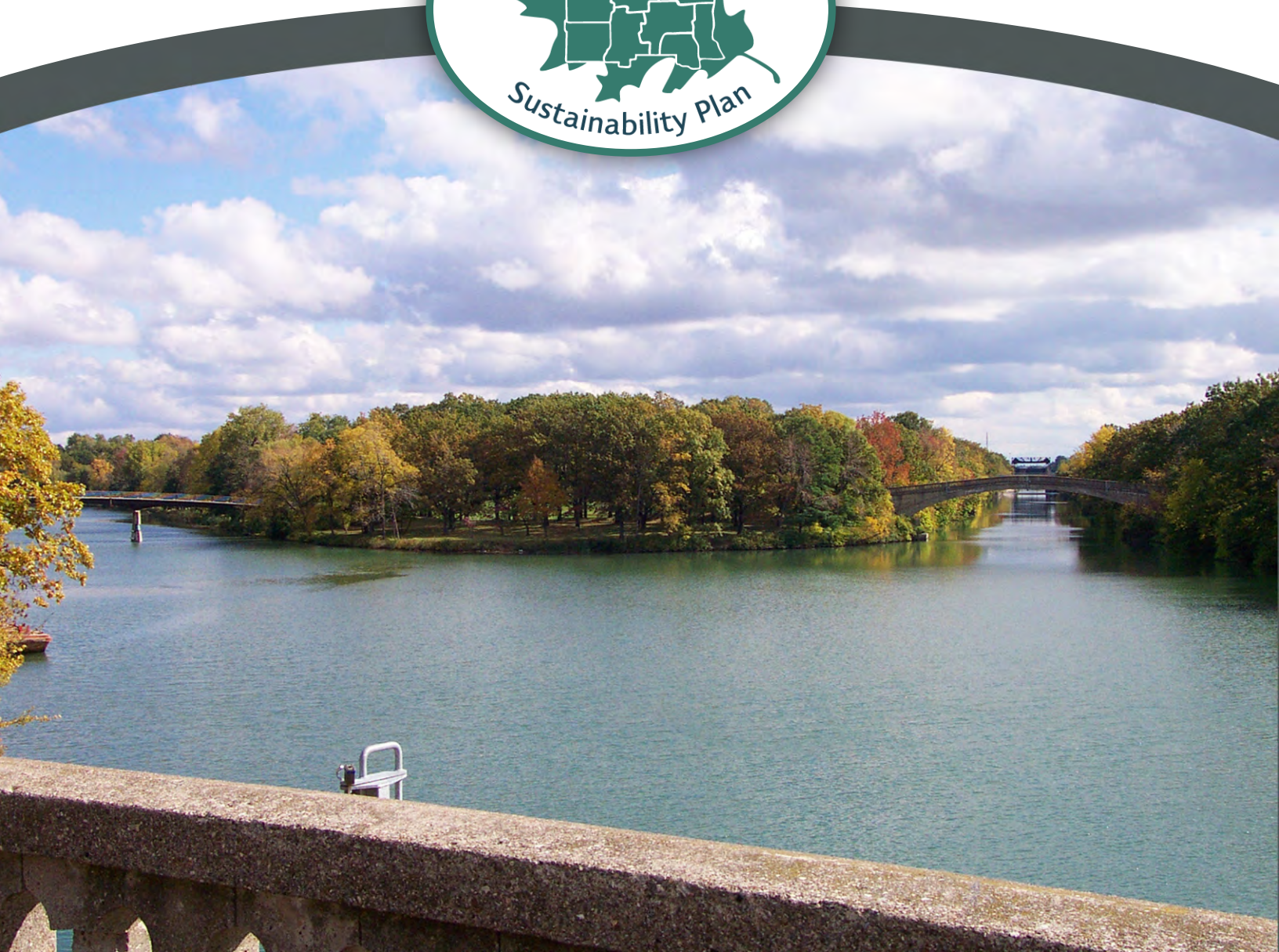


Section 1

Introduction



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1.1 OVERVIEW

The development of the Finger Lakes Regional Sustainability Plan (the Plan) was funded through the first phase of the New York Cleaner Greener Communities (CGC) program. This statewide program announced by Governor Cuomo in 2011 is administered by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). Through a two-phase competitive grant process, the CGC Program empowers New York’s 10 regions to lead the development of sustainability plans and implement projects that will significantly improve the economic and environmental health of the region and thereby improve the quality of life. In the first phase of the program, up to \$1 million per region was made available to develop comprehensive sustainability plans. The second phase of the CGC program will make up to \$90 million of implementation funds available for regional projects that support goals identified in the planning process.

The Plan, aligned with the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council (FLREDC) Strategic Plan – *Accelerating Our Transformation* and building on existing sustainability efforts, is designed to identify a focused set of Guiding Principles and strategies for the region. This guidance represents a framework for decision making, whether it be for advancing ideas in this Plan or evaluating future policies, projects, and proposals. Using this framework, the larger Finger Lakes community can view all programs, policies and projects through a “lens” of sustainability. More importantly, the region boasts an understanding of its unique identity, developed through the Story of Place process, and therefore the “lens” is more refined and tailored to the Finger Lakes Region.

The study area for the Plan includes the following nine counties:

1. Genesee County
2. Livingston County
3. Monroe County
4. Ontario County
5. Orleans County
6. Seneca County
7. Wayne County
8. Wyoming County
9. Yates County

Monroe County, on behalf of the nine counties, was awarded the funding and managed the development of the Plan.



Figure 1-1: Finger Lakes Study Area

1.2 STAKEHOLDER & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Through an elaborate process of engaging communities and stakeholders in the region, the Plan was developed to reflect local priorities and opportunities as well as guidance on overcoming the barriers to becoming more sustainable. Several parallel outreach efforts have taken place:

- Consortium (Executive Committee/Planning Team)
- Stakeholder Groups and Interviews
- Regional Leaders Forum
- Coordination with Regional Organizations
- Public Outreach

Figure 1-2 shows the relationship among the different efforts. A detailed summary of the stakeholder and public engagement process is provided in **Appendix A: Public Feedback Summary**.

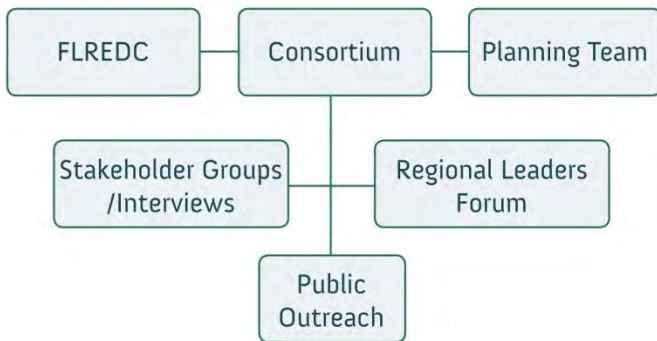


Figure 1-2: Coordinated Outreach Efforts

Consortium

The Finger Lakes Regional Sustainability Consortium (Consortium) was established to serve as the Steering Committee for the project. The founding members of the Consortium include: Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming and Yates counties, the

City of Rochester, the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FLRPC) and the Genesee Transportation Council (GTC). In addition to these founding members, the Consortium included municipalities and representatives from the following:

- Office of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, Finger Lakes Region
- Empire State Development and Finger Lakes Region Economic Development Council (FLREDC)
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Region 8

A list of Consortium members is provided in **Appendix A: Public Feedback Summary**.

The Consortium met six times during the planning process to provide project direction and review key deliverables:

1. Project kick-off – August 2012
2. Project Execution Plan/Baseline Assessment – October 2012
3. Story of Place/Guiding Principles – November 2012
4. Story of Place/Strategies – January 2013
5. Targets Outline/Implementation Strategy – February 2013
6. Draft Plan – March 2013

A subset of the Consortium served as the Planning Team, which includes representatives from:

1. Livingston County (on behalf of Genesee, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates counties)
2. Monroe County
3. City of Rochester
4. Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FLRPC)
5. Genesee Transportation Council (GTC)
6. Consultant Team

The G/FLRPC, retained under a professional services contract, served as Project Manager responsible for day to day contact with NYSERDA,

the Consortium and the Consultant Team. The Planning Team, met eight times, provided overall guidance and direction to the Consultant Team and reviewed interim deliverables.

The list of Planning Team members is provided in **Appendix A**.

Stakeholder Groups and Interviews

Six Stakeholder Groups, with approximately 500 total members, were established to provide data, technical expertise and knowledge of the region to guide the development of the Plan. These groups have been developed around the following NYSERDA defined focus areas, with the topics of Climate Change Adaptation, Governance and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions addressed in each Group:

- Energy (65 members)
- Transportation, Land Use & Livable Communities (125 members)
- Materials Management (35 members)
- Water Management (75 members)
- Economic Development (107 members)
- Agriculture & Forestry (91 members)



A list of Stakeholders is provided in **Appendix A: Public Feedback Summary**.

The Stakeholder Groups had broad representation including subject area experts, representatives from municipal, county and state agencies, academic institutions, businesses, and non-profit organizations. The Stakeholder Groups met four times:

1. To identify their vision for a sustainable region and share their knowledge on baseline conditions – October 2012
2. To engage in the Story of Place process and assist with the development of the Regional Guiding Principles – November 2012
3. To identify potential opportunities and challenges and provide input into the development of Indicators, Targets and Strategies – January 2013
4. To review the Draft Plan – March 2013



Interviews with Stakeholders and subject area experts were held throughout the planning process to obtain knowledge in *Historical Perspectives* (geology, hydrology, climate, settlement, migration, land use and economic patterns); *Current Perspectives* (sustainability initiatives, cultural and social activism and initiatives); and *Future Perspectives* (envisioning and articulating what they believe the region and its peoples can and should become).

Regional Leaders Forum

Despite efforts to engage major business leaders and representatives through the Stakeholder process, there was a lack of representation from many of the region’s largest employers and therefore a special meeting was created to bring this group together. On February 21, 2013, a forum of approximately 30 regional leaders was conducted to engage government, institutional and industry leaders in a discussion of existing sustainability initiatives, goals, and challenges, in an effort to understand how the Plan can support their implementation efforts. A concerted effort was made to ensure representation from businesses in each of the region’s counties.

A list of participants in the Regional Leaders Forum is provided in **Appendix A: Public Feedback Summary**.

Coordination with Regional Organizations

Presentations were made to the following organizations to inform them of the progress of the Plan and to solicit their input on its content and direction.

Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council (FLREDC)

Given the inter-related nature of the Plan and the FLREDC Strategic Plan, the project consultant team met with members of the FLREDC at two of their meetings during the planning process, in addition to many members of the FLREDC being part of the Economic Development Stakeholder Group and the Consortium. The meetings were held on July 23, 2012, and December 12, 2012. The first meeting provided the FLREDC members an overview of the Plan intent, scope and schedule, and discussed how the FLREDC will be incorporated. The second meeting provided an update on the project’s progress including public outreach and the Baseline Assessment.

Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FLRPC)

David Zorn, Executive Director of the Council, provided quarterly updates to the G/FLRPC during the project to keep them informed. Many of the Council members are part of the Consortium and/or Stakeholder Groups. Tara Boggio from the Consultant Team also provided a comprehensive presentation at the March 14, 2013 meeting of the G/FLRPC, providing information on the process and the findings, as well as answering questions.

Genesee Transportation Council (GTC)

Rich Perrin, Executive Director of the GTC, made presentations and gave updates to the GTC Board throughout the project to ensure the leadership knew the project status and the findings and recommendations coming out of the study.

Public Outreach

A project website (www.sustainable-fingerlakes.org) was used to inform the public of meetings, to provide access to documents for review, and to submit comments and strategies for incorporation in the planning effort. It was updated consistently to provide the public with new information as it became available. Regional agencies, counties, and municipalities within the



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study area provided links from their websites as well. The website had over 1,300 unique visits, 2,300 total views and over 100 Strategy Capture Forms were submitted. The Strategy Capture Form provided an opportunity for stakeholders, municipalities, businesses and residents to submit information on strategies, project ideas or specific projects for consideration in the planning process.



Throughout the project, the media was kept informed and was provided a variety of information including:

- Press kits – information on the project, contact information, background pieces on the stakeholder groups, and press releases for upcoming meeting
- Interview access – David Zorn, project manager, and Aileen Maguire Meyer, consultant team manager, were involved in TV and radio interviews during the course of the project
- Press releases – notices for all public meetings including locations, dates and times

Over a dozen news articles and media interviews generated traffic to the project website and encouraged attendance at public meetings. As part of the public outreach campaign, the consultant team sent out emails to the Stakeholder Groups asking for help in getting the word out about

upcoming meetings and involvement opportunities. Social media blurbs were included in those e-mails that would work for Facebook and Twitter, and many groups, such as the GTC, Greentopia, Rochester Cycling Alliance, and the City of Rochester did tweet the meetings, and/or provide the information on their Facebook pages, increasing the awareness among the community.

Six public meetings were conducted in two rounds geographically distributed across the region. There were 170 attendees in total at the six meetings. The first round of meetings, in January 2013, included a presentation to introduce the public to the project and review the findings of the Baseline Assessment, followed by a period to ask questions and provide comments. The second round of public meetings, in February 2013, was an open house format with a series of display boards. Interactive stations were provided to solicit input on the Broad Strategies, Indicators and Targets.



1.3 PLAN ORGANIZATION

Overview

The Plan is organized into six key elements, each more focused than the previous: Vision, Guiding Principles, Goals, Broad Strategies, Sub-strategies / Project Ideas, and Representative Projects. The Story of Place, as presented in Section 2, provides an “umbrella” perspective that guides the whole Plan. In addition, Indicators and Targets are provided to measure the progress of implementation. Below is a breakdown of the six key elements and how they relate to one another.

Sustainability Plan Elements

Vision

This is a single, overarching statement about the future condition or state of the region. The Vision statement, presented in Section 1.4, is the end toward which all other Plan elements are aimed.

Regional Guiding Principles

The following set of broad principles was established at the onset of the planning process to guide the development of all other elements of the Plan:

- Improve accessibility, connectivity and mobility
- Preserve, protect and improve natural resources and acknowledge the link between natural systems
 - air quality (reduce GHG emissions)
 - water quality
 - prime farmland
 - forests
 - open space

- Maintain, protect and improve the functionality and climate change/disaster resiliency of existing infrastructure systems and acknowledge the links between systems
 - transportation
 - water
 - energy
 - communication
 - solid waste
- Improve public health
- Reduce energy consumption
- Promote an equitable distribution of cost and benefit
- Respect local planning efforts and retain individual community character
- Build partnerships between local governments, the private sector, regional institutions and the public
- Build sustainability capacity and understanding through outreach and education
- Promote robust, high quality economic growth
- Bring the Finger Lakes Region together through a shared identity and common goals

Subject Area Goals

Goals are similar to the Vision in that they express the desired end state, but Goals are focused on specific Subject Areas such as agriculture or economic development. A single overarching Goal was established for each Subject Area in Section 3.

Broad Strategies

These are general action-oriented statements to be accomplished in pursuit of a Subject Area’s Goal. Section 3 highlights the Broad Strategies identified as the highest priority for the region, whereas **Appendix F: Subject Area Strategies** lists a full set of these concepts.

Sub-strategies / Project Ideas

Sub-strategies/Project Ideas relate to individual Broad Strategies but are more specific in nature, describing measurable activity. They represent innovative techniques, programs, conceptual projects, and best practices that regional and local representatives should consider implementing to achieve the Broad Strategy. Section 3 presents representative Sub-strategies for the priority Broad Strategies, whereas **Appendix F: Subject Area Strategies** contains a comprehensive list of Sub-strategies.

Representative Projects

The region has numerous sustainability-related projects that are either being studied or already underway. Representative Projects are listed for each Broad Strategy to provide examples of implementation and to demonstrate support for these initiatives. Representative Projects are provided for illustration purposes only and are not intended to reflect recommendation for funding. A comprehensive set of Representative Projects is provided in **Appendix G: Subject Area Specific Projects**.

Indicators and Targets

Indicators provide a comprehensive framework for tracking progress toward the Plan's overarching sustainability Goals. Targets are quantitative thresholds that the region should strive to attain through the various Strategies and Projects identified in the Plan. Using 2010 values as a baseline, Target values, included in the Subject Area Summary Sheets, have been developed for three time frames:

- Short-Term (2020)
- Mid-Term (2035)
- Long-Term (2050)

Subject Area Summary Sheets

In Section 3 of this Plan, the key elements of each Subject Area can be found in the Summary Sheets at the end of their respective sections. The fold-out Summary Sheets can be used as stand-alone “cut-sheets,” providing the various stakeholders involved in implementing the Plan with a large-format quick reference guide, whereas the larger document provides greater detail on a given topic.

1.4 VISION STATEMENT & REGIONAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Vision Statement

The Finger Lakes Region will work collaboratively to honor and leverage its unique character and assets – its Story of Place – to integrate, evolve, advance, and make whole its natural, built, human, social, and financial capital, which serve as the foundations of its environment, economy, and society. The result will be a healthy, safe and affordable place to live, work and play for all residents for current and future generations.



Figure 1-3: Three Pillars of Sustainability

Regional Guiding Principles

As previously noted, the evaluation criteria used to evaluate Strategies and Projects were designed to illuminate the highest priorities for the region. The regional priorities or Guiding Principles were established through coordination with the

Consortium, Stakeholders and the public. The following table shows the relationship of the Regional Guiding Principles to the evaluation criteria:

Table 1-1: Relationship between Regional Guiding Principles and Evaluation Criteria

| Evaluation Criteria | Regional Guiding Principles |
|--|--|
| <p>Benefits multiple Subject Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy • Transportation • Land Use & Livable Communities • Waste/Materials Management • Water Management • Economic Development • Climate Change Adaptation • Governance • GHG Emissions • Agriculture & Forestry | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve accessibility, connectivity and mobility • Preserve, protect and improve natural resources and acknowledge the link between natural systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ air quality ○ water quality ○ prime farmland ○ forests ○ open space • Improve public health • Promote robust, high quality economic growth • Reduce energy consumption |
| <p>Benefits multiple Capitals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human • Social • Natural • Built/Manufactured • Financial | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve accessibility, connectivity and mobility • Preserve, protect and improve natural resources and acknowledge the link between natural systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ air quality ○ water quality ○ prime farmland ○ forests ○ open space • Maintain, protect and improve the functionality and climate change/disaster resiliency of existing infrastructure systems and acknowledge the links between systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ transportation ○ water ○ energy ○ communication ○ solid waste • Improve public health • Promote robust, high quality economic growth • Reduce energy consumption • Build sustainability capacity and understanding through outreach and education • Bring the Finger Lakes Region together through a shared identity and common goals |
| <p>Benefits multiple communities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build partnerships between local governments, the private sector, regional institutions and the public • Bring the Finger Lakes Region together through a shared identity and common goals |
| <p>Implementation feasibility</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build partnerships between local governments, the private sector, regional institutions and the public |
| <p>Consistent with planning efforts</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect local planning efforts and retain individual community character |
| <p>Financial feasibility</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote an equitable distribution of costs and benefits |

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