



REGIONAL BUSINESS PLAN FOR FULTON & MONTGOMERY COUNTIES

Refresh of the 2011 Plan



NY's
FUL+ON
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REGION

Connected for Business

FEBRUARY 1, 2017
CEO ROUNDTABLE

Introduction

In August of 2011, the CEO Roundtable developed the Regional Business Plan for Fulton and Montgomery Counties. At that time, those who participated in the development of the Plan recognized that large ambitious plans, such as this one, often take decades to realize. For that reason, there was no time-table established for the implementation of the Plan. However, annual monitoring of the implementation has produced progress reports and an active dialogue between business, education and government regarding the Region's progress.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Dr. Dustin Swanger - President, Fulton-Montgomery Community College
- Dr. Patrick Michel - District Superintendent, HFM-BOCES
- James Mraz - Planning Director, Fulton County
- Ron Peters - President, Fulton County Economic Development Corp.
- Ken Rose - Director of Economic Development and Planning, Montgomery County
- Mark Kilmer - President, Fulton-Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce

Each County adopted the Regional Business Plan and has put resources toward its implementation. Some efforts have been implemented by each county and others have been collaborative efforts of both counties. The Region has progressed.

Now, five years after its initial development, the CEO Roundtable reviewed 2011 Plan to determine if adjustments needed based on the progress that has been made, new facts,

issues, developments and information that would require modifications. All good long-term plans must be living documents and adjust to new information and influences.

This refresh of the Regional Business Plan for Fulton and Montgomery Counties represents such adjustments. While the overall direction remains, this refreshed Plan refocuses the efforts of those who are working together to move our Region forward.

The work to date has been impressive. The work ahead is great. The reward is priceless.

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE REGION'S INDUSTRIAL/ BUSINESS PARKS:

One of the Region's economic success stories has been the development of its business and industrial parks. There are currently seven (7) such parks located in the Region:

Fulton County	Montgomery County
Tryon Technology Park (TTP)	Florida Business Park
Crossroads Industrial Park (CIP)	Florida Business Extension
Crossroads Business Park (CBP)	Glen Canal View
Johnstown Industrial Park (JIP)	

These seven (7) parks contain 1,525 acres of land. At present, 1,082 or 71% of these acres have been developed leaving 443 acres remaining in the two (2) Counties.

A. Fulton County:

Park	Original # Acres	# Acres Developed	# Acres Available
Tryon Technology Park	240	21	219
CIP	54	44	10
JIP	294	274	20
CBP	77	8	69
Total	665	347	318

B. Montgomery County:

Park	Original # Acres	# Acres Developed	# Acres Available
Florida Business	633	629	4
Florida Business Expansion	133	148	62
Glen Canal View: Phase I	94	64	30
Total	860	841	96

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

A. Fulton County:

1. Tryon Technology Park
 - Vireo Health of NY, LLC
2. Johnstown Industrial Park:
 - Walmart Food Distribution Center
 - FAGE
 - Benjamin Moore
 - Electrometrics
 - Euphrates
 - DHL
 - Pioneer Windows
 - Yusen Logistics
 - Evolution Recycling
 - Johnstown Renewables
 - Miracle Ear
3. Crossroads Industrial Park:
 - Dixon Value
 - Midwest Fasteners
 - Falk Industries
 - Alnico
 - Swany
 - Sysco
4. Crossroads Business Park:
 - EPIMED
 - Nathan Littauer Hospital

B. Montgomery County:

1. Florida Business Park:
 - Target Distribution Center
 - Beechnut
 - Dollar General Distribution Center (Construction Commencement Spring 2017)
2. Florida Business Expansion:
 - Hill & Markes

3. Glen Canal View:
- L&S Veneer
 - DAIM Logistics, Inc.

The investments made by local municipalities and both Counties into building these Parks has generated significant economic benefits for the Region. In 2016, the 28 businesses identified above had a combined annual payroll of over \$200 million and employed over 3,000 people. The 1,525 acres of land in these parks was originally vacant land with minimal assessed valuations which generated only a small amount of property tax revenues. Today, the businesses in these Parks pay over \$5.4 million in property taxes to local taxing jurisdictions as shown below:

Fulton County:

Park	Total Assessed Valuation	Property Taxes Paid				# Jobs as of 12/31/16
		2016-17 School	2016 County	2016 City	2016 Town	
TTP						20
CIP	\$ 10,495,600	\$ 151,979	\$ 91,417	\$ 221,037	N/A	70
JIP	\$ 93,384,100	\$1,605,804	\$ 789,989	\$1,058,287	N/A	1,750
CBP	\$ 2,330,000	\$ 33,739	\$ 20,294	\$ 49,070	N/A	105
Total	\$106,209,700	\$1,791,522	\$ 901,700	\$1,328,394	N/A	1,945

Total Property Taxes Paid in 2016 : \$4,021,616
Total # Jobs in 2016 : 1,945

Montgomery County:

Park	Total Assessed Valuation	Property Taxes Paid				# Jobs as of 12/31/10
		2015-6 School	2015 Town & County	2015 Local/Fire		
Florida Business Park	\$153,100,000	\$3,102,841	\$2,071,598	\$139,109		866
Florida Business Expansion	\$5,551,000	\$30,330	\$40,481	\$6,129		168
Glen Canal View	\$350,000	\$11,051	\$11,111	0		23
Total	\$159,001,000	\$3,144,522	\$2,123,190	\$145,238		1057

Total Property Taxes Paid in 2015	: \$5,412,950
Total # of Jobs in 2015	:1,057
Total Payroll 2015	:\$148,244,895

Vision Statement

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

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

2011 Themes and Goals

In the original 2011 Plan, there were two Themes and six Goals identified. These Themes and Goals guided much of the activity that have brought our Region to where it is today. They have served the Region, and Counties, well as the implementation has improved collaboration, sparked development and increased employment in the Region.

Themes:

- A) Create a Business Friendly Climate for the Region
- B) Retain Existing Businesses in the Region.

Goals

1. Educate and Train the Regional Students for the 21st Century Workforce
2. Develop Large and Small Shovel-Ready Sites
3. Market the Region
4. Improve the Region's Quality of Life
5. Extend Water, Sewer, Utilities and Broadband Service throughout the Region
6. Lower Local Property Tax Burden in the Region

Progress on 2011 Goals

Each year, the CEO Roundtable issued a progress update against the goals stated above. These progress updates were intended to inform elected officials as well as the community about the positive movement forward in the Region toward meeting the vision of “.....***a progressive community providing a friendly climate for business growth and retention, a variety of entertainment venues for social gathering, an educated and trained workforce and a diverse housing stock to meet the needs of the different lifestyles of its residents.***” Below are a few highlights from these updates. (The complete update is available from FMCC or any of the economic development offices.)

- HFM BOCES began a Pathways in Technology Early College High School (PTECH) that has been a tremendous advancement in education in our Region. The PTECH program, and the new Agriculture PTECH offers a high school diploma and associates degree program to students in our area.
- Fulton-Montgomery Community College has offers an Introduction to Advanced Technologies camp each summer for young students. This introduction camp provides students the opportunity to learn about technologies and potential employment available in our Region.
- The Regional Business Park Project continues to move forward as a potential site for a large employer to come to the area. Several studies have been completed toward qualifying the site for development.
- The Florida Business Park Extension has been rezoned and potential sites on the land have been identified. Additionally, technical and geo-technical work has been completed on the site.
- The former Tryon Campus has been repurposed as the Tryon Technology Park. It has its first tenant – Viro Health of NY, LLC., a manufacturer of medical cannabis.
- Both Fulton County and Montgomery County have identified a new brand identity and have begun to market themselves working on an improved image.
- Additionally, the two counties developed a Regional Brand identity to market the region. This Regional Brand and tag line “Connected for Business” demonstrates the collaborative efforts of the two counties to grow the entire region.
- In 2013, an internationally known site selector, Mike Mullis, visited the Region for the purpose of providing feedback on the Region’s strengths and weaknesses as a potential location for large corporations. That visit provided a great deal of

information and each county has taken actions separately and together to build on the Region's strengths and address its weaknesses.

- A new shopping center on Route 30 in the Town of Amsterdam has added a new shopping market to the Region. This new center draws people from both counties as well as markets beyond the two counties.
- The Mohawk Harvest Market continues to be a central hub of activity and growth in Gloversville. This farm to market co-op has served as a symbol of rebirth for downtown Gloversville.
- SMART Waters, a collaborative agreement between the City of Gloversville and Fulton County is a big step forward in development potential for the County. This agreement demonstrates a new sense of cooperation between the municipalities.

2016 Goals

1. Recruit and Train the Region's 21st Century Workforce

A critical component of the Region's ability to retain and attract businesses is having a skilled labor force. To sustain such a labor force, the Region must:

- Ensure students graduating from local schools have the required skills to enter the 21st century labor market.
 - Transform area high school program delivery to a 21st Century model
 - Improve graduation rates to 90% or higher
 - Assure that students have work ready skills upon graduation
- Attract people to live and work in the Region
 - Market the region as a quality location to raise a family
 - Explore the opportunity to bring a more diverse population to the Region
 - Invest in the three Regional Cities as hubs of activity and central locations for population growth
 - Develop a variety of housing stock for diverse lifestyles
 - Develop a strategy to address drug and alcohol abuse in the Region

The need for trained, skilled labor force exists today and will grow in the future. Fulton and Montgomery Counties must be leaders in exploring new options for developing and growing a strong workforce including attracting people from other areas of New York State, other states and countries to live and work in our Region.

2. Enhance Education to Prepare the Next Generation

There has been great progress in the Region with regard to education of our young people. Graduation rates have improved. And, the new Every Student Succeeds Act restores authority for education policy to the states, providing flexibility and innovation to create career-centric education models for the Region. Our Region has begun such career-centric models. The launch of two Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools offers hundreds of students the opportunity to “write their own story,” earning their high school diploma and an associate’s degree at no cost to their families. P-TECH is a non-traditional model for high school that focuses on skills mastery and career preparedness. However, more needs to be done.

There are too many school districts in the Region for the population. While the local population is proud of its local schools and teachers, there may be a way that better serves students and provides a more robust education at a reasonable cost. High school is the most expensive education component for districts. The Region should explore maintaining local districts while creating regional high schools. HFM BOCES is collaborating with several area school districts to create collaborative pathway academies that allow students to take advantage of career-centered academic programs at their choice of the participating high schools. More can be done.

Fulton-Montgomery Community College continues to be a valuable resource for education in the Region. FM should explore more curriculum that prepares people for work. Short-term programs that provide credentials to current and potential employees would help to prepare a workforce for the future. Additionally, FM should explore the ability to provide more skilled-trades education for the Region.

3. Market the Region

Fulton and Montgomery Counties, both individually and as a Region, need to aggressively market the Region’s assets as a great place to live and do business. The Region’s high quality of life must be marketed and promoted to attract people and potential workers to the Region. Pooling resources and partnering with the Economic Development Organizations, Fulton-Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce and others to promote a positive image will benefit the Region. There are great opportunities to market retail, commercial, and shovel-ready sites along NYS Routes 30, 30A and 67. These corridors, which provide easy access to parking as well as “store front” locations that can be customer friendly for businesses, represent key areas for future development in the Region

4. Improve the Region's Quality of Life

The Region currently features cities rich in history with architecturally significant buildings, downtowns with great potential, quaint villages and scenic towns. Building on these assets, it is important to further enhance the Region's quality of life to maintain and enhance a quality workforce. The Region's housing stock must be diversified, social as well as entertainment and art venues must be pursued and year-round recreational facilities must be developed and maintained. The downtowns of our cities must be rejuvenated. To do so, downtown development plans must be prepared and implemented. Since they influence the image of our Region, our downtowns need to be transformed into active, vibrant places that attract patrons and residents.

5. Attract New and Retain Existing Businesses in the Region

In order to attract new business to the Region, the Fulton and Montgomery Counties must develop and maintain a strong inventory of various sized shovel-ready sites in which to locate prospective businesses. In today's competitive economic development environment, businesses looking for sites expect to have infrastructure in place, environmental studies completed, and site control in place. Securing shovel-ready sites must be an on-going priority for Fulton and Montgomery Counties.

The Region's municipal infrastructure needs to be maintained with adequate capacities to serve new businesses and growth of existing businesses. Local governments must develop and implement short and long-term plans to ensure that these infrastructure systems have the capacity available to support growth.

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

6. Lower Local Property Tax Burden in the Region

Property taxes in Fulton and Montgomery Counties are too high.

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

The Region must implement meaningful reductions in the cost of government to lower the property tax burden. There are too many governments, agencies, authorities, districts, etc. for the Region's tax base to support. By enhancing efficiencies,

collaboration, sharing services, enhancing inter-municipal cooperation and exploring consolidation, the Region can reduce the local property tax burden. Local governments should conduct efficiency studies in the following areas:

- Consolidation of police departments in the Cities of Gloversville and Johnstown
- Consolidation of fire departments in the Cities of Gloversville and Johnstown
- Consolidation of small local police departments in both counties into the County Sheriff's Department
- Consolidation of Villages into Towns
- Consolidation of Town Highway Departments
- Consolidation of local School Districts

7. Create a Business Friendly Climate for the Region

Creating and sustaining a "Business Friendly Climate" is critical to the Region's economic success and will encourage local businesses to grow and expand and be an attraction to businesses to locate to the Region. The Region must create a climate that welcomes development as part of a plan for the future. Elected officials, local residents, community groups and others must welcome those interested in investing in our Region. Municipalities must remove unnecessary roadblocks to development. Our Region must prepare the county, city and village employees to facilitate projects that help the Region progress.

The Counties should create a Council of Mayors to bring the city and village mayors together to discuss economic growth and development. This effort would work toward more and better collaboration between and among municipalities for the improvement of the Region.