an arts-focused tourism program, including coordination between arts destinations and restaurants and lodging facilities for discounted rates and package deals.
  ◦ **Responsibility:** County Tourism, OC Arts Council, with assistance from County Planning if necessary
  ◦ **Timeframe:** short-to-medium term
  ◦ **Cost:** moderate

• Provide technical assistance and resources for projects, plans and grant funding that combine the efforts of the arts industry and other key industries, such as a creative placemaking plan for the County.
  ◦ **Responsibility:** County Planning, OC Arts Council
  ◦ **Timeframe:** medium term
  ◦ **Cost:** moderate to high

• Develop an arts-specific program for incubating small businesses, including live-work or Makers’ Spaces.
  ◦ **Responsibility:** County Planning, OC Arts Council, OC IDA, OC Partnership, OC Chamber
  ◦ **Timeframe:** medium-to-long term
  ◦ **Cost:** moderate to high

• Complete research and write guidelines for redevelopment of downtowns and Main Streets as arts communities. These guidelines shall be made available to municipalities as a guidance document.
  ◦ **Responsibility:** County Planning with assistance from OC Arts Council and OCCF
  ◦ **Timeframe:** medium-to-long term
  ◦ **Cost:** low to moderate

• Create education and mentoring program designed to keep young artists in Orange County, connecting young artists with established artists in their field for internships, apprenticeships and similar training.
  ◦ **Responsibility:** OC Arts Council
  ◦ **Timeframe:** medium-to-long term
  ◦ **Cost:** moderate

• Develop an education program for public officials, including information about arts as economic engine.
  ◦ **Responsibility:** County Planning, OC Arts Council, OCMPF
  ◦ **Timeframe:** medium-to-long term
  ◦ **Cost:** moderate to high
Agriculture

Agriculture has been the primary land use in Orange County for over four hundred years. The rich alluvial soil of the Black Dirt region in particular is important to the region due to its suitability for root crops; onions in particular thrive in the mucklands of the Wallkill River Valley. Although the number of farms has decreased steadily over the last twenty years, at the time of the 2007 Census of Agriculture conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture, Orange County had 642 farms, comprising a total of 80,990 acres and producing a total of $73.7 million of agricultural products sold. 16.95% of all the land in Orange County is in active agricultural production.

Orange County Agriculture and its Role in Economic Development

In 1996, Orange County was the first in New York State to adopt an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan. In 2004, the County prepared an Agricultural Economic Development Strategy to help farmers recognize that economic development activities could be easily integrated into their operations and improve their business. The expected outcomes of the strategy, which was never adopted, were to: improve on-farm profitability; enhance agribusiness infrastructure; improve understanding of agriculture as a key economic engine; heighten awareness of agriculture as a community asset; enhance market access for local agricultural products; increase value-added production activity; and engage public and elected officials in the future of agriculture.

Orange County updated its Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan; the Orange County Legislature adopted the Plan In February 2015. The new plan includes a Countywide map of priority farmland and a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) assessment, and considers the 1996 plan, the 2004 Agricultural Economic Development Strategy, the County Comprehensive Plan, the County Open Space Plan and the existing municipal comprehensive plans, zoning laws, land use regulations, economic development incentives, and other local reports and documents. Those considerations were included in a comprehensive set of recommendations regarding zoning and land use techniques, policies, programs, easements, purchase or transfer of development rights programs, and other options relevant to farmers and citizens throughout the County.

Hudson Valley Food Hubs Initiative

In April 2013, the Local Economies Project of the New World Foundation, working with Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress, released a report analyzing the potential benefits and feasibility of creating a “food hub” in the Hudson Valley. The USDA working definition of a food hub is “a business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution and marketing of source-identified food products primarily from local and regional producers to strengthen their ability to satisfy wholesale, retail and institutional demand.” The Hudson Valley Food Hubs Initiative Research Findings and Recommendations report concluded that Hudson Valley farms and communities could benefit from the development of a regional food hub. This report was generated for the entire Hudson Valley region, defined here as Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester Counties, rather than for each individual county. Conversations with Orange County farmers have indicated support for a local food hub; partnering with the other counties in the region may allow for a greater diversity of products while also permitting farmers to obtain greater access to markets, secure more affordable insurance, and obtain access to capital for supply chain infrastructure (such as equipment, vehicles, storage facilities or retail locations). Operating as a group allows the individual farmers in the food hub or food system to obtain volume discounts while retaining their independent operations.
Recommended Actions

- Improve understanding of agriculture as a key economic engine. Educate elected officials, economic development organizations, and public about the economic contribution of Orange County agriculture. Incorporate elements of USDA’s Know Your Farmer Know Your Food program as appropriate.
  - **Responsibility:** County Planning, Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), OCCF, OC Partnership
  - **Timeframe:** short term; ongoing
  - **Cost:** low

- Develop additional food processing and local food system infrastructure to support farms. This development should include the following actions: (1) supporting implementation of food hubs, (2) identifying interest in developing agricultural processing facilities, (3) conducting feasibility studies for potential facilities or ventures, (4) invest in dairy infrastructure, (5) identify funding sources for on-farm infrastructure, (6) expand value-added processing, (7) improve meat processing capacity.
  - **Responsibility:** Orange County, other Mid-Hudson counties, Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corp, Orange County AFPB, Orange County IDA, Farm Credit East, Northeast Livestock Processing Service Company
  - **Timeframe:** short to medium term for actions 1-4; long term for actions 5-7
  - **Cost:** high

- Develop a specific agricultural economics program to increase the profitability of farms. This includes creating an agricultural website linking farmers to sources of technical assistance, business planning, training, grants and other information. It also includes engaging an Ag Economic Development Planner / Coordinator. Special attention should be paid to the needs of dairy farmers.
  - **Responsibility:** Orange County AFPB, Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation, Orange County Planning, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Farmers, Farm Bureau, Orange County Soil & Water Conservation District, Downstate Milk Producers Co-op, Orange County Vegetable Growers, Dairy Advisory Committee
  - **Timeframe:** short term; maintenance ongoing
  - **Cost:** high

- Develop a buy-local initiative to increase market opportunities for Orange County agricultural products.
  - **Responsibility:** Cornell Cooperative Extension, Chambers of Commerce, Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation, OCCF, Healthy Orange, Orange County Partnership
  - **Timeframe:** short to medium term
  - **Cost:** moderate

- Provide training, tools and support to Towns to implement farm-friendly changes to local codes and plans, and assist them with removing local barriers to farming.
  - **Responsibility:** Orange County Planning, Municipalities, Orange County Municipal Planning Federation, County municipal associations, Orange County Partnership, Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation
  - **Timeframe:** short term for initial implementation; ongoing
  - **Cost:** low
• Concentrate on recruiting new farmer / next generation farmer programs and providing support for existing farmers. This includes providing training, providing incentives, and advertising existing funding opportunities for farm start-up operations. It also includes helping farmers create succession plans or transition farms to the next generation. Farm business planning that covers land acquisition, leasing agreements and obtaining credit should be offered. Further, this farmer support includes establishing model language for a lease to own agreement that landowners can use.

◊ **Responsibility:** Orange County Land Trust, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Farm Bureau, County farmers, Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation / Hudson Valley Bounty, Glywood Center, Hudson Valley Greenway, Local realtors, Local school districts, Orange County Community College, Equity Trust, New Visions for Agriculture, FFA, BOCES and other educational institutions, Cornell FarmLink / FarmNet, NY American Farmland Trust

◊ **Timeframe:** Short term; ongoing

◊ **Cost:** low

The proposed recommendations on pages 33 and 34 of this Strategy were taken from the 2015 Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan, which can be found on the Orange County Planning Department website at this address: [http://www.orangecountygov.com/filestorage/124/1362/4632/OC_Ag_%26_Farmland_Protection_Plan_Final.pdf](http://www.orangecountygov.com/filestorage/124/1362/4632/OC_Ag_%26_Farmland_Protection_Plan_Final.pdf)

These recommendations correspond, in order, to Priority Projects 1-5 (page 33 of this strategy) and 7 (this page), and are outlined in more detail on pages 40-54 of the 2015 Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan. Please review the plan for additional information.
CONCLUSION

Orange County is a great place to live, work, learn, play, create, connect and raise a family, due to our tremendous natural, physical, social and human capital. To protect these forms of capital and maximize benefits to our residents, we must balance economic development and improved quality of life, protecting natural resources and open space while allowing appropriate development in areas where infrastructure exists, and allowing new development without adversely affecting existing development and resources. In order to participate fully as a member of the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council, and for Orange County to thrive in the new economy, we must also evaluate our existing economic development structure and build on the diverse industries that already exist within the County.

The foundation for this Plan is **START Orange County.** 1. **S**hovel Ready, promote and fast track smart, shovel ready sites. 2. **T**eam Up and collaborate with our communities on strategies to attract jobs and investment. 3. **A**griculture can remain an integral part of our overall economic stability by bolstering farm to market opportunity. 4. **R**eward performance not promises for activities receiving financial support including tax exemptions. And 5. **T**out existing local businesses, big and small.

We can do this through the following four basic goals:

1. Attract and Assist Businesses—attract new businesses to Orange County and assist the businesses already here through technical support, business-friendly codes and plans and clearly-defined development policies that protect and enhance our quality of life.

2. Improve Economic Development Capacity—increase opportunities for existing business owners to work cooperatively, improve and expand our infrastructure to allow for new businesses to locate and existing businesses to expand without undue strain on other infrastructure users, and create opportunities for research and development of new ideas.

3. Strengthen Key Industries—provide technical assistance and access to financial resources for agriculture, tourism, outdoor recreation, arts, medical, and technology businesses and their related businesses.

4. Create a Supportive Culture for Small Businesses—as of 2006, small businesses made up 99.1% of businesses in New York State; of the net jobs created in New York State that year, 53.9% (more than 61,000) were in businesses with one to four employees. Small businesses are the backbone of the New York State economy and the economy of Orange County, and much of the creativity and innovation necessary to survive in today’s marketplace is born in small companies.

The recommendations in this strategy are applicable to our key industry sectors and for general economic development purposes. They are intended to attract new businesses and improve conditions for businesses that are already here, but not indiscriminately. The primary goal of this strategy is to encourage sustainable, diverse economic development that allows us to protect our important natural and cultural resources while maintaining and enhancing quality of life. As we move forward in this new economy, we look to ensure that the County continues to be a great place, and that we grow to become an even better place to do business.