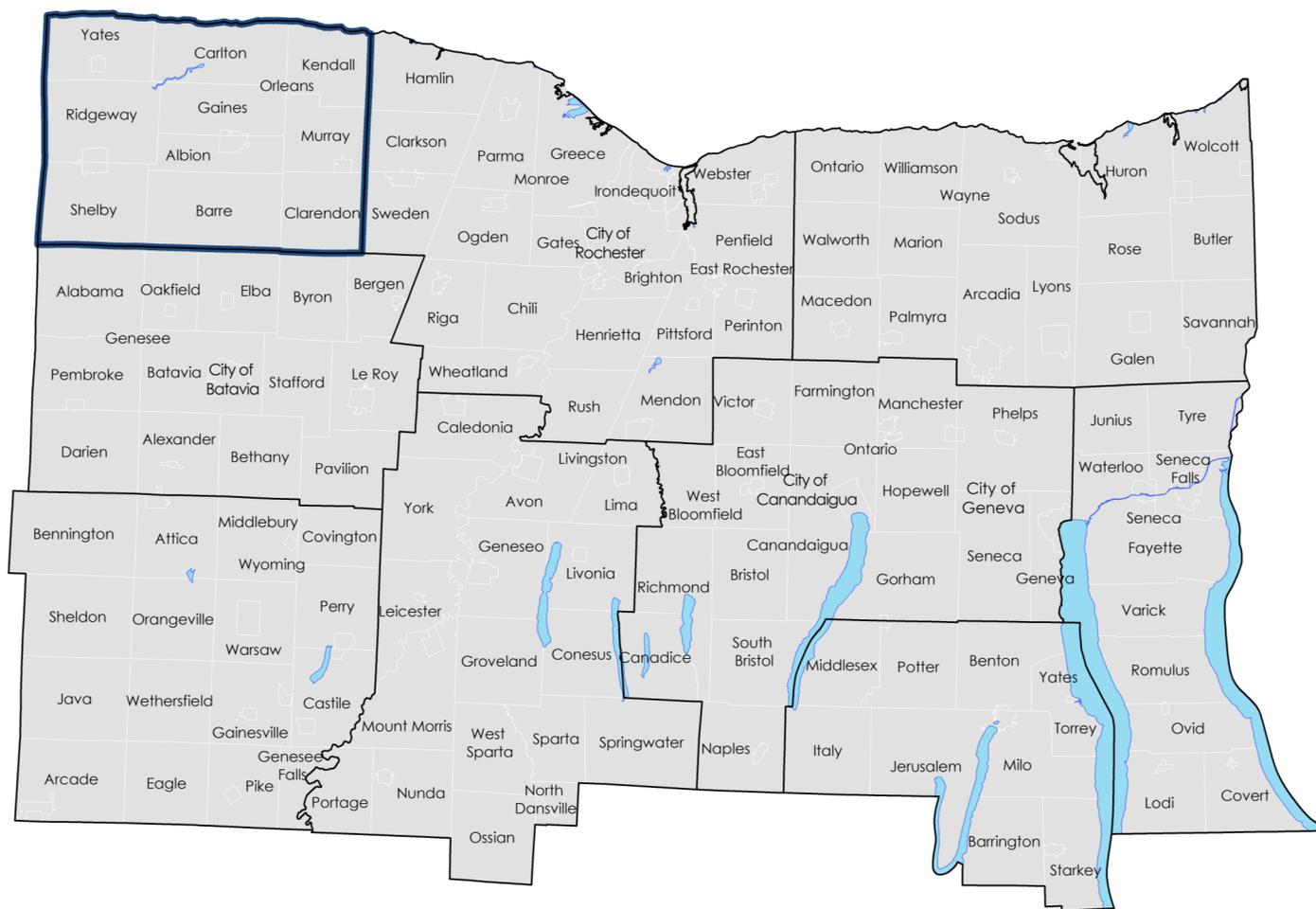


Regional Engagement Revitalization Opportunity Report Orleans County

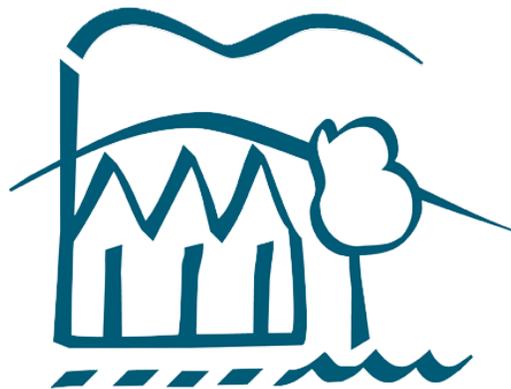


This report was prepared for the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council and the New York State Department of State with state funds provided through the Brownfield Opportunity Area Program

Regional Engagement Revitalization Opportunity Report

Orleans County

November 2016



GENESEE/FINGER LAKES
Regional Planning Council

Prepared by the
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Mission Statement

The Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FLRPC) will identify, define, and inform its member counties of issues and opportunities critical to the physical, economic, and social health of the region. G/FLRPC provides forums for discussion, debate, and consensus building, and develops and implements a focused action plan with clearly defined outcomes, which include programs, personnel, and funding.

This report was prepared for the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council and the New York State Department of State with state funds provided through the Brownfield Opportunity Area Program

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Orleans County

This report was prepared for the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council and the New York State Department of State with state funds provided through the Brownfield Opportunity Area Program

Executive Summary

The Orleans County Revitalization Opportunity Report includes an outline of the demographic and economic conditions within Orleans County along with a detailed overview of economic development; community development; and land use through the lens of 11 different subject areas. These subject areas include: Land Use; Brownfields; Economic Distress; Downtowns; Tourism and Recreation; Waterfronts; Environmental, Water Resources, and Natural Resources; Energy; Buildings and Housing; Infrastructure; and Preservation/Cultural.

Demographic and economic indicators include population change; employment; unemployment; race; age; vacancy; education; income; poverty; and economic distress. These indicators along with previously completed plans on the municipal, county, and regional level covering each of the above subject areas listed above, served as the starting point for stakeholder discussions at the October, 2015 Sub-Regional Forum. The stakeholder input provided at the Sub-Regional Forum, during the follow up webinar held on December 7, 2015; and the Orleans County Forum, held on March 1, 2016; along with the information gathered from existing plans, shaped development of the Orleans County Recommendations, Goals and Objectives, and priority projects.

Orleans County Step-2 Recommendations

Key project recommendations for Orleans County include expansion of rail at the Holley and Medina Business Parks; development of the Orleans Fiber Optic Pipe; dredging of Lake Ontario Harbor; infrastructure to support access to the Medina Business Park; implementation of the Holley Brownfield Opportunity Area Pre-Nomination Study; implementation and development of the Kendall Yates Carlton Local Waterfront Revitalization Project; and completion of the Holley Central Park Improvement Project. The focus areas for economic distress within Orleans County include the Town of Albion/Village of Albion; Village of Medina; Town of Shelby; and the Village of Holley.

Goals and Objectives

Economic and community development revitalization efforts will depend upon the successful implementation of the goals and objectives of each subject area

outlined below. Many of these goals and objectives cut across multiple subject areas and illustrate the collaboration and coordination that is needed across multiple communities and multiple organizations for implementation. While some of goals and objectives listed below are more critical than others they are all listed to show the role that each subject area can play in advancing Orleans County. The goals and objectives listed below were identified through the Sub-Regional Forum; follow-up webinar; County Forum; and existing local, county, and regional plans.

Land Use

1. Preserve agricultural land resources
2. Support the economic contributions of agriculture and related businesses
3. Focus economic development efforts on targeted areas for growth

Brownfields

1. Revitalize brownfield properties
2. Complete Phase II site assessments on strategic brownfield properties
3. Implement Holley Brownfield Opportunity Area Pre-Nomination Study

Economic Development/Economic Distress

1. Eliminate distress within targeted areas: Town of Albion; Village of Albion; Village of Medina; Town of Shelby; and Village of Holley
2. Improve sewer/water, telecommunications, and transportation infrastructure
3. Advance agriculture and agri-business
4. Support existing businesses and the retention of jobs

Downtowns

1. Fill vacant storefronts
2. Improve aesthetic appeal of “Main Streets” and historic downtowns
3. Implement building and façade renovations
4. Renovate and reuse vacant upper floors
5. Continue downtown events
6. Improve physical linkages between the Erie Canal and downtown business districts

Tourism and Recreation

1. Create network of advocates for the Finger Lakes Region lifestyle
2. Invest in the development, promotion, and preservation of cultural, artistic, and historic assets of the Region
3. Promote the Region's growing wine, culinary, and agricultural enterprises
4. Strengthen and support the Region's diverse water resources and recreational tourism opportunities
5. Increase number of hotel/lodging accommodations
6. Expand usage of Erie Canal
7. Expand wine trial and agri-tourism industry

Waterfronts

1. Continue to dredge harbors and provide recreational opportunities on Lake Ontario
2. Continue to monitor Plan 2014 and its impact on the Orleans County shoreline

Environmental/Water Resources/Natural Resources

1. Ensure long-term preservation of surface and groundwater resources
2. Preserve natural resources
3. Creation of green infrastructure standards and integration of standards into site plan review criteria
4. Restoration of severe streambank segments using ecologically-based stream restoration
5. Enforce floodplain development regulations
6. Reduce agricultural runoff

Energy

1. Develop/embrace renewable energy resources
2. Remove energy roadblocks that are limiting economic development opportunities
3. Identify, connect, and promote energy assets for successful attraction of companies

Buildings/Housing

1. Address vacant properties/storefronts
2. Continue to promote and implement senior housing/aging in place programs
3. Continue to preserve historic and culturally significant assets within Orleans County

Infrastructure

1. Improve sewer/water, telecommunications, and transportation infrastructure
2. Complete infrastructure inventory and analysis to determine the capacity and location of existing infrastructure
3. Continue to monitor traffic counts and conditions of bridges

Preservation/Cultural

1. Encourage communities to develop and enforce Design guidelines and zoning regulations
2. Connect developers and municipalities with federal and state preservation and rehabilitation programs to encourage Main Street redevelopment
3. Support historic preservation efforts throughout Orleans County

Projects

The Orleans County Revitalization Opportunity Report includes a table of specific priority projects that will advance the identified goals and objectives. Projects were identified through the Sub-Regional Forum; follow-up webinar; County Forum; and existing local, county, and regional plans; and the regional engagement project capture form.

Orleans County

Existing Conditions Introduction

The Background/Existing Conditions section below outlines the demographic and economic conditions within Orleans County utilizing available data from a variety of sources including, but not limited to the U.S. Census Bureau; New York State Department of Labor; and Bureau of Labor Statistics. These demographic and economic indicators include population change; employment; unemployment; race; age; vacancy; education; income; poverty; and economic distress. Through these indicators this section helps to identify the challenges faced by Orleans County and identifies the municipalities with the greatest need for economic development and community development revitalization efforts. The complete data tables are available in Appendix A.

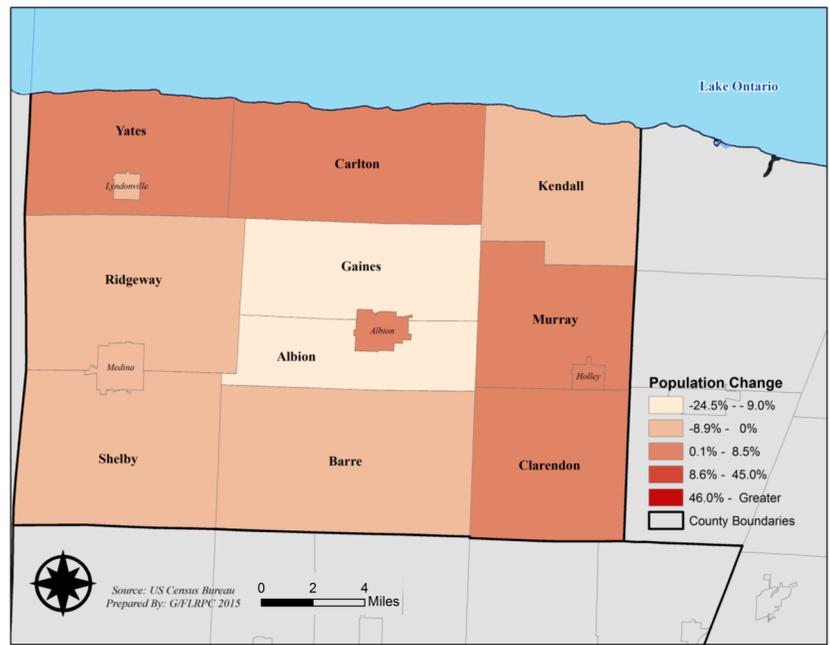
These revitalization efforts are focused on areas with high levels of poverty and economic distress building upon other Finger Lakes Region plans, including the Upstate Revitalization Initiative Plan titled *Finger Lakes Forward: United for Success* and the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council Strategic Plan titled *Accelerating our Transformation*, which identifies the reduction of poverty within the Region as a critical goal. These plans, along with many other regional and local plans, are further leveraged within the goals and objectives and project sections of this revitalization strategy.

Profile of Existing Conditions

Orleans County consists of 391 square miles¹ of area located in the northwestern portion of the nine-county Genesee-Finger Lakes Region. A portion of Orleans County is bordered to the east by Monroe County and to the south by Genesee County.

Between the years 2000 and 2010 Orleans County's population decreased by 2.9% to 42,883 people.² During this same period New York State experienced a population increase of 2.1% and the United States saw growth of 9.7%.³ Based upon quarterly census of employment and wages (QCEW) data, which notably excludes agricultural workers on small farms,⁴ many of these individuals are employed in the industry sectors of government, including local, state, and federal government; manufacturing, including food manufacturing and fabricated product manufacturing; health care and social assistance including nursing and residential care facilities; retail trade including food and beverage

Map 43: Population Change Orleans County 2000-2010



stores, gas stations, and motor vehicle and parts dealers; and finance and insurance.⁵ The largest employers in the County include: Baxter International; Walmart Stores; and Associated Brands.⁶ The unemployment rate for Orleans County is 5.5%,⁷ which is greater than both the New York State unemployment rate of 4.7%,⁸ and the national unemployment rate of 5.0%.⁹ Table 11 illustrates Orleans County Employment.

Table 11: Orleans County Employment 2012

Industry Sector	Avg. Annual Employment
Total, All Government	3,946
Manufacturing	2,536
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,405
Retail Trade	1,106
Finance and Insurance	1,034

Orleans County is predominately white (89.8%)¹⁰ and has an aging population, with approximately 14.3% of the County population aged 65 or older, greater than both the 13.6% of the population aged 65 or older in New York State and the 13.2% of the population aged 65 or older in the United States. Several municipalities have an even larger percentage of their population aged 65 or older, with the highest percentages located within the Towns of Gaines (21.5%) and Shelby (18.8%).¹¹

Vacancy is a larger concern in Orleans County, compared to other counties in the Region, with 8.6% of the structures within the County classified as vacant. This is much higher than the 7.2% vacancy rate in New York State, but in line with the 8.7% vacancy rate in the Nation. The vacancy rate is even higher within the

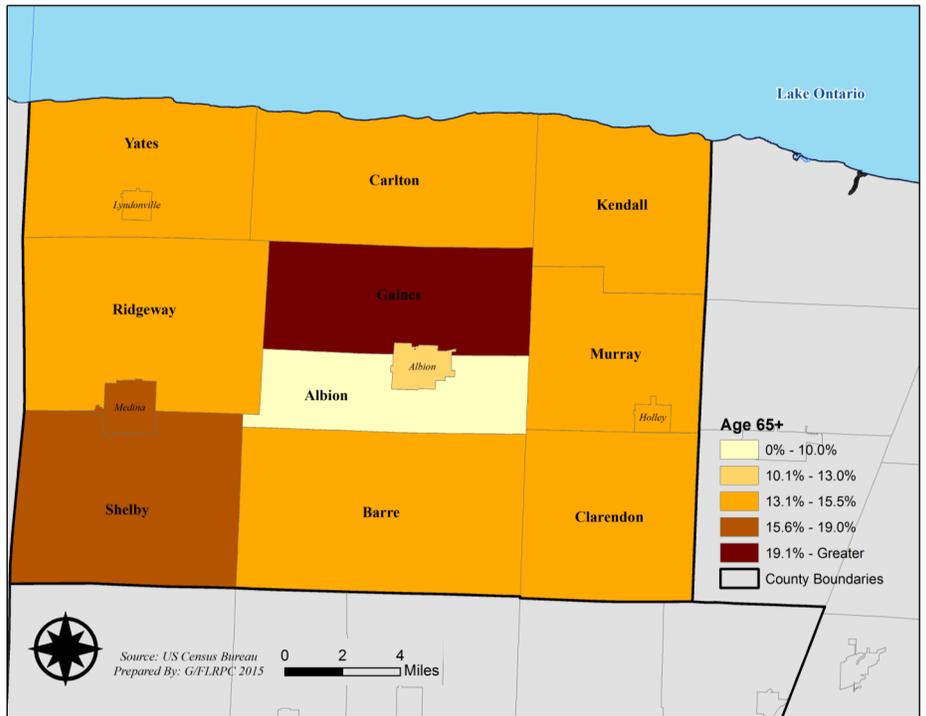
Towns Albion (14.9%), Ridgeway (11.7%) and Yates (10.8%).¹²

Approximately 86.5% of Orleans County has at least a high school diploma or equivalency with 15.8% of the County having a bachelor’s degree, graduate degree, or professional degree and approximately 25.8% having an educational attainment of an associate’s degree or higher. Within New York State approximately 84.9% of the population aged 25 or older has at least a high school diploma with 32.8% having a bachelor’s degree or greater in education and 41.1% having an associate’s degree or greater. The Town of Kendall has the highest percentage of residents with an educational attainment of at least a bachelor’s degree, with 27.6% along with an additional 15.8% of its population with an associate’s degree. The Towns of Gaines, Clarendon and Ridgeway also have a large percentage of their population with a bachelor’s degree, graduate degree, or professional degree, 19.6%, 17.4%, and 16.5% of their residents respectively.¹³

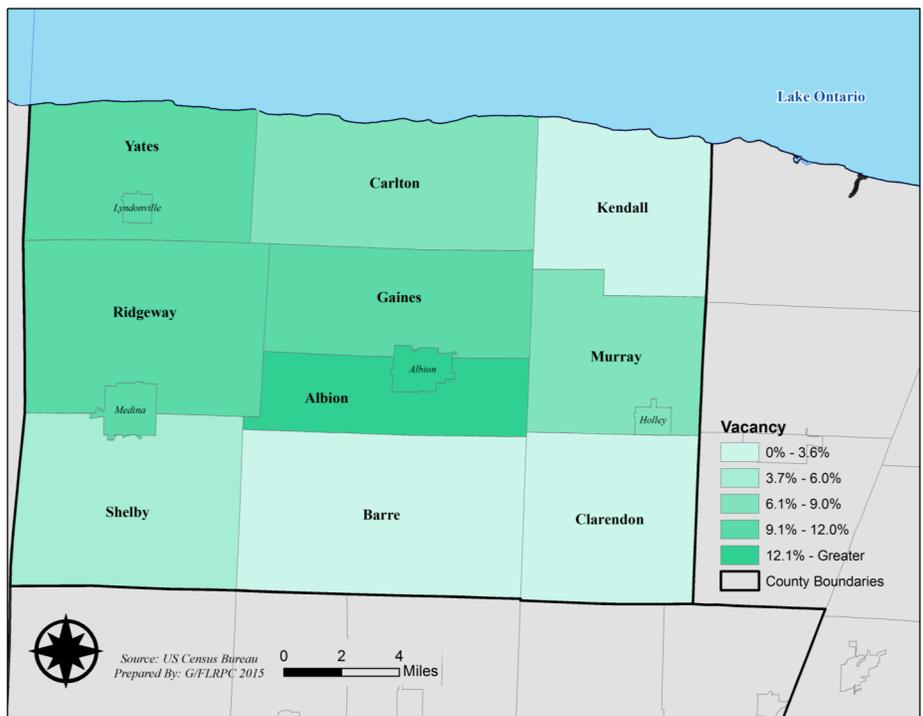
Median household income for Orleans County as a whole in 2012 was \$50,113, with the highest median household income within the Towns of Kendall (\$65,904) and Clarendon (\$60,302). The lowest median household income was within the Towns of Shelby (\$37,602 and Albion (\$39,986).¹⁴ Median household income for New York State in 2012 was \$57,683 with the United States median household income for 2012 being \$53,046.

Approximately 13.0% of the county population and 17.7% of residents under the age of 18 are living below the poverty level, lower than the national poverty rate of 14.9% and the national rate of poverty of 20.8% for those under the age of 18. The highest municipal poverty rates are within the Town of Shelby, 20.3% of the total population and 26.9% of residents under the age of 18 living below the poverty line; and the Villages of Medina, 21.8% of the total population and 30.6% of residents under the age of 18 living below the poverty line, and Albion, 18.5% of the total population and 22.1% of residents under the age of 18 living below the poverty line.¹⁵

Map 44: Population Aged 65 and Older Orleans County 2012



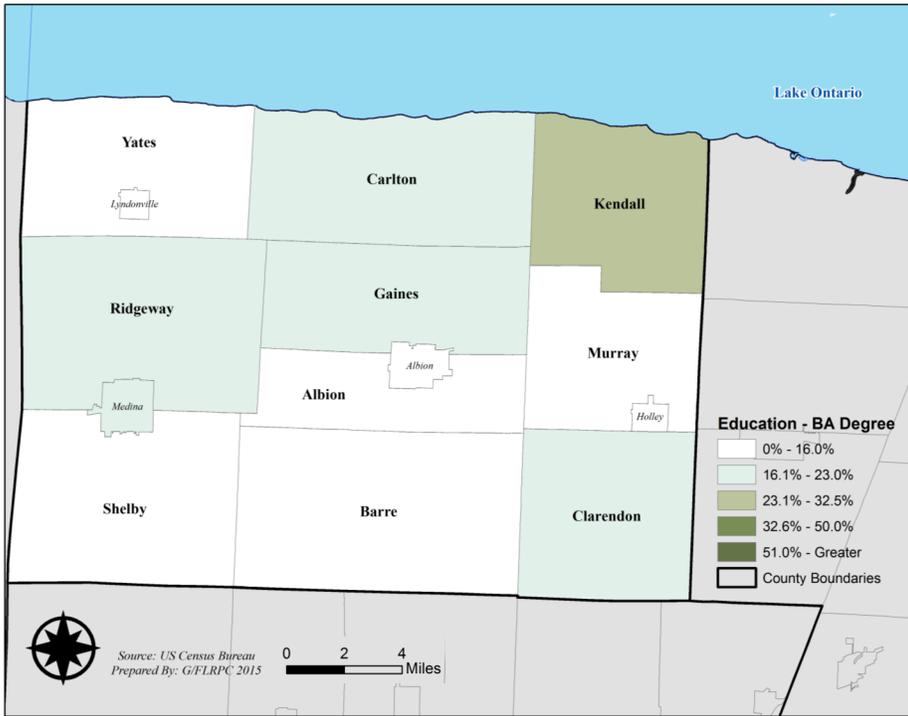
Map 45: Vacancy Orleans County 2012



Economic Distress

Economic distress can be measured using a variety of data, such as unemployment rates, income levels, vacancy rates, or poverty status. These indicators alone however fail to capture positive trends that may help to reduce economic distress such as a growing population or a highly educated workforce. In order to account for all of these variables, Genesee/Finger Lakes

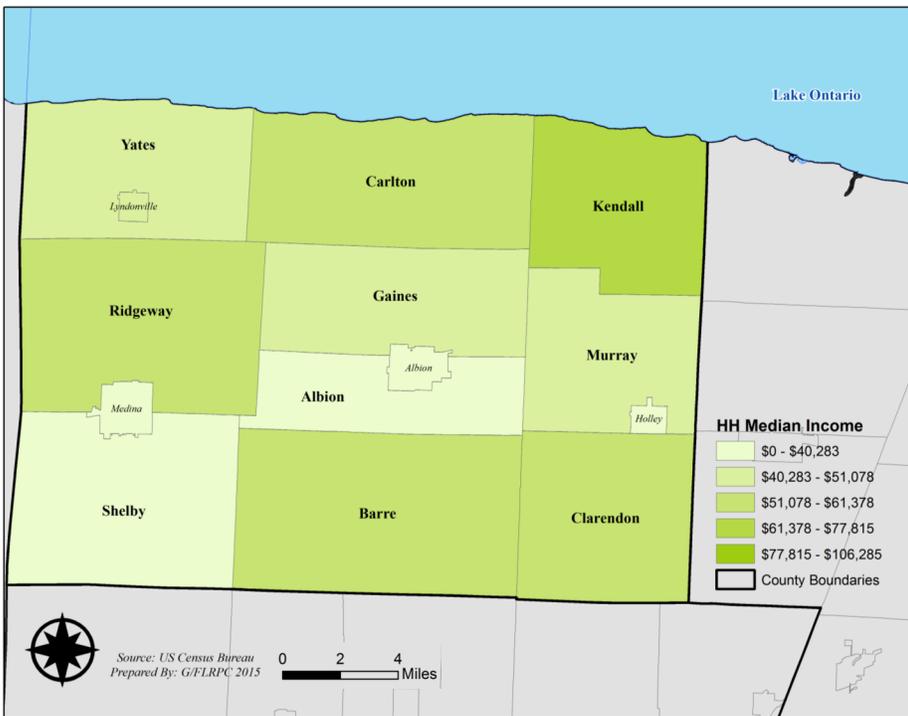
Map 46: Educational Attainment Orleans County 2012



ue for each municipality. Positive numbers indicate a higher than average level of economic distress. It is important to note that the economic distress index is a snapshot based upon the currently available data and the index will continually evolve as economic conditions fluctuate and new data is released. It is also important to note that since the economic distress index relies upon estimated Census American Community Survey data there is a margin of error within the reported numbers.

For the nine-county Finger Lakes Region as a whole the Economic Distress z-scores ranged from -12.9 (least distressed) to 9.6 (most distressed). Within Orleans County the Economic Distress z-scores ranged from -3.0, Town of Kendall; to 7.7, Town of Albion.¹⁶ The Town of Albion had the highest z-score in Orleans County largely due to its 14% vacancy rate and its 10.0% decline in population between 2000 and 2010, both substantially greater than the regional averages of 6.2% and 0% population change respectively.

Map 47: Median Household Income Orleans County 2012



Additional municipalities within Orleans County with high levels of economic distress include: the Village of Albion (6.4), largely due to its 14.9% vacancy rate; the Village of Medina (6.7), largely due to its median family income of \$37,083; the Town of Shelby (6.0), largely due to its 14.2% unemployment rate; and the Village of Holley (6.4), largely due to its 15.4% unemployment rate.

Strategies

The background/existing conditions section provides a glimpse into the current demographic trends of Orleans County. It does not, however, provide a detailed glimpse of the economic development; community development; and land use challenges that the County is facing. In

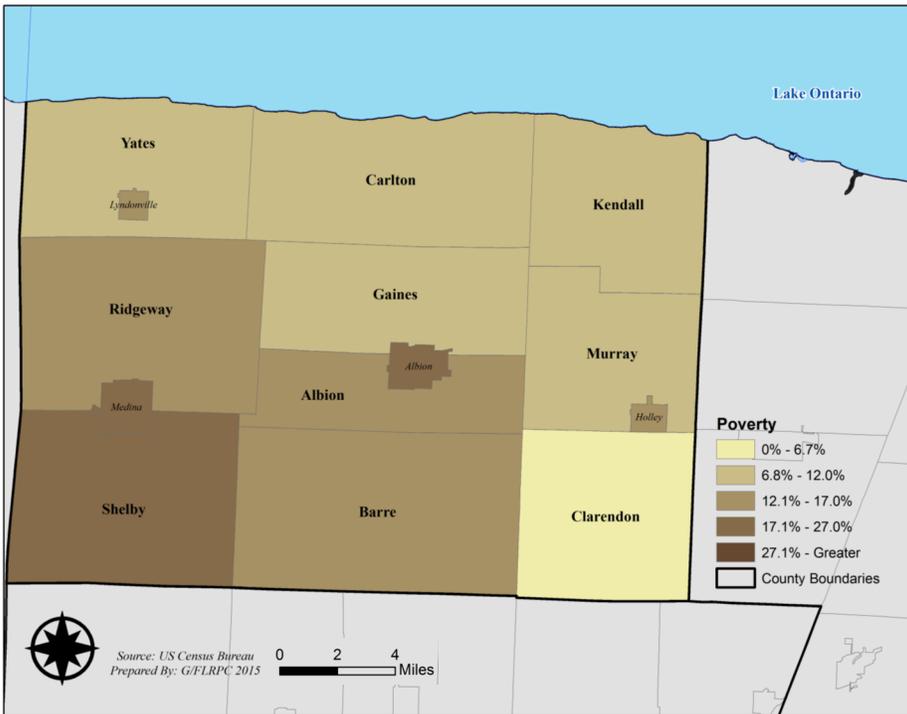
Regional Planning Council developed an economic distress index which includes the following data: median family income; employment rate; non-poverty rate; educational attainment; occupancy rate; and population change. Each of these data components were standardized into a z-score, which accounts for standard deviation amongst each category and sets 0 as the average. The z-scores for each data category were then summed to determine the economic distress index val-

order to explore these areas in more detail G/FLRPC identified 11 subject areas to explore in greater length. These subject areas are: Land Use; Brownfields; Economic Distress; Downtowns; Tourism and Recreation; Waterfronts; Environmental, Water Resources, and Natural Resources; Energy; Buildings and Housing; Infrastructure; and Preservation/Cultural.

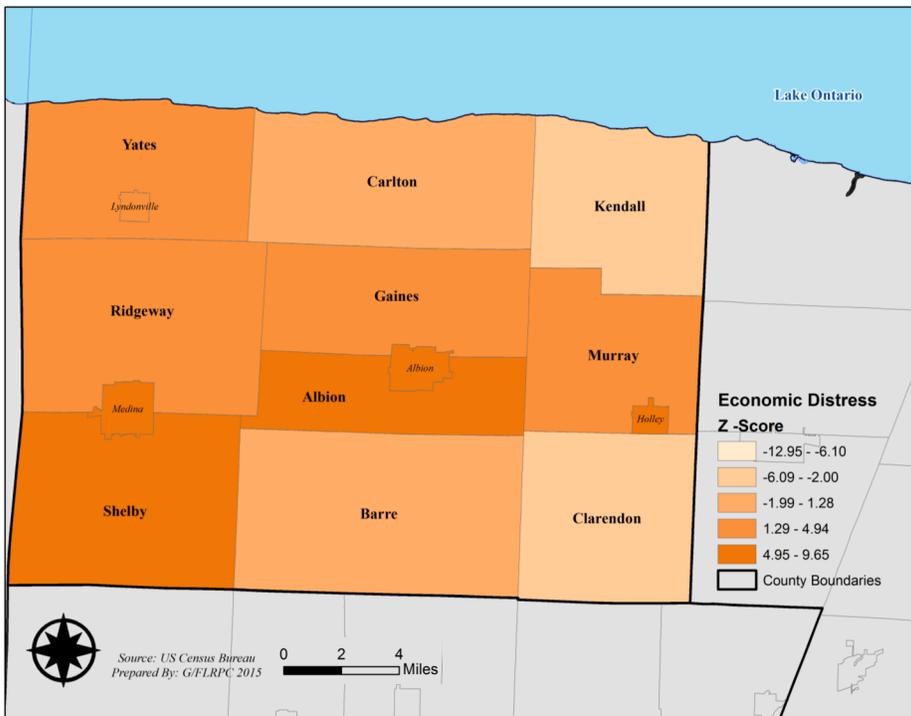
Previously completed plans on the municipal, county, and regional level covering each of the above subject areas listed above, were reviewed by G/FLRPC in or-

nar, held on December 7, 2015; and County Forum, held on March 1, 2016; along with the information gathered from existing plans formed much of the subject information below.

Map 48: Poverty Rate Orleans County 2012



Map 49: Economic Distress Orleans County 2012



der to capture the identified goals/objectives/strategies that remain relevant today. These existing plans and the identified subject areas served as the starting point for stakeholder discussions at the October, 2015 Sub-Regional Forum. The stakeholder input provided at the Sub-Regional Forum; during the follow up webi-

Land Use

Based upon an analysis of building permit data for Orleans County since 1998, the municipalities with the most residential building permits issued are the Town of Clarendon (219); Town of Carlton (160); and the Town of Ridgeway (86).¹⁷ This data merely identifies the number of permits granted and does not mean the proposed development was actually completed, but it does help to show the areas within Orleans County which are likely experiencing the most residential growth. Table 12 illustrates the Orleans County municipalities with the most residential building permits during the years 1998-2014.

Agriculture is critical to the Orleans County economy and preservation of farmland is an important land use goal. Approximately 39% of the county land area falls within an agricultural district.¹⁸ These districts were established by New York State Agriculture and Markets Law to provide protection of agricultural lands.¹⁹ Orleans County recently approved the consolidation of their three agricultural districts into one larger district to streamline the administration process and make it easier for farmers that had land in multiple districts.

Several comprehensive plans are currently underway or have been recently completed within Orleans County including Town/Village of Albion Town of Barre; Town of Murray/Village of Holley; Town of Clarendon; and Town of Kendall, which serve to outline the vision and goals for community development and land use within their municipality.

Development of the Western New York Science and Technology Advanced Manufacturing Park (STAMP) in the Town of Alabama, Genesee County will also have an impact on land use and development in Orleans County. The STAMP site has the potential for up to 1,200 jobs at full build-out²⁰ placing significant development pressure on neighboring Orleans County

Table 12: Residential Building Permits Orleans County

Municipality	Residential Building Permits 1998-2014
Town of Clarendon	219
Town of Carlton	160
Town of Ridgeway	86
Village of Albion	81
Town of Yates	79

communities.

Brownfields

There are a number of properties within Orleans County classified as brownfield sites, which based upon the Environmental Protection Agency definition means that the “expansion, redevelopment, or reuse (of the property) may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.”²¹ There are a total of 19 brownfield sites currently being addressed, or that have previously been addressed, under one of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Environmental Remediation programs. These programs include the New York State Superfund Program; Resource Conservation and Recovery program; Brownfield Cleanup program; Environmental Restoration program; and the Voluntary Cleanup program. Each of these programs works to identify and address environmental contamination within New York State with the goal of returning each site back to active and productive use.

The 19 brownfield sites within Orleans County being addressed, or that have previously been addressed, under the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Environmental Remediation programs include sites within 9 different municipalities, with many of the sites within the Villages of Medina, Lyndonville, and Albion. Additionally the Village of Holley was awarded funding through the New York State Department of State Brownfield Opportunity Area program to complete a Pre-Nomination Study for a 749 acre area in the Village near the Erie Canal that has at least 15 potential brownfield sites.²²

Economic Development

The identified economic development needs of Orleans County include improving infrastructure throughout the County, advancing agriculture and agribusiness, expanding light industry, and supporting and retaining existing businesses.

Improving infrastructure, such as water, sewer, and rail lines, is needed throughout Orleans County to support business parks and industrial parks positioning

these areas for attraction of new businesses. These targeted areas for business growth include: Medina West End Industrial Complex; Medina Business Park; Village of Lyndonville/Town of Yates; Village of Albion/Albion Industrial Center complex; Albion Business Park; Holley Business Park; and the Route 98 corridor in Albion. One of the major deterrents to development in Orleans County is the lack of modern buildings, specifically in the area of 40,000 sq. ft., to accommodate the needs of businesses.

Orleans County Industrial Development Agency completed an Industrial Development Plan in 2012 to identify and priority the infrastructure needs within the County and analyzed 6 key sites: 3959 Bates Road in the Town of Ridgeway; Albion Business Park; Allis Road site in the Town of Ridgeway; Holley Business Park; Keppler Site in the Town of Shelby; and the Medina Business Park.

Telecommunications infrastructure is also needed throughout Orleans County to support businesses, specifically “last mile” connections for businesses that are at the end of the line. These “last mile” connections are of particular importance to the agricultural sector.

One regional program that can help advance agribusiness and food processing within Orleans County is the recently approved Growing the Agriculture Industry Now! (GAIN!) RLF fund. The fund will provide Orleans County, along with the Finger Lakes Region, access to low interest loan funds to provide assistance to agricultural related businesses such as farmers and food processors. These businesses can utilize these funds to advance projects that will help to create and retain jobs within Orleans County.

In addition to agriculture and agribusiness, Orleans County is targeting the following industries for growth light industrial manufacturing, alternative energy, and health care operations. Tourism and recreation is another area in which Orleans County is looking to leverage for economic development targeting potential development efforts near the harbor area in the Town of Carlton and looking to establish a mid-sized hotel in the Village of Medina.

Downtowns

Key focus areas for downtown development in Orleans County include: the Villages of Albion, Holley, Medina, and Lyndonville. Identified goals and objectives to advance downtowns include improving aesthetic appeal of “Main Streets”; filling vacant storefronts; renovating and reusing vacant upper floors; and continuing building and façade renovation projects.

The Village of Medina is actively working on a program to identify storefronts that are vacant and working to find businesses to occupy the space. Significant research was undertaken in order to provide competitive pricing to attract these new businesses and the program would also provide small grants to businesses for basic repairs and updates to the property.

The Western Orleans Comprehensive Plan, which was completed for the Towns of Shelby, Ridgeway and Yates and the Villages of Medina and Lyndonville in 2003, addressed downtown revitalization and commercial development in the Villages of Medina and Lyndonville. Identified recommendations for the Village of Medina included: retaining the historic character of the downtown business district; continuing downtown events; and improving physical linkages from the Canal to the downtown business district. Recommendations for the Village of Lyndonville included: maintaining the attractive appearance and historic character of the area; improve building facades; improving exterior of Village Hall; and relocating power lines to the rear of buildings or buried underground.²³

Tourism and Recreation

Orleans County has many important tourism and recreation attractions including: sports fishing; Lake Ontario; Erie Canal; and the many historic villages and districts within the County. The importance of these tourism and recreational opportunities extends beyond the financial benefit of bringing visitors into the County, estimated at 1.5 billion in 2013 for the Finger Lakes Region.²⁴ These attractions and activities also help to improve the quality of life for existing Orleans County residents, which contributes towards attracting and maintaining the workforce needed for business attraction and retention efforts.

Tourism and the Arts is a key part of the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council strategic plan which emphasizes the sectors of *sports recreation, waterways and entertainment; arts, culture and history; and culinary and beverage*; as key assets to help produce jobs, improve economic development, and increase the quality of life for the Finger Lakes Region. Identified regional strategies towards achieving these goals include: creation of a network of advocates for the Finger Lakes Region lifestyle; investment in the development, promotion and preservation of the cultural, artistic and historic assets of the Region; promotion of the Region's growing wine, culinary, and agricultural enterprises; and strengthening and supporting the Region's diverse water resources and recreational tourism opportunities.²⁵ Agri-tourism is also specifically identified within the Upstate Revitaliza-

tion Initiative as a key component of the Agriculture & Food Production pillar. With many farms within Orleans County, agri-tourism is an area that may see significant growth in the future.

A significant amount of tourism and recreational opportunities for Orleans County are tied directly to Lake Ontario and therefore it is important to keep the harbors dredged to ensure recreational boaters have access to the Lake. Additional tourism and recreational projects for Orleans County include increasing the number of hotel/lodging accommodations to provide additional opportunities for visitors to stay within Orleans County; expanding usage of the Erie Canal; expanding the wine trail and agri-tourism; and improving marketing efforts.

Waterfronts

Through the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP), the Towns of Kendall, Yates, and Carlton received funding in 2002 to develop an inter-municipal comprehensive land and water use plan to address the waterfront resources within the Towns along Lake Ontario, Johnson Creek, Oak Orchard River, Marsh Creek, and Sandy Creek. Projects identified within the LWRP include: adding a fishing pier and scenic access to Lake Ontario; development of the Morrison Site in the Town of Yates; improving Oak Orchard Marine Park; developing a fish cleaning station, restroom and communication building at Orleans County Marine Park; developing Bennett Farm in the Town of Carlton; and expanding existing facilities at the Eagle Creek Marine in the Town of Kendall.²⁶ In 2015 the Towns were awarded a second LWRP grant to update current conditions, policies, and implementation tools and projects in the areas of community revitalization, erosion, transportation infrastructure, water quality, and harbor management.²⁷

Lake Ontario water levels are a primary concern for Orleans County as they have a direct impact on coastal erosion and impact quality of life for residents located along the lakefront. To this end Orleans County has been actively following development of Plan 2014, a plan to regulate water levels in Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, and many Orleans County officials oppose the plan due to its potential impact on tourism and recreation and potential to cause property damage.²⁸

Environmental/Water Resources/Natural Resources

Sustainable development is a key area of focus for the Finger Lakes Region as well as Orleans County with several strategies and projects underway to enhance the environment and preserve the quality of life with

the County.

The Finger Lakes Regional Sustainability Plan outlines a variety of strategies in order for Orleans County and the Region to ensure a sustainable future. Specifically, the Finger Lakes Regional Sustainability Plan's subject area goal for Water Management which was to *improve and protect the water environment with respect to quality, quantity, and availability; promote and understand the value of our water reservoirs, watercourses, and built infrastructure; maximize the social, economic, and ecological potential of our water resources toward equitable sharing of their benefits for both the short and long terms.*²⁹

Orleans County environmental/water resources goals are also shaped by the Oak Orchard Watershed State of the Basin Report, which laid the foundation for a future Oak Orchard Watershed Plan to propose methods for improving water quality in the watershed to ensure its long-term health and sustainability of its resources,³⁰ and the Black Creek Watershed Management Plan, which outlined specific goals including: creation of green infrastructure standards and integration of these standards into site plan review criteria; restoration of severe streambank segments using ecologically-based stream restoration; and the enforcement of floodplain development regulations.³¹

Additional Orleans County environmental/water resource goals include the long-term preservation of surface and groundwater resources; reduction in agricultural runoff; and the continued implementation of best management practices and projects within county watershed management plans. There are also a variety of natural and environmental resources throughout Orleans County including: Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge; Lake Ontario; and the many other local and state parks; the preservation of each of which is critical for a sustainable Orleans County.

Energy

The Finger Lakes Regional Sustainability Plan outlines a variety of energy strategies in order to help Orleans County and the Region ensure a sustainable future. The Finger Lakes Regional Sustainability Plan's subject area goal for Energy is to "increase the generation and distribution of regional renewable energies, while using energy efficient and alternative energy resources, along with conservation methods, to decrease the reliance on fossil fuels and nonrenewable outside energy sources and to become a self-sustainable region".³²

The Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council's strategic plan built upon the Regional Sus-

tainability Plan and identified additional energy strategies for the Region including: removing energy roadblocks that are limiting opportunities for companies that want to move to the area and limiting expansion opportunities for companies located in the Finger Lakes; and identifying, connecting, and promoting the assets and sites for successful attraction of companies.³³ Energy innovation and energy storage technologies were also identified within the FLREDC Strategic Plan as areas of focus for funding.

The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) helps to promote energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources throughout New York State, including Orleans County. To achieve these goals NYSERDA works to: "attract the private sector capital investment needed to expand New York's clean energy economy; overcome barriers to using clean energy at a large scale in New York; and enable New York's communities and residents to benefit from energy efficiency and renewable energy."³⁴ To help connect communities with NYSERDA programs the New York State Community Partnership program (NYSCP) was developed as a "unified approach to driving clean energy action and energy literacy in local governments and communities across the state." Resources will be provided through the NYSCP to help identify the "impact certain actions have on economic development; greenhouse gas emissions reductions; and energy cost savings".³⁵

In line with the above identified regional energy strategies, Orleans County is working towards advancing renewable energy within the County including efforts to advance ethanol at the Western New York Energy plant located in the Town of Shelby.

Buildings/Housing

Two critical building/housing goals for Orleans County are to improve the quality of the housing stock and reducing vacant buildings/storefronts. Orleans County is also faced with an aging housing stock, 47.7% of its structures were built before 1939³⁶; and an aging population, 14.3% of its population aged 65 or older.³⁷

There are many agencies within Orleans County actively involved in housing that are administering programs or working on efforts to address these issues, including Orleans County Office for the Aging; Orleans County Planning; PathStone; Community Action of Orleans & Genesee; amongst others. The Orleans County Office for the Aging provides information, support, advocacy, and a variety of assistance programs for Orleans County residents aged 60 or older with the aim to promote independence and improve quality of life. Programs include: meals on wheels;

home care aids; outreach visits; home medication assessments; and education of other available programs and resources.³⁸

Orleans County Planning works to provide technical assistance on housing topics including zoning and subdivision and land use determinations. PathStone administers several housing programs for Orleans County including a rental assistance program; first time home buyers program; housing rehabilitation program; a handyman repair program; and a foreclosure prevention program (counseling). In line with these programs are those offered through Community Action of Orleans & Genesee, which administers programs for both Orleans and Genesee Counties. These programs include: a weatherization and energy services program and a home rehabilitation program, which provides funding for health and safety repairs and energy efficiency upgrades.³⁹

Efforts of the above agencies, and the many others within Orleans County, are helping to keep the aging population in their current homes and providing additional opportunities for aging Orleans County residents to continue to reside in the County. These efforts are also helping to improve the quality of life and the quality of the housing stock helping to attract and retain residents and positioning the county for additional economic development and community development investment.

All of these efforts should continue to consider the many historic buildings/houses within Orleans County and the need to preserve and maintain these assets. In-fill development should also be pursued, where feasible, to take advantage of existing infrastructure.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure is a top priority for Orleans County and has also been identified by the Upstate Revitalization Initiative, Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council Strategic Plan, and Genesee-Finger Lakes Economic Development District Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) as a top priority of the Finger Lakes Region as well.

Within Orleans County, infrastructure needs include water, sewer, telecommunications, and transportation infrastructure. Many of these infrastructure improvements are needed to support business parks such as Medina Business Park and Holley Business Park. Telecommunications/internet infrastructure is needed throughout Orleans County to support businesses, specifically “last mile” connections for businesses that are at the end of the line. These “last mile” connections are of particular importance to the agricultural sector.

The recently announced New NY Broadband Grant Program aims to improve telecommunications, within unserved or underserved areas of New York State, by providing funding to establish and expand broadband. The program may be able to assist Orleans County in providing last mile connections and improving access to high speed internet.

Orleans County Industrial Development Agency completed an Industrial Development Plan in 2012 to identify and prioritize the infrastructure needs within the County and analyzed 6 key sites: 3959 Bates Road in the Town of Ridgeway; Albion Business Park; Allis Road site in the Town of Ridgeway; Holley Business Park; Keppler Site in the Town of Shelby; and the Medina Business Park. The Industrial Development Plan analyzed a number of characteristics of each site including: acreage; developable acreage; zoning/municipality; existing land use; ownership; steep slopes; wetlands; floodplain; endangered species; critical environmental areas; archaeologically sensitive areas; rail access; water availability; sanitary sewer availability; electricity availability; natural gas availability; and fiber optic/telecommunications availability. With this inventory completed Orleans County is positioned to identify sites that meet the need of businesses for attraction or expansion and can target specific sites for improvements that do not meet the economic development needs of business and industry.⁴⁰

Transportation infrastructure needs for Orleans County include rail infrastructure and rail sidings to support business parks; improvements to bridge infrastructure across the Erie Canal to provide more efficient means of crossing the Canal, especially for agricultural businesses; and reduction of travel lanes for the Lake Ontario State Parkway. Orleans County recently received funding under the Unified Planning Work Program funding to complete a study to potentially reduce the number of travel lanes on the Lake Ontario State Parkway from 4 lanes to 2, which would allow for a reduction in maintenance costs and help improve driving conditions along the Parkway.

Analysis of traffic counts and state bridges in Orleans County did not identify any significant concerns, with state routes in Orleans County adequately handling traffic. The latest New York State Department of Transportation traffic counts show that the highest traffic within Orleans County is along Route 63 in the Village of Medina, which averaged 7,390 cars per day; Route 61 in the Town of Middleport, which averaged 6,562 cars per day; and Route 31 in the Town of Albion, which averaged 5,594 cars per day.⁴¹

Bridge inspections are regularly conducted by the

New York State Department of Transportation for all publically owned highway bridges in New York State, 137 of which are located within Orleans County. These inspections include a New York State Condition Rating (ranging from 1-7) and an associated classification rating of “structurally deficient”, “functionally obsolete”, or “neither”. A classification of “structurally deficient” is used for bridges with “significant load carrying elements are found to be in poor or worse condition due to deterioration and/or damage, the bridge has inadequate load capacity, or repeated bridge flooding causes traffic delays”.⁴² A bridge classified as “structurally deficient” does not imply that it is unsafe or likely to collapse. A classification as “functionally obsolete” is used for bridges with an “inability to meet current standards for managing the volume of traffic it carries, not its structural integrity.” This includes bridges with narrow lanes, no shoulders, or low clearances.⁴³

For Orleans County, the analysis of the 137 highway bridges, rated 88 as being neither functionally obsolete nor structurally deficient; 25 as being structurally deficient; and 24 as being functionally obsolete. All of these bridges will continue to be monitored at least every two years, with any unsafe bridges being closed.

Preservation/Cultural

There are 25 sites within Orleans County listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including 5 historic districts: Cobblestone Historic District; Holley Village Historic District; Main Street Historic District; North Main Bank Historic District and Orleans County Courthouse Historic District. The remaining sites include historic homes; farm; cemeteries; and churches throughout all of Orleans County.

Preservation efforts are also focused on the many other historic places throughout Orleans County that are not listed on the National Register, but still contribute to the history and sense of place of each community. Some of these efforts include the rehabilitation of downtowns within the historic villages and hamlets throughout the County. Additionally Orleans County has an aging housing stock with 47.7% of its structures built before 1939⁴⁴, many of which have significant historic characteristics that further the sense of place of the County.

Historic preservation is also a key goal of the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan, which identified the strategy to “reinforce the identity, sense of place, and character of the area through downtown redevelopment, adaptive reuse of existing buildings and infrastructure, and historic preservation.”⁴⁵ Main Street Redevelopment and His-

toric Preservation are also key components of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy with a specific Goal outlined to “Encourage Main Street Revitalization and Historic Preservation” along with several strategies for the Region including: encouraging communities to develop and enforce design guidelines and zoning regulations; working to link developers and municipalities with federal and state preservation and rehabilitation programs to help encourage Main Street redevelopment; and supporting historic preservation efforts throughout the Region.⁴⁶

The Genesee-Finger Lakes Regional Inventory of Culturally Significant Areas also identified six cultural landscapes from Orleans County. These included: Lake Alice in the Town of Carlton; Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge in the Town of Shelby; Glenwood Lake in the Village of Medina; Smith Family Estate in the Village of Lyndonville; Oak Orchard Harbor in the Town of Carlton; and the Holley Village Square in the Village of Holley.⁴⁷

Department of State Programs

New York State Department of State offers, or previously offered, a number of programs to assist municipalities, counties, and regions within New York State. These programs include the Local Government Efficiency Program; Local Waterfront Revitalization Program; and the Brownfield Opportunity Area program. Additionally, Department of State also administers the Community Services Block Grant program throughout New York State.

The Local Government Efficiency (LGE) Program provides assistance and grants to local governments for projects that will achieve savings and improve efficiency. Potential projects include shared services, cooperative agreements, mergers, consolidations, and dissolutions.⁴⁸ Orleans County has been the recipient of a number of Local Government Efficiency grants over the past few years including the following: assistance to the Village of Albion, Town of Albion, and Town of Gaines to study a potential merger; assistance to the Village of Lyndonville and the Town of Yates to study village dissolution; assistance to the Village of Medina to study village dissolution with the Town of Shelby and Town of Ridgeway; assistance to the Barker Central School District to study a merger with Lyndonville Central School District; assistance to the Holley Central School District to study a shared transportation facility with the Town of Murray and Village of Holley; assistance to the Village of Holley to study the benefits of consolidating departments; and assistance to Orleans County for the purchase of equipment.

The Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) provides assistance to communities to prepare a planning document “addressing all issues that are impacting a community’s entire waterfront or addressing the most critical issues that are facing a significant portion of its waterfront.”⁴⁹ Through the LWRP, funding was received by the Towns of Kendall, Yates, and Carlton in 2002 to develop an inter-municipal comprehensive land and water use plan to address the waterfront resources within the Towns along Lake Ontario, Johnson Creek, Oak Orchard River, Marsh Creek, and Sandy Creek.⁵⁰ In 2015 the Towns were awarded a second LWRP grant to update current conditions, policies, and implementation tools and projects in the areas of community revitalization, erosion, transportation infrastructure, water quality, and harbor management.⁵¹

The Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) program helps provide communities assistance and funding to develop revitalization strategies to return vacant and blighted parcels into productive properties improving economic and community development.⁵² The Village of Holley received funding under the BOA program to complete a Pre-Nomination Study for a 749 acre area located within the Village near the Erie Canal. Revitalization objectives include: cleaning-up and redeveloping brownfields and other vacant sites with commercial and industrial businesses. New York State Department of State is also responsible for administration of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Program which supports a variety of programs aimed at reducing and eliminating poverty. For Orleans County, funding under the CSBG program is provided to Community Action of Orleans and Genesee County, Inc., which provides assistance to Orleans County and Genesee County residents through a variety of programs including: head start; family development; home rehabilitation and weatherization; amongst others.⁵³

Orleans County Step-2 Recommendations

Orleans County has a number of key project recommendations, many of which can leverage the funding programs outlined in the section above, including New York State Department of State and other state and federal programs.

Key project recommendations for Orleans County include expansion of rail at the Holley and Medina Business Parks; development of the Orleans Fiber Optic Pipe; dredging of Lake Ontario Harbor; infrastructure to support access to the Medina Business Park; implementation of the Holley Brownfield Opportunity Area Pre-Nomination Study; implementation and development of the Kendall Yates Carlton Local Waterfront

Revitalization Project; and completion of the Holley Central Park Improvement Project. The focus areas for economic distress within Orleans County include the Town of Albion/Village of Albion; Village of Medina; Town of Shelby; and the Village of Holley.

The projects identified above are in variety of stages of completion with several projects previously receiving funding through the New York State Consolidating Funding Application process, from Upstate Revitalization Initiative awards, or from other local or federal funding sources and other projects that have yet to pursue funding (or have not been awarded funding). Even projects which have received awards may still need additional funding as the funding may only cover one phase of a multi-phase project.

The full list of Orleans County priority projects is outlined in the table below and includes the priority projects identified above along with other key projects that were identified through the Sub-Regional Forum; follow-up webinar; County Forum; and existing local, county, and regional plans; and the regional engagement project capture form.

Orleans County Next Steps/Status

The Orleans County IDA is leading a number of implementation efforts on a number of economic development projects including rail expansion at the Holley and Medina Business Parks; development of the Orleans Fiber Optic Pipe; and infrastructure development to support access to the Medina Business Park. Discussions have taken place regarding a potential application for Public Works funding from EDA to assist in infrastructure development at the Medina Business Park. The Public Works program can cover up to 50% of project costs.

Ongoing Orleans County projects include the implementation of the Holley Brownfield Opportunity Area Pre-Nomination Study, which can potentially leverage funding through the New York State Department of State Brownfield Opportunity Area program for a Step-2 Nomination Study; development and implementation of the Kendall, Yates, Carlton Local Waterfront Revitalization Project, which was recently funded by a \$40,000 grant from New York State Department of State; and completion of the Holley Canal Park Improvement Project, which previously received \$65,776 from the New York State Canal Corporation.

Orleans County also continues to work with New York State and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers to ensure that dredging of Lake Ontario Harbor continues in order to maintain recreational opportunities on Lake Ontario and will continue to monitor Plan 2014 and its

impact on Lake Ontario water levels.

Goals and Objectives

Successful revitalization of Orleans County cannot occur within the silo of any single subject area described above. Economic and community development revitalization efforts will depend upon the successful implementation of the goals and objectives of each subject area outlined below. Many of these goals and objectives cut across multiple subject areas and illustrate the collaboration and coordination that is needed across multiple communities and multiple organizations for implementation. While some of goals and objectives listed below are more critical than others they are all listed to show the role that each subject area can play in advancing Orleans County. The goals and objectives listed below were identified through the Sub-Regional Forum; follow-up webinar; County Forum; and existing local, county, and regional plans.

Land Use

1. Preserve agricultural land resources
2. Support the economic contributions of agriculture and related businesses
3. Focus economic development efforts on targeted areas for growth

Brownfields

1. Revitalize brownfield properties
2. Complete Phase II site assessments on strategic brownfield properties
3. Implement Holley Brownfield Opportunity Area Pre-Nomination Study

Economic Development/Economic Distress

1. Eliminate distress within targeted areas: Town of Albion; Village of Albion; Village of Medina; Town of Shelby; and Village of Holley
2. Improve sewer/water, telecommunications, and transportation infrastructure
3. Advance agriculture and agri-business
4. Support existing businesses and the retention of jobs

Downtowns

1. Fill vacant storefronts
2. Improve aesthetic appeal of “Main Streets” and historic downtowns
3. Implement building and façade renovations
4. Renovate and reuse vacant upper floors
5. Continue downtown events
6. Improve physical linkages between the Erie Canal and downtown business districts

Tourism and Recreation

1. Create network of advocates for the Finger Lakes Region lifestyle
2. Invest in the development, promotion, and preservation of cultural, artistic, and historic assets of the Region
3. Promote the Region’s growing wine, culinary, and agricultural enterprises
4. Strengthen and support the Region’s diverse water resources and recreational tourism opportunities
5. Increase number of hotel/lodging accommodations
6. Expand usage of Erie Canal
7. Expand wine trial and agri-tourism industry

Waterfronts

1. Continue to dredge harbors and provide recreational opportunities on Lake Ontario
2. Continue to monitor Plan 2014 and its impact on the Orleans County shoreline

Environmental/Water Resources/Natural Resources

1. Ensure long-term preservation of surface and groundwater resources
2. Preserve natural resources
3. Creation of green infrastructure standards and integration of standards into site plan review criteria
4. Restoration of severe streambank segments using ecologically-based stream restoration
5. Enforce floodplain development regulations
6. Reduce agricultural runoff

Energy

1. Develop/embrace renewable energy resources
2. Remove energy roadblocks that are limiting economic development opportunities
3. Identify, connect, and promote energy assets for successful attraction of companies

Buildings/Housing

1. Address vacant properties/storefronts
2. Continue to promote and implement senior housing/aging in place programs
3. Continue to preserve historic and culturally significant assets within Orleans County

Infrastructure

1. Improve sewer/water, telecommunications, and transportation infrastructure
2. Complete infrastructure inventory and analysis to determine the capacity and location of existing infrastructure
3. Continue to monitor traffic counts and conditions of bridges

Preservation/Cultural

1. Encourage communities to develop and enforce Design guidelines and zoning regulations
2. Connect developers and municipalities with federal and state preservation and rehabilitation programs to encourage Main Street redevelopment
3. Support historic preservation efforts throughout Orleans County

Projects

Projects listed below were identified through the Sub-Regional Forum; follow-up webinar; County Forum and existing local, county, and regional plans; and the regional engagement project capture form. Projects are listed with a brief description, along with their corresponding subject area or areas, and potential funding sources. Additional information about potential funding sources is available in Appendix B.

Orleans County Priority Projects

Project Name	Project Description	Subject Area	Agency/Organization Responsible for Implementation	Potential Funding Organization/Program
ALBION NY MAIN STREET 2011	Town will rehabilitate buildings and provide streetscape enhancements and a kiosk providing space for advertising and promotion of the district.	Downtowns	Town of Albion	New York State Office of Community Renewal Main Street Program
Medina NY Main Street	Project will assist in the renovation of downtown mixed-use buildings in historic Downtown Medina.	Downtowns; Preservation/Cultural	Village of Medina	New York State Office of Community Renewal Main Street Program
Genesee-Orleans Employment Support Project	The Genesee/Orleans Employment Training and Support Project will prepare unskilled individuals to qualify for, and obtain, employment in high occupational areas.	Economic Development	Community Action of Orleans and Genesee Inc.	Community Development Block Grant Program
Rail Infrastructure Holley Business Park	Development of rail infrastructure in support of the Holley Business Park.	Economic Development	Orleans County Economic Development Agency	Empire State Development Grant Funds; Economic Development Administration Public Works Program
Medina Business Park Shovel Ready	Development of Infrastructure in support of the Medina Business Park.	Economic Development	Orleans County Economic Development Agency	Empire State Development Grant Funds; Economic Development Administration Public Works Program
Orleans Fiber Optic Pipe	Development of Fiber Optic Pipe in Orleans County to improve access to broadband and support business retention and attraction efforts.	Economic Development	Orleans County Economic Development Agency	Empire State Development Grant Funds; Economic Development Administration Public Works Program
Rail Infrastructure Medina Business Park	Development of rail infrastructure in support of Medina Business Park.	Economic Development	Orleans County Economic Development Agency	Empire State Development Grant Funds; Economic Development Administration Public Works Program
Orleans County Agriculture Processing Facility Business Park	Construction of pre-permitted building for a food processing facility and infrastructure for additional projects sites in the Medina Business Park.	Economic Development	Orleans County Economic Development Agency	Empire State Development Grant Funds; Economic Development Administration Public Works Program; Upstate Revitalization Initiative

Orleans County Regional Engagement Revitalization Opportunity Report Projects

Project Name	Project Description	Subject Area	Agency/Organization Responsible for Implementation	Potential Funding Organization/Program
Medina Business Park Infrastructure Access	Widen road, expand water, sewer, utility infrastructure to support access to additional parcels for development at the Medina Business Park.	Economic Development, Infrastructure	Orleans County Economic Development Agency	Empire State Development Grant Funds; Economic Development Administration Public Works Program
Countywide Drainage District in Orleans County	Establish of a county-wide drainage district in Orleans County.	Environmental/Water Resources	Orleans County	Orleans County; New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
County-Wide Last-Mile Internet	Project will address areas with limited or no internet access through establishing “last-mile” connections.	Infrastructure	Orleans County; Niagara County	New NY State Broadband Program
Law Enforcement Shared Service and Efficiency Study	Study will explore the efficiency of current local law enforcement operations amongst the Orleans County Sheriff’s Office, and the Police Departments of the Villages of Albion, Lyndonville, Medina, and Holley and investigate the potential consolidation of the five departments.	Other	Orleans County; Village of Albion; Village of Lyndonville; Village of Medina; Village of Holley	DOS Local Government Efficiency Program
Marine Park Boating Access Phase 2	Orleans County will design and construct improvements at Orleans County Marine Park on Oak Orchard River.	Tourism and Recreation	Orleans County	DOS Local Waterfront Revitalization Program
Holley Canal Park Improvement Project	The Village of Holley in Orleans County will provide improvements to Canal Park including improvements to the existing gazebo, pavilions, and stone paths.	Tourism and Recreation	Village of Holley	New York State Canal Corporation Grant Program
Hillside Cemetery Chapel Restoration	This project will restore the non-denominational chapel in Hillside Cemetery of Clarendon and Holley and repurpose it for new public uses.	Tourism and Recreation	Town of Clarendon	Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation-Environmental Protection Fund
Bents Opera House Restoration Phase II	The Orleans Renaissance Group will perform restoration work on the historic Bents Opera House building located in the Village of Medina.	Tourism and Recreation	Orleans Renaissance Group	Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation-Environmental Protection Fund; Upstate Revitalization Initiative

Orleans County Regional Engagement Revitalization Opportunity Report Projects

Project Name	Project Description	Subject Area	Agency/Organization Responsible for Implementation	Potential Funding Organization/Program
Lake Ontario Harbor Dredging	Dredging of the Harbors along Lake Ontario to support Recreational Boating Access.	Tourism and Recreation	Orleans County	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Kendall-Yates-Carlton Local Waterfront Revitalization Program Update	Orleans County, in partnership with the Towns of Kendall, Yates and Carlton, will amend the Kendall-Yates-Carlton LWRP to update current conditions, policies, and implementation tools and projects.	Waterfronts; Environmental/Water Resources	Orleans County, Towns of Kendall, Yates, Carlton	DOS Local Waterfront Revitalization Program

End Notes

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