



Regional Economic  
Development Councils



STATE OF THE REGION:

# Southern Tier

2023 STRATEGIC PLAN





# Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council Members

## Regional Council Co-Chairs

Judy McKinney-Cherry  
*Executive Director, Schuylers County Partnership for Economic Development (SCOPED)*

Dr. Kevin Drumm  
*President, SUNY Broome Community College*

## Executive Committee

Peg Ellsworth  
*Executive Director, The Mark Project*

Heather McDaniel  
*President, Tompkins County Area Development*

LeeAnn Tinney  
*Director of Economic Development & Planning, Tioga County Government*

Dawn Burlew  
*Director of Government Affairs and Business Development, Corning Enterprises*

Jerome Emanuel  
*Director of Business Development, Alternatives Federal Credit Union*

Michael Field  
*President The Raymond Corporation*

## Regional Council Members

Joseph Roman  
*Executive Director, Chemung County IDA*

Karen Jones  
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*International Representative, 3rd District, IBEW, Local 139*

Kathryn Connerton  
*President/ CEO, Our Lady of Lourdes Memorial Hospital, Inc.*

Thomas Schryver  
*Cornell University*

Shailesh Upreti  
*Founder, iM3NY*

## Ex-Officio Regional Council Members\*

Donna Lupardo  
*Assemblymember, NYS Assembly*

Tom O'Mara  
*Senator, NY State Senate*

Jason Garnar  
*Broome, County Executive*

Shawna Black  
*Chair of County Legislature, Tompkins*

Chris Moss  
*County Executive, Chemung*

Martha Sauerbrey  
*Chair of County Legislature, Tioga*

Scott VanEtten  
*Chair of County Legislature, Steuben*

Carl Blowers  
*Chair of County Legislature, Schuylers*

George Seneck  
*Chair of County Legislature, Chenango*

Tina Molé  
*Chair of County Legislature, Delaware*

Jared Kraham  
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Dan Mandell  
*Mayor, Elmira*

## Empire State Development Regional Office Staff

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*Regional Director*

Carly Creed-Herman  
*Project Manager*

Janet Maxian  
*Executive Assistant*

## Strategic Plan Support

HR&A Advisors

River Street Planning & Development

Kyanite Partners

\* Appointed NYS Senate and Assembly Council members can vote on general items in REDC meetings and batch project lists, but not on individual projects.

# Table of Contents

<b>MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY &amp; PROGRESS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
a. State of the Region .....	7
b. A Vision for the Southern Tier .....	9
c. Five Pillars of Regional Investment .....	10
d. Status of Past CFA Projects .....	13
<b>II. REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE &amp; PARTICIPATION.....</b>	<b>18</b>
e. The Southern Tier Today.....	19
f. Pillars of Regional Investment.....	30
g. Participation .....	62
<b>III. REGIONAL CHALLENGE .....</b>	<b>66</b>
h. Overview .....	67
i. Proposal .....	68
<b>IV. APPENDIX.....</b>	<b>77</b>
j. Appendix A - Implementation Agenda.....	78
k. Appendix B - Performance Measurement .....	81
l. Appendix C - Work Group Members.....	82
m. Appendix D - Available Sites .....	85
n. Appendix E - Tourism Amenities .....	86

# Message from the Co-Chairs

## *Join the Momentum in the Southern Tier*

Since 2011, the Southern Tier has demonstrated thoughtful planning, active progress, demonstrable economic performance, and transformative infrastructure projects. For the new Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan, we engaged over 150 stakeholders with a commitment to diverse perspectives focused on key opportunities that will catalyze innovation, attract and hone talent, create employment opportunities with career ladders, all to enhance the existing vitality and exceptional quality of life in the Southern Tier.

Through public outreach, data analysis, and collaboration, we have woven together a new strategic plan that reflects the collective aspirations of our communities within the Southern Tier. This plan is the culmination of our efforts and provides a guide for an even brighter and more resilient, prosperous future. We are grateful for the engagement of our REDC members, stakeholders and businesses, and related community members who provided us with thoughtful and inspirational insights. Through them, we have identified strengths to leverage, challenges to address, and emerging opportunities to seize. As but one result of this planning effort, we will be enhancing our cross-collaborative efforts by establishing two new workgroups consisting of ex-officio members and workgroup co-chairs in order expand our regional networks to effectively communicate ideas, implement strategies, and align goals that will grow and sustain our regional economy.

Rooted in innovation, this plan champions the development and attraction of new businesses, particularly those with inherent strengths that are tied to our institutions of higher education and our region's anchor industries, as catalysts for continued economic growth. It supports the critical role that our back-bone industries, including agriculture, play in our regional economy. The following plan recognizes our strengths in Clean Energy and strongly supports our initiatives in this growing industry. With strategic investments and partnerships, coupled with federal awards, we aspire to position our region as a national hub for innovation in the clean energy and energy storage sectors.

Central to our strategy is our deliberate focus on population and talent attraction, development, and retention. By fostering an environment that nurtures skills and innovation and attracts diverse talent, we aim to grow



Judy McKinney-Cherry



Kevin Drumm

our vibrant, dynamic workforce and ever replenishing workforce capable of propelling our region forward with a replenishing energy. This will be realized through creating targeted initiatives that will anchor more of those educated in the region from pre-K through graduate school, that will invest in talent development to cultivate a skilled workforce, and will retain talent by creating an inclusive and innovative environment. To ensure success, we will need to have communities that are authentic, unique, and desirable to live in with appropriate housing, commercial amenities, and services for the growing variety of people and needs in the region.

The Southern Tier has an astounding quality of life including a diverse natural environment for outdoor recreation, charming villages and bustling cities, and cultural assets unique in the United States. Our strategic plan recognizes this and addresses the need to ensure we share our communities' livability and attractions with the nation and the world.

The STREDC plan is not just a goal, it is a responsibility we owe to ourselves and future generations. Together, let's ensure that the Southern Tier is economically vibrant, inclusive, sustainable and a source of pride for all of us.

Yours in Sustainable Growth,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judy M. Cherry".

Judy McKinney-Cherry,  
Co-Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. Drumm".

Kevin Drumm,  
Co-Chair





PART ONE

# Executive Summary & Progress



## More than a decade after the founding of the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) and the development of its first strategic plan, the Southern Tier stands at a pivotal juncture.

The eight-county region's charming towns, world-class universities, remarkable natural beauty, and moderate cost of living have made it one of New York's most livable regions for decades, but future economic prosperity requires continued reinvention.

Momentum is building, propelled by innovations in legacy industries that have long sustained the region and the growth of new industries that look to the future. As New York State continues to recover from the pandemic, face escalating climate impacts, and address a deepening housing crisis, the Southern Tier of New York is positioned to lead a charge toward a sustainable and resilient future. With a robust network of anchor institutions and employers, a burgeoning green economy, and a solid quality of life, the Southern Tier can play a vital role in addressing local and state-wide challenges.

To do so, the Southern Tier must confront its challenges. The region's population has continued to decline in recent decades as the rest of the state and other up-state regions have grown. The workforce is aging, and like many rural and semi-rural regions, the Southern Tier has lagged behind the economic growth that more urban regions have enjoyed. Yet the Southern Tier has tapped into its unique assets to drive growth in emerging sectors, leveraging the Upstate Revitalization Initiative to strengthen the regional innovation economy and reinvest in urban centers, attracting more than \$113 million in federal and state support through the New Energy New York Build Back Better Regional Challenge, and most recently winning designation as one of 31 Tech Hubs nationally, with hundreds of millions of dollars of additional investment in reach.

Now, the Southern Tier must maximize the benefits of recent investments to lay the groundwork for overall regional prosperity. It must regrow its population, attracting and retaining talent from across the state, nation, and globe; continuing to invest and drive innovation in backbone industries like advanced manufacturing, agriculture, and health care; and developing and training its workers to attain skills and jobs in growing industries. It must make strategic investments in infrastructure that attracts and grows businesses and communities across

the eight counties that are livable, accessible, welcoming, and inclusive. And it must be vigilant to make sure that the benefits of economic growth and development benefit everyone in the region.

This Strategic Plan encompasses a holistic approach to regional economic development. In an era marked by unprecedented change, guiding economic development demands strategic foresight, adaptability, and collective action. This Plan identifies key trends impacting the Southern Tier economy and collective quality of life. It examines the region's major strengths and challenges, providing a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape of living, working, visiting, and enjoying the Southern Tier. More than just an analytical exercise, this Plan articulates a vision for the future of the region informed by input from hundreds of business, academic, cultural, government, and community stakeholders. It identifies the region's most pressing policy priorities and potential strategies to address these priorities, establishing a clear path forward.

At the heart of this Plan are a set of values that guide the Southern Tier REDC's approach to economic development:

- 1. Equity:** Economic growth and physical planning will seek to benefit all Southern Tier communities, and to narrow racial, gender, socio-economic, and geographic disparities.
- 2. Diversity:** Strategies put forth by this plan will respect that the region is made up of many types of communities that bring different strengths and require different approaches.
- 3. Sustainability:** The region's natural environment is one of its greatest assets, and investments will seek to preserve this asset.
- 4. Collaboration:** The region will work and learn in partnership, across the public and private sectors, across counties, and with other regions of the state.

This Plan's creation was a collaborative effort, merging a broad array of perspectives, expertise, and insight. Led by the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council with input from a cross-section of institutional, business, government, and community stakeholders, as well as the wider Southern Tier community, this update represents a roadmap that leverages the Southern Tier's unique assets, strategically addresses its challenges, and builds on its meaningful potential to drive economic prosperity and enhance quality of life across the region.

# State of the Region

**The Southern Tier region, abutting New York's southern border, comprises eight counties: Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, and Tompkins Counties.**

The region is home to 639,000 residents, just 3% of New York State's total population, and yet it plays an outsized role in the state. World-renowned colleges and universities, combined with robust and growing advanced manufacturing and agribusiness sectors, make the region a home for innovation and have led to the region's emergence as a hub for cleantech. An increasingly diverse population, vibrant cities and towns of all sizes, and abundant natural beauty make the region an attractive place to live and to visit. And yet the region must overcome its significant challenges, including population and job loss, unequal distribution of economic opportunity, and a lack of affordable housing.

Among the Southern Tier's greatest strengths and assets are:

- **Its network of world-class universities, colleges, and community colleges**, anchored by Binghamton and Cornell Universities. Academic institutions in the region awarded over 18,500 degrees in 2021, 86% of which were bachelor's degrees or higher, and the region's top higher education institutions receive over \$1.3 billion in funding for research and development each year. Educational institutions also play critical roles in supporting startups and providing workforce training, offering opportunities for Southern Tier residents across the region.
- **The region's emerging innovation ecosystem**, which has created significant momentum in recent years, particularly around advanced manufacturing and cleantech. Incubators in the region have launched globally successful companies, and anchor employers continue to innovate and create the technologies of tomorrow.

## #1

region in NY State for concentration of advanced manufacturing and electronics jobs

## 65,000+

students are enrolled in the region's higher education institutions.

## 30% growth

in the agribusiness sector.

## \$110M+

in recent public grants to further battery technology development.



- **Its historic strength in critical sectors including manufacturing, agriculture, and health care.** Anchor businesses and talent have helped capture the newest generation of advanced manufacturing, including in the transportation and energy storage industries. The region's agriculture sector grew by more than 30% from 2011 to 2021 even as other industries contracted.
- **Vibrant population centers of all sizes.** Binghamton and Ithaca have both grown over the past decade, fueled by new housing and commercial development, cultural projects, and public space improvements. Smaller cities and villages across the region are undertaking planning efforts to revitalize main streets, increasing walkability and quality of life.
- **Natural beauty and top cultural amenities,** which fuel the local tourism economy and provide recreation opportunities for residents, including visiting New York's Wine Country, hiking among the region's streams and gorges, and attending art exhibits and globally recognized museums.
- **Growing cultural diversity,** with the non-white population growing by 19,600 residents from 2011-2021.

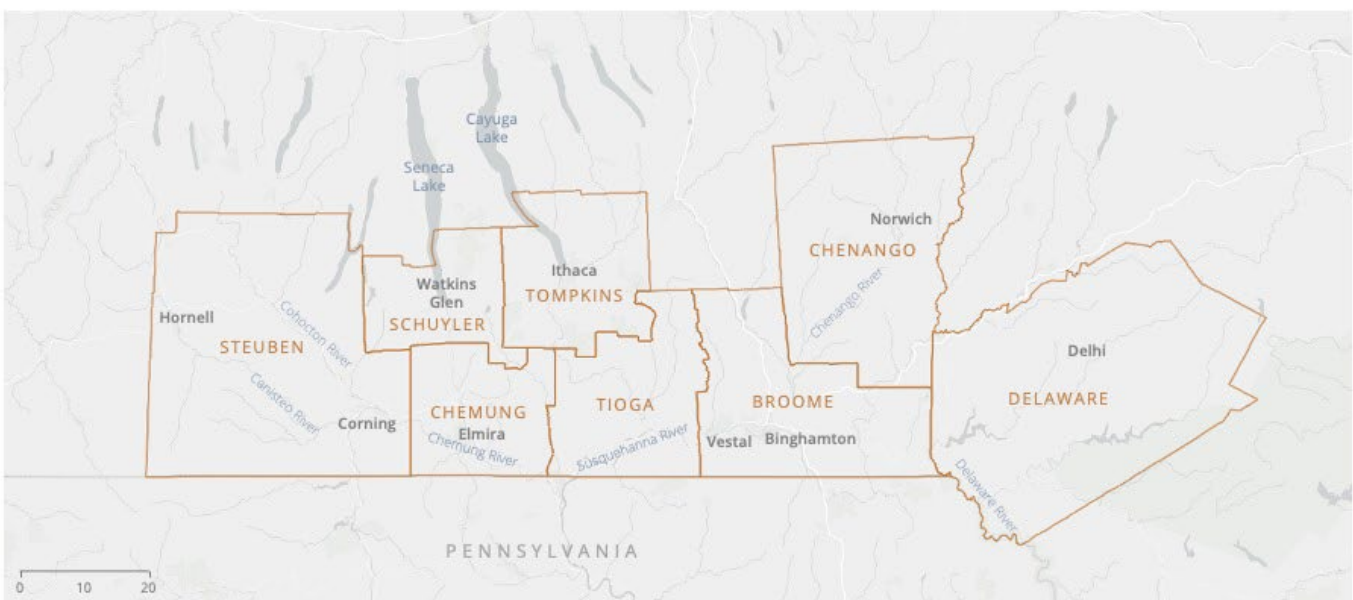
Amid these strengths, the region contends with meaningful challenges, including:

- **Declining and aging population.** The region's population peaked in 1990 and declined by 2.6% from 2000-2020. The largest population decline was in adults of prime working age, including those aged 35 to 54 (a decline of 17%).

- **Relatedly, a shrinking labor force.** The combined effect of these demographic changes and increasing retirements among aging workers is a decline of almost 12% in the region's labor force, the steepest decline of any region in the state. The shrinking labor force raises challenges for local employers seeking a qualified workforce and limits the region's tax base.
- **Job contraction in core industries.** The region's top four industries (government, health care, manufacturing, and retail) all saw major job losses over the last decade. However, recent private and public investment in the region, coupled with decades of planning and partnerships across industries, have begun to bear fruit – manufacturing is expected to grow by 9% over the next 5 years.
- **Persistent inequalities based on race and ethnicity.** Median incomes for Black residents were roughly half that of white residents, a higher level of disparity than New York State or the U.S. as a whole.
- **Declining affordability.** For all residents, regardless of race, gender, or income, housing affordability is a top concern: rates of home construction have slowed across the region, and many counties saw a net loss of housing units.

The Southern Tier is facing these challenges head on, leveraging recent momentum to propel the region forward. This plan outlines a framework and strategic direction for the region, and lays the foundation for growth in the decade to come.

## Southern Tier Region



# A Vision for the Southern Tier

This Strategic Plan lays out a roadmap for the next five years that not only guides REDC investment, but also builds the foundation for enduring and resilient growth for decades to come. The Southern Tier REDC has defined a vision for the region's future, in which the Southern Tier fulfills the following:

- **The Southern Tier's population and job base is growing**, with new households and businesses choosing to relocate to the region and those who grow up and study in the region choosing to stay or return.
- **The Southern Tier has harnessed its historic manufacturing strength to cement its longstanding position and become a global leader in next-generation industries**, with thriving businesses in cleantech, advanced manufacturing, and agribusiness.
- **The Southern Tier's workforce is continually renewing with new workers, returning workers, and workers with new skills; and is ready to seize any opportunity**, backed by employer-informed training at all skill levels and strengthened coordination between universities and industry.
- **The Southern Tier is known statewide and nationally as a great place to live and visit**, with a low cost of living, unmatched natural beauty, charming and historic downtowns, and easy access to job centers and nearby metro areas.



Binghamton, NY



Corning, NY



Cornell AgriTech



# Five Pillars of Regional Investment

The Southern Tier REDC values of equity, diversity, sustainability, and collaboration guided development of the five Pillars of Regional Investment laid out in this document, and the strategies and recommended actions contained within each Pillar. Each Pillar

represents an overarching goal for the region, and the strategies within recommend approaches to investment, policy, or programming. Pillars of Regional Investment defined by the REDC are:



**Position the Southern Tier as a dynamic, ever-evolving hub for cleantech.** The Southern Tier is emerging as a global leader in battery technology innovation and manufacturing, fueled by research at regional universities and a base of anchor employers and startups eager to deploy new technologies. Local manufacturers are exploring novel technologies to sustainably diversify the region's energy mix, and the Southern Tier has the opportunity to position itself as a hub for the cleantech industry, creating a distinctive economic cluster and competitive edge to support business and talent attraction.

*The REDC will amplify the work of regional sectoral partnerships to build on state and federal investments and catalyze growth, and address challenges in the electrical grid to increase power capacity for energy transitions.*



**Propel growth in backbone industries and nurture the regional innovation ecosystem.** In 2011, the Southern Tier REDC set out to radically grow the region's innovation ecosystem to catalyze economic growth. Today, innovation is a critical component of the region's economy, and regional incubators have spun off companies that have created hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars in economic impact. Underpinning this innovation are backbone industries that have sustained the region for decades, including advanced manufacturing, transportation and logistics, and agriculture. *Building on this success, the region will support early-stage companies, strengthen the region's manufacturing capacity by investing in backbone industries, identify and prioritize strategic shovel-ready sites, support food manufacturing and agricultural value-add to capture economic value, and create a focused branding and marketing campaign to elevate the Southern Tier as a national leader in advanced manufacturing.*



**Demonstrate the Southern Tier's unmatched livability and incentivize residential and commercial development that complements the region's communities.** Economic success will require the region to retain a greater share of its population and attract new residents. The region has many assets in place: a low cost of living, historic cities, towns, and villages, quality healthcare, and incredible natural beauty. Yet the lack of quality and affordable housing, inadequate childcare, and underinvested downtowns hold back the Southern Tier's growth. *To address these challenges, the Southern Tier will prioritize funding tools that create housing, incentivize municipalities to rethink land use, ensure the Southern Tier is welcoming to all residents, expand the supply of childcare, and invest in urban, town, and village centers across the region to improve the public realm and increase livability.*



**Grow a diverse, adaptable, future-ready workforce.** The Southern Tier has long boasted a skilled workforce in manufacturing, agriculture, and related industries. Yet a shrinking labor force leaves employers struggling to find qualified talent, and a mismatch between available positions and worker skills leaves residents disconnected from quality jobs. By focusing on connecting jobseekers to opportunities in emerging fields, the Southern Tier can raise economic well-being and boost the regional economy. *The REDC will strengthen partnerships between stakeholders, retain students who are educated in the Southern Tier, expand successful training programs across the region, and invest in wraparound services to increase participation in the workforce.*



**Amplify the Southern Tier story.** The Southern Tier offers incredible natural beauty, rich culture, and vibrant downtowns. Visitors and residents can access outdoor activities like hiking and boating, cultural amenities including music festivals and art walks, and agricultural tourism that ranges from craft food and beverage to cow cuddling. Tourism is a core component of the region's economy, and improving access to activities and amenities for visitors simultaneously supports the regional appeal necessary to attract and retain residents. *To amplify the Southern Tier's story, the REDC will facilitate collaboration to craft a cohesive tourism and messaging strategy, build on the region's cultural legacy to create a new mix of destinations, and support businesses that serve diverse populations.*



Within each pillar are a series of strategies that outline specific actions the REDC will support:

Pillar	Strategy
<b>Position the Southern Tier as a dynamic, ever-evolving hub for cleantech</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Amplify the work of regional sectoral partnerships in cleantech, including New Energy New York, to build on state and federal investments and catalyze cluster growth throughout the Southern Tier.</li> <li>2. Address challenges in the electrical grid to increase power capacity and ensure a fast and reliable transition to clean energy and energy storage solutions.</li> </ol>
<b>Foster the resilience of the region's backbone industries and nurture the emerging regional innovation ecosystem</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support entrepreneurial companies with access to mentorship, capital, and talent.</li> <li>2. Continue to strengthen the region's manufacturing capacity by investing in businesses up and down the supply chain.</li> <li>3. Identify strategic sites to prioritize for shovel-ready improvements for business development and expansion.</li> <li>4. Support the development of food manufacturing, diversification, and agricultural value-add to capture a higher share of economic value for the region.</li> <li>5. Focus branding and marketing efforts on elevating the Southern Tier as a global leader in advanced manufacturing and cleantech.</li> </ol>
<b>Demonstrate the Southern Tier's unmatched livability and incentivize residential and commercial development</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prioritize funding tools that support the development of housing in addition to commercial uses, including affordable housing.</li> <li>2. Incentivize municipalities to rethink land use regulations to create an environment for the development of housing and other amenities to meet market demand.</li> <li>3. Ensure the Southern Tier is welcoming and supportive to all residents.</li> <li>4. Expand the net supply of childcare.</li> <li>5. Invest in urban, town, and village centers across the region to improve the public realm, leverage cultural assets, and improve livability.</li> </ol>
<b>Grow a diverse, adaptable, future-ready workforce</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Convene regional workforce partners to strengthen partnerships between private-sector partners, training and education providers, and community-based services for regional coordination and collaboration.</li> <li>2. Implement innovative worker attraction strategies to grow the regional workforce.</li> <li>3. Retain students who are educated in the Southern Tier.</li> <li>4. Expand successful training programs across the region.</li> <li>5. Invest in wraparound services to increase participation in the workforce and workforce training programs.</li> </ol>
<b>Amplify the Southern Tier Story</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Build on the Southern Tier's historic cultural legacy to expand and create a mix of new destinations in the region.</li> <li>2. Facilitate cross-collaboration among Southern Tier tourism regions, to craft a cohesive regional tourism strategy to attract multi-day visitors.</li> <li>3. Create a focused marketing campaign to elevate the Southern Tier as a great place to live with natural beauty, a rich cultural fabric, and a low cost of living.</li> <li>4. Support institutions, organizations, and businesses that serve diverse populations.</li> </ol>

Implementation of the strategies laid out in the chart above will take place over the next five years and beyond. Priorities established in this report will guide the REDC as it evaluates grant awards through the Consolidated Funding Application, facilitates collaboration among regional economic development, business, and institutional stakeholders, and advocates for both public and private investment in the Southern Tier's communities and residents. The REDC will continue to convene Work Groups focused on key strategic priorities and collaborate with regional elected officials and municipalities to build consensus and support around those priorities.

Through the REDC's investment, the Southern Tier will benefit from a coordinated and comprehensive network of workforce training initiatives that generate a skilled, renewable labor force positioned to leverage ever-evolving economic shifts. Investments in emerging cleantech industries and in legacy manufacturing and agriculture industries will attract businesses with stable, well-paying jobs, with accompanying high-capacity infrastructure that can accommodate growth. Private and public support will be aligned to foster entrepreneurship, drive innovation, and allow new businesses to begin, grow, and remain in the region. Southern Tier towns, cities, and rural communities will benefit from strategic land use planning and targeted investment that facilitates the efficient production of housing, revitalization of public realm and infrastructure, and expansion of crucial amenities that support quality of life, such as childcare. Support for organizations, institutions, and businesses that serve and welcome diverse populations will ensure that the Southern Tier is a welcoming and inclusive place to live. Finally, all of the Southern Tier's assets will be clearly communicated to potential residents, businesses, and investors nationally and internationally through cohesive, thoughtful storytelling and tourism strategy.



Connecticut Hill Wildlife Area



Town of Owego NY



Watkins Glen International Speedway

















## Status of Past CFA Projects



# Overview of Previously Funded Priority Projects

## SUMMARY STATUS OF PAST PRIORITY PROJECTS BY ROUND

Status	Round I	Round II	Round III	Round IV	Round V	Round VI	Round VII	Round VIII	Round IX	Round XI	Round XII	Total
	27	16	18	19	16	1	1	2	3	-	-	103
	-	2	2	4	3	-	4	7	6	2	3	33
	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	4	2	-	10
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
	1	4	1	-	1	-	1	2	-	-	-	10
	4	6	8	7	12	5	11	7	7	-	2	69
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>225</b>

-  Project is complete
-  Project concerns need to be resolved
-  Project is on schedule
-  Project contract not yet executed
-  Project is progressing more slowly than anticipated
-  Project canceled or funding declined

## LEVERAGE OF STATE INVESTMENT IN ALL PAST PRIORITY PROJECTS

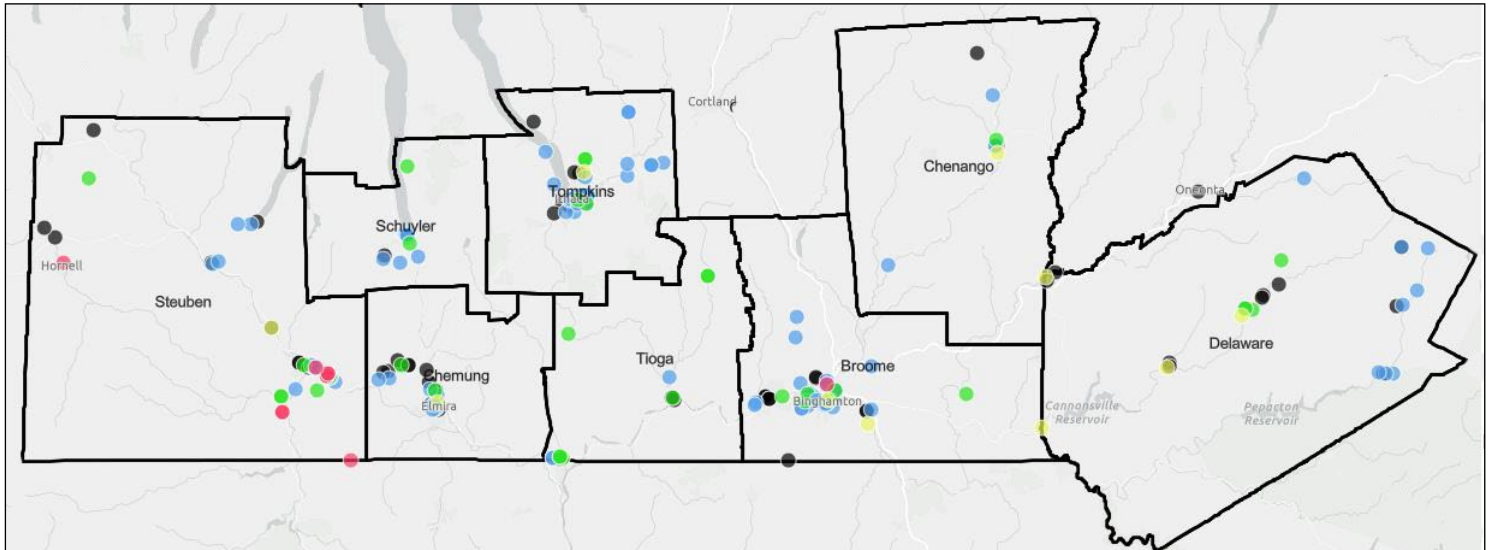
The table below lists the ratio of the total investment in past priority projects to the state investment over Rounds I through XII of the REDC.

Round	Total Number of Priority Projects	Total Amount of Priority Project Awards	Total Project Cost	Ratio of Award Amounts to Total Project Cost
Round I	29	\$28,589,262	\$120,734,020	1:4.22
Round II	22	\$22,862,949	\$335,374,856	1:14.67
Round III	21	\$23,600,682	\$152,682,582	1:6.47
Round IV	23	\$24,172,100	\$133,838,231	1:5.54
Round V	20	\$40,767,810	\$194,488,393	1:4.77
Round VI	1	\$250,000	\$9,950,000	1:39.8
Round VII	7	\$3,011,000	\$18,774,008	1:6.24
Round VIII	13	\$8,540,000	\$53,440,692	1:6.26
Round IX	13	\$6,917,000	\$47,848,151	1:6.92
Round XI	4	\$2,251,816	\$12,534,409	1:5.57
Round XII	3	\$3,755,000	\$22,757,970	1:6.06
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>\$164,717,619</b>	<b>\$1,102,423,312</b>	<b>1:6.69</b>

Project data is updated through October 2023. For additional analysis and full appendix of all projects, please visit <https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/southern-tier> to view the Project Tracking Dashboard.







## GEORGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF PAST PRIORITY PROJECTS







- Project is complete
- Project concerns need to be resolved
- Project is on schedule
- Project contract not yet executed
- Project is progressing more slowly than anticipated
- Project canceled or funding declined



# Overview of All Previously Funded CFA Projects

Since its inception, 880 projects have been supported by the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council. Through these strategic investments, \$431 million in public support has leveraged more than \$2 billion in private funds for projects throughout the Southern Tier for a total strategic investment in the region of more than \$2.4 billion and the creation and/or retention of more than 30,000 jobs.

Status	Round I	Round II	Round III	Round IV	Round V	Round VI	Round VII	Round VIII	Round IX	Round XI	Round XII	Total
	58	49	74	71	70	43	34	33	33	3	-	<b>468</b>
	-	5	5	6	11	11	27	47	59	54	13	<b>238</b>
	1	-	-	1	2	-	3	5	5	2	-	<b>19</b>
	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	3	4	5	<b>16</b>
	1	5	2	-	1	-	1	2	1	-	-	<b>13</b>
	7	10	12	14	19	10	19	15	12	4	4	<b>126</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>880</b>

-  Project is complete
-  Project concerns need to be resolved
-  Project is on schedule
-  Project contract not yet executed
-  Project is progressing more slowly than anticipated
-  Project canceled or funding declined



## LEVERAGE OF STATE INVESTMENT IN ALL CFA PROJECTS

Round	Total # of Awards	Total Amount of All CFA Awards	Total Project Cost	Ratio of Award Amount to Total Project Cost
Round I	60	\$37,342,269	\$140,529,682	1:3.76
Round II	59	\$70,194,539	\$355,599,689	1:5.07
Round III	81	\$33,717,813	\$179,906,383	1:5.34
Round IV	78	\$33,995,407	\$159,045,389	1:4.68
Round V	84	\$59,685,643	\$332,681,336	1:5.57
Round VI	56	\$25,827,745	\$269,714,685	1:10.44
Round VII	65	\$33,692,864	\$213,877,175	1:6.35
Round VIII	89	\$31,670,178	\$184,527,616	1:5.83
Round IX	101	\$40,613,728	\$249,041,526	1:6.13
Round XI	63	\$53,959,192	\$285,322,244	1:5.29
Round XII	18	\$10,212,031	\$34,967,083	1:3.42
<b>Total</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>\$430,911,409</b>	<b>\$2,405,212,809</b>	<b>1:5.58</b>

## JOB CREATION IN ALL CFA PROJECTS

The table below lists the total number of permanent jobs retained and created through the CFA.

Round	Projected Jobs Created	Projected Jobs Retained	Total
Round I	216	346	562
Round II	409	6164	6573
Round III	399	2071	2470
Round IV	230	1037	1267
Round V	650	4999	5649
Round VI	810	669	1479
Round VII	216	512	728
Round VIII	1395	1750	3145
Round IX	308	7506	7814
Round XI	384	1355	1739
Round XII	87	50	137
<b>Total</b>	<b>5104</b>	<b>26459</b>	<b>31563</b>



A photograph of a street scene. In the background, there is a three-story yellow building with blue window frames and white shutters. To the left, a large green tree partially obscures the building. To the right, a red brick building is visible. In the foreground, a group of people are walking on a paved sidewalk. Some are standing near a tree, while others are walking past. There are several concrete blocks or planters on the sidewalk. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

PART TWO

# Regional Strategic Plan Update & Participation



# The Southern Tier Today

**World-class universities. Unmatched natural beauty. Historic towns and villages. Rich manufacturing and agriculture assets. Multinational companies and small family-owned firms. A vibrant innovation cluster that is writing the next chapter of technology, energy, and food.**

## **This is the Southern Tier in 2023.**

The Southern Tier comprises eight counties abutting the state's southern border: Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, and Tompkins Counties. With a population of 639,000 residents in 2022, the Southern Tier is home to just 3% of New York State's population but has an outsized role in the state's history and future. While it has lost population and jobs in recent decades, the region benefits from a world-renowned academic sector which, when combined with its robust and growing advanced manufacturing and agribusiness sectors, makes the region a competitive center for innovation and commerce. The Southern Tier's increasingly diverse population, natural beauty, and numerous tourist destinations will also play a role in a more diversified and growing economy. The region must address population and job loss, ensure that economic opportunity is spread equitably, and focus on improving housing availability and affordability. Regional partnerships to address these challenges are well underway and will serve as the backbone of future planning efforts.

## **STRENGTHS AND ASSETS**

The Southern Tier is a hub for education, innovation, manufacturing, hospitality, tourism, and natural beauty. It is these strengths that make the region a unique and vibrant place to live and work and provide a foundation on which to build a resilient, vibrant economic future.

### **A Higher Education Hub**

Among the Southern Tier's greatest assets is its network of world-class universities and colleges that support a robust ecosystem of research and development, particularly in the STEM and agriculture fields.



## **A REGION WITH MANY FLAVORS**

The Southern Tier's eight counties share a rich history of culture, commerce, and innovation. Still, the region has wide variation across counties and municipalities in demographic trends, dominant industries, and opportunities for the future. The region's two major urban centers, Greater Binghamton and Ithaca, are collectively home to roughly one third of the Southern Tier's population, approximately 235,000 people. While the overall regional population declined over the past decade, those urban centers grew – Greater Binghamton grew by 1% and Ithaca by 5%.<sup>1</sup> The Southern Tier also has a constellation of small cities, including Corning, Elmira, and Hornell, as well as expansive rural communities with proud legacies of agriculture, natural resources, and natural beauty. No one economic development strategy can apply universally to all regional communities in the Southern Tier. While many strategies are important to all types of communities – urban, town, rural – it is necessary to apply those strategies differently. Housing strategies should account for the character of the built environment and the needs of local communities, workforce strategies should target different industries, skills, and services, and business support and attraction strategies should account for varying needs in technology, access, and infrastructure.

At any given time, there are over 65,000 students enrolled in the Southern Tier's colleges and universities, giving the Southern Tier a student-to-total-population ratio 1.8 times as high as the statewide

<sup>1</sup> American Community Survey, 2021.



average.<sup>2, 3</sup> The largest academic institutions in the Southern Tier by total enrollment are Cornell University (25,900), Binghamton University (18,600), SUNY Broome Community College (5,400), Ithaca College (5,000), Tompkins Cortland Community College (4,700), SUNY Corning Community College (4,000), SUNY College of Technology at Delhi (2,600), and Elmira College (1,100). In 2021, academic institutions in the region awarded over 18,500 degrees and certificates, 86% of which were bachelor's degrees or higher.

The most popular programs studied by Southern Tier students are Business Administration and Management, Computer Science, Nursing, Biology, and Psychology, presenting an opportunity for the region to retain future business, STEM, and healthcare leaders. The region's higher education institutions also play a significant role in regional research, innovation, and business development. In a typical year, the region's top higher education institutions alone receive over \$1.3 billion in funding for research and development.<sup>4</sup> These institutions contribute to several competitions and startup incubators that have demonstrated success in advancing new technologies and creating new businesses in the region, including Grow-NY (sponsored by Cornell University) and New Energy New York (sponsored by Binghamton University), both detailed below.

Southern Tier academic institutions receive over  
**\$1.3 billion**  
 annually in R&D funding.

### An Emerging Innovation Engine

More than a decade of investment has created significant momentum around the Southern Tier's emerging clean technology ("cleantech") and advanced manufacturing sectors. The New Energy New York (NENY) Battery Tech Hub, led by Binghamton University, is growing the region's battery technology sector and cementing the Southern Tier as a national leader in researching, developing, and manufacturing battery technology, including American-made lithium-ion batteries and next-generation technologies. Already, battery companies such as the locally launched

2 Total enrollment in Southern Tier's higher education institutions was calculated using 2022 and 2023 (when available) full student body enrollment data from the region's top 8 largest institutions.

3 The student to total population ratio in the Southern Tier for 2022 was approximately 1:0.10 and for New York State was 1:0.06. Calculated based on Lightcast 2022 population estimates and NYSED Total Higher Education Enrollment data for 2022.

4 National Science Foundation 2021 R&D Expenditures.



Binghamton University's Small Scale Systems Integration and Packaging Center

Imperium 3 New York (iM3NY) have chosen to grow in the Southern Tier with a cutting-edge gigafactory in Endicott. NENY has secured nearly \$114 million in State and federal grants through the Build Back Better Regional Challenge and the Appalachian Regional Commission and was designated one of 31 national Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs.<sup>5,6</sup> This endorsement has the potential to supercharge the Southern Tier's battery industry, while positioning NENY to apply for an additional \$160 million from the National Science Foundation and \$40 to \$70 million in additional federal funding to further its mission.

### Critical Backbone Industries

In addition to education and cleantech, the region boasts significant concentrations of transportation, retail, hospitality, computer, and electronic manufacturing; wood, metal, and mineral products; and agribusiness and craft beverage businesses, supported by a concentration of longtime anchor employers.<sup>7</sup> Anchor employers in the Southern Tier include Corning Incorporated, Lockheed Martin, BAE Systems, IBM, Guthrie, and the Raymond Corporation. These anchors collectively employ over 9,000 workers. Additionally, the region's agribusiness industry is providing growing job opportunities with low barriers to entry and strong ties to the regional innovation economy through regional research institutions including Cornell University. Between 2011 and 2022, the region's agribusiness sector grew by over 30%, making it one of the region's top-growing industry clusters.<sup>8</sup> The annual Grow-NY

5 [White House, "President Biden to Announce 21 Winners of \\$1 Billion American Rescue Plan Regional Challenge," September, 2022.](#)

6 [US Economic Development Administration, "New Energy New York \(NENY\) Battery Tech Hub," 2023.](#)

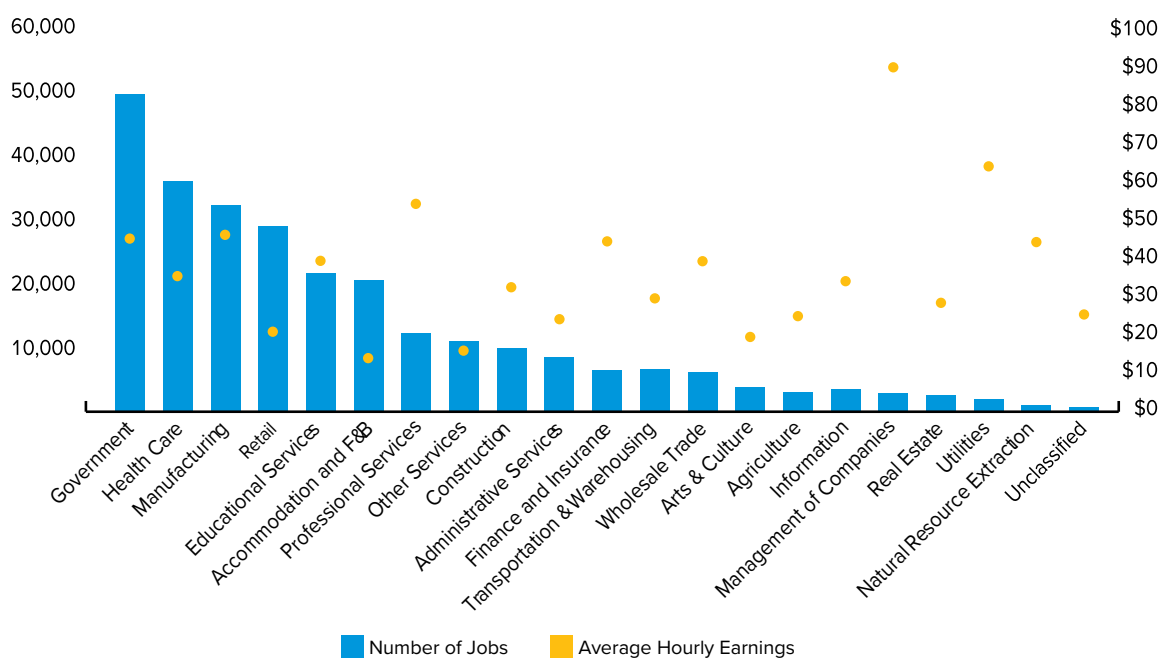
7 Lightcast, 2022.

8 Lightcast, 2022.

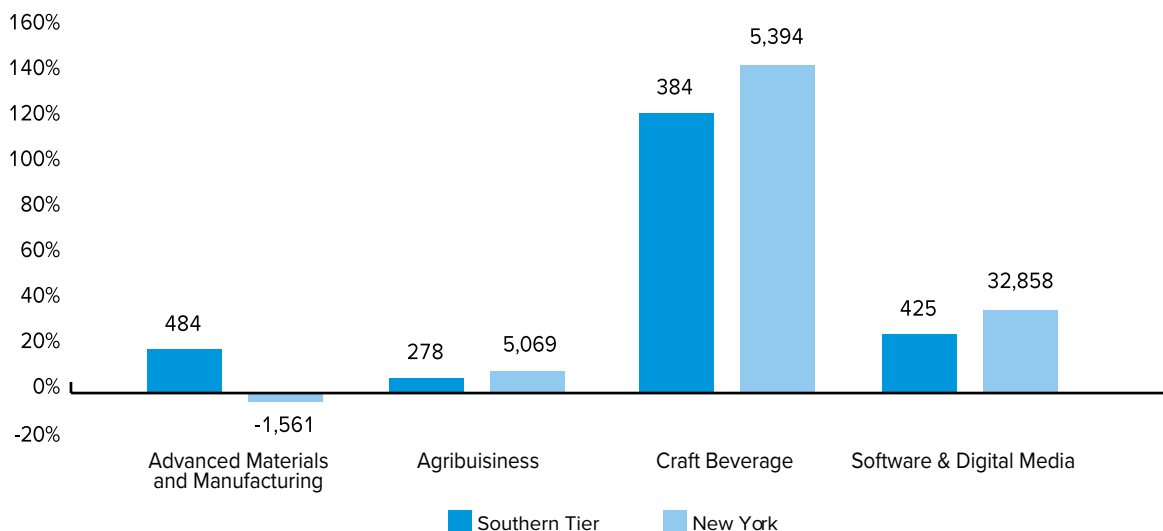
Food & Agriculture Competition provides funding to food and agriculture startups seeking to locate in the region and pairs them with local mentors and business leaders. The program has already demonstrated success in attracting startups to the region like ProAgni, an Australian company that chose to locate in the Southern Tier to further its mission of producing live-stock feeds and supplements to reduce methane emis-sions and the environmental footprint of the sheep and cattle industry.<sup>9</sup> Between 2011-2021, jobs in key sectors that the REDC has identified as priorities have grown almost at pace with, or faster than, jobs statewide.

Between 2011 and 2022, the Southern Tier's agribusiness industry **grew by 30%** to generate **\$1.35 billion annually.**

**Number of Jobs and Hourly Earnings by Industry (2022)**

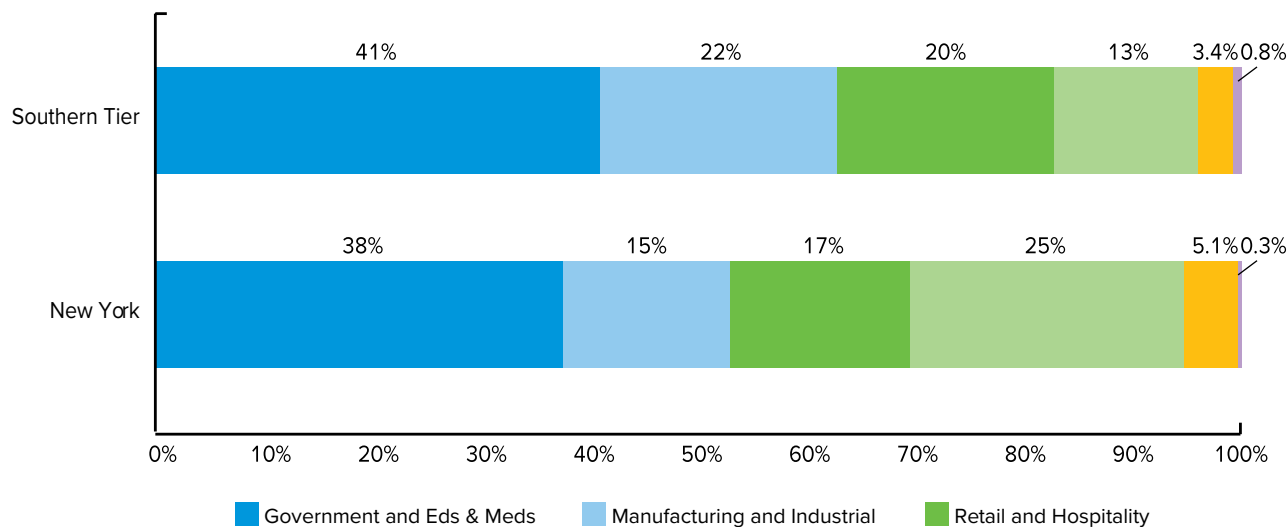


**Job Growth in REDC Priority Sectors (2011-2021)**



<sup>9</sup> GrowNY, "2022 Winners" 2022.

## Distribution of Jobs by Sector, 2021



### Thriving City and Town Centers

The Southern Tier is home to several growing, vibrant population centers. Between 2011-2022, the populations of both Ithaca and Greater Binghamton grew, as new housing, commercial development, cultural projects, and public space improvements took shape. The cities and villages of Elmira, Watkins Glen, Oswego, Hornell, Endicott, Norwich, Johnson City, Montour Falls, and Waverly have advanced planning efforts to revitalize main streets and downtown areas. The Elmira-Horseheads, Corning-Painted Post, and Hornell areas remain major employment hubs, with concentrations in healthcare, scientific research and entrepreneurship, and railcar manufacturing.

### A Robust Healthcare System

The Southern Tier is home to a significant density of quality healthcare facilities. The region is home to almost 7,500 healthcare facilities, including 15 major hospitals with over 1,500 beds.<sup>10</sup> Major hospitals include Our Lady of Lourdes Memorial Hospital in Binghamton, Wilson Medical Center in Johnson City, and the Cayuga Medical Center at Ithaca. Of the 15 hospitals, 9 achieve patient satisfaction ratings above the statewide average. 11 achieve mortality rates and 10 achieve patient safety rates above the statewide average.<sup>11</sup> A dense network of quality hospitals and healthcare facilities is essential for community health, enabling timely access to medical services, facilitates preventive care, early diagnosis, and contributing to overall well-being. Robust healthcare infrastructure fosters community resilience, enabling swift responses to emerging health threats and promoting a healthy, growing population.



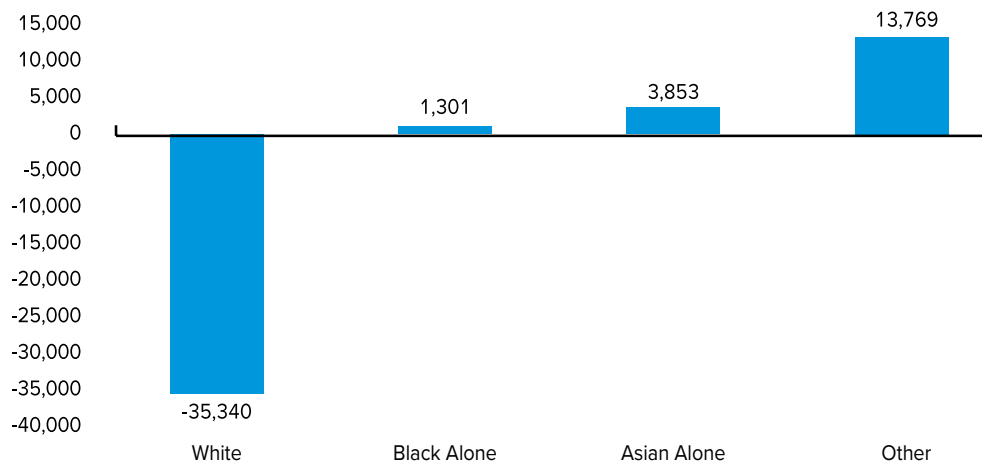
Governor Hochul announcing Downtown Revitalization Initiative funding for Johnson City

<sup>10</sup> ESRI Business Analyst, Data Axle, 2022.

<sup>11</sup> [New York State Department of Health, "NYS Health Profiles."](#)



## Change in Population by Race (2011-2021)



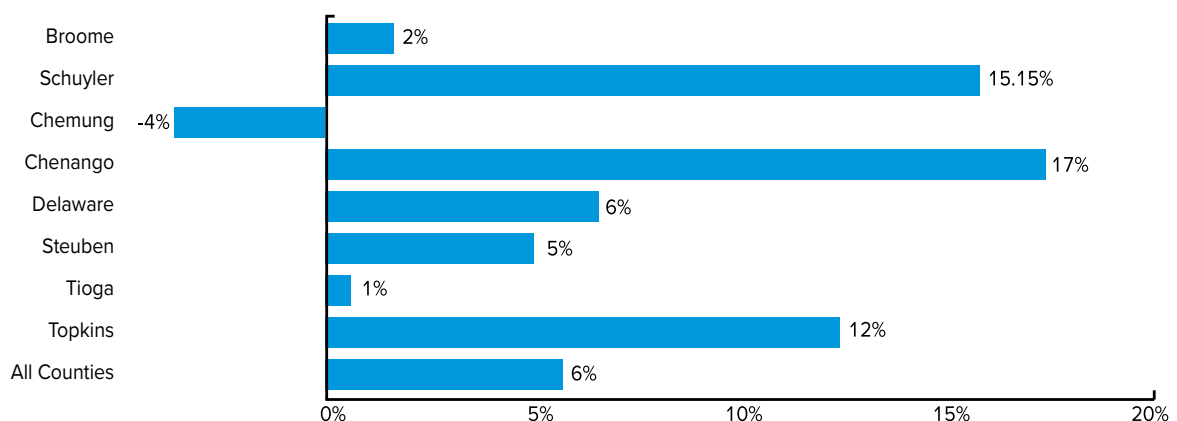
### Growing Diversity

While the Southern Tier's population remains predominantly white, all population increases over the last decade have been driven by its non-white population.<sup>12</sup> Between 2011 and 2021 the region's white population decreased by over 35,000 (-6%) as its non-white population grew by 19,600, especially its Black (+1,300), Asian (+3,900), and multiracial populations (+11,300).<sup>13</sup> The Southern Tier is also home to a sizeable foreign-born population nearly 40,000 strong, with 7% of Broome County residents and 12% of Tompkins County residents having been born outside of the United States.<sup>14</sup>

### Unmatched Natural Beauty & Growth in Tourism

The Southern Tier is rich in rare natural beauty and cultural attractions, showcasing both scenic wonders and the artistic, innovative, and creative talent of the region's residents. In fact, visitor spending has recovered past pre-COVID levels across the region, especially in the Finger Lakes counties of Schuyler, and Tompkins, signaling a demand for the region's offerings and an opportunity to continue this momentum.<sup>15</sup>

## Change in Visitor Spending by County (2019-2022)



<sup>12</sup> Nonwhite includes "Black Alone," "Asian Alone," "American Indian and Alaska Native Alone," "Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone," "Two or More Races," and "Some Other Race Alone," as defined by the US Census Bureau. The only nonwhite population that decreased between 2011-2021 was American Indian and Alaska Natives (-777).

<sup>13</sup> American Community Survey, 2021. The 2021 5-Year Estimates are the most current accurate source of racial and ethnic data available for all Southern Tier Counties.

<sup>14</sup> In the graph "Change in Population by Race," "Other" includes American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, Some Other Race Alone, and Two or More Races as defined by the US Census Bureau.

<sup>15</sup> Tourism Economics, 2022.

The Southern Tier's top natural, cultural, and recreational attractions include:

### **Wine Country**

The counties surrounding the Finger Lakes make up New York State's premier wine-producing region, with visitors spending over \$3 billion annually. In the Southern Tier, these include Schuyler, Steuben, Tompkins, and Tioga Counties.<sup>16</sup> Tourists and locals travel between the area's numerous vineyards, enjoying the region's history, food, culture, and towns along the way.

### **Watkins Glen State Park**

Watkins Glen State Park exemplifies the Southern Tier's natural beauty, with a stream winding past 200-foot cliffs and generating 19 waterfalls along its course. The park receives nearly one million visitors annually from around the world. The State invested over \$6.5 million in 2018 to improve the visitor experience by adding a small outdoor amphitheater and improved educational displays, a viewing area for those unable to hike the gorge, renovated restrooms, and an expanded café.<sup>17</sup>

### **Watkins Glen International**

The Watkins Glen International Speedway (WGI, or "The Glen") was established in 1956 to host the Watkins Glen Grand Prix and was later home to the US Formula One Grand Prix from 1962-1980. WGI also hosts NASCAR, the International Motor Sports of America, and numerous other racing events, including the famous "Six Hours at the Glen" endurance challenge. The track attracts additional visitors from April through October from rentals to car clubs around the Northeast. Visitors can camp at the track, which also hosts major events such as the Finger Lakes Wine Festival and has hosted famous music events such as June Jam and PHISH concerts.

### **Great Western Catskills**

Known as the "Great Western Catskills," Delaware County offers visitors a vast selection of hiking, camping, boating, fishing, and other outdoor activities. Visitors can enjoy the area's natural beauty along with its farmers' markets, fairs, charming towns and villages, and bed and breakfasts.

### **Corning Museum of Glass**

The Corning Museum of Glass, with a globally recognized collection, opened in 1951, has become one of the region's top tourist destinations, welcoming half a million visitors annually. The museum offers exhibits

on the arts, history, culture, technology, science, craft, and design of glass, along with a library and school dedicated to the craft. The museum anchors the city of Corning, home to Corning Incorporated, one of the Southern Tier's top innovators and employers.

### **Spiedie Fest and Balloon Rally**

Started in 1983 as a friendly competition between families to see who could make the best Spiedie (a regionally recognized sandwich), Spiedie Fest quickly turned into a nationally known food and hot air balloon festival, held annually at the end of summer. Over 100,000 visitors flock to Binghamton each year to enjoy family activities, hot air balloon rides, and the much-anticipated Spiedie competition.

### **Luma Projection Arts Festival**

Since 2015, the Luma Projection Arts Festival has drawn thousands to downtown Binghamton to experience artistic storytelling through projection art. The event, typically held at the end of the summer, brings awareness to local artists and attracts tens of thousands of visitors to the best of what Binghamton has to offer.



Weis Vineyards



Luma Projection Arts Festival in Binghamton, NY

16 Oswego County Business, "Finger Lakes Wine Country Keeps Juice Flowing," August 2020.

17 New York Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. "[New York State Announces \\$16.2 Million in Projects to Transform Watkins Glen.](#)" 2018

CHALLENGES

Despite the Southern Tier’s strengths and momentum, the region contends with meaningful challenges that risk limiting economic growth and prosperity and inhibiting the success of regional residents, businesses, and institutions. This strategic plan is designed to face these challenges head-on, in addition to leveraging recent momentum.

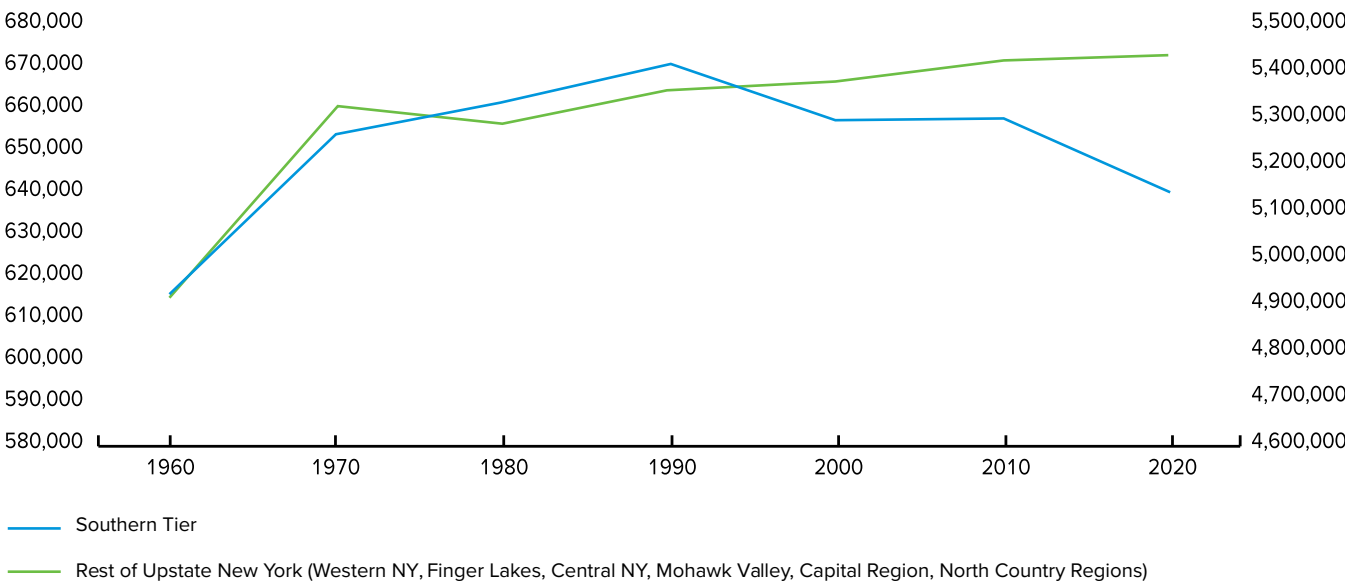
Declining Population

Among the Southern Tier’s greatest challenges is a shrinking and shifting population. The region’s population peaked in 1990 and fell by 2.6% from 2000-2020, while New York State grew by 6.5% and the rest of Upstate New York grew by 1%.<sup>18</sup> Population projections show continued growth for all of New York State but continued shrinkage in the Southern Tier over the next two decades.<sup>19</sup> Population trends vary by county, with Tompkins County having grown by 5% since 2010 and Broome County having grown slightly over the same

period. Rural counties such as Chenango, Delaware, and Schuyler lost between 3% and 8% of their populations.<sup>20, 21, 22</sup> A portion of the region’s population decline is driven by out-migration as residents flocked to larger urban centers in Upstate New York, New York City, and southern cities such as Raleigh, N.C. The region’s net out-migration primarily came from residents leaving the two most populous counties (Broome and Tompkins), despite both having gained population overall. This suggests that students from major universities are choosing to leave the region for employment.<sup>23</sup>

The Southern Tier lost  
**2.6%**  
of its population  
from 2000 to 2020.

Population Growth in the Southern Tier and Upstate New York (1960-2020)

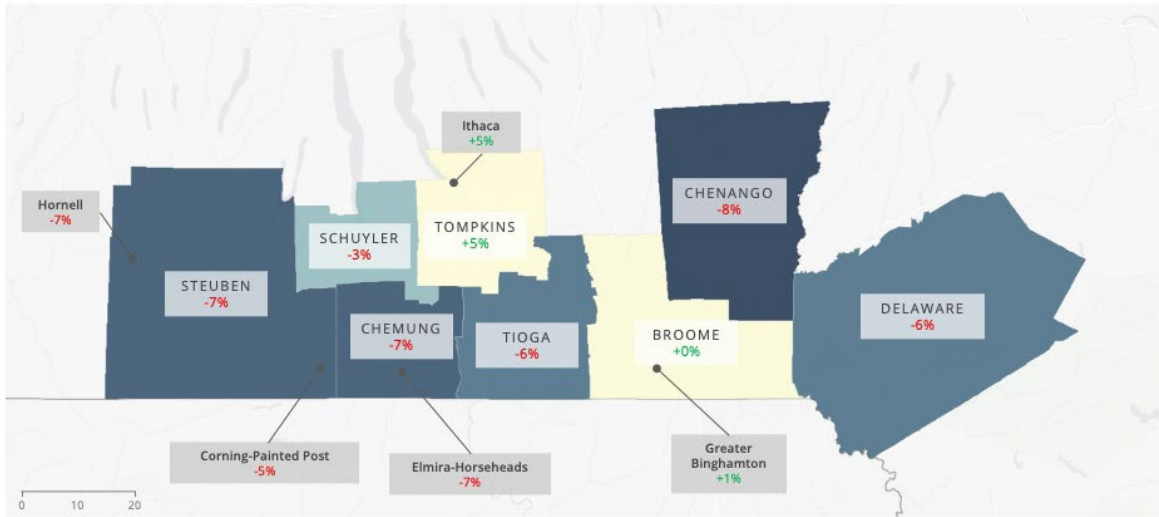


18 US Census, 2020. “Rest of Upstate New York” is defined as the Western NY, Finger Lakes, Central NY, Mohawk Valley, Capital Region, and North Country ESD regions.  
19 County Projections Explorer, Cornell Program on Applied Demographics.

20 US Census, 2020.  
21 Urban centers and towns include all ZIP codes coterminous with each municipality, including the following ZIP Codes for each hub: Greater Binghamton: 13760, 13790, 13850, 13901, 13902, 13903, 13904, 13905; Ithaca: 14850, 14853; Elmira-Horseheads: 14845, 14901, 14903, 14904, 14905; Corning-Painted Post: 14830, 14870; Hornell: 14843.  
22 Lightcast, 2022.  
23 Lightcast, 2020.



## Change in Southern Tier Population by County (2011-2022)



### Shrinking Labor Force

Out-migration has had an acute impact on the regional labor force, a major challenge as regional employers add jobs and seek to staff up. The Southern Tier's labor force has declined at a steeper rate than any other region in the state from 2011-2022.<sup>24</sup> The largest decline in population from 2011-2021 in the Southern Tier occurred in residents typically at prime working age, aged 35-54 (-17%).<sup>25</sup> The pattern threatens to continue due to a declining birthrate across the state, and Tompkins County has the second-lowest birth rate of all New York Counties.<sup>26</sup> In addition, the Southern Tier's working population has one of the highest poverty

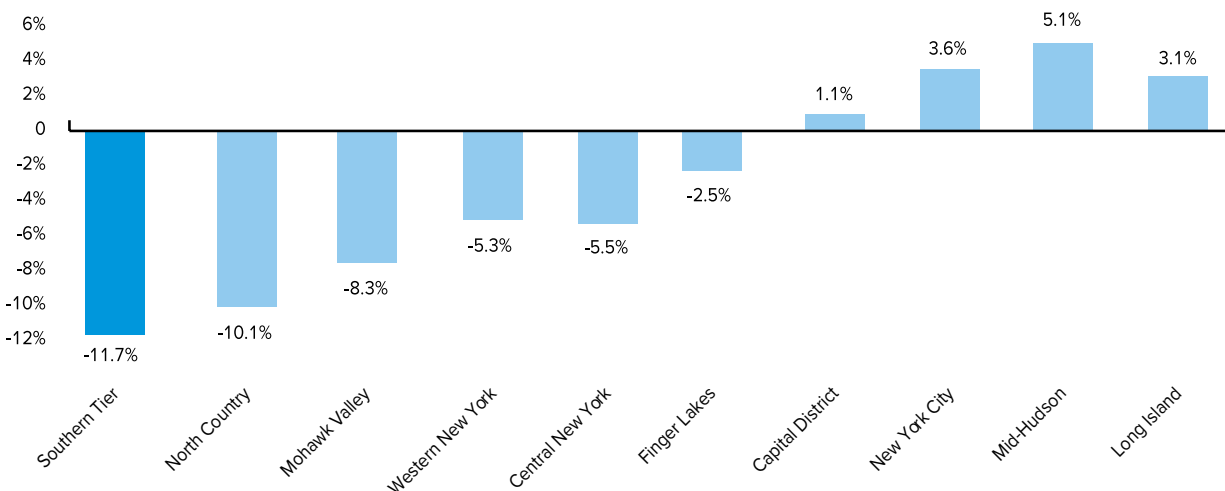
rates in the state, indicating a need for higher-paying jobs. These patterns present challenges not only to local businesses seeking employees, but to the region sustaining its historic tax base – a declining population of working-age adults limits the number and quality of services available to Southern Tier residents.

The Southern Tier's prime working-age population, aged 35 to 54, fell by

**17%**

between 2011 and 2021.

### Change in Labor Force (2011-2022)

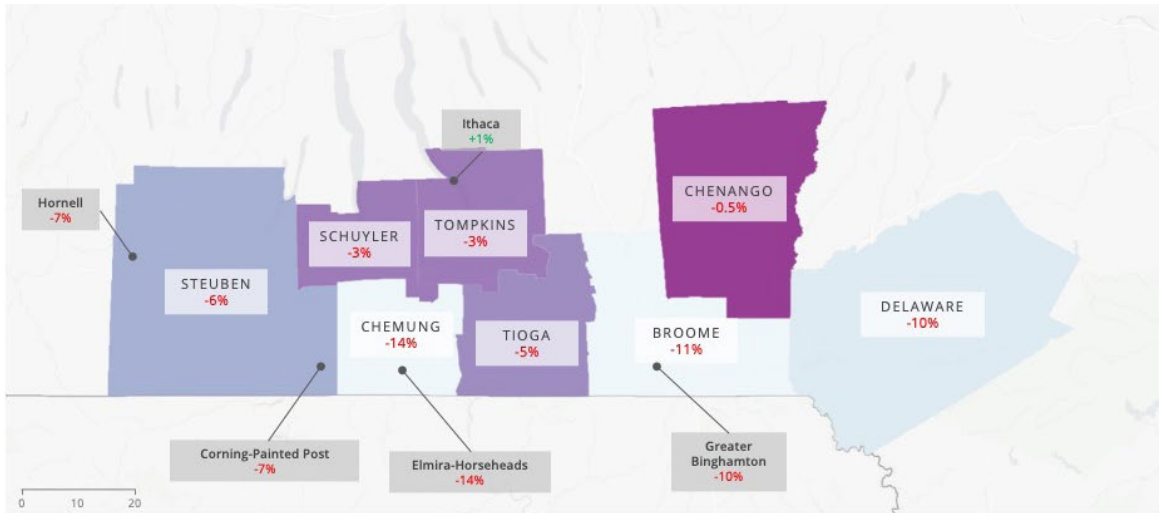


<sup>24</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022.

<sup>25</sup> American Community Survey, 2021.

<sup>26</sup> Cornell Chronicle, "[New York's fertility rate drops, average age of mothers rises](#)," 2023

## Change in Southern Tier Jobs (2011-2022)



### Job Contraction in Core Industries

The number of jobs available in the region has declined along with its labor force. Job decline from 2011-2022 was driven by loss of government, manufacturing, and retail jobs. This reflects a shift away from the dominance of the manufacturing industry, the increased application of technology to manufacturing processes, and a decline in the demand for services that accompanies a smaller overall population. Today, the Southern Tier has higher shares of jobs in government, education, health care, the industrial sector, and retail and hospitality jobs relative to the state as a whole. While many residents are employed in well-paying and growing fields, the majority of residents are employed in industries that offer a middle to low tier of wages. Outside the five largest job centers in the region, the Southern Tier saw a decrease in all three of its top industries: government, healthcare, and hospitality.<sup>27</sup>



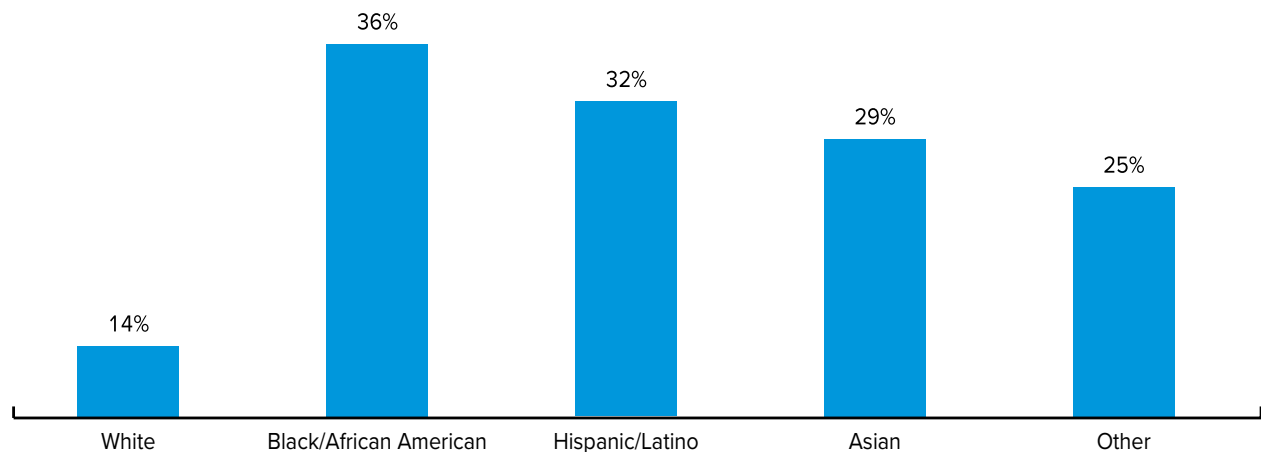
Rev Ithaca



Chenango Valley Central School District Career Day

<sup>27</sup> Lightcast, 2022.

## Poverty Rate by Race/Ethnicity (2021)



### Persistent Racial Disparities

Economic fortunes in the region vary widely based on race and ethnicity. In 2021, 36% of Black residents and 32% of Hispanic/Latino residents earned incomes below the poverty line, compared with 14% of white residents.<sup>28</sup> Median incomes for Black residents in the Southern Tier were roughly half, or 56%, of the median income of white residents, compared to 63% and 62% in New York State and nationwide. Hispanic/Latino median incomes were 74% of the income of white residents, a greater share than Hispanic/Latino residents see statewide at 65%, but still less than the national average of 78%. Black residents also faced 15% unemployment, compared to 10% for Hispanic/Latino residents and 6% for white residents.<sup>29</sup> As the region's non-white population continues to grow, more work must be done to ensure that economic development programs and policies address these disparities.

In 2021, poverty rates were  
**2X to 3X higher**  
for non-white residents  
than for white residents.

<sup>28</sup> American Community Survey, 2021. "Other" includes American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, Some Other Race Alone, and Two or More Races as defined by the US Census Bureau.

<sup>29</sup> American Community Survey, 2021.

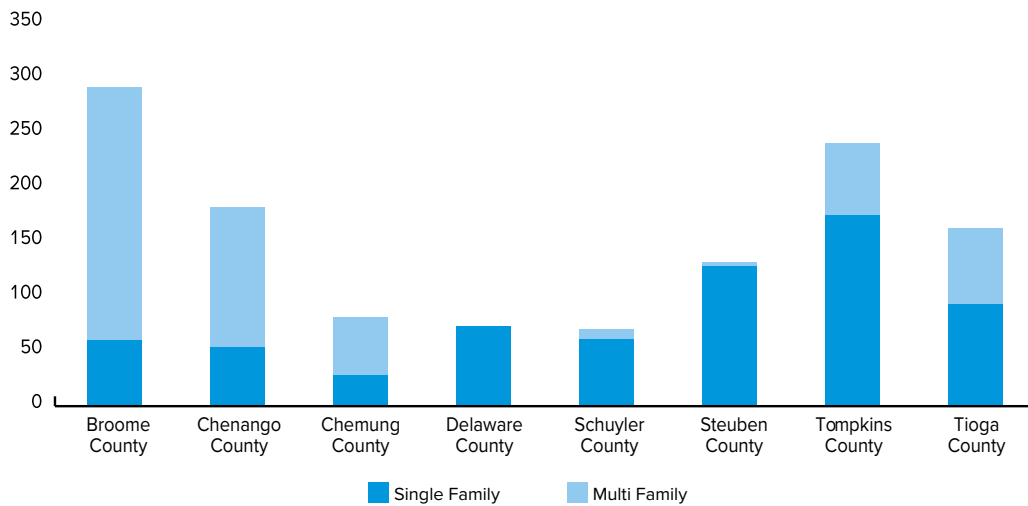


## Declining Housing Affordability

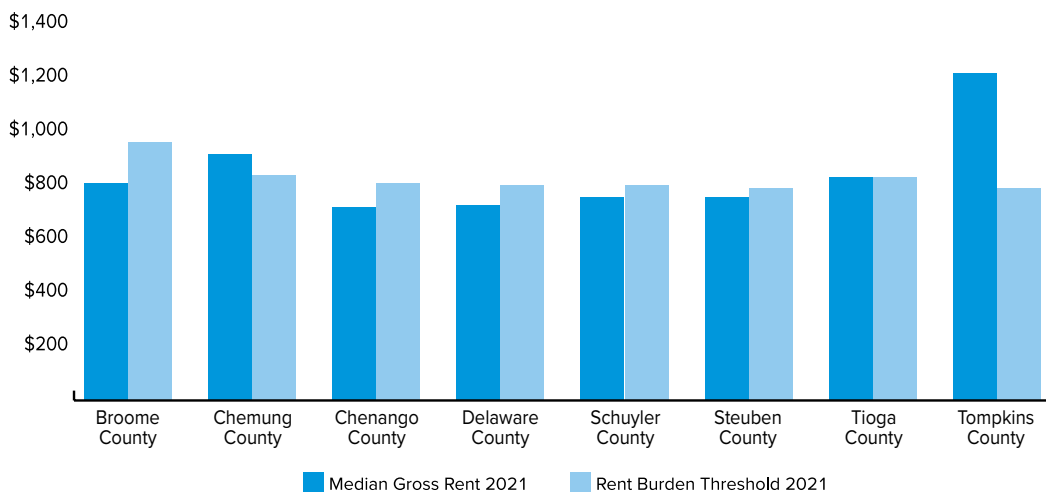
The pandemic exacerbated a preexisting national housing affordability crisis.<sup>30</sup> Housing quality and affordability are concerns across the Southern Tier's geographies, income levels, and communities. There is a mismatch between housing supply and demand for units, with limited housing production beyond a few urban centers. Whereas Tompkins, Broome, Chemung, and Schuyler counties saw a net increase in housing units, all other counties saw a net loss of housing units, deepening the housing supply crisis. Along with these

trends, recent rates of home construction have slowed across the region. There was a general slowdown in building permits issued across all counties in 2022. Most counties saw a decrease in permits issued in 2022 when compared to 2018-2021. Housing unaffordability is most acute in Tompkins, Delaware, and Schuyler Counties, home to the highest and fastest-growing average home values.<sup>31</sup> In 2021, a single person earning a living wage and paying the average rent in Chemung and Tompkins Counties would be considered rent-burdened, defined as paying 30%+ of their income on rent.<sup>32</sup>

**Building Permits Issued (2022)**



**Comparison of Median Rents and Rent-Burden Threshold, based on Living Wage**



<sup>30</sup> Before the pandemic, millions of US households lacked stable, affordable, and quality housing as well as a strong financial safety net (Brookings, "Strategies for increasing affordable housing amid the COVID-19 economic crisis," 2020). In 2020, due to economic shocks, reduced work hours, unemployment, and the deaths of family members, households behind on their mortgage payments rose to their highest levels since the Great Depression (2 million households), while 8 million renter households were behind on their rent, disproportionately in communities of color. (Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, "Housing insecurity and the COVID-19 pandemic," 2021).

<sup>31</sup> Zillow, Change in sale price of all housing typologies, inflation-adjusted, 2023.

<sup>32</sup> MIT Living Wage Calculator

# Pillars of Regional Investment

The Southern Tier is abundant in institutional, cultural, historical, and natural assets, and also burdened with critical demographic trends and shifting economic opportunity. This plan lays out a roadmap to not only guide the REDC's investment, but also to build the foundation for enduring and resilient growth for decades to come. The Southern Tier REDC identified five pillars around which to guide investment in support of economic development over the next five years.

Each pillar represents an overarching goal for the region, within which a set of strategies – or specific approaches to investment, policy, or programming – is recommended. Pillars adhere to the values of Equity, Diversity, Sustainability, and Collaboration that ground this Strategic Plan, and seek to achieve the vision of a prosperous and ever-evolving Southern Tier. The pillars are:



**Position the Southern Tier as a dynamic, ever-evolving hub for cleantech.** The Southern Tier is emerging as a global leader in battery technology innovation and manufacturing, fueled by research at regional universities and a base of anchor employers and startups eager to deploy new technologies. Local manufacturers are exploring novel technologies to sustainably diversify the region's energy mix, and the Southern Tier has the opportunity to position itself as a hub for the cleantech industry, creating a distinctive economic cluster and competitive edge to support business and talent attraction. *The REDC will amplify the work of regional sectoral partnerships to build on state and federal investments and catalyze growth, and address challenges in the electrical grid to increase power capacity for energy transitions.*



**Propel growth in backbone industries and nurture the regional innovation ecosystem.** In 2011, the Southern Tier REDC set out to radically grow the region's innovation ecosystem to catalyze economic growth. Today, innovation is a critical component of the region's economy, and regional incubators have spun off companies that have created hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars in economic impact. Underpinning this innovation are backbone industries that have sustained the region for decades, including advanced manufacturing, transportation and logistics, and agriculture. *Building on this success, the region will support early-stage companies, strengthen the region's manufacturing capacity by investing in backbone industries, identify and prioritize strategic shovel-ready sites, support food manufacturing and agricultural value-add to capture economic value, and create a focused branding and marketing campaign to elevate the Southern Tier as a national leader in advanced manufacturing.*



**Demonstrate the Southern Tier's unmatched livability and incentivize residential and commercial development that complements the region's communities.** Economic success will require the region to retain a greater share of its population and attract new residents. The region has many assets in place: a low cost of living, historic cities, towns, and villages, quality healthcare, and incredible natural beauty. Yet the lack of quality and affordable housing, inadequate childcare, and underinvested downtowns hold back the Southern Tier's growth. *To address these challenges, the Southern Tier will prioritize funding tools that create housing, incentivize municipalities to rethink land use, ensure the Southern Tier is welcoming to all residents, expand the supply of childcare, and invest in urban, town, and village centers across the region to improve the public realm and increase livability.*



**Grow a diverse, adaptable, future-ready workforce.** The Southern Tier has long boasted a skilled workforce in manufacturing, agriculture, and related industries. Yet a shrinking labor force leaves employers struggling to find qualified talent, and a mismatch between available positions and worker skills leaves residents disconnected from quality jobs. By focusing on connecting jobseekers to opportunities in emerging fields, the Southern Tier can raise economic well-being and boost the regional economy. *The REDC will strengthen partnerships between stakeholders, retain students who are educated in the Southern Tier, expand successful training programs across the region, and invest in wraparound services to increase participation in the workforce.*



**Amplify the Southern Tier story.** The Southern Tier offers incredible natural beauty, rich culture, and vibrant downtowns. Visitors and residents can access outdoor activities like hiking and boating, cultural amenities including music festivals and art walks, and agricultural tourism that ranges from craft food and beverage to cow cuddling. Tourism is a core component of the region's economy, and improving access to activities and amenities for visitors simultaneously supports the regional appeal necessary to attract and retain residents. *To amplify the Southern Tier's story, the REDC will facilitate collaboration to craft a cohesive tourism and messaging strategy, build on the region's cultural legacy to create a new mix of destinations, and support businesses that serve diverse populations.*

Within each pillar are a series of strategies that outline specific actions the REDC will support:

Pillar	Strategy
<b>Position the Southern Tier as a dynamic, ever-evolving hub for cleantech</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Amplify the work of regional sectoral partnerships in cleantech, including New Energy New York, to build on state and federal investments and catalyze cluster growth throughout the Southern Tier.</li> <li>6. Address challenges in the electrical grid to increase power capacity and ensure a fast and reliable transition to clean energy and energy storage solutions.</li> </ol>
<b>Foster the resilience of the region's backbone industries and nurture the emerging regional innovation ecosystem</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Support entrepreneurial companies with access to mentorship, capital, and talent.</li> <li>8. Continue to strengthen the region's manufacturing capacity by investing in businesses up and down the supply chain.</li> <li>9. Identify strategic sites to prioritize for shovel-ready improvements for business development and expansion.</li> <li>10. Support the development of food manufacturing, diversification, and agricultural value-add to capture a higher share of economic value for the region.</li> <li>11. Focus branding and marketing efforts on elevating the Southern Tier as a global leader in advanced manufacturing and cleantech.</li> </ol>
<b>Demonstrate the Southern Tier's unmatched livability and incentivize residential and commercial development</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Prioritize funding tools that support the development of housing in addition to commercial uses, including affordable housing.</li> <li>13. Incentivize municipalities to rethink land use regulations to create an environment for the development of housing and other amenities to meet market demand.</li> <li>14. Ensure the Southern Tier is welcoming and supportive to all residents.</li> <li>15. Expand the net supply of childcare.</li> <li>16. Invest in urban, town, and village centers across the region to improve the public realm, leverage cultural assets, and improve livability.</li> </ol>
<b>Grow a diverse, adaptable, future-ready workforce</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. Convene regional workforce partners to strengthen partnerships between private-sector partners, training and education providers, and community-based services for regional coordination and collaboration.</li> <li>18. Implement innovative worker attraction strategies to grow the regional workforce.</li> <li>19. Retain students who are educated in the Southern Tier.</li> <li>20. Expand successful training programs across the region.</li> <li>21. Invest in wraparound services to increase participation in the workforce and workforce training programs.</li> </ol>
<b>Amplify the Southern Tier Story</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>22. Build on the Southern Tier's historic cultural legacy to expand and create a mix of new destinations in the region.</li> <li>23. Facilitate cross-collaboration among Southern Tier tourism regions, to craft a cohesive regional tourism strategy to attract multi-day visitors.</li> <li>24. Create a focused marketing campaign to elevate the Southern Tier as a great place to live with natural beauty, a rich cultural fabric, and a low cost of living.</li> <li>25. Support institutions, organizations, and businesses that serve diverse populations.</li> </ol>



# A Regional Vision

The Southern Tier REDC has defined this vision for the region's future, one in which the region achieves the following:

**The Southern Tier's population and job base is growing**, with new households and businesses choosing to relocate to the region and those who grow up and study in the region choosing to stay or return.

**The Southern Tier has harnessed its historic manufacturing strength to cement its longstanding position and become a global leader in next-generation industries**, with thriving businesses in cleantech, advanced manufacturing, and agribusiness.

**The Southern Tier's workforce is continually renewing with new workers, returning workers, and workers with new skills; and is ready to seize any opportunity**, backed by employer-informed training at all skill levels and strengthened coordination between universities and industry.

**The Southern Tier is known statewide and nationally as a great place to live and visit**, with a low cost of living, unmatched natural beauty, charming and historic downtowns, and easy access to job centers and nearby metro areas.

To drive towards this vision, this Plan lays out five pillars to guide regional investment, as well as specific strategies associated with each pillar. The REDC also identified a set of values in which to ground this roadmap, and around which the region's leaders and communities must center in order to ensure this future is attainable:

- 1. Equity:** Economic growth and physical planning will seek to benefit all Southern Tier communities, and to narrow racial and geographic disparities.
- 2. Diversity:** Strategies put forth by this plan will respect that the region is made up of many types of communities that bring different strengths and require different approaches.
- 3. Sustainability:** The region's natural environment is one of its greatest assets, and investments will seek to preserve this asset.
- 4. Collaboration:** The region will work and learn in partnership, across the public and private sectors, across counties, and with other regions of the state.

The Pillars of Regional Investment outlined in this Plan incorporate this vision and core values, leveraging the Southern Tier's existing strengths to address its most pressing challenges and position the region for a more prosperous and dynamic future.



Southern Tier BOCES Training



Southern Tier Welcome Center



# Pillar One:

## POSITION THE SOUTHERN TIER AS A DYNAMIC, EVER-EVOLVING HUB FOR CLEANTECH.

The Southern Tier is emerging as a global leader in battery technology innovation and manufacturing, fueled by research at Binghamton University and a base of anchor employers and startups eager to deploy new technologies. Local manufacturers are exploring novel technologies to sustainably diversify the region's energy mix, and the Southern Tier has the opportunity to position itself as a hub for the cleantech industry, creating a distinctive economic cluster and competitive edge to support business and talent attraction.

Cleantech is a broad term that encompasses a wide range of emerging industries, from clean and renewable energy (solar, wind, alternative fuels) to recycling technology to electric vehicles. Recent investment in the region has centered around rechargeable lithium-ion batteries and energy storage. Rechargeable batteries and energy storage are critical components in the broader clean energy and cleantech ecosystem – they provide the missing link between clean energy generation and the ability to store and distribute that energy. Battery technology goes far beyond powering electric vehicles and will play an important role in reducing our reliance on fossil fuels and limiting further environmental harm from climate change.



New Energy New York (NENY), a multisector partnership catalyzed by a \$63 million Build Back Better Regional Challenge award and \$50 million in New York State investment, will further power regional innovation in energy storage. The initiative builds on work by Nobel Prize winner M. Stanley Whittingham, a longtime member of Binghamton University's faculty and inventor of the first rechargeable lithium-ion battery, to address needs in workforce development, the supply chain, innovation and entrepreneurship support, and more.<sup>33</sup> Adding to the momentum, the Southern Tier received a federal designation as a Regional Tech Hub, a recognition that NENY can drive regional innovation and job creation while strengthening American manufacturing and competitiveness.<sup>34</sup> NENY was one of 31 winners nationally in this exceptionally competitive program. The designation unlocks significant potential for future federal funding, allowing the region and the state to expand on its Build Back Better award and further build out the battery innovation and manufacturing ecosystem.

New Energy New York (NENY)  
was awarded

**\$114 million**

in 2022 from federal and State  
sources to further battery  
technology innovation.

In addition to catalytic state and federal funding, the region has seen significant private investment in cleantech – including both established firms and new startups emerging from the region's innovation ecosystem. Raymond Corporation has established a line

<sup>33</sup> Binghamton University, BingUNews, "[New Energy New York: Building back better at Binghamton](#)," May 2023.

<sup>34</sup> Binghamton University, BingUNews, "[Binghamton University-led battery initiative named federal Tech Hub](#)," October 2023.



of lithium-ion batteries designed to integrate with their existing technology, and is investing heavily in research and development.<sup>35</sup> Alstom and other transportation manufacturers in the region are testing clean fuel technologies, including both batteries and hydrogen fuel cells, for use in trains and long-haul trucking.<sup>36</sup> Imperium 3 New York (iM3NY), an independent lithium-ion cell manufacturer that launched out of the Koffman Southern Tier Incubator, established its first gigafactory in the Southern Tier, creating over 167,000 square feet of manufacturing space and providing as many as 3,000 jobs at full capacity.<sup>37, 38</sup>

Cleantech investment in the region goes beyond battery manufacturing and expands across the region. Earth Source Heat, a Cornell University research collaboration, is exploring the feasibility of using the Earth's internal "deep geothermal" heat to warm the Cornell campus without the use of fossil fuels.<sup>39</sup> Already, the University uses Lake Source Cooling, relying on the deep cold waters of Cayuga Lake to cool campus buildings.<sup>40</sup> Ithaca startup Ecoelectro (a semifinalist in the 2020 76west Clean Energy Competition) received \$1.7 million from the U.S. Department of Energy to accelerate the production of hydrogen.<sup>41</sup> United Airlines recently agreed to purchase at least 300 million gallons of sustainable aviation fuel from Dimensional Energy, a startup that participated in Cornell's McGovern Family Center for Venture Development in the Life Sciences and received early support from the Atkinson Center for Sustainability.<sup>42</sup> Upstate 2.0, a coalition led by Cornell University focused on transitioning the region from fossil fuels to clean energy through climate-smart biotechnology, was awarded a \$1 million National Science Foundation Engines Development Award, one of 44 such grants across the country that opens the door to millions of dollars of add-on funding.

35 SupplyChain Quarterly, "[Raymond Expands Energy Solutions Portfolio with New 48v Drop-In Lithium-Ion Battery](#)," March 2023.

36 Alstom, "[Alstom Coradia iLint, the World's 1st Hydrogen Powered Passenger Train](#)."

37 [iM3NY Gigafactory](#).

38 Office of Senator Chuck Schumer, "[Schumer Launches Push for iM3NY's \\$700 million Department of Energy Proposal to Supercharge Battery Manufacturing in the Southern Tier](#)," February 2023.

39 [Cornell Earth Source Heat](#)

40 [Cornell Lake Source Cooling](#)

41 Cornell Chronicle, "[Ecoelectro receives \\$1.7M from DOE to accelerate hydrogen fuel development](#)," November 2018.

42 Cornell Chronicle, "[United Airlines, Dimensional Energy reach green fuel pact](#)," June 2022.

# 10,000

projected new supply chain jobs added to the Southern Tier by New Energy New York within the next 10 years



iM3NY Gigafactory

## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT -

### Imperium 3 New York

Imperium 3 New York (iM3NY) is an innovative lithium-ion battery cell company based in Endicott, NY. The company began commercial production in early 2023 and is an integral part of the region's battery manufacturing cluster. Its Endicott Gigafactory is expanding domestic battery manufacturing, strengthening regional supply chains, and providing well-paying jobs to workers across a range of income levels. iM3NY exemplifies the success of the Southern Tier's innovation ecosystem – it was initially founded as a consortium of three Southern Tier companies, including 76West Clean Energy Competition winner and Koffman Southern Tier Incubator graduate C4V. The consortium received a \$4 million Upstate Revitalization Initiative grant, as well as \$3.5 million in Excelsior Jobs Program tax credits.



## STRATEGIES

### Strategy 1: Amplify and strengthen regional partnerships in cleantech to build on state and federal investments and catalyze cluster growth throughout the Southern Tier.

New Energy New York, spearheaded by Binghamton University and supported by a regional coalition of partners, is the leading sector partnership in battery manufacturing. Their coalition combines employers throughout the supply chain, community-based organizations providing integral connections to (and trust with) hard-to-reach populations, labor unions, community colleges, four-year colleges and universities, the statewide New York Battery and Energy Storage Technology Consortium (NY-BEST), and more. While NENY's work reaches beyond the borders of the eight-county Southern Tier region, the nucleus of the ecosystem is in the Greater Binghamton area and the impact of the industry spans the entire Southern Tier.

Cornell University, including its Center for Regional Economic Advancement, has also been a driving force of cleantech innovation and business creation in the region, as a center of scientific and engineering research, a core partner of the 76West Clean Energy Competition (see Pillar 2), and an incubator of entrepreneurs through programs such as Diversity in ClimateTech, which supports BIPOC and women founders, and the Green Technology Innovation Fellowship, which pairs business and research experts to commercialize cleantech.

The Southern Tier REDC will amplify the strategies established by NENY, working together to maximize the impact of existing state and federal investments and strategize around future funding opportunities for business attraction and expansion.

#### Actions

- **Leverage future federal investment opportunities, including capitalizing on the Tech Hub designation.** The region's new designation as a Tech Hub includes prioritization for certain federal funding opportunities (details on which programs have not yet been released but could include Department of Defense and Labor programs). To catalyze future cluster growth in the region, the REDC will work closely with NENY to plan maximally impactful programming and capital investments that combine State funding with available federal funding programs. Additionally, this federal funding priority offers an incentive for businesses interested in

relocating to the region – the REDC will partner with NENY to develop supply chain strategies and proactively attract new firms to fill the cluster needs.

- **Power the growth of cleantech companies and technologies committed to the region.** With cutting-edge research emerging from local universities and employers, a maturing innovation ecosystem, and a strong base of manufacturing talent and expertise, the Southern Tier is positioned to not just incubate but to grow and sustain the next generation of cleantech businesses, across a wide variety of specialty areas and up and down the supply chain. The REDC will support new and existing businesses as they prototype technologies, spin off ventures, secure space and equipment, and go to market – with a strong priority for creating and sustaining quality, accessible jobs in the region.
- **Partner with NENY to expand workforce training opportunities** across the Southern Tier, to ensure all residents can benefit from regional growth in cleantech and battery manufacturing. NENY is developing cutting-edge training programs in battery manufacturing through its Battery Academy. Programs include a 10-week battery technician program, and future programs will include more extended training and credentialing. These programs were developed in close partnership with employers and reflect the most up-to-date industry standards and technology. The REDC will work with NENY and the broader regional workforce ecosystem (see Pillar 4) to ensure residents across the Southern Tier are able to access these programs regardless of geographic location. Additionally, the REDC will explore the use of next-generation technology like extended reality (XR) to support workforce training and talent attraction.

#### Impacts

The Southern Tier has received significant State and federal funding in the last two years, and NENY projects that the funding awarded to date will generate 10,000 new jobs in the coming decades. Amplifying recent success in workforce development, private investment, and business attraction has the potential to expand economic opportunity to the entire region and ensure that future jobs are distributed equitably across the Southern Tier.

## Strategy 2: Address challenges in the electrical grid to increase power capacity and ensure a fast and reliable transition to clean energy and energy storage solutions.

The capacity of the electrical grid is a top concern of businesses and economic development organizations across the region. Businesses and residents are excited about the transition to clean energy but are worried that an already strained electrical grid will not be able to handle the additional capacity necessary to both sustain existing needs and power the large-scale energy projects planned for the region. The region's Industrial Development Authorities (IDAs) cite power capacity as one of the primary obstacles to recruiting new manufacturers, as new hookups are limited because of strained transmission capacity, and individual businesses are unable to afford to upgrade grid infrastructure by themselves.<sup>43</sup>

Innovation in this sector is underway, with several recent demonstration projects earning awards through NYSERDA's Future Grid program.<sup>44</sup> In 2022, a partnership between Siemens PTI, Streetlights Data, and Cornell University received over \$700,000 for a pilot project to forecast scenarios for electricity demand due to electric vehicle adoption, building electrification, and solar generation. ProsumerGrid received \$1.3 million for a demonstration project developing models for the adoption of electric vehicles and heat pumps in Binghamton.

The Southern Tier has the potential to become a large contributor to New York State's climate goals through cleantech and battery innovation. The region can also be a leader in developing innovative approaches to addressing statewide challenges to grid capacity. The region will work closely with IDAs, business owners, and utility companies to address grid challenges, build trust in the electrification process, and ensure a smooth clean energy transition.

## Actions

- **Encourage communities to take advantage of existing State funding (such as the NYSERDA Future Grid program) to study grid capacity and limitations for both current conditions and projected needs.** In partnership with multiple State agencies, the REDC will serve as an information hub and provider of technical assistance to encourage more applications that can leverage existing funding sources for grid modernization.
- **Prioritize the use of State economic development funds to address acute grid challenges.** Focusing on opportunities where last-dollar funding can address gaps in grid infrastructure or other solutions and enable business attraction or job creation, the REDC will work with communities to fund and implement creative solutions to grid capacity limitations. Possible projects could include the relocation of businesses to locations with more capacity, creating simplified and improved agreements with utility companies, or piloting technological innovations to increase grid capacity and reduce strain.
- **Leverage lessons from similar geographies globally that have made meaningful grid improvements.** Cities across the nation and the world are facing climate adaptation challenges, including the need to upgrade electrical grids to handle increased capacity from renewable sources. The Southern Tier can learn from these places and will seek out relationships with similarly situated regions to inform best practices and develop innovative policies.

## Impacts

The stakes of electrification are high: by ensuring that the earliest stages of the transition go smoothly, residents and business owners will be more inclined to embrace future electrification transitions, increasing progress toward a clean climate future. Similar projects across the region can increase the reliability of the electrical grid, improve community trust, and ensure accurate modeling for future grid demand.

43 UtilityDive, "[NY PSC Authorizes \\$4.4B in Transmission Upgrades Planned by National Grid, Other Utilities](#)," February 2023.

44 New York State, "[NYSERDA, NYSEG and RG&E Announce Future Grid Challenge Project Awards in Southern Tier to Help Forecast and Assess Impact of Increasing Electrification on the Electric Grid](#)," March 2022.



## Pillar Two:

### PROPEL GROWTH IN BACKBONE INDUSTRIES AND NURTURE THE REGIONAL INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM.

Nearly eight years ago, through Southern Tier Soaring, the Southern Tier REDC set out to radically grow the region's innovation ecosystem as a prime strategy to drive reinvestment and catalyze economic growth. Today, innovation is a critical component of strategic growth for the region. An innovation ecosystem comprises the players, stakeholders, policies, resources, and structures that catalyze the development of new products, ideas, methods, and systems. The regional incubator network, led by the Koffman Southern Tier Incubator, Rev: Ithaca, and Incubator Works, has spun off companies that have created hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars in economic impact, helping catalyze the region's burgeoning technology industries. The 76West Clean Energy competition and Grow-NY food and agriculture competition have galvanized entrepreneurs and investors in the Southern Tier and launched high-growth, high-potential businesses. iDistricts established in Binghamton, Endicott, and Johnson City have spurred mixed-use developments as well as innovation economy hubs. Recent federal investments in battery technology further support the region's capacity for innovation.

Per-capita university  
R&D spending is  
**7X greater**  
in the Southern Tier  
than nationally.

The foundation underpinning this focus on innovation is the region's backbone industries, including advanced manufacturing, transportation and logistics, aerospace and defense, agricultural technology, and health and biotech manufacturing. Core Southern Tier employers such as Alstom, BAE Systems, CAF USA,

Corning, Hillard Corp., Lockheed Martin, and Raymond Corporation, as well as dozens of mid-sized companies, help make manufacturing the region's third-highest sector of employment (behind only government and health care).<sup>45</sup> These companies drive projected growth in the sector over the next five years and contribute to R&D and product development.<sup>46</sup> Agribusiness is a more than \$1.3 billion regional industry, with job growth that has increased by over 30% between 2011-2022.<sup>47</sup> A 2022 REDC-commissioned workforce study underscores the significant transformation facing the agribusiness sector as innovation and technology platforms are changing how and where things grow and creating new tools to grow more efficiently.

Equally important are the higher education institutions that are critical partners to industry, including Binghamton University, Cornell University, Corning Community College, Elmira College, Ithaca College, SUNY Broome and SUNY Delhi, Tompkins Cortland Community College, and four NYSTAR-funded Centers for Advanced Technology (CATs).<sup>48</sup> A 2017 report by the Center for Regional Economic Advancement at Cornell University found that higher educational institutions in the Southern Tier spent \$1,674 per capita in university-supported R&D expenditures,<sup>49</sup> exceeding any other region in New York State and the national average of \$232 per capita.

Despite a strong ecosystem for seeding companies, the Southern Tier struggles to retain its home-grown innovators. Among the reasons for this are a lack of in-region capacity, venture and seed funding, patent

<sup>45</sup> Lightcast, 2021.

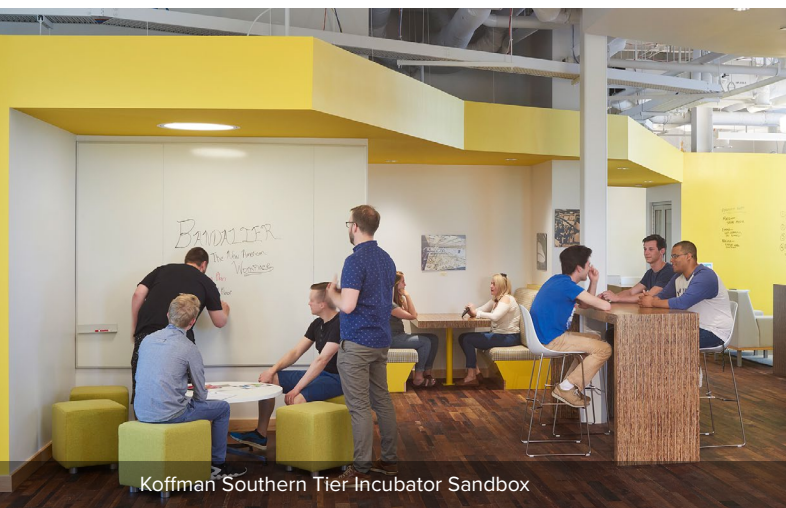
<sup>46</sup> ESD, 2023-2028.

<sup>47</sup> Lightcast, 2022. Based on ESD definition of Agribusiness NAICS codes.

<sup>48</sup> Center for Regional Economic Advancement at Cornell University, ["The Southern Tier Outpaces the Rest of New York State in Per Capita Higher Education R&D Expenditures,"](#) 2017.

<sup>49</sup> Empire State Development, "Centers for Advanced Technology."





Koffman Southern Tier Incubator Sandbox

#### PROJECT SPOTLIGHT -

## Southern Tier Startup Alliance

The Southern Tier Startup Alliance (STSA) leverages the contributions of incubators and existing entrepreneurial resources in the region, and creates support services where none currently exist. STSA operates via a network of member incubators, which serve as focal points for local entrepreneurial communities. Member incubators include IncubatorWorks Corning, Rev: Ithaca Startup Works, the Center for Life Science Ventures at Cornell University, the Koffman Southern Tier Incubator, Binghamton University Start-Up Suites, Praxis Center for Venture Development, and Runway & Spinout programs at Cornell Tech.

Since 2016, STSA has supported more than 200 new financial deals, and member startups have closed deals totaling more than \$400 million. STSA has also brought 63 new investors to the region, and 123 groups have invested in Southern Tier startups. STSA received \$1.25 million in REDC support in 2017 and an additional \$1.25 million in 2022, and individual incubators have also received support.



Winners of the 2023 Grow-NY Prize

#### PROJECT SPOTLIGHT -

## Grow-NY Summit & Business Competition

Started in 2019, the Grow-NY business competition is a startup challenge focused on enhancing the emerging food, beverage, and agriculture innovation cluster in the Southern Tier and neighboring Central New York and Finger Lakes regions. The competition culminates in a two-day pitch competition at the Grow-NY Summit, held in Binghamton in 2023. Empire State Development provides funding for Grow-NY through the Upstate Revitalization Initiative, and builds on strategies laid out in Southern Tier Soaring Plan from 2016. The program awarded \$3 million in 2023, including a \$1 million grand prize. Finalists include startups from across the globe, and represent the most cutting-edge developments in ag tech and food and beverage. Winners commit to operating in the area for at least one year, providing significant economic benefit and further enhancing the region's innovative agriculture ecosystem.



## We're With You Every Sip of the Way

Best Bev

### PROJECT SPOTLIGHT -

## Best Bev, LLC

Best Bev, located in Waverly in Tioga County, purchased and installed modern-day and efficient manufacturing equipment. The warehouse location that was renovated required flooring, municipal water and sewer connection, water filtration system, lightning, and HVAC. With its manufacturing facility complete, Best Bev provides co-packing, material sourcing, storage, and distribution of both alcohol and non-alcoholic beverages. The facility will include new high-capacity canning lines producing millions of cases a month for co-packing services. The Company is also expanding its offerings to include sourcing ingredients, materials, packaging, customized cans, variety packing, and storage. Best Bev applied for ESD funding in July 2022 through Round 12 of the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) process to assist with the construction and renovation of a 136,000-square-foot state-of-the art manufacturing facility. An award for a \$3,200,000 grant was offered to Best Bev and the incentive proposal was accepted in March 2023. The total project cost is estimated at \$17,607,970. The company has committed to creating 65 new jobs in the region.

support, expertise to provide mentorship to startups, and a lack of centrally available information about opportunities within the innovation ecosystem. Both the manufacturing and agribusiness sectors require capital and equipment support, workforce training, and connections to new supply chains and markets to continue to evolve and sustain the region into the future. Southern Tier REDC funding has supported effective collaboration among higher educational institutions, start-up incubators, and the private sector. The region will continue to build on those assets to support the continued development of an ecosystem that supports entrepreneurship, research commercialization, and startup creation to move its backbone industries into the future.

### STRATEGIES:

#### Strategy 1: Support entrepreneurial companies with access to mentorship, capital, and talent.

Critical investments have laid the foundation for a strong innovation ecosystem in the Southern Tier. Looking to the next stage of ecosystem growth, the Southern Tier REDC seeks to cultivate an attractive environment for new and existing entities to stay in the region and ensure that companies have access to capital and space to grow. Too often, startups that get their start in the Southern Tier leave for nearby metropolitan areas – including New York City and Boston – following their initial growth phase. For young and startup businesses, building supportive connections to existing regional players can create opportunities within larger supply chains. This can be particularly important for addressing core needs such as market identification and expansions for new and emerging businesses, and matching employers with talent.

This investment will build on recent success like the 76West Clean Energy Competition, created by NYSERDA and supported by the Cornell Center for Regional Economic Advancement. The program, which was managed by the Southern Tier Startup Alliance, provided opportunities for funding, technical assistance, incubator space, and mentorship to winners.

Between 2016 and 2020, finalist and semifinalist businesses raised \$51 million of private capital, invested in land and equipment, and purchased \$1.7 million from suppliers. Past program winners include Micatu, Optimus Technologies, Skyven Technologies, EkoStinger, Switched Source, Hub Controls, C4V, SunTegra, ProsumerGrid, SolarKal, Global Thermostat, and Southern Tier Technologies.<sup>50</sup> These winners continue to have a presence in the Southern Tier.<sup>51</sup>

## Actions

- **Fund startup competitions in concert with local colleges and industry organizations.** Competitions such as 76West and Grow-NY raise the profile of the region and grow new companies. Competitions can also make resources and mentorship more accessible across the entire region, reaching startups not yet part of the larger ecosystem. The REDC will support the continuation of existing competitions and work with schools and industry partners, especially in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors, to identify additional competitions that will elevate and attract regional innovators.
- **Create a consortium of private investors that builds on New York Ventures to support the long-term growth of start-ups in the region.** There is currently a lack of venture capital funding to support young companies as they grow beyond the seed stage in the region. Building private sector support (including equity investors, procurement opportunities, mentorship, market access, accelerators, and more) can facilitate the growth of incubated businesses and increase long-term retention, further developing the regional innovation ecosystem. The Regional Challenge Proposal provides additional detail on this strategy.
- **Facilitate student internships with startups by partnering with school districts and higher education institutions,** including community colleges and universities. Students interested in entrepreneurship can participate in the region's startup culture. More than 65,000 students attend the Southern Tier's colleges and universities each year, an enormous pool of creative talent that employers of all sizes are eager to harness. The REDC will work with regional partners to design student/company matching programs that support long-term talent retention in the region.

<sup>50</sup> NYSEDA, "Governor Cuomo Announces Winners of 76West Clean Energy Business Competition to Boost Economic Development and Combat Climate Change," October 2020.

<sup>51</sup> Center for Regional Economic Advancement at Cornell University, "76West Clean Energy Competition."

## Impacts

Investments will nurture an ecosystem that keeps early-stage companies in the region, creating a supportive ecosystem for new businesses. A growing concentration of innovative companies will strengthen existing core industries, bolster regional supply chains, and contribute to longer-term retention of talent in the Southern Tier.

## What We Heard

What does an economically vibrant Southern Tier look like?

"New businesses of many scales (tiny to large) moving in, existing businesses expanding and having a good succession to the next generation."

## Strategy 2: Continue to strengthen the region's manufacturing capacity by investing in businesses up and down the supply chain.

Manufacturing is a critical component of the past, present, and future Southern Tier regional economy – it sustained the region in decades past, and is emerging again as a reimagined, technologically advanced industry. Despite global economic shifts away from traditional manufacturing, the Southern Tier has maintained at least one large legacy manufacturer in each of its eight counties, as well as many small and medium-sized manufacturers, supporting jobs and economies in every corner of the region. Manufacturers in the region are building train cars that will carry passengers throughout the Northeast, developing cutting-edge pharmaceuticals to solve everyday ailments, creating new materials that allow for the continual advancement of technology, and more. New and established firms alike are integrating with the region's emerging cleantech industry, creating opportunities for supply chain integration, collaboration, and innovation. For example, Raymond Corporation has developed integrated battery technology, and BAE Systems is creating electrified aerospace products, among many more examples.

As of 2021, the sector provided 17,400 jobs in the Southern Tier with notably higher average annual earnings than other regional industries (\$103,175 for advanced manufacturing versus \$74,000 for all industries).<sup>52</sup> Despite this, the sector is facing core workforce challenges. With an aging workforce and greater

<sup>52</sup> Southern Tier REDC Phase II Regional Sector-Based Strategies (EY, 2022)



population of individuals with disabilities, the Southern Tier's regional labor force participation rate is lower than the New York State average. Additionally, there are gaps in the Southern Tier's credential and training programs: a 2022 analysis of the Southern Tier's workforce needs highlights that the region underproduces associate's and accredited certificate-level graduates for Advanced Manufacturing roles.<sup>53</sup> Sectoral growth will require investment in training and skills building, which are also directly addressed in Pillar 4.

## Actions

- **Strengthen sectoral partnerships in advanced manufacturing to coordinate on talent development, identify gaps and opportunities within regional supply chains, and foster connections between new and existing businesses.** Manufacturers across the region have diverse needs and opportunities, but many share common challenges. Sectoral partnerships like the Alliance for Manufacturing and Technology (AMT) provide an invaluable resource for local small, medium, and large manufacturers, offering business advisors who can guide companies on everything from increasing sales to attracting and retaining talent. These partnerships can also connect new or small manufacturers with larger companies in the region to create opportunities for collaboration, procurement, or supply chain integration, further developing the region's cohesive ecosystem. The REDC will continue to support regional sectoral partnerships, and will prioritize programs that bring together manufacturers across the region to tackle overlapping challenges and opportunities.
- **Support the retention, expansion, and development of anchor companies through capital funds, equipment upgrades, and workforce training.** To remain competitive long-term, manufacturers need to continue to expand and innovate. This requires capital support for new facilities or upgraded equipment, partnership with local workforce partners to ensure a cutting-edge workforce, and collaboration with state and regional organizations to gain access to new markets both domestic and global. The REDC will continue to support legacy manufacturers who provide high-quality jobs in the region. One expected initiative is establishing a Competitiveness Fund that offers investment in backbone industries, offering matching grants for implementing new processes or technological adoption, bringing in new product lines, finding buyers for idled facilities, supporting employee

training, and commercializing R&D. The REDC will explore partnership with one or more regional financial institutions, working in unison with the regional Manufacturing Extension Partnership and local Economic Development Organizations to qualify and support loan guarantees.

- **Connect top talent to innovative anchor companies through internships and "intrapreneur in residence" programs.** Anchor companies throughout the region are looking for top talent across a range of fields and offer the opportunity to work in an innovative and collaborative work environment. Connecting students interested in remaining in the Southern Tier to legacy manufacturers creates beneficial experiences for both the students and the companies and presents opportunities to lower talent attraction costs in the future by creating a pipeline of interested talent. The REDC will support programs that work with local manufacturers, colleges and universities, and workforce development organizations to pair students with companies for internships or "intrapreneur in residence" programs.

## Impacts

Anchor employers in the region provide well-paying jobs that support local economies while developing technologies that impact not just the Southern Tier, but the entire State and beyond. Continuing to support these large employers not only bolsters local economic growth but also furthers regional competitiveness by increasing innovation, intrapreneurship, and adaptation to new and emerging technologies.

## Strategy 3: Identify strategic sites to prioritize for shovel-ready improvements for business development and expansion.

Several factors make this an ideal time for the Southern Tier to attract and grow new supply-chain businesses that can feed into the region's growing economy, including growing demand from large multinational companies anchored in the region, a burgeoning logistics industry, and the historic investment by Micron in a \$100 billion semiconductor fabrication center in the Syracuse metro area, one hour north from the region's northern boundary. Attracting such businesses – whether small, mid-sized, or large – requires shovel-ready sites that have the infrastructure (energy, broadband, road, sewer, and water) to accommodate high-tech manufacturing, are free of contamination or other site complications, and can be permitted quickly through the local municipality. As the Micron deal demonstrated, having shovel-ready sites, paired with

<sup>53</sup> Southern Tier REDC Phase II Regional Sector-Based Strategies (EY, 2022)

appropriate incentives and a strong talent ecosystem, can attract direct investment from companies from outside the region and retain growth-stage companies seeded in the region.

The region has had recent momentum in site development, with two winners in the first round of the State's \$200 million FAST NY Shovel-Ready Grant Program to unlock strategic sites. In Broome County, The Agency was awarded \$500,000 toward a \$1 million project to create a 300-acre sustainability-focused corporate park in Johnson City that will attract companies in advanced electronics and semiconductor manufacturers, test packaging, life sciences, and agricultural processing. In the Village of Painted Post in Steuben County, the State awarded \$36,000 toward a \$120,000 predevelopment study to remake the 45-acre West Water Street site into a hub for regional advanced manufacturing and semiconductor supply chain companies.

### Actions

- **Support County and municipal governments and land banks to develop an active list of vacant, underutilized, and potential greenfield sites.** Identifying land parcels suitable for large-scale manufacturing sites is a first step to promoting their reuse as job-producing assets. The REDC will work with local governments, economic development organizations, and industrial development agencies to catalog potential shovel-ready sites as well as key property information, conditions, and capital needs to support both investment and business attraction efforts.
- **Advance critical investments at priority strategic sites that are identified in each county within the region.** Building on the FAST NY program, the REDC will directly support investments in sites that have the potential to accommodate new business facilities in targeted industries. The REDC will support investments in infrastructure (energy, broadband, road, sewer, and water), environmental remediation, and planning and permitting. Sites will be prioritized based on size (sites should ideally be between 50 and 200 acres), potential to accommodate businesses in targeted industries (including but not limited to advanced manufacturing, cleantech, and agribusiness), location and accessibility to transportation networks, level of investment required to achieve shovel-ready status, and level of support from community and local stakeholders. Tioga County is home to several examples of sites that require investment to attain shovel-ready status. Industrial sites on Buck Road and Route 17 in Nichols require investment in water and sewer infrastructure.

### Impacts

Preparing additional shovel-ready sites, and making those sites easily identifiable, will demonstrate the region's commitment to attracting new companies to the region and expanding existing ones, which will in turn retain growth-stage businesses that otherwise may relocate to other areas and attract new talent to the region. A larger ecosystem of supply chain and other companies will also add long-term capacity for the development of clean technology/energy-related businesses.

### Strategy 4: Support the development of food manufacturing, diversification, and agricultural value-add to capture a higher share of economic value for the region.

Agribusiness provides accessible opportunities for job seekers. It also faces workforce challenges, including a need for succession planning as farmers age, a decrease in the supply of migrant labor, increasing hourly wage and overtime rates, and lower labor force participation rates across the region. Past CFA-funded projects in the Southern Tier include roughly 50 projects in food and agriculture with \$10+ million in awards for nearly \$30 million of total project costs. Projects funded include wineries, breweries, craft beverage manufacturers, meat processing facilities, food hubs, food system distributors, capital for family farms, farmers markets, school farms, hydroseeding, vertical farms, cannabis, greenhouses, composting, marketing, culinary centers, and others. Continued investment in the agribusiness sector will create further accessible job opportunities and build on the rich legacy of farming and food business in the Southern Tier.

### Actions

- **Support the development of value-added processing facilities and amenities, including shared cold processing, hemp production, storage off-farm, and a USDA-certified slaughterhouse.** Processing facilities are essential to supporting the industry's vision of becoming a regional hub of food business. Addressing the current shortage of infrastructure in processing and last-mile distribution is critical for small farm and food system resilience. Scaling up commercial kitchens, particularly in bottling and cold processing support, will help to strengthen the local food supply. In addition, supporting value-added production of hemp grown for food, fiber, and industrial applications such as textiles, fibers, wool, biomaterials, and biofuel will support the local economy.

- **Encourage adoption of new ag tech, including those that support climate resiliency, and support the purchase of such tech by farmers/farm equipment-share programs through small grants.** Tool exchanges and equipment sharing across multiple farms are growing in favor among small-scale farmers. Education and promotion are needed to increase awareness of new farming technologies (such as automated harvesting, technology-enabled mechanical harvesters, drones, and robots to reduce labor shortage issues). Sustainable farming practices supported by new technology can also drive toward net-zero energy – for example, investments in onsite renewable energy generation including solar, biodigesters, waste separation, the use of non-edible byproducts of farming in energy production, and other uses. The REDC will also encourage waste to fuel programs that turn agricultural waste into energy.
- **Support diversification to higher value crops such as rice, chickpeas, and lupini beans,** which provide alternative revenue streams to traditional farm operations. Farmers in the Southern Tier are experimenting with crops not historically grown in the region, looking for ways to diversify revenue and increase the economic engine of agriculture in the region. A recent partnership between Schuyler County and Cornell University is piloting a chickpea test plot on a farm in Schuyler County to see if the crop can be successfully grown in the region, inspired by a conversation with a Cornell startup that was importing chickpeas from another state rather than sourcing them locally.<sup>54</sup> The REDC will support innovative pilots of new crops that offer economic and agricultural benefits to the region.
- **Increase awareness of and access to services, programs, and funding available to farmers – especially traditionally disadvantaged farmers – through outreach, events, and coordination with diverse businesses, organizations, and academic institutions.** Ensuring that the farming community is informed about opportunities is key. Outreach to a wider range of food and agriculture entrepreneurs including historically underrepresented groups and young farmers will help more farmers to access new and available support. Agritourism programs with a “stop, look, experience” component for small and mid-size farms have had success in the past. The value of Cornell programs, tech support, and business spinoffs should also be promoted. Advocacy

<sup>54</sup> Cornell Chronicle, [“Regional partnership takes a chance on New York chickpeas.”](#) 2021



#### PROJECT SPOTLIGHT -

### Clark Farmstead Creamery Expansion

Clark Farmstead Creamery, a fifth-generation family farm in Delhi, received \$260,000 in assistance to triple production capacity of their licensed milk processing plant and creamery. The \$1.3 million project includes renovating an existing building to meet USDA, NYS AG& Markets, and FDA code, as well as purchasing new production equipment. This expanded capacity allows Clark Farmstead to scale up production to meet demand and develop new cultured dairy products to diversify their product and pursue new opportunities. The project will also enable Clark Farmstead Creamery to obtain FDA certification for interstate sales, further expanding market opportunity.

with schools and universities can increase profitable institutional buying of locally produced food.

#### Impacts

Collaboration and aggregation for small-scale farms and food businesses will increase opportunities and the ability to scale up to demand. Local universities and extension services will be drivers of such tech innovation and cluster transformation. Increasing the rate of adoption of new technologies will improve labor shortages over time. It is critical that the region attract aspiring farmers and related supply chain entrepreneurs, especially historically underrepresented farmers who benefit through targeted outreach and promotion.



### Strategy 5: Focus branding and marketing efforts on elevating the Southern Tier as a national leader in advanced manufacturing.

The Southern Tier has seen an influx of investments, activity, and excitement around transportation manufacturing, battery development, and other forms of advanced manufacturing. These investments have the potential to change the trajectory of the region – but only if businesses, investors, and talent know what is happening. Many associate the Southern Tier first and foremost as a region with natural beauty, world-class universities, and agricultural uses, overlooking its potential to anchor domestic manufacturing across critical growth sectors. Changing this perception will be critical to the region’s success and will be foundational in accomplishing the goals laid out in this plan. The REDC will build on the strategies laid out in Southern Tier Soaring, and the work being done by New Energy New York (NENY) and other sectoral partnerships, to develop a marketing campaign highlighting the region’s opportunities and strengths.

#### Action

- **Focus marketing efforts on campaigns geared toward businesses, investors, and talent.**  
Efforts will bring together local stakeholders, including economic and community development organizations, chambers, and local businesses, to build awareness of the Southern Tier as a leader in advanced manufacturing and related industries. Campaigns will promote relocation to and investment in the region and integration with the Southern Tier business ecosystem and will target out-of-state business owners, researchers, talent, and investors. The REDC will work closely with NENY to coordinate its own messaging and outreach around cleantech, with the goal of amplifying existing NENY marketing campaigns and supporting additional campaigns as needed. To inform this effort, the region will evaluate the Southern Tier against other regions throughout the United States that are also positioning as advanced manufacturing hubs.
- Key messages of marketing efforts should include:
  - The Southern Tier is creating and building new technology that can change the world, with cutting-edge advanced manufacturing in the transportation, battery, and sustainable and ethical materials, and ag-tech sectors.
  - Businesses can connect to a robust ecosystem and supply chain and find

a talented and growing workforce at every skill and education level.

- Individuals can find well-paying roles that provide meaningful opportunities for career advancement and development, while actively contributing to next-generation technology and the fight against climate change.
- Examples of tactics that might be used include:
  - Landing page: create a coordinated, comprehensive landing page for businesses and individuals interested in exploring opportunities in the region. The page will offer information on jobs, regional site availability and readiness, relocation assistance, and other support.
  - Earned media: capitalize on federal awards and designations to promote the region’s burgeoning industry and the economic opportunities available.
  - Social media: create a unified Southern Tier social media presence with content focused on next-generation advanced manufacturing and job opportunities, complemented by the Southern Tier’s high quality of life.
  - Strategic paid media: leverage digital ad buys to promote the opportunities available in advanced manufacturing, as well as the high quality of life in the region.

#### Impacts

A robust branding and marketing campaign has the potential to attract long-term residents and new businesses while ensuring the current momentum around cleantech and advanced manufacturing turn into long-lasting economic activity. The Southern Tier has seen significant earned media in recent months due to federal and State investment. Capitalizing on that media, while supplementing with social media, paid media, and the creation of a landing page, will continue to raise awareness about the opportunities in the region.

### What We Heard

An economically vibrant Southern Tier would have “a more robust version of what we have now - which are all the building blocks of a great community with industry, education, healthcare, and culture already here.”



# Pillar Three:

## DEMONSTRATE THE SOUTHERN TIER'S UNMATCHED LIVABILITY AND INCENTIVIZE RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT THAT COMPLEMENTS THE REGION'S COMMUNITIES.

Economic success and well-being in the Southern Tier will require the region to retain a greater share of its homegrown population and to attract new residents from outside New York State. Quality of life and quality of place are crucial to both goals.<sup>55</sup> The Southern Tier has many assets in place: a low cost of living compared to other parts of New York State and the Northeast, historic cities, towns, and villages, and natural beauty on par with anywhere else in New York State. Yet the lack of quality and affordable housing, inadequate childcare options, and underinvested downtowns represent key challenges to the Southern Tier's ability to attract and retain residents, workers, and employers.

The Southern Tier  
experienced a net loss of

**2,100**

housing units between 2011-2021.

For existing residents of the Southern Tier, the cost of housing has become increasingly burdensome. Median rents for households in Chemung, Tioga, and Tompkins Counties have grown at a faster rate than the statewide average between 2011 and 2021.<sup>56</sup> Housing production has not kept up with statewide levels, and there has been a net loss of 2,140 housing units in the region outside of Tompkins and Broome Counties since 2011.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> 1 in 5 leaders of fast-growing companies named quality of life as a key factor for business location (Insight Endeavors, "What Do the Best Entrepreneurs Want in a City?" 2014). Quality of place amenities matter 3X more to young people than they do to older age groups (Happiness and Health Across the Lifespan in Five Major Cities; Journal of Social Science & Medicine, 2016).

<sup>56</sup> American Community Survey, 2021.

<sup>57</sup> American Community Survey, 2021. Chemung and Schuyler Counties added 502 and 172 net new housing units over this time, respectively, but decreases in other counties outweighed these gains.

Childcare deserts add further strain, with higher costs for families who can afford these services and lost income for those who cannot.

## Rent growth

in Chemung, Tioga,  
and Tompkins Counties  
has outpaced the  
statewide average.

Finally, while New York State and local partners have undertaken numerous projects to enhance the walkability, livability, and economic health of the Southern Tier's downtowns and villages, more remains to be accomplished to foster vibrant urban and rural town centers that attract business, visitors, and cultural amenities.

### STRATEGIES

**Strategy 1: Prioritize funding tools that support the development of housing in addition to commercial uses, including affordable housing.**

Key to the future success of the Southern Tier is its ability to produce new housing that meets the quality and affordability needs of its existing and future residents. Community members and developers have indicated a need for more resources to develop new and affordable housing in the Southern Tier, especially in city and town centers with underutilized buildings and land.

ESD currently offers or participates in numerous programs that incentivize real estate development across the state on vacant or underutilized land. These include the Upstate Revitalization Initiative

(URI), which seeks to stimulate large and impactful public and private mixed-use investment in upstate regions; the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) and New York Forward (NYF), which provide funding to implement catalytic projects to advance a community's vision for revitalization; as well as Restore NY, which supports projects that focus on demolishing, rehabilitating, and restoring residential, commercial, and mixed-use buildings. Successful uses of such funds include the City of Corning's Parish Heights project, which leveraged Restore NY funds to rehabilitate four historic, vacant, and blighted former church buildings to establish 45 units of affordable, supportive senior and workforce housing as well as a new childcare facility for 50 children.

However, the majority of funding sources available through the REDC incentivize business growth through commercial development rather than residential development. While these programs can support residential development, they require a significant commercial footprint as part of construction plans, limiting the quantity of housing that can be built in each project.<sup>58</sup> The REDC has successfully partnered with NYS Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) on past DRI projects that contain a large housing component. For example, in Watkins Glen, a middle school was redeveloped to create 51 affordable housing units for seniors and a community theater space, pairing HCR funding with ESD funding to support the residential and commercial components respectively.<sup>59</sup>

Incentivizing residential development is not just important for the production of housing units to satisfy housing demand, but also to support the financial feasibility of development in areas where commercial development is not financially feasible, including the region's more rural areas where populations may be too low to support intensive commercial development. In addition, an increasingly challenging economic climate with high inflation, rising interest rates, and unpredictable capital markets, has broadened funding gaps and made it increasingly difficult to build.

The Greater Binghamton Fund provides a successful model for funding residential development. The fund was established as a result of the Upstate Revitalization Initiative by the Southern Tier REDC in 2017 to foster business expansion and growth in Greater Binghamton's downtowns. Since its inception, the Greater Binghamton Fund recognized the need for new housing accessible

to three new iDistricts in Binghamton, Endicott, and Johnson City. The Fund has awarded funding to the development and redevelopment of mixed-use residential buildings throughout Greater Binghamton, as well as solely residential projects.

### Actions

- **Identify at least three projects for each CFA round to support the development of workforce and affordable housing,** with funds administered in partnership with HCR. ESD will prioritize funding mechanisms that can fill funding gaps faced by residential and mixed-use projects to increase development feasibility while bolstering a critical component of economic success – affordable and workforce housing accessible to residents across the income spectrum. Funds can be used for residential-only projects – or mixed-use projects with commercial and residential components – and applied to costs for site readiness, including site preparation, remediation, zoning compliance, and infrastructure improvements, as well as for gap funding. Awards will take into consideration the housing needs of the surrounding community as distinguished by income level and typology, and the ability of the project to deliver units that align with need.
- **Advance critical infrastructure investments that can unlock significant housing production.** In addition to supporting site readiness for commercial and industrial projects, the REDC will support investments in sites and surrounding infrastructure networks that have the potential to reduce the costs and increase the feasibility of residential development. The REDC will support investments in infrastructure (energy, broadband, road, sewer, and water), environmental remediation, and planning and permitting. Sites will be prioritized based on number of housing units unlocked, affordability, housing need in the surrounding area, location and accessibility to transportation networks, level of investment required to achieve feasibility, and level of support from community and local stakeholders.

### Impacts

Additional funding that enables mixed-use residential projects and solely residential projects would unlock development opportunities across the region by supporting the financial feasibility of increasingly difficult-to-fund projects. In particular, funding could support redevelopment in city and town centers that struggle with underutilized land or historic structures

<sup>58</sup> [Regional Economic Development Council Guidebook, 2023.](#)

<sup>59</sup> Corning Leader, "School-to-apartments project in Schuylar gets \$3.8M grant." 2014.



that might require greater investment in remediation and site readiness.

### Strategy 2: Incentivize municipalities to rethink land use regulations to create an environment for the development of housing and other amenities to meet market demand.

In addition to financial barriers, prospective developers also encounter regulatory hurdles to building. Vacant or underutilized properties in cities and towns across the region with access to job centers, civic amenities, and social services present significant opportunities for housing development. However, redevelopment can be hindered by outdated land use restrictions and cumbersome approval processes, driving up development costs or discouraging projects entirely. Updating zoning regulations and



Supportive housing in Binghamton completed in 2023

#### PROJECT SPOTLIGHT -

## Permanent Supportive Housing

Cities and towns across the Southern Tier are working to provide housing for all, including supportive housing for formerly homeless families and individuals, those with mental illness, people who were formerly incarcerated, veterans, and young adults aging out of foster care. Supported by Governor Hochul's \$25 billion comprehensive Housing Plan and state funds from the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance's Homeless Housing and Assistance Program, Greater Opportunities for Broome and Chenango Inc. recently completed an \$8.1 million renovation of four buildings to create 27 new apartments in Binghamton. Funding for the project includes \$7.5 million from the Homeless Housing and Assistance Program and more than \$500,000 from the City of Binghamton, and operating funding will be provided by the Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative.

streamlining permitting and review processes, especially for high-priority projects, can facilitate greater investment in Southern Tier communities.

#### Actions

- **Incentivize municipalities across the region to rethink zoning and regulations** to create environments where modern housing and other amenities can be built to meet market demand, address affordability, and enable in-migration. Approaches may include planning grants to assist "pro-housing" communities in the updating of their zoning codes and building regulations or funding for community engagement and outreach activities to advance the process of updating land use regulations. This strategy recognizes the differing land use contexts and housing needs across the region and will encourage municipalities to promote forward-looking, neighborhood-sustaining investments best suited to their local conditions. Priority will be given to communities that demonstrate a broad coalition of support for policies that welcome new residents while encouraging new housing development or rehabilitation. Potential Impacts

#### Impacts

Zoning and other policies that encourage housing construction and redevelopment will play a critical role in addressing the Southern Tier's housing crisis in the coming years. Focusing investment on municipalities that embrace these strategies will allow forward-thinking communities to deliver housing that serves the needs of current and new Southern Tier residents, namely creating housing with access to family-sustaining jobs, education, healthcare, and other amenities at affordable prices.

## What We Heard

Survey respondents ranked "a competitive salary and manageable cost of living" and "affordable housing" as the second and third highest priority for attracting and retaining residents in the Southern Tier.

"An economically vibrant region would look like housing that is available, in all the ways people want to live: apartments, single-family homes, townhouses, rural, urban, land, no land without costing a fortune. It would look like people being able to have shorter commutes versus 45 minutes to 1 hour for a good paying job."

### Strategy 3: Ensure the Southern Tier is welcoming and supportive to all residents.

People of color make up a growing share of Southern Tier residents, increasing in both total number and percentage of total population. Between 2011 and 2021 the region's white population decreased by over 35,000 (-6%) as its non-white population grew by 19,600, especially its Black (+1,300), Asian (+3,900), and multiracial populations (+11,300).<sup>60</sup> BIPOC residents spoke positively of their experiences in the region, describing a supportive community that believes in equity and inclusion. However, BIPOC residents also articulated a need for continued support, noting the lasting impacts of historic underinvestment and structural racism. Lingering economic inequality and the need for continued investment is evident in the data: in 2021, 36% of Black residents and 32% of Hispanic/Latino residents earned incomes below the poverty line, compared with 14% of white residents.<sup>61</sup> The REDC will work to ensure the Southern Tier is a welcoming and inclusive place for all residents, supporting communities and groups that have historically been marginalized or underinvested.

#### Actions

- **Develop networking and mentorship events for new residents.** The Southern Tier's communities are close-knit, welcoming, and offer tremendous potential for personal and professional networking and mentorship. Connecting to these groups is a crucial step towards feeling at home and supported in the region, and while the Southern Tier offers many opportunities for connection, they can be challenging to find – particularly for residents from disadvantaged communities or historically marginalized groups. The REDC will support development of networking and mentorship events for all residents, with a focus on those from marginalized communities, to facilitate strong community ties for all residents.

#### Impacts

Supporting historically marginalized communities will ensure current residents feel welcomed and included in the Southern Tier and will increase the region's ability to attract new residents. Developing robust networks and mentorship structures for new residents will

60 American Community Survey, 2021. The 2021 5-Year Estimates are the most current accurate source of racial and ethnic data available for all Southern Tier Counties.

61 American Community Survey, 2021. "Other" includes American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, Some Other Race Alone, and Two or More Races as defined by the US Census Bureau.

connect residents to professional opportunities, social events, and local businesses and services, strengthening community ties and supporting local economies.

### Strategy 4: Expand the supply of affordable childcare.

The Southern Tier, like the rest of New York and the United States, has a shortage of high-quality, affordable childcare across geographies and income levels. This affects both children and their caretakers, who may work less or leave the workforce entirely to care for their children. Women often bear the brunt of this responsibility, leaving the workforce in higher numbers during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to care for children.<sup>62</sup> A statewide survey conducted in 2021 revealed that many of the state's already scarce childcare centers had been forced to close during the pandemic and that, in places where childcare is available, it is dependent on a small and underpaid workforce. Most New Yorkers have trouble paying for quality childcare and most live in childcare deserts (64%) without the means of transportation to access childcare providers. Providers are often unable to pay adequate salaries or afford the physical spaces they need and therefore have a difficult time recruiting more caregivers.<sup>63</sup>

#### Actions

- **Prioritize funding for new childcare facilities and mixed-use projects that incorporate childcare uses.** The Southern Tier will prioritize funding for new childcare facilities or expansion of existing facilities that increase the total supply of childcare and will continue to prioritize funding for real estate development projects that include childcare uses through annual Consolidated Funding Application appropriations. The REDC will prioritize areas that currently have low or no supply, as well as facilities that serve low-income or marginalized populations. There is also a particular need for infant childcare, which is often less available due to higher staffing ratios.<sup>64</sup>

#### Impacts

Ensuring that Southern Tier residents have access to quality affordable childcare has numerous spillover benefits. In addition to ensuring that the region's children have the best start in life, stable childcare frees up

62 Brookings Institute, ["Why has COVID-19 been especially harmful for working women?"](#) October 2020.

63 New York State Senate, "The Child Care Crisis in New York State," 2021.

64 Southern Tier REDC, "Phase II Regional Sector-Based Strategies," 2022.

Southern Tier families to pursue career advancement, education, and recreation opportunities that they might not otherwise be able to. In addition, the childcare sector provides meaningful employment opportunities, often to underserved populations.

**Strategy 5: Invest in urban, town, and village centers across the region to improve the public realm, leverage cultural assets, and increase livability.**

The future of population retention and growth in the Southern Tier hangs on the ability of its people to live, work, shop, and play in places with attractive public spaces, modern social and physical infrastructure, walkable streets, thriving businesses, health and aging-in-place amenities, and rich culture. The region's fastest-growing areas benefit from a strong sense of place. New York State recognizes this and provides funding to invest in the public realm and placemaking through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative, New York Forward, and New York Main Street programs, among others.

Six Southern Tier towns have received and implemented Downtown Revitalization Initiative plans (Endicott, Norwich, Hornell, Oswego, Watkins Glen, and Elmira), while Johnson City is currently undergoing the planning process. Two villages (Montour Falls and Waverly) are currently creating their NY Forward plans. These projects include community arts centers, traffic calming measures, storefront improvements, construction projects, and many other catalytic investments in the Southern Tier's downtowns. Meanwhile, the Village of Watkins Glen, utilizing the DRI, created 34 affordable apartments and a 7,300-square foot childcare center providing educational opportunities for children birth to age five.

Also crucial to fostering a sense of place is the recognition of a region's cultural amenities, history, and creative assets. The region is rich in art venues, performance spaces, local food experiences, and festivals that contribute to a clear sense of what it means to live in and visit the Southern Tier. Beyond improvements to streetscapes, a deep understanding of the cultural assets in the area, capital and programmatic needs, and target users can help develop the identity of the region.

**Actions**

- **Encourage public realm improvements through strategic development and public-private partnerships,** ensuring that privately led projects align with the REDC's vision for the region's urban centers. These may include streetscape improvements,

pedestrian improvements on sidewalks and paths, public open space, public art, and historic preservation.

- **Convene communities awarded revitalization grants to share best practices and lessons learned.** The convening and ongoing information sharing will ask community leaders throughout the region to share best practices and lessons learned applicable to other regional downtowns. These discussions will include community leaders from the Southern Tier's strong set of anchor cultural institutions and tourist attractions, including museums, business groups, and representatives from the hospitality sector.
- **Support cultural assets across the region that serve residents and visitors.**<sup>65</sup> Cultural destinations and events throughout the region are critical not only to attracting visitors and driving spending, but also to defining the region's history and contributing to the high quality of life that makes the Southern Tier an excellent place to live. The REDC will support existing and new arts, culture, and heritage assets through capital projects, coordination on workforce needs, and, in concert with local tourism and cultural organizations, in efforts to map cultural assets and the creation and branding of creative corridors that connect arts and cultural districts, local art festivals, cultural institutions, youth and family programs, and community engagement and interactive art.

**Impacts**

By doubling down on downtown revitalization and cultural assets, the REDC will be able to build on the millions of dollars already invested in the Southern Tier by spreading best practices, ideas, and expertise across the region's cities, towns, and villages. Moving forward, the REDC and municipal leaders will be positioned to leverage the \$100 million that New York State plans to invest in the region in the next five years through DRI and NY Forward to create the places that the next generation of Southern Tier residents will want to call home. Actions will also support the arts and cultural community in the Southern Tier, making the region a destination for cultural tourism while improving the quality of life for residents.

65 Newburgh Arts & Cultural Commission, "[The Newburgh Cultural Inventory](#)," 2021. Cultural asset mapping has been undertaken in larger cities – such as Boston and Chicago, but also in smaller cities and towns interested in growing arts and cultural scenes, and visitor bases. For example, the Newburgh Arts and Cultural Commission and the City of Newburgh undertook a comprehensive inventory and assessment of the city's arts and culture ecology.





# Pillar Four:

## GROW A DIVERSE, ADAPTABLE, FUTURE-READY WORKFORCE.

The Southern Tier's workforce has for decades been one of its core strengths, with concentrations of workers skilled in manufacturing, agriculture, and related industries. Yet that historic workforce is shrinking, and regional employers increasingly cite the lack of a sufficiently qualified talent pool as a major challenge. Demographic data confirms this: the Southern Tier labor force contracted by almost 12% between 2011 and 2022, the largest decline of any region in New York State.<sup>66</sup> Two major trends contribute to this: an overall reduction in population, and an increasing average age of those who remain. Total population in the region decreased by 3% from 2011 to 2022, but the population aged 55 and over increased by 14.4%.<sup>67</sup> Racial inequality within the workforce also remains high: Black residents earned a median household income of just \$33,600 compared to \$59,500 for white households, and Black residents face a 15% unemployment rate compared to 10% for Hispanic/Latino residents and 6% for white residents.<sup>68</sup> Eliminating these gaps is key to achieving the region's vision of economic equity.

While employers struggle to find a qualified workforce, jobseekers simultaneously cite a lack of high-quality jobs in the region, suggesting a mismatch between available positions, worker skillsets, and awareness of and ability to access high-quality jobs. The opportunity in the Southern Tier is there – growing industries such as cleantech, transportation manufacturing, and healthcare offer good wages that meet or exceed a living wage. Meanwhile, smaller, longstanding, profitable businesses struggle with succession plans with no family or worker(s) to take the business over. Closures of those businesses leave quality jobs on the table. By focusing on connecting jobseekers to opportunities in fields with family-sustaining wages, and providing the necessary training to access those jobs, the Southern Tier can raise economic well-being and boost the regional economy.

<sup>66</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022.

<sup>67</sup> Lightcast, 2022.

<sup>68</sup> American Community Survey, 2021.

The Southern Tier's labor force shrunk by nearly

**12%**

between 2012 and 2022.

The region's non-white population is growing, but has lower average household income than the Southern Tier's white population.



Greater Southern Tier BOCES Dental Assistant Training

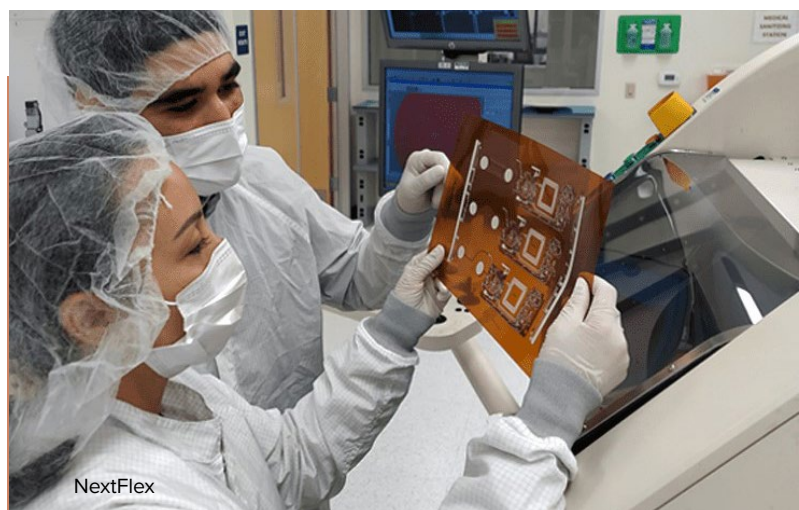
The region benefits from a broad network of workforce development and training programs, including One-Stop Career Centers, Southern Tier Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), SUNY Delhi, SUNY Broome, Corning Community College, and programs led directly by employers. While there are successful programs across the region, partners often operate in siloes and lack mechanisms to coordinate with potential employers and other programs across the region. Workers also face barriers to participate in programs, most notably a lack of childcare and transportation and the need for continued income during training and early weeks of employment. A lack of diversity and representation in many growing industries further hinders participation, particularly for already under-represented groups including women and workers of color.

Growing the regional workforce quickly to meet the need from employers will require new, engaging, coordinated, and ever-evolving approaches to skills training, and a sustained emphasis on supportive services for all who need them. Therefore, the Southern Tier will focus on transferable skills and renewable training, rather than a static list of requirements that are relevant for today's jobs but not for tomorrow's. A focus on certificates and credentials in addition to more traditional degree programs will further enhance workforce adaptability, and is in line with the needs of the region's major industries. The REDC has strong relationships with agencies and partners throughout the region and will maximize its convening power to support best practices, scale innovative programs, and pilot new approaches.

## STRATEGIES:

**Strategy 1: Convene regional workforce partners to strengthen partnerships between private-sector partners, training and education providers, and community-based services for regional coordination and collaboration.**

The Southern Tier has a wealth of workforce development programs, educational institutions, labor unions, and other stakeholders that make up a robust ecosystem. Organizations across the region are piloting innovative programs, finding creative funding solutions, and struggling with overlapping challenges. They have a shared desire to collaborate and meet more regularly to brainstorm and share ideas. However, while workforce development partners within a city or county collaborate when time and resources allow, organizations across the region lack a mechanism for regular



## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT -

### NextFlex

The State of New York has invested \$20 million in the second phase of the federally sponsored NextFlex Initiative, focused on flexible hybrid electronics. The federal NextFlex consortium brings together companies and universities to develop new technologies and ecosystem infrastructure, and to train the skilled workforce needed to grow the advanced manufacturing industry. The Southern Tier Node is a partnership with Binghamton University, and Phase II will focus in part on narrowing the workforce gap in advanced manufacturing.

coordination and collaboration outside of REDC Work Groups. Growing a creative, adaptable, future-ready workforce will require collaboration across the entire region among all partners.

## Actions

- **Convene stakeholders to streamline industry-informed workforce training and PreK-20 curriculum.** To strengthen partnerships and increase collaboration across the region, the Southern Tier REDC will coordinate quarterly convenings that bring together employers, economic and workforce development organizations, educators, and other stakeholders. The group will share information and resources, as well as advise on issue- or industry-based working groups. A long-term aspiration for this group is to raise the funding to stand up an organization with an independent budget and staff

to sustain and expand operations, but in the short term, the REDC will play this coordination role. Two primary goals of this group will be 1) informing PreK-20 curriculum and 2) establishing a single point of entry for interested job- and training-seekers.

- **Raise awareness of pathways to careers in growing industries, particularly for jobs that do not require an advanced degree and for students from historically disadvantaged communities.** Providing a single, coordinated place for industry partners to collaborate with educators and training providers allows for more seamless integration between employer needs and workforce partner offerings, whether through PreK-20 education or dedicated training programs. It also allows schools and training providers to collaborate on region-wide initiatives, expand successful pilot programs, and share resources and information on best practices. Priority actions may include working with BOCES to expand regional Career Days, inviting regional employers to share available careers to inspire and motivate students and address misperceptions about careers in legacy industries, and developing ongoing career mentorship programs, modeled after the Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego (DCMO) BOCES program.<sup>69</sup> The DCMO BOCES Career Destinations program matches youth with career mentors who are currently in the workforce, offering youth a view into a specific industry or career path. Mentorship can be especially beneficial for students from underrepresented backgrounds or disadvantaged communities, who may lack access to more informal career mentorship or opportunities.

## Impacts

Creating a coordinated pathway for employers to partner with educators and training providers will increase industry engagement and collaboration across the region. Industry-informed training programs will open new pathways into quality jobs for a greater share of Southern Tier residents, and jobseekers will be able to identify and access the services and support they need more easily. Regionwide coordination between workforce partners will also reduce duplicative efforts and allow for successful programs to be expanded across the region, allowing residents in all corners of the Southern Tier to access mentorship and job training.

## What We Heard

Survey respondents ranked the availability of job opportunities in high-paying industries as the top priority for attracting and keeping residents and workers in the Southern Tier.

“Creating jobs that do not need a college education. There are plenty of smart people who do not want to go into debt to get a degree but are able to do a great job and have a great work ethic.”

“The ability to grow up in a supportive community, gain a solid education, find employment in the area, and have a high quality of life throughout one’s career and retirement. This means affordability of lifestyles, meaningful careers, inclusive communities, and higher education.”



Raymond Corporation Seminar

## Strategy 2: Implement innovative worker attraction strategies to grow the regional workforce.

Attracting new workers to the Southern Tier is critical to shifting the demographic trends currently challenging the region. Young professionals are particularly important to attract – amidst an overall decline in population, the steepest decline has been in “prime working age” adults.<sup>70</sup> Without reversing this trend, employers will struggle to find the necessary talent and local economies will face difficulty maintaining the tax base needed to support services. Throughout community and stakeholder engagement for this plan, residents and employers frequently cited the need for an influx of new workers to complement efforts to train existing residents. Success will require pairing established best practices with pilots of innovative new approaches to extend the region’s reach.

<sup>69</sup> [Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego BOCES, “Career Destinations.”](#)

<sup>70</sup> American Community Survey, 2021.



## Actions

- **Create a single point of entry for interested job-or training-seekers.** As a mid-term goal, the REDC will work with regional partners, including community colleges, labor unions, and private employers, to consolidate information and resources on job openings and training programs. Currently, information about training programs is scattered across individual partners' websites, and jobseekers have to rely on search engines and job aggregator sites (like Indeed, ZipRecruiter, and Monster). Consolidating this information will simplify the experience for existing and potential residents and will allow partners to expand their reach rather than duplicate marketing efforts.
- **Partner with national and global cities to develop innovative programs that support seasonal workers.** The Southern Tier, like many agricultural and tourism regions, relies in part on a seasonal workforce that plays a critical role in the local economy. Cities across the globe are exploring best practices to attract and support seasonal workers and respond to post-pandemic shifts in available workforce. The REDC will support partnerships with cities around the country and the globe in developing best practices or piloting innovative programs for sourcing and sustaining seasonal labor.
- **Pilot attraction strategies that leverage national events with concentrations of young professionals that would complement the Southern Tier workforce.** Attracting young professionals will require creative thinking that goes beyond traditional workforce development channels. The Southern Tier will explore pilot programs that

leverage large-scale national events as a source for talent attraction, including music festivals, industry summits, and other gatherings and conferences that attract large numbers of young professionals (for instance, South by Southwest, Ted conferences, Coachella, and Comic-Cons). Pilots could include physical presence through interactive booths that highlight the Southern Tier's most innovative technologies (including demonstrations using Extended Reality), participation on panels and in workshops, or a strategic marketing campaign showcasing the region's opportunities and livability.

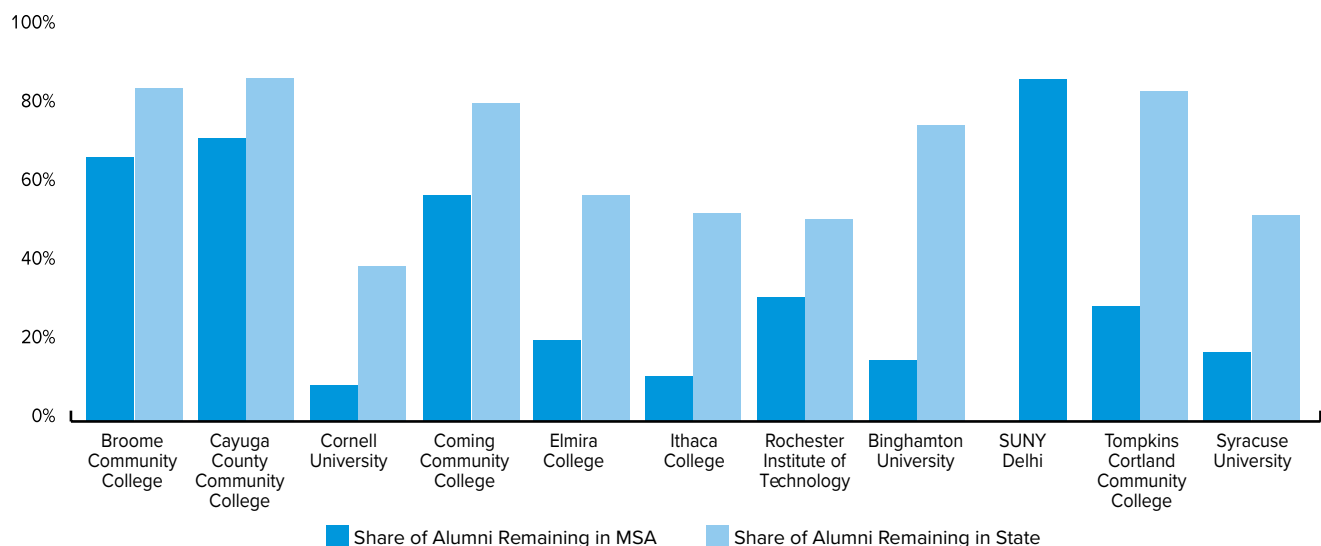
## Impacts

Attracting new workers to the Southern Tier will revitalize local economies, provide crucial talent for employers across a range of industries, and infuse new energy into the region. A mix of established best practices with creative, outside-the-box ideas will allow the region to reach new audiences and attract workers who may not have previously considered relocating.

### Strategy 3: Retain students who are educated in the Southern Tier.

One of the Southern Tier's greatest assets is its world-class educational institutions. Despite this, many students leave the region after graduation, particularly if they graduated from a four-year college or university. In a recent study, just 9% of Cornell University's alumni remained in the surrounding Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), and fewer than 40% remained in New York State. Ithaca College had similar statistics, with 12% remaining in the MSA and just over half remaining in the state. Binghamton University fared slightly better, but still

## Alumni Remaining in Region & State for Select Institutions



just 16% of alumni remained in the region – compared to over 30% for Rochester Institute of Technology.<sup>71</sup>

Educators, parents, students, and stakeholders in work groups and public meetings described a range of reasons that graduates leave, but common themes include a belief that it will be easier to find well-paying jobs elsewhere or a desire for increased cultural amenities in larger cities. An important part of retaining students includes enhancing quality of life across the region, an issue addressed in Pillars 3 and 5, but just as important is making students aware of job opportunities that exist in the region. This strategy seeks to facilitate connections between employers and students at all levels of education – from a high school graduate interested in a family-sustaining manufacturing job to a Ph.D. student interested in developing new clean energy technologies.

### Actions

- **Support paid summer internships for high school and college students.** A successful strategy to retain students must begin before graduation day: while students are still in school, many will begin to think about where to build a life. High school students weigh whether to attend college or immediately seek work, and whether to remain close to home or leave the region. Educators report that many college students are interested in staying in the Southern Tier over summer vacations (and have year-long leases that would allow them to stay) but cannot find paid employment. To address this, the Southern Tier REDC will help coordinate employers interested in providing paid summer internships, and connect employers with career counselors in high schools and colleges. Employers will hire and provide fair wages to summer interns, and in return will get the benefits not only of the work an intern performs over the summer but also the potential benefit of reduced recruiting costs long term. Students will gain valuable work experience and tangible skills, and get exposure to local employers providing well-paying jobs. Providing paid internships also ensures that students from all backgrounds can participate, as students from lower income backgrounds are often unable to take unpaid positions.

- **Incentivize graduates interested in remaining in the region and working for a Southern Tier employer.** To increase regional competitiveness, the Southern Tier will offer cash grants, rental assistance, or student loan and visa support to any student graduating from a Southern Tier school (at the high school, college, or graduate school level) who remains in the region and is either a) employed by a Southern Tier employer, or b) participating in an established apprenticeship program in the Southern Tier. Participants must remain in the region for at least 3 years, and incentives will be distributed in tranches at the end of each year.

**PRECEDENT:** *the State of Vermont's Green Mountain Jobs program offers a student loan repayment program for students who graduate from qualifying Vermont colleges and universities with a bachelor's degree. Graduates must remain in the region for at least two years and work for a Vermont-based employer, and the program offers up to \$5,000 of assistance.*

### Impacts

Colleges and universities in the Southern Tier produced over 18,500 graduates in 2021, most of whom received a bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>72</sup> While no region retains all of its college graduates, increasing the percentage of graduates who remain in the region by even a small amount would have a meaningful impact on the population and talent base of the Southern Tier. Based on the MSA retention rates shown above, the four largest educational institutions in the region retain a combined total of roughly 2,450 graduates a year (Cornell, Binghamton, Ithaca College, and SUNY Broome Community College).<sup>73</sup> If those four institutions increased their retention rate by 50%, the region would see an additional 1,225 young people start their careers in the Southern Tier. If Cornell University, Binghamton University, and Ithaca College each reached Rochester Institute of Technology's 30% retention rate, the region would retain over 2,700 additional young people each year.

<sup>71</sup> Based on HR&A analysis of NBER research; "[Grads on the Go: Measuring College-Specific Labor Markets for Graduates](#)," 2022. Analysis of alumni remaining in the MSA and the State is based on LinkedIn data. SUNY Delhi is not part of a Metropolitan or Micropolitan Statistical Area, so does not have data for this field.

<sup>72</sup> Lightcast, 2022

<sup>73</sup> Based on HR&A analysis of NBER research; "[Grads on the Go: Measuring College-Specific Labor Markets for Graduates](#)," 2022.

#### Strategy 4: Expand successful training programs across the region.

Employers and workforce development organizations agree that there are many successful programs being run within the Southern Tier that would benefit from expansion and continued investment. Leaders at SUNY Delhi cited programs in mechatronics, HVAC, and welding that are so popular and successful that they lack the physical space to accommodate demand. There were also several creative ideas for ways to use existing funding sources to expand successful programs, such as providing grants for small businesses to train their existing workers in new skills. Other programs, despite their popularity with employers looking for skilled workers, struggle to recruit enough participants. Where necessary, new programs should be created (such as those needed for the emerging battery manufacturing industry, discussed in the Regional Challenge proposal). However, more is not always better: the Southern Tier will also focus heavily on increasing coordination and collaboration across partners and geographies, as well as increasing awareness of and participation in existing programs.

#### Actions

- **Encourage expansion of grants for local businesses looking to train or upskill their workforce.** SUNY offers Workforce Development Training Grants, which allow SUNY community colleges to partner with businesses or consortia interested in training or upskilling their workforce. The grants cover up to 75% of training costs, and the employer contribution can be funded through a mix of cash and in-kind support.<sup>74</sup> The trainings include a wide range of industries, from advanced manufacturing to nonprofit leadership, and all SUNY community colleges are eligible to participate. Similarly, the NYS Office of Strategic Workforce Development (OSWD) offers Pay-for-Performance and Capital Grant Programs of up to \$1 million to workforce training providers to support programs that partner with employers to train for in-demand jobs. Promoting these programs across the region offers local employers and trainers the ability to meet the changing demands of today's economy and allows jobseekers to gain critical and transferable skills that will enable their continued success. The REDC will bring together local community colleges and OSWD grantees to share information and best practices on using SUNY Workforce Development Training Grants and encourage regional

<sup>74</sup> [SUNY, "Community College Workforce Development Funding Opportunities."](#)



A student in the soldering lab at the Calice Advanced Manufacturing Center, SUNY Broome

collaboration to develop industry-led curricula and targeted outreach materials to local businesses who might be interested in upskilling their workforce.

- **Work with high school guidance counselors and other youth coaches to reduce the stigma of non-college pathways and increase awareness of local training opportunities.** Guidance counselors and other youth mentors, from coaches to clergy, play a crucial role in steering young people toward opportunities, whether college, apprenticeships, or job or training opportunities. Many adults coaching young people are often under pressure to steer students towards college rather than local training opportunities, despite the availability of well-paying jobs or apprenticeship programs. Therefore, the REDC will work with local workforce partners (including unions, BOCES chapters, and other training providers) to coordinate a targeted outreach campaign to increase awareness among guidance counselors and other coaches of available local opportunities and connect them with local employers or training organizations in their area. The REDC will also encourage CFA applications for programs that create innovative partnerships between high schools and local employers, with an emphasis on placing students directly into roles that do not require a college degree.
- **Pilot the use of extended reality (XR) for talent attraction and training.** Extended reality (XR, an umbrella term for augmented, mixed, or virtual reality) offers an exciting new approach to attract, screen, and train new talent. XR headsets allow people to experience a virtual shop floor, learn how to repair equipment, understand a new technology, or visualize a complex process. The Southern Tier



will explore opportunities to partner with local employers and workforce training organizations for innovative pilots that utilize this cutting-edge technology to recruit, train, or upskill their workforce, creating a ready-to-go workforce that can attract new companies to the region. The Regional Challenge Proposal section of this report contains additional detail about this strategy.

## Impacts

In-demand programs are popular precisely because they lead to well-paying jobs in industries with high demand. Expanding these programs offers economic opportunity to residents while simultaneously meeting the needs of local employers, reducing the mismatch between available workers and available jobs. Similarly, working with guidance counselors expands the range of opportunities high school graduates view as exciting and rewarding – changing the narrative from manufacturing jobs as outdated to manufacturing jobs as the future of the region.

### Strategy 5: Invest in wraparound services to increase participation in the workforce and workforce training programs.

To meaningfully participate in training and apprenticeship programs, many people need more than just a spot in the program – they may need childcare, transportation support, housing assistance, or other supportive services to enable their complete participation. They also need to sustain income during training programs to sustain their households and benefit from hands-on assistance and coaching. Needing these wraparound services should not disqualify residents from participating in programs, and yet so often, it does exactly that. The Southern Tier REDC will expand availability and funding for wraparound services offered as part of job training programs, to ensure that residents who seek out education and training are able to access it.

## Actions

- **Prioritize wraparound services to increase participation in workforce programs, particularly among underinvested communities and cultures.** The Southern Tier REDC will prioritize workforce programs that offer a comprehensive suite of wraparound services and encourage employers to design wraparound services into their training programs through partnerships with regional service providers. One path to doing so is OSWD's available Pay-for-Performance and Capital Grant

Programs (referenced above), which fund workforce programming costs, including wraparound services, with priority for industries that are growing in the Southern Tier, including cleantech, advanced manufacturing, and electronics. The REDC will connect schools and trainers with community organizations that have trust and credibility with underrepresented and hard-to-reach populations, supporting intentional outreach to historically marginalized groups. The REDC will also work with providers to develop models in which employers can fund wraparound services on an ongoing basis, to ensure long-term sustainability of programs.

- **Share best practices on, and seek to expand, successful wraparound models.** Many workforce providers in the Southern Tier are providing high-impact services to trainees, for example, programs that offer navigators to provide more personalized connections between participants and services. Navigator services like Chemung County's Community Services Navigator program provide a crucial lifeline to disadvantaged residents, assisting workers and trainees in the often complex process of receiving social services or other supports.<sup>75</sup> Supporting residents in receiving necessary services allows them to participate in workforce training or job placement programs more fully, ultimately increasing economic stability for themselves and their families. The REDC will seek to amplify these efforts.

## Impacts

Improving wraparound services will increase the total number of people who are able to participate in workforce training programs. Critically, it will also increase the breadth and diversity of people who are able to participate, including lower-income residents who are more likely to need additional support, BIPOC residents who have historically been less able to access quality jobs or training programs, and women and caregivers who have been excluded from the workforce due to lack of childcare, and other barriers.

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75 [Chemung County Community Navigator](#)



# Pillar Five:

## AMPLIFY THE SOUTHERN TIER STORY.

The Southern Tier offers incredible natural beauty, rich culture, vibrant downtowns, and charming villages and towns, all of which appeal to tourists and residents alike. Stretching from the Finger Lakes to the Catskills, Southern Tier visitors and residents can access hiking, camping, and boating. Cultural amenities such as music festivals, performing arts centers, and art walks have a strong presence in the Southern Tier, as do agri-tourism and craft food and beverages. Cities including Binghamton, Ithaca, and Corning have invested in adaptive reuse, arts and cultural events and venues, and sustainable infrastructure to create both unique experiences for visitors, and to improve quality of life for residents. Towns including Endicott, Norwich, Hornell, Watkins Glen, Elmira, and Owego have won State funding to implement downtown revitalization projects, improving streetscapes, walkability, and sense of place.

As a result, tourism is a core part of the region's economy. In 2022, tourism generated \$1.25 billion in direct sales and \$516 million in labor income for workers across the Southern Tier's counties.<sup>76</sup> Visitor spending has recovered since declining during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a 6% increase in total visitor spend in 2022 from 2019 levels. Yet, the tourism industry faces challenges. Spanning multiple tourism regions, there is no core regional tourism organization that supports cross-promotion across multiple destinations, including across the Finger Lakes and Catskills. The geographic breadth of the region makes it difficult for visitors to access or even be aware of the number of attractions throughout the region. And investment in the hospitality industry is needed to support growth, both in lodging capacity and in support for hospitality workers and businesses.

Southern Tier tourism attractions generated  
**\$1.25 billion**  
in sales in 2022.

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Total visitor spending  
has rebounded to  
**6%**  
above pre-COVID levels.

The future of the region depends in part on its ability to promote and expand its existing attractions and spread the word among the broader visitor population of the region's strongest assets. This will require the Southern Tier to tell its story, cross-promote across diverse assets, and increase visitation in addition to long-term quality of life in the region. Promoting and improving access to existing amenities will also support the development of other Pillars presented in this plan, offering the activities and regional appeal necessary to attract and retain population.

<sup>76</sup> Tourism Economics, 2022.

## STRATEGIES:

### Strategy 1: Build on the Southern Tier's historic cultural legacy to expand and create a mix of new destinations in the region.

The Southern Tier is home to a wide range of exciting attractions that sustain the region's current base of tourism. Maintaining these assets, while also continually refreshing and expanding the region's attractions, will ensure the Southern Tier can attract new visitors, extend stays to multi-day experiences, and support the growth of the industry throughout the region. Efforts to support tourism will ensure that concentrated nodes of destinations and clear paths between nodes facilitate visits that extend across multiple days and geographies. The region benefits from a base of tourism assets such as a unique legacy in silent film and movie production, agritourism experiences, and historical sites that celebrate the region's African American history and its role in the Underground Railroad. The Southern Tier can continue to maximize investment in existing experiences and attractions as key cultural assets in the region and in the creation and promotion of new destinations that showcase its history. Connecting local tourism nodes will further support the development of multi-day itineraries, allowing visitors to experience all the region has to offer.

#### Actions

- **Invest in new and existing capital projects, public art, festivals, venues, and events that promote the region's historical cultural legacies.** This includes investing in existing destinations that celebrate the region's African American history, such as the John W. Jones Museum in Elmira and the Downtown Binghamton Freedom Trail, and new and expanded offerings, such as an African American History Trail building on the Downtown Binghamton Freedom Trail, by providing direct support for the development of facilities and infrastructure. The region can build off of existing successful series – including Silent Movie Month in Ithaca,<sup>77</sup> while supporting programs such as tours, exhibitions and facilities around other film and television history in the region. Investment in this particular history can also raise the profile and cultural brand identity of the region – given the larger interest of visitors in arts and culture in Upstate New York.
- **Continue to support agritourism in the region.** Support small and mid-sized farms building on a growing focus on agritourism that provide unique

experiences such as farm visits offering alpaca tours and cow cuddling, farm stands and markets, wineries and breweries, and classes that teach food production like mushroom growing and winemaking. Farms, wineries, and breweries will benefit from support through promotion and outreach, capital improvements to support visitor access, facility expansion, and production of festivals and events focused on seasonal and local produce.

- **Increase the visitor capacity of the region by supporting hospitality projects and assisting with dedicated hospitality workforce training.** Capacity is a significant obstacle in attracting new tourists to the region: facilities need capital to support expansion, and the hospitality workforce faces shortages due to historically low wages and seasonal opportunities. To combat this, the REDC will provide hospitality businesses with grant capital to support a larger visitation base for facility expansions to improve overall lodging capacity. For example, Southern Tier REDC funded the development of the Roxbury at Stratton Falls, adding larger visitation capacity to Stratton Falls in Delaware County, drawing visitors from around the world, and resulting in awards and widespread publicity. In addition, the REDC will work with tourism organizations to create a consolidated listing of open positions across the region, and support wraparound services for the workforce, in partnership with workforce development training programs (for example, SUNY-Broome Community College and Cornell University hospitality training program).<sup>78, 79</sup> Finally, supporting extended-hour childcare programs for the hospitality workforce is essential to ensuring that workers can participate in hospitality job opportunities – the REDC will prioritize projects that offer childcare subsidy or create net-new childcare supply.<sup>80</sup>

#### Impacts

Supporting and refreshing the region's existing tourism assets, including destinations based on the region's history and dominant industries, will further develop assets that locals and visitors alike are already drawn to. Improving the quality of these existing attractions while also expanding the breadth of amenities available will support multi-day itineraries, bolstering the region's

78 SUNY Broome, Hospitality Programs Department, 2023.

79 Cornell University, Nolan School of Hotel Administration at the SC Johnson College of Business

80 CommonWealth Beacon, "Pilot program will offer early morning childcare in Boston, 2020. The Care That Works pilot program in Boston establishes a matching program between employees and providers to provide early morning service to construction workers, who have similarly non-traditional worker hours.

77 <https://whartonstudiomuseum.org/silent-movie-month-2023/>



tourism economy. Furthermore, investing in capital projects and workforce development will increase the industry's ability to provide year-round, well-paying jobs to local residents.

**Strategy 2: Facilitate cross-collaboration among Southern Tier tourism regions to craft a cohesive regional tourism strategy that attracts multi-day visitors.**

The Southern Tier spans three New York State tourism regions: the Catskills, Central New York, and the Finger Lakes.<sup>81</sup> As a result, messaging to visitors is often driven by these three tourism regions and individual metro areas, with no tourism organization or board coordinating among cultural attractions, businesses, and tourism bodies across the region. Given the breadth of the region and the number of different experiences offered, cross-promotion can increase the length of stay and total spend of visitors in the area. Visitors to Ithaca and Watkins Glen might not be aware of the arts and cultural offerings in Downtown Binghamton or historical museums in Corning, and vice versa. The table below depicts the wealth of amenities that exist across counties; while not intended to be exhaustive, it demonstrates the variety of attractions across the region's eight counties.

**Actions**

- **Develop a regional tourism strategy that promotes multi-day visitor experiences across counties.**

Encouraging a multi-day visitor experience extends the length of visits and expands the opportunity for visitation to more attractions. Experiences might vary by theme – arts, agriculture/food/beverage tours, outdoor recreation, and regional histories, and would be promoted by hospitality businesses and partnerships among cultural institutions and arts councils. Complementing promotion of those experiences would be the engagement of a vendor to create common CRM systems for tracking visitor data across cultural attractions in the Southern Tier, as well as a comprehensive year-round calendar of festivals and events across the region.<sup>82</sup> For example, Hudson Valley and Long Island highlight fall and winter calendar events and offer a year-round calendar.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>81</sup> [I Love NY, "Places To Go," 2023.](#)

<sup>82</sup> Metropolitan Area Planning Council, "Regional Cultural Tourism Project." Recommendation noted in a similar effort undertaken by a regional planning entity in Greater Boston.

<sup>83</sup> Hudson Valley Tourism, "Unique Fall & Winter Food & Drink in the Hudson Valley," 2023. Discover Long Island, "ANNUAL EVENTS & FESTIVALS," 2023.

**Impacts**

Increasing cross-promotion and facilitating themed multi-day visitor experiences will bolster visitation to the region and extend the average length of stay, supporting the growth of the tourism industry in the Southern Tier. These higher quality visitor experiences will in turn result in more repeat customers, fostering the region's reputation as an inviting and exciting place to visit. Higher visitation, longer stays, and more frequent repeat-visitors will all increase tourism expenditures in the region.



Skiing in Delaware County



Roxbury Motel

### Strategy 3: Create a focused marketing campaign to elevate the Southern Tier as a great place to live with natural beauty, a rich cultural fabric, and a low cost of living.

Many of the same features that make the Southern Tier an exciting place to visit also make it appealing to long-term residents and serve a critical role in attracting new population. The region's relatively low cost of living enhances this appeal, especially when compared to neighboring regions or New York State as a whole. The living wage in the Southern Tier, a metric calculated based on local cost of living, is lower than the Statewide average: living wage for a working adult with no children in the state of New York is \$21.46, versus a regional average of \$15.70 in the Southern Tier.<sup>84</sup>

Despite the relatively low cost of living and high quality of life, the Southern Tier has struggled to retain and attract population. Between 2011 and 2021, the largest population decline across age groups was for ages 35-54 (a decline of 17%), while growth was stagnant for populations aged 18-24 and 25-34.<sup>85</sup> Reversing this trend is critical: the region's ability to attract new residents, especially younger individuals and families, will determine the future of the Southern Tier. Every pillar in this Plan is designed to support this fundamental challenge, from bolstering emerging tradable sectors (Pillar 1) to developing new and existing talent (Pillar 4) and "right-sizing" residential and commercial development (Pillar 3). For all of those pillars to be successful, the region must market itself as attractive to the next generation of New Yorkers, broadcasting a narrative that highlights all that the region has to offer.

#### Actions

- **Fund a marketing campaign that highlights the Southern Tier's assets: high quality of life, quality jobs, thriving cultural centers, and attractive natural spaces.** This marketing campaign would include direct outreach to target groups, such as alumni of major universities and colleges, in addition to advertising in target regions such as the NYC area and developing a social media presence for the region. This effort would dovetail with marketing efforts presented in previous pillars focused on cleantech and business and talent relocation. The REDC will coordinate with town chambers of commerce and County tourism boards to identify key regional events that can be marketed across the Southern Tier for both young adults and families, fostering a

greater sense of regional cohesion and tapping into product, cultural, and geographic assets.

#### Impacts

Increasing awareness of what the Southern Tier has to offer will generate interest among families and individuals from all walks of life, fostering a diverse base of residents and an increased regional workforce. A strategic marketing campaign can encourage those born and raised in the Southern Tier to move back to raise a family and can spark interest in residents of larger metropolitan areas who are looking for a lower cost of living and smaller, more intimate communities. Growth of the region's population will not only increase the workforce, but also increase the available tax base to facilitate long-term investment in the region's infrastructure, quality of life, and supportive services.

### What We Heard

The Southern Tier is "a great place for remote work. We are 4 hours from NYC, Philly, Toronto, and have the Finger Lakes and mountains. We need to capitalize on this push for remote work."

### Strategy 4: Promote institutions, organizations, and businesses that serve diverse populations.

Between 2011 and 2021, the Southern Tier's non-white population grew by 19,600, with growth concentrated among Black (+1,300), Asian (+3,900), and multiracial populations (+11,300), while its overall population declined.<sup>86</sup> The Southern Tier is also home to nearly 40,000 foreign-born residents: 7% of Broome County residents and 12% of Tompkins County residents were born outside of the United States. The region's population growth rests on continuing to attract and retain a racially and culturally diverse population, which in turn depends on creating an environment and set of amenities that is welcoming and supportive of Southern Tier residents from all backgrounds. Given the region's ambitions to grow a series of different industries, and retain more of its student population, there is an urgent need to ensure that the region is welcoming to all.

<sup>84</sup> MIT Living Wage Calculator.

<sup>85</sup> American Community Survey, 2021.

<sup>86</sup> American Community Survey, 2021. 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates are the most current accurate source of racial and ethnic data available for all Southern Tier Counties.

## Actions

- **Promote BIPOC-owned businesses within the Southern Tier.** Promoting BIPOC-owned businesses improves representation within the region, increases awareness of businesses that may provide unique culturally-, ethnically-, or racially specific services and products (such as Black hair care), and offers residents of all backgrounds access to exciting local small businesses in their communities. Visit Ithaca/Tompkins County Visitors Bureau already highlights Black-owned businesses in promotional material, a practice the REDC will support across the region.<sup>87</sup> Creating an event series around BIPOC-owned businesses would further improve visibility: the REDC will work with existing diverse travel organizations within the state, including I LOVE NY Black Travel Program, I LOVE NY LGBTQ and Accessible NY Programs to promote events and businesses for tourists and visitors to the region.<sup>88</sup> In addition to marketing and event support, BIPOC-owned businesses would benefit from targeted capital grants and technical support in the region.<sup>89</sup> The REDC will explore precedent models for targeted support that align with regional industries, such as Seattle's Food Innovation Network, which operates an incubator for immigrant- or BIPOC-owned food and agriculture businesses.<sup>90</sup>
- **Support organizations that tell the story of diverse populations in the region.** The REDC will support organizations that offer marketing and cross-promotion of cultural institutions, increasing the ability of diverse populations in the Southern Tier to tell their own story. Existing institutions in the region already promote this storytelling: for example, The History Center in Tompkins County has created programming around Black history in Ithaca, as has the John W. Jones Museum in Elmira, and the newly invested in Binghamton Downtown Freedom Trail.<sup>91,92,93</sup>

87 [Visit Ithaca, "Black-Owned Businesses in Ithaca," October 2020.](#)

88 [Governor Kathy Hochul, Governor Hochul Announces Plans for I LOVE NY Black Travel Initiative," February 2023.](#)

89 [LISC, "Charting the Ways Forward for Community-rooted Small Businesses," September 2021.](#)

90 [Food Innovation Network, "Spice Bridge."](#)

91 [The History Center in Tompkins County, 2023.](#)

92 [John W. Jones Museum.](#)

93 [Binghamton University, BingU News, "Tubman Center unveils inaugural marker on Downtown Freedom Trail," March 2023.](#)

## Impacts

Supporting and growing the base of BIPOC businesses in the region will increase representation and foster a sense of belonging among BIPOC residents, leading to higher retention and increased quality of life. Increasing awareness of the region's diverse history through storytelling and marketing will further support this mission, while simultaneously supporting regional arts and cultural assets. Supporting current BIPOC residents in the Southern Tier will also help attract new residents by promoting the fact that the region can be a home for everyone.

## What We Heard

Participants noted arts and cultural assets and organizations are important to include under the umbrella of tourism, as it's one of the most significant ways that communities tell their stories.

The State should "invest in existing ongoing arts and culture in addition to tourism attractions."

These five pillars and associated strategies are designed to be future-oriented and ever-evolving, growing adapting alongside the region. This plan will guide the REDC as it evaluates grant awards through the Consolidated Funding Application, facilitates collaboration among regional economic development, business, and institutional stakeholders, and advocates for both public and private investment in the Southern Tier's communities and residents.



History Center in Tompkins County



# Participation

## The creation of this plan was underpinned by comprehensive research and analysis of the region's economy and demographic composition.

Both publicly available and propriety data sources were used to analyze population growth and demographic change, employment trends, industry and business trends, and other variables. The Southern Tier REDC led the creation of the plan, establishing a Steering Committee consisting of seven REDC members and key partners representing a range of industries, organizations, and geographies. The Steering Committee provided guidance and direction throughout the planning process in developing a vision for the region's economic future, determining investment priorities, establishing pillars to guide regional investment, and identifying strategies to achieve the established vision.

Eight groups of stakeholders, with participants representing a broad spectrum of sectors and constituencies, convened to provide insights and expertise on regional strengths, challenges, and opportunities. Groups included:

1. Academia
2. Advanced Manufacturing
3. Economic Development Organizations and Industrial Development Agencies
4. Food and Agriculture
5. Innovative Culture and Quality of Life
6. Real Estate Developers
7. Tourism
8. Workforce Development

Finally, public engagement ensured that the voices of Southern Tier communities – residents, workers, businesses, and other local stakeholders – were heard and reflected in investment strategies. Southern Tier communities provided input through three hybrid in-person/online public meetings and an online survey. A summary of public engagement efforts and findings is below.

### PUBLIC OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

Public outreach and engagement were achieved through three well-publicized hybrid open houses, held in Elmira, Delhi and Vestal, and an online community survey to capture the input of people who were unable to attend the workshops.

#### Open Houses

More than 75 regional residents attended the three workshops online and in person. The first open house was held on October 18 in Elmira, NY at the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM), drawing more than 30 participants. The second open house was held at SUNY Delhi in Delhi, NY on October 19, with roughly 30 people in attendance online and in person at the Okun Theater on campus. The third open house, with 15 people participating, was held in Vestal, NY, on October 25 at Binghamton University in the Innovative Technologies Complex. The workshops shared information about the strategic plan update process and existing conditions and obtained essential input on the Regional Challenge proposal. Following a public question-and-answer period, participants broke into groups to discuss the Regional Challenge proposal.

Open house events were publicized through e-mail blasts through the local Chambers of Commerce, Southern Tier REDC member distribution lists, and social media postings, Southern Tier REDC Strategic Plan Work Group members, and outreach on the Southern Tier REDC website. SUNY Delhi made an additional in-house effort to promote the open house in Delhi, starting with a news release on the university's website that was pushed to local media markets in the Delhi region as well.

The following themes emerged during open discussion across the open houses:

- **Housing choice and affordability**, with residents concerned about the supply and quality of the region's aging housing stock as well as affordability across a range of housing needs.
- **Diversity and BIPOC experiences** in the Southern Tier, including a need to ensure representation in leadership roles and regional planning processes. BIPOC residents spoke positively of their experiences in the region and the impact of available services and opportunities, while noting a need for continued support.
- **Youth and K-12 job readiness**, and the importance of both preparedness training and taking a chance on young people early in their careers.
- **Wraparound services to accompany jobs and training programs**, particularly childcare and transportation subsidies.
- **Promotion and marketing of the region**, to highlight opportunities for both new and existing residents. Participants spoke of the need for both tourism-based marketing and campaigns focused on business and talent attraction.
- **Small business assistance**, including support with succession planning, access to loans and grants, and technical assistance. Small and large businesses also spoke to the need for support for minority-, women-, and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses, particularly with regard to certification processes and contracting opportunities.
- **Transportation**, including expansion of evening service to accommodate students, residents and tourists attending evening events, and workers with nontraditional hours.
- **Trades and on-the-job training** as an incredible opportunity for residents without college degrees. Educators, employers, and residents all spoke to the importance of destigmatizing non-college pathways and ensuring that those working with youth understand available opportunities.
- **The role of tourism, arts, and culture** in the strategic plan update. Participants noted arts and cultural assets and organizations are important to include under the umbrella of tourism, as it is one of the most significant ways that communities tell their stories.
- **The federal CHIPS Act and State Green CHIPS Act**, which seeks to re-shore the semiconductor industry and have already attracted major employers and new jobs to New York, and its potential application in the Southern Tier.
- **Cleantech and emerging battery technology**, including discussion of the recent designation of a federal Tech Hub in the Greater Binghamton area.
- **The Regional Challenge proposal** and the importance of having a consortium of players. It was noted that innovation coming to Binghamton will re-shore technology and put the Southern Tier on the map.

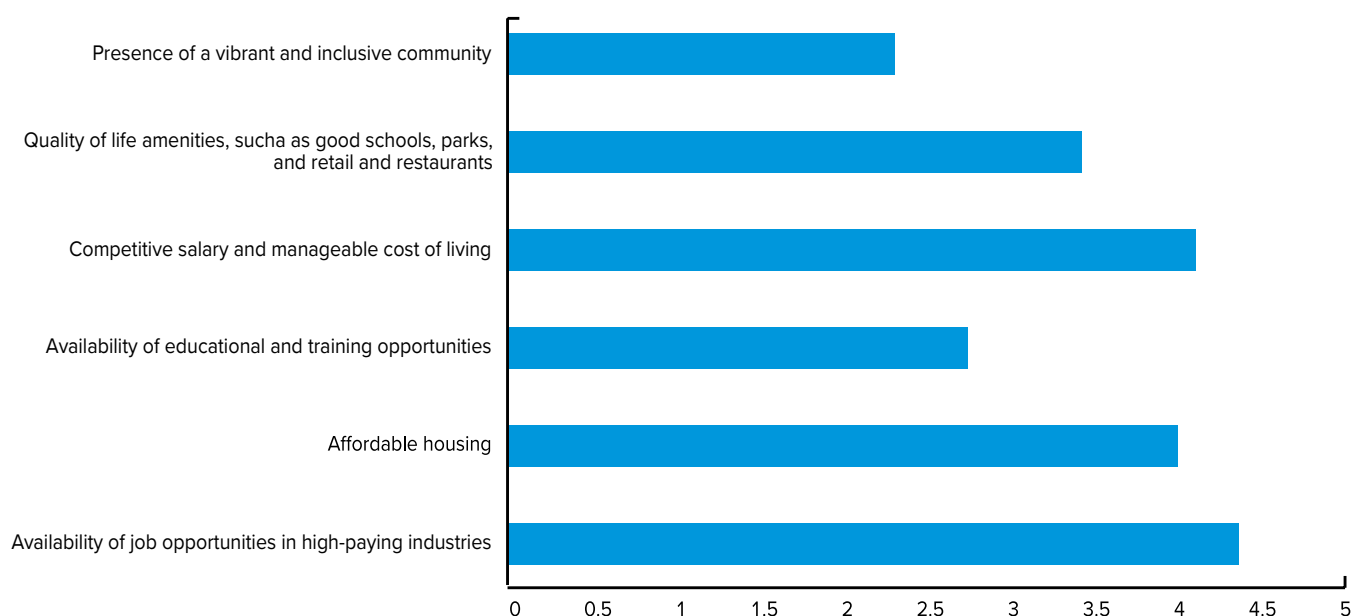


Spiedie Fest and Balloon Rally



Ithaca Downtown Conference Center

**What do you think is important for attracting and keeping residents and workers in the Southern Tier? Please rank the following, with 1 being most important and 6 being least important.**



### Community Survey

More than 100 people responded to an online survey that enabled engagement across the region. The survey asked respondents how and where they would like to see economic investment and funding prioritized throughout the Southern Tier. It also requested input on the Southern Tier REDC Regional Challenge topic of attracting, retaining, and developing population and talent. The following represent key findings from the survey:

- A majority of respondents indicated they would like to see grant funds throughout the region prioritized for 1) keeping talented workers in the region (84%), 2) training and educating workers so they can access skilled jobs in growing industries (66%), 3) redeveloping underused properties (60%), and 4) providing safe and affordable housing (55%).
- Many respondents identified Binghamton and Elmira as the urban communities with the most need for economic investment in the Southern Tier. Several respondents observed that Elmira does not have a large institution that is an economic driver for the community like many other communities, and that it “should be a hub of Southern Tier growth,”

but needs revitalization of blighted properties and real estate reinvestment. Norwich and Corning were also mentioned by over 10% of respondents as opportunity areas.

- A range of rural communities in need of economic investment were identified across all counties of the Southern Tier. Delaware County was mentioned most often by respondents.
- Respondents were asked to rank what they thought was important for attracting and keeping residents and workers in the Southern Tier. Options were ranked in the following order: 1) availability of job opportunities in high-paying industries, 2) a competitive salary and manageable cost of living, 3) affordable housing, 4) quality of life amenities, 5) availability of educational and training opportunities and 6) presence of a vibrant and inclusive community.
- Other open-ended questions asked survey-takers what the Southern Tier REDC should invest in, be doing, or be aware of in order to support economic development across the region.



## STAKEHOLDER GROUP ENGAGEMENT

The REDC established eight groups of stakeholders to contribute insights and expertise on regional strengths, challenges, and opportunities to the strategic plan. Each group benefited from participants representing a broad spectrum of sectors and constituencies. Among the eight groups, five were defined as “Work Groups,” with topic areas pertaining to specific areas of opportunity within the Southern Tier. Work Groups were convened twice and provided input through an online survey. Three groups were defined as “Focus Groups,” and were convened once with an opportunity to provide written feedback on draft goals and strategies. Both sets of groups had an opportunity to discuss regional strengths, challenges, and opportunities and to provide feedback on the recommended vision for the strategic plan, pillars of regional investment, and strategies. The groups were:

### Work Groups:

1. Advanced Manufacturing
2. Food and Agriculture
3. Innovative Culture and Quality of Life
4. Tourism
5. Workforce Development

### Focus Groups:

6. Academia
7. Industrial Development Agencies
8. Real Estate Developers

In total, more than 90 members participated in stakeholder groups. A list of all members can be found in Appendix C. Before the first convening of Work Groups, group members were sent an online survey with prompts regarding Work Group members’ perspectives on major strengths, challenges, and opportunities relevant to each topic. During the first convening of each group, participants were provided with an overview of the strategic planning process, the group’s charge and role in the process, and projected timeline and deliverables. Work Groups also received a report-back on responses to the online survey. Data on demographic and economic trends in the Southern Tier related to the group’s topic area was also shared with participants, along with a set of prompts to foster discussion about the existing conditions of each topic area in the Southern Tier and how the strategic plan can address

challenges, elevate assets, and leverage opportunities. During the second convening of Work Groups, group members were provided with the recommended vision for the strategic plan, pillars of regional investment, and strategies. Members were provided with a set of prompts soliciting input on proposed strategic plan recommendations. Focus Groups provided the same level of input through written feedback, rather than through live discussion.

## ADDITIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Beyond engagement of Southern Tier community members through public forums and stakeholder groups, the REDC, its staff, and the consultant team conducted outreach to additional stakeholders through the eight-county region to better inform the development of the strategic plan. These stakeholders included regional employers, representatives of institutions, and public economic development officials. A complete list of those engaged can be found in Appendix C.

As the REDC advances plan implementation, it will continue this approach to engagement, driven by work groups representing regional and industry-based expertise. The REDC will facilitate opportunities for the public to share their priorities and provide feedback, ensuring plan implementation is reflective of the vision and goals of the community.



Binghamton University



A scenic view of a harbor with sailboats, a weeping willow tree, and houses on a hill. The image is used as a background for the text.

PART THREE

# Regional Challenge

Supported by the \$10M Challenge award and working with New York State departments and regional stakeholders, the Southern Tier REDC will pilot new strategies to address **POPULATION AND TALENT ATTRACTION, DEVELOPMENT, AND RETENTION** in our region, with an eye toward statewide implementation.

# Overview

**The Southern Tier is rich in assets that support a high quality of life: world-class universities, distinctive natural beauty, and major employers that provide value to the region and the entire state.**

Still, the region has struggled to maintain and grow its population in the face of a global economic restructuring away from traditional manufacturing, an industry that once defined and sustained this area. From 2011 to 2021, the region's manufacturing and industrial jobs declined by more than 11%, erasing more than 6,500 jobs. Over the same period, the Southern Tier's population declined by 2%, the second-steepest decline across all of New York. Notably, the greatest population losses were among those aged 35 to 54 (a loss of 17%) and those under 18 (a decline of 11%), indicating a significant loss of prime working-age people with families and young children. This demographic is critical for determining the future of a region. The region's aging population, coupled with the accompanying drop in overall labor force, presents a threat to the region's prosperity that must be overcome.

**The Southern Tier  
labor force declined by  
12%  
from 2011 to 2022.**

Recent private and public investments in the Southern Tier, built on decades of planning and partnership, have greatly improved the region's economic fortunes. Companies are hiring – Raymond Corporation posted more than 600 job openings in the last year, and Lockheed Martin posted more than 400 positions.<sup>94</sup> The Southern Tier is now one of the nation's foremost emerging hubs for battery technology development and manufacturing, earning \$113 million in public awards in the last two years and a coveted designation as a Regional Tech Hub that will leverage further support. Today, labor market projections anticipate job

growth in the manufacturing sector (+9%), as well as in transportation and warehousing (+11%), arts, entertainment, and recreation (+17%), and professional, scientific, and technical services (+10%), adding more than 5,000 new jobs by 2028.<sup>95</sup> Regional economic success will have implications far beyond the borders of the Southern Tier: cleantech and battery technology are crucial in the global fight against climate change, and the region is poised to move the needle on our ability to generate, store, and distribute clean energy.

**Southern Tier companies and startups in the advanced manufacturing, arts and entertainment, and professional services sectors are hiring rapidly, projected to add**

**5,000 jobs  
by 2028.**

The Southern Tier – and New York State – will only be able to seize these opportunities if we rebuild the region's population and labor force while simultaneously investing in existing communities. We cannot just assume that private investment will automatically regrow our population, strengthen our labor force, or advantage current residents. Meeting this moment will require a dedicated and collaborative effort, bringing together private and public partners across the region to commit to creating the conditions for equitable and sustainable growth.

The REDC Regional Challenge Award will catalyze growth in the region through four strategies outlined below:

- 1. Cultivate Southern Tier communities as unique, desirable, and livable places.**
- 2. Retain top-tier talent trained and educated in the region.**
- 3. Establish a robust and adaptable workforce by developing local talent.**
- 4. Grow the region and fuel talent attraction by supporting future-oriented businesses.**

<sup>94</sup> Lightcast, 2022

<sup>95</sup> Lightcast Employment Projections, 2028



# Proposal

The Southern Tier will build on regional strengths in education, innovation, quality of life, and inclusivity, welcoming a new generation of residents and enhancing opportunities for existing and returning residents. For each strategy, we have identified one Flagship Initiative that will be foundational in addressing this challenge and would receive the greatest award allocation, as well as Complementary Initiatives that would receive smaller allocations but remain critical to achieving our goals.

## 1. CULTIVATE SOUTHERN TIER COMMUNITIES AS UNIQUELY DESIRABLE AND LIVABLE PLACES.

Attracting and retaining population and talent will only be successful long-term if residents find a quality, affordable home in the Southern Tier, and feel welcomed into their community. Doing so will require building housing across all income levels, an intentional focus on placemaking, and fostering inclusive and equitable communities.

### *Flagship Initiative*

#### **Execute transformational housing projects in a range of geographies, markets, and typologies.**

Every community has a unique housing market, but universal across all communities is a sense that the current supply of housing does not meet quality and affordability demands. The lack of housing in the Southern Tier was cited by multiple regional stakeholders as a specific obstacle to recruiting top talent. Increasing the supply of housing will be critical to achieving the Southern Tier's goals of population and talent attraction, but like many regions, housing production in the Southern Tier has fallen behind. Only 4,200 net new housing units were added over the last decade, just 1.35% of the current inventory.<sup>96</sup>

The REDC has utilized several available ESD funding tools to incentivize real estate development across the region, including the Upstate Revitalization Initiative (URI), Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI), and New York Forward (NYF). However, these tools are not always able to provide the type of funding required when it is most needed. Building on the strategies outlined in Pillar 3 of this report, the REDC will accelerate at least three housing projects per year through gap-closing funding in partnership with NYS Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) and will support hands-on work with localities to streamline plan review and approvals.

Projects will be prioritized based on their ability to address housing market gaps, including provision of affordable and workforce units. Funds can go toward site preparation, infrastructure, last-dollar funding gaps, and other uses. Projects can be residential-only or mixed-use, so long as they contain significant residential components. The Southern Tier will prioritize projects that have been planned and proposed but stalled due to funding or infrastructure constraints.

Two pending projects in the region represent the types of developments the REDC might advance through this strategy, and reflect the diversity of housing needs across the region:

1. **Meads Hill Road (Schuyler County):** Schuyler County has not seen a large-scale, for-sale housing development since 1975, and is in dire need of new housing. The Meads Hill Road project would provide at least 50 single-family homes, as well as 30 multifamily homes, a community center, and 20 acres of green space. Proposed private development faces an obstacle in that water, wastewater, and broadband infrastructure will need to be extended by one mile for the project to come to fruition, an extraordinary cost that cannot be borne by the project. An REDC award could fund a grant or low-interest loan to make this project a reality.

<sup>96</sup> American Community Survey, 2021. Housing production varies significantly between counties, and while some counties increased housing supply between 2011 and 2021 (Tompkins, Schuyler, Chemung, Broome), other counties lost units (Tioga, Steuben, Delaware, Chenango).



Village Grove

## Project Highlights

Developments underway in the region exemplify the types of projects that align with REDC goals for residential development:

### 1. Village Grove (Village of Trumansburg, Tompkins County):

Village Grove is a 46-unit mixed-use, mixed-income multifamily project. It targets families earning between 30% and 90% of area median income and consists of four buildings – one two-story multifamily building, two three-unit townhomes, and one standalone commercial building which will house the Trumansburg Community Nursery School. The project is all-electric and contributes to the carbon-neutrality goals of the NYS Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act and aims to meet Passive House and Net Zero Energy building standards.



Asteri

### 2. Asteri Ithaca (Ithaca, Tompkins County):

This market-rate project is part of an integrated redevelopment of the Green Street Parking Garage in Downtown Ithaca. Asteri Ithaca will be located on the upper nine floors of a 12-story building, with the first three floors housing conference center space and active street level uses. The project consists of 180 units, with a mix of studio, one-, two-, and three-bedroom units. In addition, the redevelopment includes green space and community seating.

### 3. Court Street Apartments (Binghamton, Broome County):

CSD Housing, Helio Health, and Eagle Star are partnering to offer 109 affordable homes, including half that would serve low- to moderate-income households and half that would provide supportive housing for people with substance use disorders, mental health challenges, and/or homeless veterans and individuals at risk for homelessness.

## 2. Ezra Village Apartments (Tompkins County):

The Ezra Village project would add almost 750 units of new housing to the Village of Dryden. The large-scale development, with a proposed build-out over 15 years, would deliver 75 units per year to allow for sustainable growth. The development would also feature significant green spaces available for public use by the community. Execution of the project will require rezoning the parcel from light industrial to multi-family residential, as well as support to develop infrastructure to connect the development to downtown Dryden, including sidewalk infrastructure. Funding support for infrastructure needs would accelerate the project and deliver much-needed housing.

### Complementary Initiatives

- **Facilitate a regional housing site study.** The REDC will initiate a regional housing study to identify public, civic, and vacant private sites with potential for housing development, including both sites that are currently ready and sites that could be ready with minor infrastructure improvements or adjustments. Understanding available housing sites will facilitate investment from developers, help municipalities plan for future infrastructure investments, and help businesses know where new developments could be located. As a precedent, Southern Tier IDAs are currently undertaking a similar study to identify sites for cleantech businesses. The housing study will follow a similar format, adjusted for metrics and zoning relevant to housing development.

## 2. RETAIN TOP-TIER TALENT TRAINED AND EDUCATED IN THE REGION.

The Southern Tier is known throughout the country for its world-class educational institutions – every year, more than 18,500 students graduate from one of the Southern Tier’s colleges and universities.<sup>97</sup> Many of those students have spent the last several years falling in love with what the Southern Tier has to offer: lush scenery, close-knit communities, and a high quality of life with an affordable cost of living. But each year, too many of those students feel they need to leave the region to find a well-paying job – especially if they need a visa to work. The Southern Tier will implement a suite of programs designed to retain the incredible talent trained and educated within the region, from high school graduates to PhDs.

<sup>97</sup> Lightcast, 2022

### Flagship Initiative

**Expand visa sponsorship to enable more students to remain in the region and facilitate connection to local employers through “intrapreneur-in-residence” programs.**

For employers across a range of industries and business sizes, navigating the visa sponsorship process is onerous and daunting and prevents employers from hiring otherwise qualified talent. While federal immigration policy is outside the control of the Southern Tier, the region does have the ability to reduce the administrative burden for employers – a small change with enormous consequences for the region.

**7%**  
of Broome County residents and  
**12%**  
of Tompkins County residents  
were born outside of the  
United States.

This program will have two primary components. The first is an “intrapreneur-in-residence” program. Interested partners (including local nonprofits, industry organizations, and educational institutions) will have the opportunity to sponsor H-1B visas for foreign-born graduating students in high-demand fields, combining post-graduate university programming in entrepreneurship and business with a direct match to a local employer interested in hiring top talent. Current federal regulations exempt certain organizations from the H-1B visa cap, and the Biden Administration has proposed a regulatory update that would expand these exemptions, creating additional opportunity in the region.<sup>98</sup> The region is already home to a sizeable foreign-born population, with 7% of Broome County residents and 12% of Tompkins County residents born outside of the United States.<sup>99</sup> Leveraging H-1B visas will enable a greater share of graduates to remain in the region and will allow employers to attract talent for positions that they currently struggle to fill.

<sup>98</sup> Department of Homeland Security, “[DHS Issues Proposed Rule to Modernize the H-1B Specialty Occupation Worker Program](#),” October 2023.

<sup>99</sup> In the graph “Change in Population by Race,” “Other” includes American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, Some Other Race Alone, and Two or More Races as defined by the US Census Bureau.



The second component is to provide education and training: a partnering entity will create guides and workshops that demystify the visa sponsorship process, to help businesses feel confident in offering visa sponsorship to talent in the Southern Tier.

While this program will be open to students from a range of fields, there is a particular need for engineering talent, given growth in the cleantech and battery technology sectors. Cornell University and University of Binghamton both have strong engineering programs that graduate successful students every year, many of whom are interested in staying in the region but need additional support to do so. This program meets the needs of both employers and students and will fuel the continued growth of local tradeable sectors.

#### *Complementary Initiative:*

**Pilot cash grants, rental assistance, or student loan support to graduates of Southern Tier colleges and universities to facilitate greater retention post-graduation.**

For many students, the difference between choosing to stay in the Southern Tier and choosing to leave is based on a cost/benefit calculus: while cost of living in the Southern Tier is low, pay is also typically lower than larger metropolitan areas, and some students prefer to earn more even if it means paying more. Offering cash grants, rental assistance, or student loan support can tilt that balance and incentivize students to remain in the region after graduation, bolstering the local population and increasing the workforce. The Southern Tier will establish a pilot program offering such incentives to graduates of any post-secondary educational institution in the region, including both four-year colleges and universities as well as community colleges. The student must graduate from an established degree program and must remain in the region for two years while working for a Southern Tier employer.



Ithaca College Graduation

### 3. ESTABLISH A ROBUST AND ADAPTABLE WORKFORCE BY DEVELOPING NEW AND LOCAL TALENT.

Exciting opportunities are emerging in the Southern Tier, stemming from recent public and private investments in clean energy and battery manufacturing industry. While the Southern Tier has legacy strengths in manufacturing that give the regional workforce a leg up, emerging industries will require new training programs and increased awareness to ensure a robust and adaptable workforce. The region currently faces a mismatch between the exciting new opportunities available (a high number of jobs paying family-sustaining wages for workers across education and skill level) and the lack of labor force participation and relatively low average wages among those who are working.

Many residents are not aware of emerging opportunities in cleantech or lack enthusiasm due to outdated perceptions of the jobs. The Southern Tier also faces low labor force participation among young people, and especially among young working-age men, who have historically filled manufacturing jobs – the labor force participation rate for men aged 16+ is just 59.2%.<sup>100</sup> This presents two opportunities: the first is to increase labor force participation and average wages among populations who have historically filled manufacturing jobs by bringing them into the higher wage jobs available in cleantech and battery manufacturing, and the second is to expose and train new audiences that have not historically filled these jobs – including women, residents of color, and people from outside the region. The Southern Tier REDC will make use of innovative technologies to expand

<sup>100</sup> ESRI Business Analyst, 2023

and train an adaptable and robust workforce, raising economic prosperity for residents throughout the region and attracting new residents to the region.

#### *Flagship Initiative:*

### **Leverage emerging XR technology to support the growth of emerging and legacy industries in the Southern Tier through workforce training, marketing, and other uses.**

Employers in the Southern Tier frequently cite the number of open positions at their company and share stories of how many applicants and hires they have to go through to find a qualified candidate who stays in the position for more than a few months. Meanwhile, many jobseekers have an outdated view of legacy industries like manufacturing or agriculture and are reluctant to pursue these jobs.

Extended reality (XR, an umbrella term for augmented, mixed, or virtual reality) offers an exciting new approach to attract, screen, and train new talent. Using this technology allows for a more efficient process that generates excitement about new and legacy industries while exposing prospective workers to real-life job conditions, thereby screening in applicants who are best aligned with these jobs. Encouraging everyone to travel to an advanced manufacturing facility is ineffective and infeasible – but loaning a local partner five XR headsets that allow people to experience a shop floor can generate excitement regardless of geographic location. Headsets can demonstrate a wide range of positions and job types, from high-tech engineering jobs to machine shops to family farms. They also allow employers to screen for basic skills and technical competency before candidates travel or relocate, reducing the number of candidates employers must evaluate to find a qualified match.

The Southern Tier will partner with employers and workforce training organizations to develop interactive modules that demystify careers in both legacy and emerging industries, allowing employers of all scales to attract, screen, hire, and train qualified workers more efficiently. The REDC will identify a small number of manufacturers interested in piloting this program, prioritizing companies with a consistently high number of unfilled roles at a variety of skill levels. The REDC will also acquire necessary XR equipment, facilitating its use and reuse across multiple pilots. Workforce development partners will work with manufacturers to develop recruitment and training modules based on their unique

needs, and all partners will work together to determine opportunities and strategies for marketing.

The goal of this program is to increase awareness of and readiness for local jobs, and to recruit and train successful candidates. The ability to facilitate part of the process at a distance dramatically expands the reach of local employers and workforce development organizations. XR does not replace the need for in-person training, and cannot replace in-person work, but it has the potential to dramatically increase the available talent pool and improve matching between candidates and employers.

#### *Complementary Initiative:*

### **Strengthen and promote affinity groups and cultural organizations to improve diversity, equity, inclusion.**

For New Yorkers of color, immigrants, and groups historically underrepresented in the Southern Tier, feeling at home often requires finding or creating a support network of people and organizations with similar backgrounds. The Southern Tier has many such institutions but finding them can be difficult for newcomers. Strengthening and promoting affinity groups, cultural and religious organizations, and other supportive institutions will increase retention in the region (for both new and lifelong residents) and further the region's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The REDC will partner with organizations including Business Leaders of Color, Support Black Businesses 607, and others to catalog relevant groups and resources, create a public “landing page,” and promote the link through local workforce and economic development organizations, employers, faith-based organizations, and other partners.



Baron Winds Project

## 4. GROW THE REGION AND FUEL TALENT ATTRACTION BY SUPPORTING FUTURE-ORIENTED BUSINESSES.

Business growth and attraction are of paramount importance to the success of the Southern Tier. Attracting businesses infuses new jobs and economic activity into the Southern Tier, providing meaningful opportunities for both new and current residents and boosting local economies. Startups within the region are commercializing emerging research and technology and creating new, innovative solutions across a range of industries, and with sufficient support, will grow into the next generation of anchor employers in the region. There has never been a better time to support business growth and attraction in the region: recent state and federal investments have generated momentum and funded critical infrastructure, from workforce training to large-scale capital projects to supply chain databases and certification programs. The Southern Tier will harness this momentum by seeding a growth-stage venture fund to support startups looking to anchor in the region, complementing successful startup competitions 76West and Grow NY as well as the New York Ventures (NYV) seed-stage investment vehicle. This flagship initiative will be complemented by increased regional coordination to attract and support businesses.

### *Flagship Initiative:*

#### **Seed a growth-stage venture fund to support startups looking to anchor in the region.**

The innovation ecosystem in the Southern Tier is strong, thanks in part to the last decade-plus of investment by the REDC. Incubators and accelerators like Rev:Itasca, the Koffman Southern Tier Incubator (KSTI), and Incubator Works have created successful companies across the region. Graduates from these incubators now play critical roles in the region's legacy and emerging industries – C4V, a graduate of KSTI, went on to become part of iM3NY, which is an anchor in the region's lithium-ion battery manufacturing ecosystem. While there are examples of incredible success, too many startups that are launched in the region end up leaving the Southern Tier to find access to funding, often moving to larger metropolitan areas like New York City or Boston.

To retain a larger share of the region's most innovative startups, the Southern Tier REDC will seed a venture fund for growth-stage companies that builds on the

state's NYV program. The fund will focus specifically on early- and mid-stage companies with proven products that are ready to scale and provide well-paying jobs in the region. Companies in any industry will be considered, but there will be a particular focus on the growth of emerging tradeable sectors in the region, including advanced manufacturing, cleantech, value-added agricultural production, and ag tech.

The initial funding from the Regional Challenge will be used as a match to attract private capital to the fund and to build out staff capacity to stand up and manage the fund. The staff will work in concert with regional incubators and accelerators to identify growth-stage companies that are ready to scale, and coordinate across the region to identify expansion locations, resources, and connections to anchor companies.

By allowing startups that originate in the Southern Tier to remain in the region while they scale, the region will not only capture the value of companies' economic activity, but also the jobs they create.

### *Complementary Initiative:*

#### **Increase regional coordination to attract businesses and talent.**

Currently, there is no central information source where businesses interested in relocating to the Southern Tier can learn about shovel-ready sites, incentives, the available workforce, and other business attraction features on a regional level. The system for jobseekers is much the same, with no single source for identifying available training or job opportunities. Harnessing the Southern Tier's momentum will require increased regional coordination across geographies and partnerships, and simpler ways for businesses or talent to engage with the regional ecosystem. The Southern Tier will initiate efforts to improve its collaborative infrastructure, working across counties to identify shovel-ready commercial sites for interested businesses and job openings and training programs for talent looking to relocate. A range of models of regional collaboration will be studied, and a structure identified that fits with the Southern Tier's needs. The REDC will also explore the feasibility of a regional "landing page" that serves as a digital front door for business and talent attraction.



## Why This Proposal

The Southern Tier REDC has crafted a proposal responds to the region's most pressing challenges. The development of these initiatives involved input from stakeholders throughout the region and leverages public and private resources to deliver immediate results, while laying the foundation for long-term success in the region. The proposal responds to the State's evaluation criteria of vision, process and implementation, and leveraged resources.

### Vision

**Realistic and innovative:** This proposal is grounded in historic data on the Southern Tier's declining population and shrinking workforce, as well as data projecting the strong potential for future job growth. This analysis is complemented by innovative approaches that utilize best practices from across the state and nationally, seek to modernize administrative barriers to progress, and leverage technology to set the stage for the Southern Tier's next chapter.

**Equitable and inclusive:** The Southern Tier aims to create economic prosperity for all residents (both current and future) including by addressing unique barriers tied to race, gender, socioeconomic status, immigration status, or geography. This vision is woven throughout the proposal, with explicit strategies designed to address inequalities (such as supporting affordable housing and child care, increasing visa sponsorship, and creating a more welcoming Southern Tier for all).

**Profound economic impact:** The initiatives described in this proposal are catalytic, with the potential to enable significant private sector investments across a range of industries and opportunities. Population and talent attraction have ripple effects throughout communities, increasing local tax bases that can in turn support additional community services and supports. Building housing will support both new and existing residents, as well as creating demand for jobs in construction.

### Process and Implementation

**Stakeholder and partner support:** The STREDC strategic planning process was collaborative and iterative. REDC members were asked to rank potential challenge topics, and population and talent attraction, development, and retention emerged as the clear consensus. The plan's eight work groups provided feedback on proposed initiatives. The plan's Steering Committee refined the strategic approach and provided direct input on flagship and complementary initiatives, partnership strategies, economic impact, and funding allocations.

### Community engagement and public feedback:

The REDC conducted an online public survey and three in-person open houses to collect feedback and gauge public opinion on the challenges and opportunities facing the region. More than 100 residents completed the survey. A majority of respondents indicated they would like to see grant funds prioritized for 1) keeping talented workers in the region (84%), 2) training and educating workers so they can access skilled jobs in growing industries (66%), 3) redeveloping underused properties (60%), and 4) providing safe and affordable housing (55%).

**Implementation:** This proposal was developed in close collaboration with the local leaders and stakeholders who will be crucial partners in implementing the initiatives described. Each has provided feedback on what is feasible, the resources needed for success, and the timeline for impact. Their ideas are reflected in the final proposal. The flagship initiatives proposed could be scaled across the region and the state, contributing to prosperity for all New Yorkers.

### Leveraged Resources

**Public and private investment:** The proposal leverages new and existing State and federal resources while also unlocking significant private investment by employers and institutions. Recent State and federal investment in the Southern Tier have helped lay a foundation on which this proposal builds. While public funding offers critical support for regional initiatives, a core goal of this proposal is to leverage private investment. Supporting last-dollar funding for housing projects can help unlock substantial private funding from developers, and the region's growth-stage venture fund will attract funding from investors interested in the region's cutting-edge startups across a range of industries. Leveraging XR technology and expanding visa sponsorship both promote growth of regional employers. The initiatives in this proposal have the potential to leverage approximately \$65 million in private investment, a conservative estimate.

**Regional assets and partners:** The initiatives proposed leverage the Southern Tier's strongest regional assets, including world-class educational institutions, a legacy of manufacturing, and a decade of success growing the region's innovation ecosystem fueled by past REDC investment. Leaders from these same local institutions provide the backbone of the proposal's partnership strategy and were instrumental in developing the initiatives.

## ALLOCATIONS & IMPACTS

Collectively, the initiatives above would have a catalytic impact on population and talent attraction, development, and retention in the Southern Tier over the next five years. While final initiative design and resource allocation would follow further engagement with State and regional partners, the table below illustrates a

representative allocation of the \$10 million Regional Challenge award across the flagship and complementary initiatives, based on today's understanding of needs and benefits, as well as our expectation of private leverage for each initiative. The table also highlights potential implementing entities and partners.

Initiative	Challenge Allocation (est.)	Private Investment (est.)	Leverage	Implementing Entities
<b>1. Cultivate Southern Tier communities as unique, desirable, and livable places.</b>				
Execute transformational housing projects in a range of geographies, markets, and typologies.	\$3,000,000	\$45,000,000	15:1	REDC, HCR, local governments
Incentivize local governments to “move at the speed of business” and adopt smart regulations that promote housing production and affordability.	\$500,000	Not yet quantifiable	-	REDC, local governments
Facilitate a regional housing site study.	\$250,000	Not yet quantifiable	-	REDC, local governments
<b>2. Retain top-tier talent trained and educated in the region.</b>				
Expand visa sponsorship to enable more students to remain in the region and facilitate connection to local employers through “intrapreneur-in-residence” programs.	\$1,000,000	\$7,000,000	7:1	Industry organizations, employers, educational institutions
Pilot cash grants, rental assistance, or student loan support to graduates of Southern Tier colleges and universities to facilitate greater retention post-graduation.	\$500,000	Not yet quantifiable	-	Educational institutions
<b>3. Establish a robust and adaptable workforce by developing new and local talent.</b>				
Leverage emerging XR technology to support the growth of emerging and legacy industries in the Southern Tier through workforce training, marketing, and other uses.	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000	2:1	REDC, pilot cohort of manufacturers
Strengthen and promote affinity groups and cultural organizations to improve diversity, equity, inclusion.	\$250,000	Not yet quantifiable	-	REDC
<b>4. Grow the region and support talent attraction by supporting future-oriented businesses.</b>				
Seed a growth-stage venture fund to support startups looking to anchor in the region.	\$3,000,000	\$12,000,000	4:1	REDC, NY Ventures
Increase regional coordination to support business and talent attraction.	\$500,000	Not yet quantifiable	-	REDC, New Energy NY, IDAs, EDOs
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,000,000</b>	<b>\$64,000,000</b>	<b>6.5:1</b>	

We have also begun to estimate the anticipated public benefits of regional investment in line with the above allocations over the next five years. While these estimates would be updated upon award, the Southern Tier REDC is confident that this series of investment would have a game-changing impact on the population and talent trajectory of the region and pay outsized dividends for the citizens of New York State.

- **10,000+ new working-age residents<sup>101</sup>** relocate to the region, drawn to the Southern Tier by the availability of well-paying jobs in emerging industries. These new residents will change the population trajectory of the region, and spur increased economic prosperity for both new and existing residents.
- **4,000+ new or rehabilitated homes<sup>102</sup>** in urban communities and town centers, increasing housing supply and affordability for residents across all income levels and geographies.

- **5,000+ trainees<sup>103</sup>** and hires in cleantech, manufacturing, and agricultural industries, 50%+ from out of region. New trainees will provide the workforce needed to catalyze the growth of emerging industries, helping New York businesses succeed.
- **500+ foreign students recruited<sup>104</sup>** as intra-preneurs-in-residence, retaining top-tier talent educated in the region and providing highly skilled workers to local companies.

The initiatives in this proposal will have a transformational impact on the Southern Tier and stand to benefit the region for generations to come. While this proposal is focused on population and talent attraction and retention, its vision and proposed actions are intrinsically linked to all other regional priorities, impacting workforce development, housing, racial equity, supporting industries and businesses, and more. The REDC Regional Challenge Award will allow the Southern Tier to seize the moment, growing economic prosperity throughout the region and creating ripple effects that will benefit all of New York State.

<sup>101</sup> Based on projected five-year net job growth of 17,200 (2023-2028); assumes 50% of new jobs are filled by new residents or retained students, and that half of new workers bring a working partner.

<sup>102</sup> Represents a 2x housing production pace versus the prior decade. Tompkins County added roughly 450 homes a year from 2011 to 2020, Broome County added 180, and Chemung added 50 (a total of approximately 680), while all other counties either lost units or remained stable.

<sup>103</sup> New Energy New York has already completed 800 job trainings for battery related roles through Build Back Better Regional Challenge Funding; job openings in this sector will exceed this number each year.

<sup>104</sup> Estimated 1,750 graduating international students each year; assumes > 5% choose to stay through this program.





PART FIVE

# Appendix

# Appendix A - Implementation Agenda

The following table summarizes the Pillars and Strategies listed above, along with their expected implementation timeframes and the equity considerations that will inform their implementation.

Strategy	Pillar	Potential Implementation Leads	Potential State Funding Source	Short (1 yr) Medium (2-3 yrs) Long-term (4+ yrs)	Equity Considerations
Amplify the work of regional sectoral partnerships in cleantech, including New Energy New York, to build on state and federal investments and catalyze cluster growth throughout the Southern Tier.	1	STREDC, NENY	ESD	Medium-term	Ensure opportunities from regional cleantech investments are available to all Southern Tier residents
Address challenges in the electrical grid to increase power capacity and ensure a fast and reliable transition to clean energy and energy storage solutions.	1	Counties, municipalities, utilities	NYSERDA Future Grid Program, ESD	Long-term	Address geographic inequities in grid capacity for both businesses and individuals; follow environmental justice principles for siting and engagement
Support entrepreneurial companies with access to mentorship, capital, and talent.	2	Local community colleges and universities, regional business incubators, Southern Tier Startup Alliance, core manufacturing businesses	ESD, NY Ventures, New York State Certified Business Incubators and Innovation Hot Spots Program	Short-Term	Aggregate funding to support emerging and small businesses that would otherwise struggle to launch and find capital
Identify strategic sites to prioritize for shovel-ready improvements for business development and expansion.	2	STREDC, counties, municipalities	ESD, FAST NY	Long-Term	Prioritize assets and land parcels in historically disinvested parts of the region; follow environmental justice principles for siting and engagement
Support the development of food manufacturing, diversification, and agricultural value-add to capture a higher share of economic value for the region.	2	Small farmers and food/beverage/processing entities, IDAs, agricultural technology manufacturers, Cornell Cooperative Extension, agritourism campaigns	ESD, Grow NY, Rural Initiatives Loan Program, DOL, Excelsior Jobs Program, Office of Strategic Workforce Development, NYS Small Business Credit Initiative	Long-Term	Support food manufacturing workers, the lowest paid workers in the region's manufacturing core

Focus branding and marketing efforts on elevating the Southern Tier as a global leader in advanced manufacturing and cleantech.	2	NENY	ESD	Short-term	Ensure historically marginalized groups and communities have access to economic opportunities promoted through marketing
Prioritize funding tools that support the development of housing in addition to commercial uses, including affordable housing.	3	STREDC, in consultation with real estate industry leaders	ESD, HCR	Medium-Term	Ensure development meets the needs of existing as well as new residents and is accessible to transit, jobs, healthcare, and other services; mitigate displacement pressures
Incentivize municipalities to rethink land use regulations to create an environment for the development of housing and other amenities to meet market demand.	3	STREDC, participating municipalities	ESD, HCR	Medium-Term	Ensure development meets the needs of existing as well as new residents and is accessible to transit, jobs, healthcare, and other services; mitigate displacement pressures
Ensure the Southern Tier is welcoming and supportive to all residents.	3	STREDC, affinity organizations	ESD	Short-Term	Prioritize organizations and communities that are underserved by existing funding
Expand the supply of affordable childcare.	3	STREDC	OCFS, ESD	Medium-Term	Prioritize areas that are underserved by childcare resources
Invest in urban, town, and village centers across the region to improve the public realm, leverage cultural assets, and improve livability.	3	STREDC, DOS, municipal applicants/participants	DRI, NY Forward, Restore NY, ESD	Long-Term	Ensure public investment meets the needs of existing as well as new residents; mitigate displacement pressures
Convene regional workforce partners to strengthen partnerships between private-sector partners, training and education providers, and community-based services for regional coordination and collaboration.	4	STREDC, BOCES, community colleges, workforce training partners	ESD OSWD grants	Medium-term	Focus on pathways to family sustaining jobs for residents without college degrees
Implement innovative worker attraction strategies to grow the regional workforce.	4	STREDC	ESD	Medium-Term	Attract people from a wide variety of backgrounds, including educational attainment, socioeconomic status, age, race and ethnicity, and gender



Retain students who are educated in the Southern Tier.	4	Colleges and universities	SUNY, ESD	Long-term	Invest in young people interested in remaining in the region
Expand successful training programs across the region.	4	SUNY Community Colleges, local school districts, BOCES	SUNY Workforce Development Training Grants, ESD OSWD	Medium-Term	Focus on residents with low education attainment and in remote geographies
Invest in wraparound services to increase participation in the workforce and workforce training programs.	4	Workforce training partners, STREDC	ESD OSWD training grants	Short-Term	Provide wraparound services to ensure historically marginalized groups can participate in training programs
Build on the Southern Tier's historic cultural legacy to expand and create a mix of new destinations in the region	5	I Love NY, local chambers of commerce, tourism entities	ESD	Medium-Term	Increase representation of underrepresented groups, building on the region's breadth of cultural and historical attractions
Facilitate cross-collaboration among Southern Tier tourism regions to craft a cohesive regional tourism strategy that attracts multi-day visitors.	5	I Love NY, chambers of commerce, regional tourism entities	ESD	Long-Term	Increase representation of underrepresented groups in employment and business ownership
Create a focused marketing campaign to elevate the Southern Tier as a great place to live with natural beauty, a rich cultural fabric, and a low cost of living.	5	Local chambers of commerce, cultural and non-profit institutions	ESD	Medium-Term	Promote the region's affordability for individuals and families who cannot afford to live in more expensive, nearby metropolitan areas
Support institutions, organizations, and businesses that serve diverse populations.	5	Local chambers of commerce	ESD, NYS Small Business Credit Initiative, Office of Strategic Workforce Development, NY Ventures	Long-Term	Make the region a welcoming environment for all to live and do business; celebrate and promote cultural diversity for the region's students and residents

# Appendix B - Performance Measurement

The following measures will be used to track the progress and success of each Pillar and its corresponding strategies. The REDC will document these metrics in partnership with implementation partners and share them as part of its annual progress reports as the Strategic Plan is carried out.

Pillar	Measures
1. Position the Southern Tier as a dynamic, ever-evolving hub for cleantech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total federal investment in cleantech</li> <li>• Jobs created by new and growing cleantech companies</li> <li>• Dollars invested in grid improvements</li> </ul>
2. Propel growth in backbone industries and nurture the regional innovation ecosystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private dollars committed to growth-stage fund and invested in small agricultural businesses</li> <li>• Jobs created by startups and growth-stage companies receiving awards or investment</li> <li>• Jobs created by businesses relocating from outside the region receiving support</li> <li>• Total private investment in previously vacant and underutilized sites</li> <li>• Annual sales growth in value-added agricultural products</li> </ul>
3. Demonstrate the Southern Tier's unmatched livability and incentivize residential and commercial development that complement the region's communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing units produced through REDC-supported projects</li> <li>• Childcare seats produced through REDC-supported projects</li> <li>• Number of communities convened for knowledge-sharing</li> </ul>
4. Grow a diverse, adaptable, future-ready workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrollment, completions, and placements in industry-aligned workforce programs</li> <li>• Total students who participate in retention programs and remain for at least three years</li> <li>• Total State and federal funding awarded to regional workforce development programs</li> </ul>
5. Amplify the Southern Tier story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total visitation and visitor spending</li> <li>• BIPOC-owned businesses promoted via tourism channels</li> </ul>

# Appendix C - Work Group Members

## Advanced Manufacturing

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# Appendix D - Available Sites

Site Name	Location	Acreage	Zoning	Investment Needed
Buck Road	Town of Nichols	9.64 acres	Industrial	Minimal investment to extend water/sewer into site. 3-phase electric and natural gas located along roadway.
Hess	Town of Nichols	19.8 acres	Industrial	Minimal investment to extend water/sewer into site. 3-phase electric and natural gas located along roadway.
Strong Road (Rizzuto)	Town of Owego	41.9 acres	Residential	Extension of existing water/sewer; extension of 3-phase electric and natural gas.
Shephard Niles	Montour Falls	34 acres	Industrial	In need of remediation, but has existing power and wastewater capacity, ample public water, access to truck route.
Schuyler County Business Park	Watkins Glen	3 parcels totaling 47 acres	Light Industrial/Manufacturing	Business Park has existing water, wastewater, electric, natural gas, and broadband infrastructure.
Painted Post Foundry Site	Painted Post	52	Industrial	Site has existing water, sewer, electric, natural gas, and broadband service.
Wayland Business Park	Town of Wayland	150 acres	Industrial/Commercial	Certified shovel-ready by New York State Build Now NY program; planned for up to 1.3 million square feet of development.



# Appendix E - Tourism Amenities

## SELECTED AMENITIES BY COUNTY<sup>105</sup>

County	Broome	Chemung	Chenango	Delaware	Schuyler	Steuben	Tioga	Tompkins
Vacation Region	Central	Finger Lakes	Central	Catskills	Finger Lakes	Finger Lakes	Finger Lakes	Finger Lakes
Arts & Cultural/ Historical Amenities	Broome Art Trail The Firehouse Stage at the Goodwill Theater Bundy Museum of History and Art Tri-Cities Opera The Discovery Center of the Southern Tier Animal Adventure Park Binghamton Downtown Freedom Trail Roberson Museum and Science Center LUMA Projection Arts Festival Phelps Mansion Museum First Friday Art Walks Chuckster's Family Fun Park Recreation Park Binghamton Philharmonic Broome County Forum Theatre Broadway in Binghamton Artist Row (State Street Binghamton) "Carousel Capital of the World" Kopernik Observatory Visions Veterans Memorial Arena Anderson Center for the Performing Arts Mural & Mosaic Trail Dick's Sporting Goods Open Annual Spiedie Fest & Balloon Rally	Clemens Center Arnot Art Museum National Soaring Museum John W. Jones Museum The Cider Mill Harris Hills Amusement Park Tanglewood Nature Center and Museum Eldridge Park Chemung County Fair Chemung Valley Historical Society and Museum	Northeast Classic Car Museum Chenango County Historical Society Chenango River Theatre Creative Works & The Artists' Palette Earlville Opera House Jericho Arts Council New Berlin Art Forum Sam and Adele Golden Gallery Oxford Historical Society Museum The Afton Museum Preferred Manor The Oxford Memorial Library Rogers Environmental Education Center	Roxbury Hotel/ Stratton Falls Arts Inn Headwaters Arts Center Historical societies Delaware and Ulster Railroad Hanford Hills Museum John Burroughs Woodchuck Lodge Pakatakan Farmers Market Town of Delhi Historical Society Bushel Taste of the Catskills Franklin Stage Company Delaware County Historical Association & Frisbee House	Watkins Glen International International Motor Racing Research Center Painted Bar Stables Farm Sanctuary Schuyler County Historical Society	Corning Museum of Glass Rockwell Museum of Modern Art Glenn H. Curtiss Aviation Museum	The Tioga Beverage Trail Galleries/Tioga Arts Council Tioga Downs Casino Resort Waterman Conservation Education Center Wildlife Refuges Waverly Historical Society	State Theater of Ithaca Kitchen Theater Company Hangar Theater Civic Ensemble Public Theater The Cherry Arts Theater Ithaca College Handwerker Gallery Cornell Herbert F. Johnson Museum The History Center in Tompkins County Museum of the Earth Ithaca Farmers Market Ithaca Reggae Fest Southside Community Center Greater Ithaca Activities Center Sciencenter Cornell Lab of Ornithology

<sup>105</sup> This table was created with input from Tourism Work Group members. It reflects group feedback and is not a comprehensive list or resource.

Natural Amenities	Agritourism AquaTerra Wilderness Area Public parks/ recreation Confluence of two rivers in Downtown Binghamton Golf Courses Binghamton University Nature Center	Public parks/ recreation Finger Lakes access Newtown Battlefield State Park Sperr Memorial Park	Chenango Valley State Park Public parks/ recreation NY River Adventures Brookfield State Forest Guilford Lake Millbrook Recreation Park	Catskills Public parks/ recreation Baxter Mountain Plattekill Mountain Catskill Scenic Trail	Watkins Glen State Park Seneca Lake Finger Lakes access Public parks/ recreation Catharine Valley Wildlife Management Area Finger Lakes National Forest Agritourism Seneca Lake Wine Trail Erie Canalway (Cayuga/Seneca Canal) Clute Park on Seneca Lake Havana Glen Park Catharine Valley Trail Finger Lakes Trail Waterfalls	Finger Lakes access Wineries Public parks/ recreation	Finger Lakes Access Public parks/ recreation Iron Kettle Farm Tioga Gardens Two Rivers State Park Recreation Area	Public parks/ recreation Cayuga Lake Hector Land Use Area Buttermilk Falls State Park Cornell Botanic Gardens Ithaca waterfalls Ithaca Children's Garden
City/Town Centers	Binghamton Endicott Johnson City	Elmira	Norwich	Delhi	Watkins Glen	Corning Hornell	Owego	Ithaca

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- p.27: (Top) Source: revithaca.com (2021/06/2021\_Prototyping\_Design\_Workshop.jpg)  
(Bottom) Source: Chenango Valley Central School District (<https://www.cvcsd.stier.org/SouthernTierConstructionCareerDay2017.aspx>) – Chenango Valley Central School District Career Day
- p.31: (Left) Source: Explore Watkins Glen (Greater\_Southern\_Tier\_Industrial\_Maintenance\_Training0-bea6feec5056a36-bea6ffdb-5056-a36a-08cf60c5b47c5a49.jpg) - Southern Tier BOCES Training  
(Right) © NYS Dept. of Economic Dev. (NYSDED (ST\_WC\_dining-area-de79e7e7903dc79\_de79e9af-d73d-00f9-ce71673283183588.jpg)
- p.33: Source: New Energy New York (<https://newenergynewyork.com/press/>) – Build Back Better Regional Challenge press conference
- p.34: Source: Greentech Media (AlevoManufacturing\_721\_420\_80\_s\_c1.jpg)
- p.38: (Left) © 2018 David Lamb Photography (Koffman+Southern+Tier+Incubator\_Sandbox.jpg)  
(Right) Source: Cornell University (Snack-Bar-Hypercell-Tech.jpg) - Winners of the 2023 Grow-NY Prize
- p.39: Source: Best Bev (ezgif-3-016c682756.webm) – Best Bev
- p.43: Source: Clark Farm Creamery (3d3fcb\_4dff7e319c74b83a771bb9940262d7b~mv2.jpg) - Clark Farm Creamery
- p.47: Source: Bob Joseph/WNBF News (2023.04.07-39-MUNSELL-STREET-A.jpg) - Recently completed supportive housing in Binghamton
- p.50: Source: Greater Southern Tier BOCES (<https://www.gstboces.org/page/career-and-technical-education-programs>) – Greater Southern Tier BOCES Dental Assistant Training
- p.51: Source: NextFlex (Industry.png)
- p.52: Source: DCMO BOCES (2021830165238240\_image.jpg) – Raymond Corporation Seminar
- p.55: Source: SUNY Broome (wlk87c6M-1080x720.jpeg) - A student in the soldering lab at the Calice Advanced Manufacturing Center, SUNY Broome
- p.59: (Top) Source: discoverupstateny.com (QuequeZgw2.jpeg) - Skiing in Delaware County  
(Bottom) Source: The Roxbury Motel (mansion-exterior-15-min.jpg)
- p.61: (Bottom) Source: History Center in Tompkins County (Exhibit%20Hall\_1.jpg) - History Center in Tompkins County
- p.63: (Left) Scott M Anderson (Spiediefest1.jpg)  
(Right) Source: Ithaca Downtown Conference Center (<https://www.ithacadowntownconferencecenter.com/>) – Ithaca Downtown Conference Center
- p.65: (Left) Source: bachelorstudies.com (198744\_198722\_cover\_photo-20161018\_FallClockTower06\_jwc-2.jpg)
- p.66: Source: TravelandLeisure.com (TAL-watkins-glen-marina-WATKINSGLEN0523-aec29cc0ec5a439383ca9019e58a472d.jpg)
- p.69: (Left) Source: Ithaca Neighborhood Housing (tburg-layout-2-website.jpg)  
(Right) Source: Vecino Group (Full-view-Ithaca-1-1024x576.png)
- p.71: Source: The Ithacan (Commencement\_MalikClement3.1-1-1024x577.jpg)
- p.72: Source: Steuben County Industrial Development Agency (IMG\_0347-2048x1365.jpg) - Baron Winds Project
- p.78: Source: gafferdistrict.com (Rockwell-Museum---Aerial---Brian-Maloney-1-sm\_92BEF027-5056-A36A-0AE7872B4E13904C-92beedbe5056a36\_92bf0459-5056-a36a-0a2f154905df5a6e.jpg) - Rockwell Museum, Corning, NY



