

Technical Report # 5 & 6

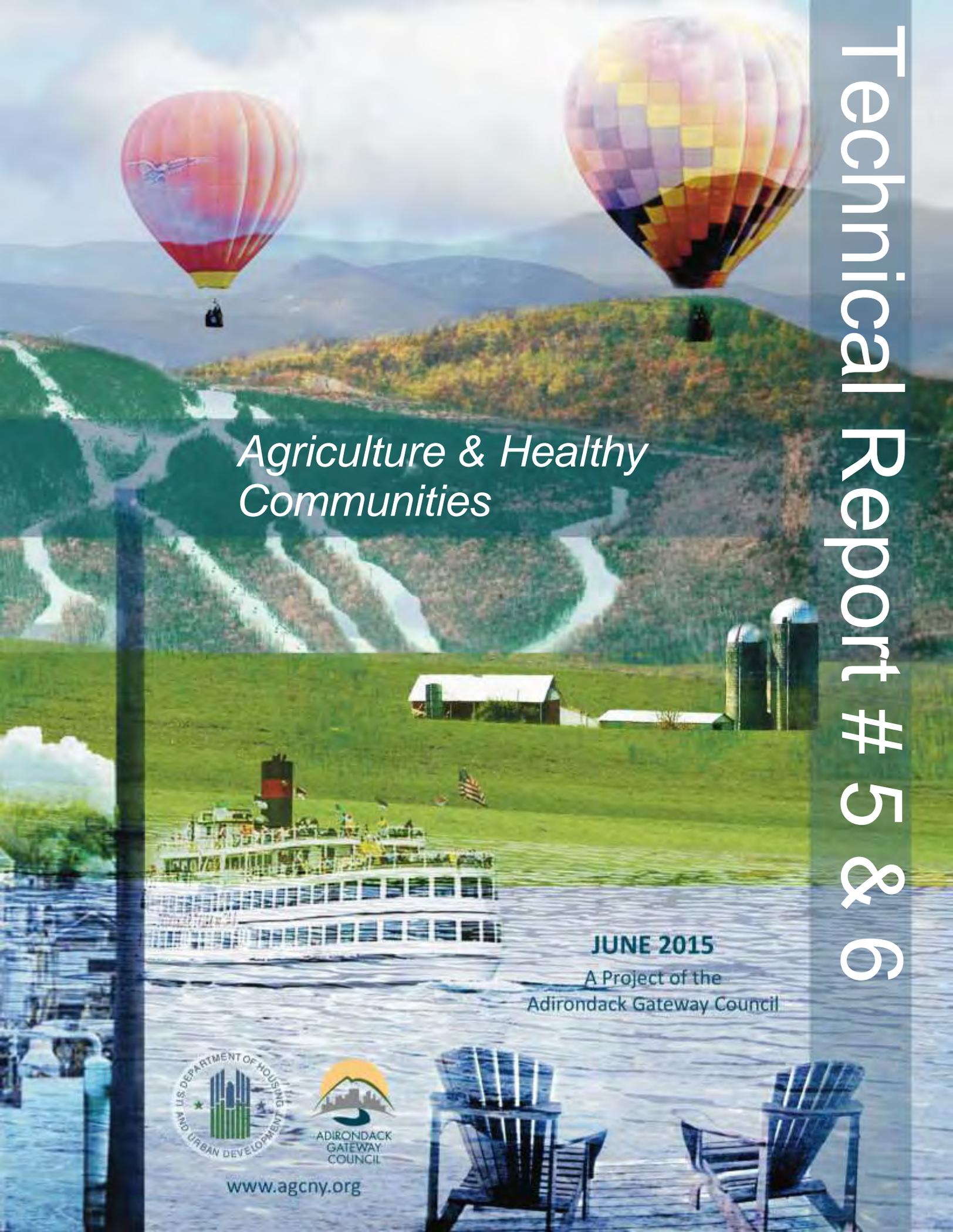
Agriculture & Healthy Communities

JUNE 2015

A Project of the
Adirondack Gateway Council



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**AGC TECHNICAL
REPORT:
NUMBERS 5 & 6**

AGRICULTURE & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES FINAL REPORT



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
1	Executive Summary	1
2	Project Overview	4
3	Characteristics of the Adirondack Gateway Council	7
4	Vision Statement	28
5	Projects, Programs & Policies for a Healthy Adirondack Gateway Council	29
6	Implementation Matrix	41

Chapter 1

Executive Summary

Existing Conditions Highlights

Regional analysis found that the region is aging. As the region's population continues to age, it will have important impacts on the regional housing stock and land use development patterns.

- Because they are aging in place, new housing will have to be constructed thereby negatively affecting agricultural lands.
- The aging population will require improved supportive services to meet basic needs such as grocery shopping, arriving at doctor's appointments and filling needed prescriptions.
- As supportive services are met by public and private entities, seniors will become increasingly able to age in place.

AGC has a role in protecting important agricultural lands from growing development pressures.

One measure of food accessibility is travel time. According to U.S. Census data, ninety-eight percent of the AGC population has access to one or more vehicles within their household. This data, combined with drive-time to grocery store estimates indicates that the region has reasonably good accessibility to healthy foods.

As economic development initiatives continue to take form, housing demand will continue to increase.

- Failures to protect important agricultural lands could negatively impact the food system by limiting such things as food production opportunities or travel to food retail outlets.
- The leading tool that can be used to protect important agricultural lands are locally adopted comprehensive plans because of their legal significance in a Home Rule state.

There are opportunities for improved agricultural added value operations within the AGC region.

According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, between 2007 and 2012, Washington County added eight new farms, yet lost 13,486 acres of land in farming. Surprisingly, Warren County experienced an increase of thirty-one new farms for the same period, resulting in 973 additional acres of land in farms. While the number of farms increased in Warren County, the average size of the farms decreased by eighteen acres, or 18.2%. The average size of farms also decreased by eighteen acres in Washington County, or 7.5%. This can be in part attributed to improvements in technologies, but also suggests that smaller, family-owned and operated farms are collectively making significant contributions to both the State and regional economies. Helping these farmers maintain successful operations will be an important part of ensuring a safe, affordable, accessible food supply to the AGC region.

While the region has a meaningful amount of local food production, interviews with regional stakeholders has indicated that there is significant potential to improve the effectiveness of distributing food locally. Most of the farms that exist in the AGC region are small- to medium-sized farms and do not necessarily have the resources available to effectively find new market opportunities.

Another concern brought forward is the need for local producers to work together more collaboratively to bring their products to the market.

Our local research found that while many of the raw commodities in the AGC region can be sold at local grocery stores and farmer's markets, there would be even greater profit margins if the farming community had the ability to convert their raw commodities into products that are more readily usable by the public. Further, this value-added process would make it easier for some populations to purchase locally produced foods without much knowledge or effort to prepare.

Trails within the AGC region are largely defined by their location in the State Forest lands and have a very limited amount of dedicated trails outside these lands.

Emerging Vision

We envision the Adirondack Gateway Council region to include a resilient economy for local food production and distribution to all people of the region with convenient access to a fully integrated multimodal network. The Adirondack Gateway Council supports our local farming community and is dedicated to providing opportunities that will foster healthy living and economic independence. Our efforts to strengthen the regional food network and provide recreational opportunities are supported through partnerships between our farmers, businesses, consumers, and the region's public and private institutions. We recognize collaboration, among all, to be at the heart of our success for a "Healthy Community."

Goals and Recommendations

Goal One: Improve Food Access & Distribution

- a. Establish a Regional Food Policy Council.
- b. Enhance food accessibility.
- c. Promote food nutrition and preparation education.
- d. Develop a strategic marketing program.
- e. Work with local governments to develop land use patterns, densities, and designs that foster safe and efficient multi-modal routes to neighborhood centers with healthy food options.
- f. Improve participation in Regional Farm-to-School programs.
- g. Establish a year-round farmers' market in downtown Glens Falls and Fort Edward.

Goal Two: Enhance Competitiveness and Linkages to Markets

- a. Enhance efficiency and competitiveness for small- to medium-sized farms. Coordinate with local farmers to promoting the twenty farmers markets.
- b. Promote a Regional "Food Hub."
- c. Promote a new logistics sector focused on fresh and frozen foods wholesale and distribution.
- d. Explore the feasibility of creating a Regional Food Cooperative.
- e. Develop a coordinated marketing plan for agriculture in the Region.
- f. Promote the Region's proximity to Canadian markets and other Capital District submarkets for export potential of agricultural and manufactured products.
- g. Encourage all local Comprehensive Plans for AGC communities to include statements and policies that support local food systems.
- h. Facilitate the connection between retiring farmers and next-generation farmers
- i. Develop an Agri-Tourism Program with a focus on introducing regional farms to residents
- j. Support recent NYS Cider Regulations and funding for the industry at the federal level.
- k. Examine the feasibility of expanding freight rail and waterways for "foodshed" distribution.
- l. Support SUNY Adirondack focus and programs in sustainable agriculture and agri-business.
- m. Support local farmers through partnerships with Cornell Cooperative Extension and Hudson Valley Agriculture Development Corporation.

Goal Three: Be a Healthy Region with a Diverse Array of Recreation Resources

- a. Continue local bicycle paths making linkages into the Adirondack Park and Statewide bikeways, and collaborate with Lakes to Locks Passage, First Wilderness Heritage Corridor, and the New York State Canal Corporation.
- b. Support communities to improve and expand and improve parks.
- c. Continue bike paths and pedestrian walkways including art and historical trails to improve connectivity between communities.
- d. Promote and protect local waterways and lakes.

Chapter 2

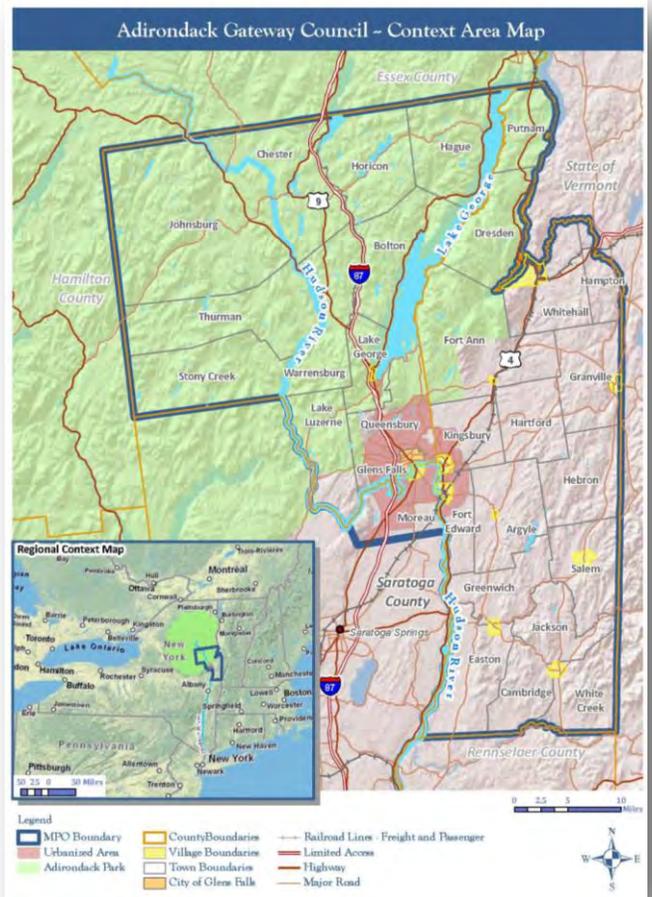
Project Overview

The Adirondack Gateway Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Program

In 2011, the Adirondack Gateway Council, Inc. was awarded funding to develop the *Adirondack Gateway Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Program* for the Adirondack Gateway Region. The primary goal of the program is to create a comprehensive regional development plan that serves as a guide for local, regional and state policies and investments and enable the region to grow in a sustainable manner over the next 20 years. This Plan addresses the inter-related challenges of housing, transportation, environmental impact, economic and workforce development. The project includes several components, all of which have been developed as a series of coordinated individual reports based on topic areas. The project focuses on strategies for improving telecommunications/broadband access, education, energy use, and health/wellness issues faced by the Adirondack Gateway Region. This section of the overall project evaluates health/wellness as it relates to healthy food accessibility and opportunities for active recreation and is called the *Agriculture and Healthy Communities Technical Report*.

Agriculture & Healthy Communities Technical Report

The Agriculture and Healthy Communities Technical Report begins by analyzing the issues and opportunities within the Adirondack Gateway Council (AGC) region. Research and mapping was completed to develop a profile of the people and places within the region. Demographic information includes a review of population statistics, household income, age composition, poverty and housing occupancy, among other topics. The agricultural community is also profiled, indicating needs and opportunities to build a stronger agricultural economy and support a healthy regional community. Mapping includes locations of parks, trails, farmers' markets, grocery stores, and soils.



While gathering and analyzing empirical data is an important component of evaluating the region, hearing anecdotally from the people is often more valuable when creating a strong, healthy community. Since recommendations made in this report can have long-term, meaningful economic and environmental outcomes, this entire planning process was developed with transparency and full participation from local, regional and state agencies and other interested and affected parties. AGC has pursued an open and collaborative approach to involve state and regional agencies, residents and other stakeholders in the AGC region. With this in mind, a series of stakeholder and public meetings were held. Participation from these entities will be foundational to the long-term success of this project.

Public Engagement Summary

Meetings/Interviews	
Date	Audience
9/16/2014	Stakeholder meeting at Gardenworks Farm
9/16/2014	Stakeholder meeting at Hicks Orchard
9/24/2014	AGC Board Briefing
10/28/2014	Interview: Preston Jenkins, Town of Moreau Supervisor
10/28/2014	Interview: Renee Boplan, Agriculture Stewardship Association
11/25/2014	Interview: Patricia Tatich, Warren County Planner, Special Events
11/26/2014	Interview: Teri Ptacek, Ex. Director, Agriculture Stewardship Association
12/1/2014	Interview: David Porter, Homestead Artisans
12/4/2014	Interview: Jim Lindsey, Supervisor, Town of Kingsbury
12/9/2014	Interview: Kevin Geraghty, Supervisor, Town of Warrensburg
12/9/2014	Community Meeting: Warrensburg
12/9/2014	Community Meeting: Fort Edward



Site Visit to Garden Works Farm in Washington County



Stakeholders discuss the future of the Glens Falls Farmers' Market



Stakeholders in Warren County participate in a public workshop to discuss their issues and concerns

Chapter 3

Characteristics of the Adirondack Gateway Council

This section of the Agriculture & Healthy Communities Technical Report contains information on the current context in the region relating to healthy lifestyles and agriculture. The section begins by describing some key demographics of the region, such as population, household income and poverty. Mapping includes locations of supermarkets and farmers’ markets, parks and trail connections. This section also includes an analysis of agriculture in the region and how it can be further enhanced as not only a means for healthy local food access but how it can be an even stronger economic generator for the region.

The Adirondack Gateway Council (AGC) was formed in 2011 and consists of 20 municipalities covering 1,800 square miles. The AGC is located in Upstate New York and is generally bordered by the Adirondack State Park to the north and the Vermont State Line to the east. The AGC includes two entire counties, Warren and Washington Counties, and a portion of a third, Saratoga County. Washington County is located along the New York-Vermont border and is 846 square miles with twenty-eight municipalities (seventeen towns, nine villages and two hamlets) and an estimated 2012 population of 62,932. Washington County is principally defined by its agricultural operations and includes some regional historical destinations such as the Champlain Canal, the Glens Falls Feeder Canal, Rogers Island and the famed Battenkill River. Located west of Washington County is Warren County, which covers 932 square miles with thirteen municipalities (eleven towns, one village and one city) and an estimated 2012 population of 65,538. Warren County can best be defined as an Adirondacks Gateway Community with a number of tourist destinations, such as Lake George, Great Escape, and Fort William Henry as well as numerous camping, hiking, fishing, and swimming opportunities. The AGC also includes three Towns in northern Saratoga County, one of the fastest growing counties in NYS: Corinth, Hadley and Moreau.

Physical Characteristics

Warren and Washington Counties are very different places in terms of their function and landscape. Warren County, which was formed in 1813 from Washington County, covers about 932 square miles and is largely defined by its natural resources as an outdoor recreational destination. Warren County is located entirely within the Adirondack State Park and includes eleven towns, one village and one city. Four mountain ranges, Luzerne, Kayaderosseras,

	Square Acres	Square Miles
Warren County	596,623	932
Washington County	541,349	846
Saratoga Communities	92,025	144

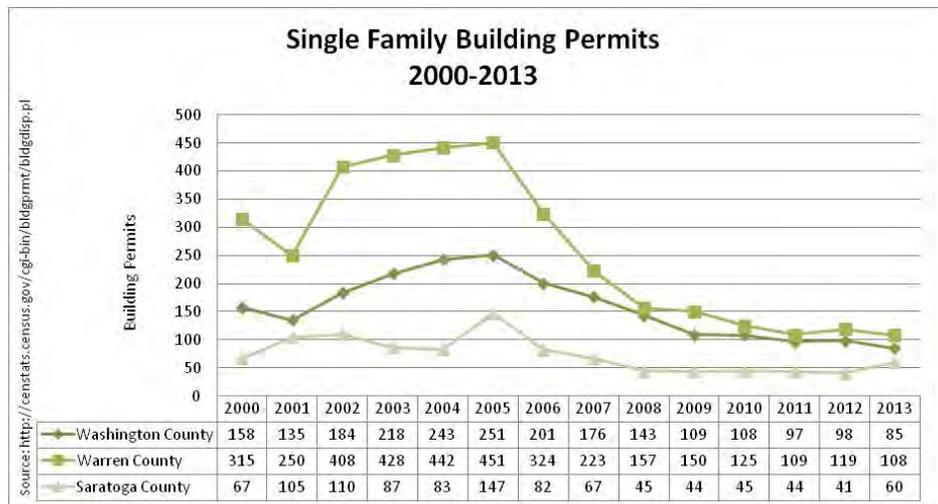
Source: Warren County NY GIS; Warren, Washington and Saratoga County Real Property Services

Schroon, and Bouquet, provide ample opportunity for hiking. Water sports are popular in the several lakes and four rivers that flow through the County. Lake George is the most notable water destination in the region because of its size and landside communities that include popular vacation destinations like the Village of Lake George and the Village of Bolton.

Washington County, founded in 1772 from Albany County as Charlotte County and later renamed in 1784 after President Washington, covers about 846 square miles and is largely defined by its agrarian landscape. Washington County shares a border with the State of Vermont and includes seventeen towns and nine villages. Washington County’s agricultural economy plays an important role not only in the production of food, but also as a tourism-generating activity. Scores of visitors come to Washington County to visit not only agriculture-related destinations, but the region has important historic destinations such as Rogers Island, the Old Champlain Canal and six National Historic Register Districts, among many other destinations. The Saratoga Communities of Hadley, Corinth and Moreau are located in a region with one of the fastest growth rates in the northeast. Hadley and Corinth were important industrial center in the 19th Century because of their location along both the Hudson River and the Delaware and Hudson Railway. Much of this old rail line today is used for a scenic railroad that follows the Hudson River between Saratoga Springs and North Creek. Moreau has a long agricultural history. Today, Moreau is a community that is experiencing residential growth pressures on important agricultural lands primarily because of its location along the Adirondack Northway (I-87), which provides convenient access to new employment being created by the growth of the semiconductor industry in Malta, just 30 minutes south of Moreau.

In order to develop some understanding of development pressures within the region since 2000, we examined building permit data for the AGC region. On average, between 2000 - 2013, the AGC region has seen 163 single-family building permits issued annually. Consistently, Warren County has been the leader in issuing building permits for the AGC region. For the fourteen year period reviewed, Queensbury has been experiencing some of the greatest development pressure, especially between 2000-2002 where Queensbury received greater than fifty percent of all single family building permits issued in Warren County. The trend overall has slowed considerably since 2006 with the housing market bubble burst. Today,

single-family building permits are a fraction of what they were in the early part of the 2000s. However, as economic development initiatives such as Global Foundries in Malta continue to take form, housing demand will continue to increase. This, coupled with the aging population choosing to age



in place, makes it important to develop strategies that maintain affordable housing that is properly connected to the regional transportation system and does not negatively disrupt important agricultural lands. Failures to protect these important lands could negatively impact the food system by limiting such things as food production opportunities or travel to food retail outlets.

Agricultural Land & Resources

Within the AGC region, the natural environment is an important component of shaping a healthy community network. As the mapping graphics indicate, the AGC region, particularly in Washington County, has extensive soils that are suitable to farming. Analysis shows that within Washington County about 37,227 acres are recognized as Prime Farmland soils. An additional 8,501 are defined as Prime Farmland, if Drained. Finally, Farmland of Statewide Importance is land that is important to agriculture in the State, but exhibits some properties that do not meet Prime Farmland criteria, such as seasonal wetness, and erodibility. Such land produces fair to good yields when managed properly. Within Washington County, there are approximately 113,581 acres recognized as Statewide Importance. In total, almost thirty percent of Washington County is covered by one of these three soil categories.

**Washington County
Agricultural Lands**

Prime Farmland	37,227
Prime Farmland, if Drained	8,501
Farmland of Statewide Importance	113,581
Lands within Agricultural Districts	288,271

Source: NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets



Washington County landscape

Within the AGC region, prime agricultural lands, or lands with rich soil ideal for growing food for human consumption, have been under threat from development pressures. Washington County has been experiencing the greatest pressure of converting agricultural lands to residential. Land development data shows that while the Washington County population grew just over three percent between 2000 and 2013, about eight percent of agriculture lands were lost to residential development between 2006 and 2014. Some have noted that these trends are, in part, the result of local government policies and plans, and that through innovation and dedicated leadership, these trends can be halted to ensure a sustainable, long-term local food supply for the people of the region. Integrating a community-based food system into land use decision-making can potentially circumvent this issue by connecting local growers with retail outlets; ensuring regional agricultural lands are protected and encouraging opportunities for people to grow their own food. However, the leading tool that can be used to protect important agricultural lands are locally adopted comprehensive plans because of their legal significance in a Home Rule state. Combined with a local or County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan, the AGC region can ensure that the most important farming lands are protected for generations to come.

The development patterns of the AGC region are largely defined by the various ranges running throughout the region. Steep slopes are defined by slopes great than eighteen percent. It is commonly held that while many of these slopes can be engineered to be built on, the costs often outweigh the investment. Many of the lands between the ranges include lands that are prime for food production, especially in Washington County. Some have noted that some of the tight spaces between these mountain ranges lend themselves well to livestock (cows, sheep, pigs, etc.). In total, roughly 421,160 acres in the region are constrained by steep slopes. The table below shows that the majority of the steep slopes are located in Warren County, a reflection of the County's place in the Adirondack Park. A general conclusion is that there is a double pressure on the flat lands in the region for both food production and land development.

Steep Slopes within AGC Region

	Total Acres	Steep Slopes	Percent Steep Slopes
Warren County	596,623	234,742	39.3%
Washington County	541,359	162,898	30.1%
Saratoga Communities	92,025	23,961	26.0%

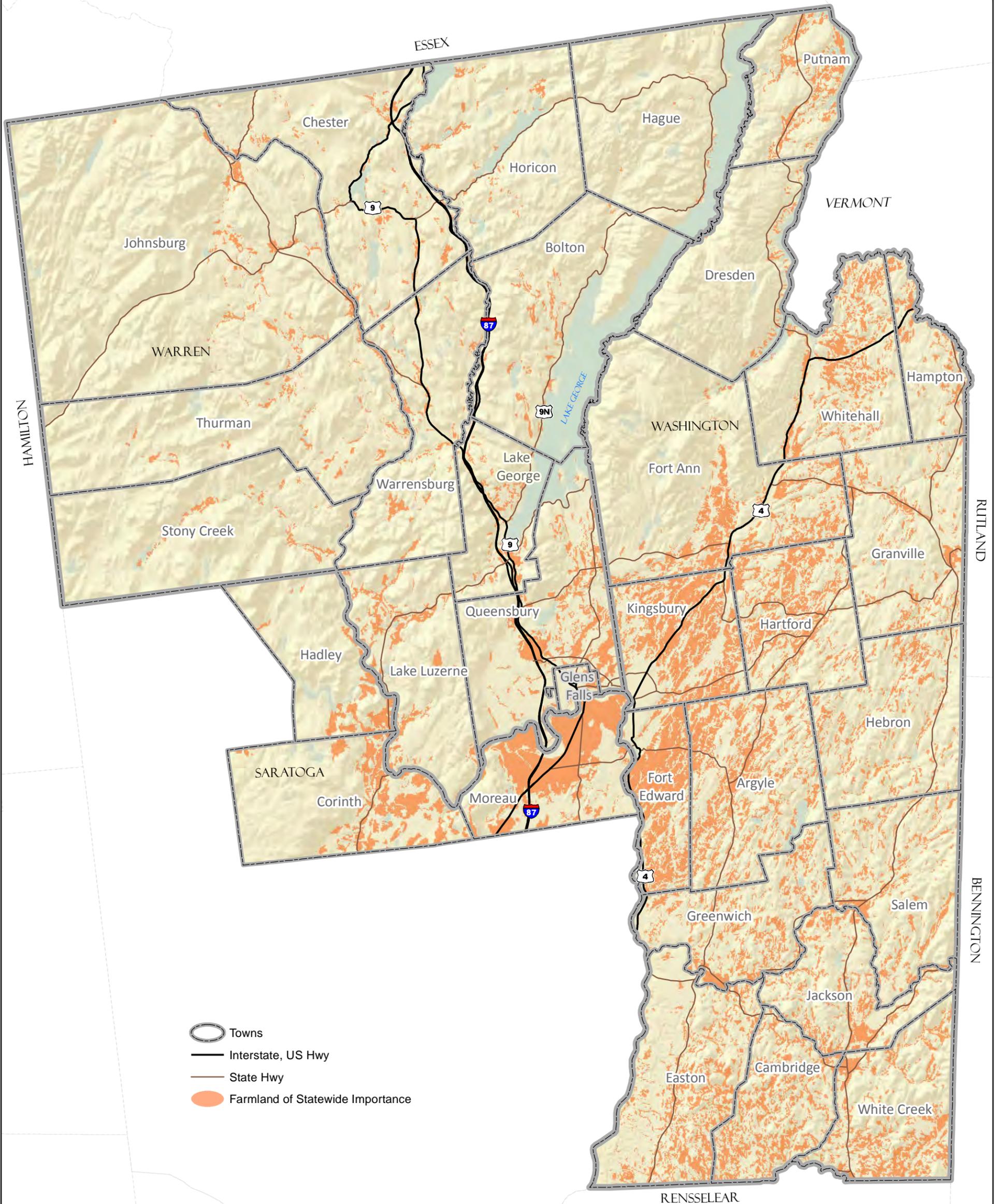
Source: Warren County GIS analysis

Map: Farmland of Statewide Importance

Adirondack Gateway Council

HUD Regional Planning Initiative
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FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE



- Towns
- Interstate, US Hwy
- State Hwy
- Farmland of Statewide Importance



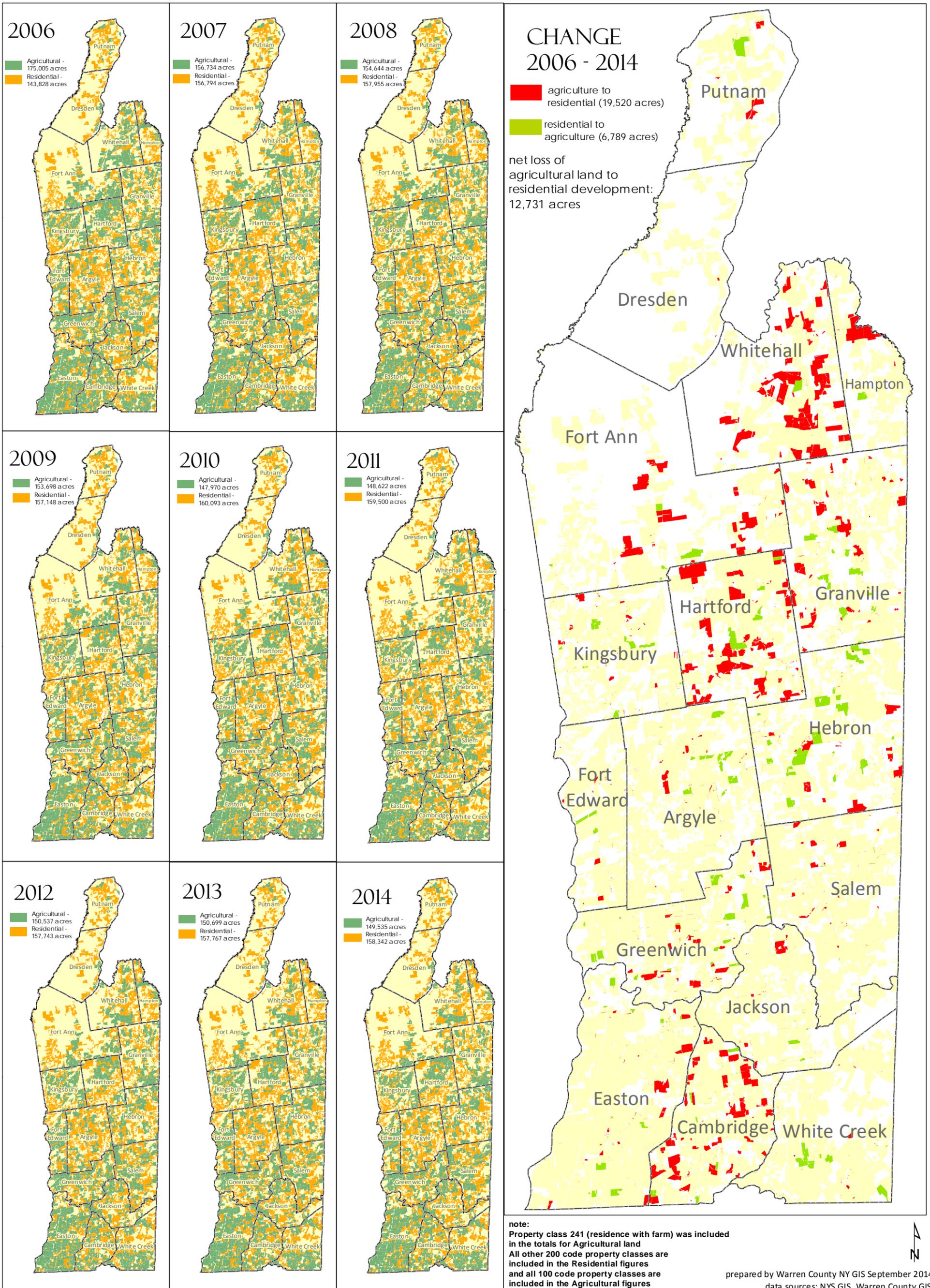
0 2.5 5 10 15 Miles

**Map: Washington County: Change in
Residential and Agricultural Land Use 2006-2014**

Adirondack Gateway Council

HUD Regional Planning Initiative
Agriculture and Healthy Communities

WASHINGTON COUNTY: CHANGE IN RESIDENTIAL AND AGRICULTURAL LAND USE 2006-2014



AGC Regional Farming Trends

Local farming practices are an important ingredient to providing the people of the AGC region with healthy food options. Washington County plays a critical role in providing the region with these local options. To some extent, the Saratoga Communities also contribute to the local food production, but not to the same extent as Washington County. Warren County, in particular, and the Saratoga Communities, to some extent, can benefit from having access to the food production in Washington County. Further, there may be opportunities for improved agricultural added value operations in both Warren County and the Saratoga Communities.

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets promotes, fosters and encourages a healthy agricultural industry throughout the State. Article 25-AA of the Agriculture and Markets Law authorizes the creation of local agricultural districts pursuant to landowner initiative, preliminary county review, state certification, and county adoption. The purpose of agricultural districting is to encourage the continued use of farmland for agricultural production. The Program is based on a combination of landowner incentives and protections, all of which are designed to forestall the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses. The AGC region has ten Agricultural Districts totaling 288,271 acres. Washington County has a total of nine Agricultural Districts for a total of 288,271 acres. Warren County does not have any Agricultural Districts. Among the Saratoga Communities, the Town of Moreau includes 8,495 acres of Saratoga Agricultural District 1.

**AGC Region
Agricultural Districts**

Washington County	District	Acreage
	District 1	37,738
	District 2	4,181
	District 3	55,607
	District 4	23,244
	District 5	27,596
	District 6	42,783
	District 7	48,251
	District 8	37,562
	District 24	11,309
Total acreage Washington Co.		288,271
Saratoga Communities	District 1	8,495
Total acreage in the AGC region		296,766

Source: NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets

Data for this section was primarily drawn from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Census of Agriculture (conducted every five years, most recently in 2012). The data is not available at a specific town level. For this reason, data was not collected for the three Saratoga Communities. The data collected from the Census of Agriculture for this section principally profiles Warren and Washington Counties.

According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, between 2007 and 2012, Washington County added eight new farms, yet lost 13,486 acres of land in farming. Surprisingly, Warren County experienced an increase of thirty-one new farms for the same period, resulting in 973 additional acres of land in farms.

In total, Warren and Washington Counties experienced a net increase of additional farms and a net loss of 12,513 acres of land in farms.

General Physical Characteristics 2007 & 2012

	Warren County			Washington County		
	2007	2012	2007-2012 Change	2007	2012	2007-2012 Change
	Number of farms	86	117	36.0%	843	851
Land in farms (acres)	8555	9528	11.4%	202877	189391	-6.6%
Average size of farms (acres)	99	81	-18.2%	241	223	-7.5%
Avg. age of principal operator	57.5	57.9		54.4	56.5	

Source: 2012 Census of Agriculture - County Data, USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service

Both Counties experienced a decrease in the average size of farms. While the number of farms increased in Warren County, the average size of the farms decreased by eighteen acres, or 18.2%. The average size of farms also decreased by eighteen acres in Washington County, or 7.5%. These trends involving loss of farmland and smaller farms is also consistent with statewide trends. This can be in part attributed to improvements in technologies, but also suggests that smaller, family-owned and operated farms are collectively making significant contributions to both the State and regional economies. Helping these farmers maintain successful operations will be an important part of ensuring a safe, affordable, accessible food supply to the AGC region. Agricultural census data from 2007 to 2012 indicates that the average age of farmers has noticeably increased in Washington County, while Warren County has stayed relatively the same. However, tracking the data back to 2002, the Warren County farmer average age was 53.6, which indicates a similar aging pace as Washington County. This aging farmer population is a growing industry trend and in places like Washington County, a place that is

Market Value of Agriculture Products Sold 2007 & 2012

	Warren County			Washington County		
	2007	2012	2007-2012 Change	2007	2012	2007-2012 Change
Vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes						
Farms	6	16	166.7%	47	69	46.8%
Sales	\$ 21,000	\$ 260,000	1138.1%	\$ 3,900,000	\$ 3,002,000	-23.0%
Fruits, tree nuts, and berries						
Farms	4	3	-25.0%	36	59	63.9%
Sales	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ 1,282,000	\$ 1,405,000	9.6%
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture and sod						
Farms	12	18	50.0%	40	39	-2.5%
Sales	\$ -	\$ 2,138,000	-	\$ 1,683,000	\$ 1,695,000	0.7%
Livestock, poultry, and their products						
Farms	29	39	34.5%	462	504	9.1%
Sales	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ 98,915,000	\$ 112,213,000	13.4%

Source: 2012 Census of Agriculture - County Data, USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service

uniquely located within one of the growing regions of New York State, this could have profound effect on land use development patterns as farmers retire and sell off their land for alternative development uses.

The majority of increase in farms for Warren County was in *vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes* with ten new farms, or 166.7%. Impressively, these new farms increased sales by 1,138%, from \$21,000 to \$260,000. *Fruits, greenhouse, floriculture and sod, and livestock, poultry and their products* categories experienced an increase in farms between 2007 and 2012. In Washington County, there were meaningful increases in the number of *vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes* farms (46.8%), but a loss of 23% in sales. Overall, the net positive change in the number of *vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes* farms indicates that there should be improved access to fruits and vegetables for the residents of the AGC region. The loss in sales for Washington County farms further supports a possible market opportunity to enhance access to these farms by regional residents.

Agricultural Product Distribution System

At the core of a healthy agricultural distribution system resides the relationship between producers and consumers. Often the producers are disconnected from the necessary connections to get their product from the farm to the marketplace. Consequently, moving the product of the farmers to consumers often involves the use of a distributor, who is able to bridge the gap between production and consumer by moving the product into the appropriate distribution channels. However, these distributors are typically focused on moving product to broader markets and, inevitably, miss opportunities for immediate local distribution. Further, local farmers are often so focused on the day-to-day operations of production, that they do not have the time to facilitate more local distribution.

Getting product from the local farm to the local market can be an important contributor to both a healthy community and the success of the individual farmer. While the region has a meaningful amount of local food production, interviews with regional stakeholders has indicated that there is significant potential to improve the effectiveness of distributing food locally. While some foods are being sold at both Price Chopper and Hannaford, and at local farmers' markets, there are more opportunities to strengthen relationships with regional institutions like the school districts, senior Meals-on-Wheels, and food banks.

Our research found that while local foods are being sold at both Price Chopper and Hannaford, farmers still are not able to turn a profit. Finding new markets for a product is tough, especially with the seasonal nature of farming. Farmers must juggle different outlets in order to distribute their products. Most of the farms that exist in the AGC region are small- to medium-sized farms and do not necessarily have the resources available to effectively find new market opportunities. Nonetheless, some farmers have taken to driving their own goods to buyers, such as the King Brothers Farm delivers their milk to the front step of their customers.

Another concern brought forward is the need for local producers to work together more collaboratively to bring their products to the market. It was noted that there is not one central location, such as a

website or regional market, where farmers can enter what they have and customers (residents and stores, alike) can identify what they want.

Finally, our local research found that while many of the raw commodities in the AGC region can be sold at local grocery stores and farmer's markets, there would be even greater profit margins if the farming community had the ability to convert their raw commodities into products that are more readily usable by the public. Further, this value-added process would make it easier for some populations to purchase locally produced foods without much knowledge or effort to prepare.

Trail Network

Trails serve multiple purposes including walking, running, hiking, cycling, mountain-biking, bird-watching, and equestrian use. They can be safe non-motorized transportation routes to destinations such as places of employment, education facilities, commercial establishments, and recreation locations. Furthermore, they are often important economic generators for communities: a 2010 study developed by the New York State Canal Corporation estimated that multi-day bicyclist vacationers spend between \$100 and \$300 per day on food, lodging and other items. Trails also provide a vital link to resident health: according to the American Heart Association, with each dollar a community invests in multi-use trails, \$3 in medical cost savings is realized. AGC uses the term 'Healthy Communities' in the broadest sense to move beyond food and food access to include concepts of walkability, multi-use train development, recreation, parks, liveable and connected communities.

Trails within the AGC region are largely defined by their location in the State Forest lands and have a very limited amount of dedicated trails outside these lands. There are numerous hiking, biking and horseback riding opportunities in northern Washington County along the eastside of Lake George. New York State maintains over 41 miles of trails in Fort Ann and Dresden. The Town of Fort Ann includes the Shelving Rock trail, Sleeping Beauty Mountain trail and Buck Mountain trail. Black Mountain, located in Dresden, is the tallest mountain along Lake George with an 8.5 mile trail with a ranger's cabin and abandoned fire tower at the summit. Gull Bay Preserve, located in Putnam, is a 472 acre preserve with a series of trails throughout. The Pilot Knob Ridge Preserve in Fort Ann includes a two-mile loop trail that provides a view of the southern Lake George basin and Adirondack Mountains.

Southern and western Washington County includes five areas with recreational trails. The Battenkill State Forest includes a trail that follows the famed Battenkill known as the Peaked Rock Trail. The Carter Pond Wildlife Management Area is located in Greenwich is a 435-acre facility with trails throughout. The Dionondehowa Wildlife Sanctuary & School covers 217 acres with trails that are open to the public. The Feeder Canal Alliance has developed a 7-mile linear park that follows the historic canal and towpath and connects to the Warren County Bikeway, a 9.5 mile paved bikeway that extends to the shore of Lake George. Finally, the Pember Nature Preserve is a 125-acre preserve with seven nature trails.

Warren County has an extensive trail network, predominately along the western side of the County. Like Washington County, many of these trails are located on State Forest lands. The Warren County Bikeway is a 10-mile paved bike path that connects Lake George Beach State Park and Platt Street in in Glens Falls. The Warren County Bikeway also connects with the Glens Falls Canal Trail.

The Glens Falls Feeder Canal Trail travels through both Warren and Washington Counties. The trail begins at the Feeder Dam in Glens Falls and follows the Hudson River through the city to the Champlain Canal, then turns south toward Fort Edward. The 8-mile trail follows a portion of one of New York's few remaining sections of the original 1820s canal system. There is one short on-road segment (1 mile) through Glens Falls that goes around the paper mill. The Glens Falls Feeder Canal Trail is part of the 71-mile Champlain Canalway Trail. As of 2011, only about 17 miles of the Champlain Canalway Trail are complete; another 14 miles are being planned or expected to be finished within the next few years. A multi-use trail, some sections will be open to snowmobiles.

In January 2012, the Adirondack/Glens Falls Transportation Council released the *Warren County Bicycle Plan*. The plan is intended to identify existing conditions, create a methodology to select needed improvements, set priorities for short- and long-term goals, and facilitate implementation in the future. The goal of the plan is to provide a framework for future improvements which will result in a more expansive and comprehensive network of bicycle facilities in Warren County. Priority routes were identified for several County routes, including Rt. 8, Rt. 28, and Rt. 9. A number of local roads were also identified in the report, such as Atateka Dr. in Chester, Padanarum Rd. in Bolton, Schroon Rover Rd. in Warrensburg and Harrisburg Rd. in Stony Creek, among others. Refer to the 2012 Warren County Bicycle Plan developed by Adirondack/Glens Falls Transportation Council for more detail.

Demographic Trends

The future of the AGC region will be heavily determined by regional demographics. Many of the AGCs demographic trends reflect broader State and national trends and will play an important role in how the region supports changing demands resulting from these trends. Between 2000 and 2012, Warren County has experienced a 3.8% increase in population, while Washington County experienced a similarly modest increase of 3.6%. However, when the county population is reviewed in age cohorts, the younger populations for both counties decreased and the older populations significantly increased. The greatest increase for both counties was in the 60-64 age cohort where Warren County experienced a nearly 68% increase and Washington experienced a 48% increase. The Saratoga Communities took a significant hit (-14%) in the 25-34 cohort and experienced a vast increase in the 85 and older cohort. It will be important for this plan to develop projects and policies that facilitate elder health, well-being, and the ability to age in place.

Percent Population Change 2000-2010

	Warren County	Washington County	Saratoga Communities
Under 5 years	-5.5%	-1.9%	0.9%
5 to 9 years	-16.9%	-14.3%	-6.0%
10 to 14 years	-15.6%	-18.8%	-1.8%
15 to 19 years	-1.9%	-3.1%	5.3%
20 to 24 years	9.0%	12.9%	14.5%
25 to 34 years	-8.7%	-7.8%	-14.1%
35 to 44 years	-19.2%	-14.0%	-11.9%
45 to 54 years	16.1%	20.4%	34.4%
55 to 59 years	39.5%	38.7%	43.1%
60 to 64 years	67.9%	47.8%	43.0%
65 to 74 years	16.2%	14.0%	14.7%
75 to 84 years	12.2%	8.5%	0.8%
85 years and over	35.5%	25.9%	72.1%

Median Age	2000	2010	Change
Warren County	39.0	44.1	13.1%
Washington County	37.5	41.7	11.2%
Saratoga Communities	35.5	41.6	17.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Berry picking at Garden Works Farm, Salem, Washington County

While the region has experienced an increase in the senior populations, it has also experienced a decrease in almost all of the younger age cohorts. Many of the younger generations today face difficult economic circumstances, which in part is a reflection of the impact of the Great Recession (2007-2009) and in part the longer-term effects of globalization and rapid technological change on the American workforce. One bright spot in the region is the 20-24 age cohort, which experienced increases in both Warren and Washington Counties and the Saratoga Communities.

As the region’s population continues to age, it will have important impacts on the regional housing stock and development patterns.

Between 2000 and 2010 the region experienced a net increase in housing demand. However, for the same period the region experienced a meaningful decrease of households with individuals under 18. In Warren County the decrease was just over eight percent, and in Washington County the decrease was seven and a half percent. The Saratoga Communities bucked the trend and made just over a one percent increase. For the same period, the total number of households with individuals 65 years and older has increased across the board. In Warren County the increase was over nineteen percent and in Washington County the increase was just over fifteen percent. It is also important to note that many farmers in the region aging, too. As they grow older, finding a farmer to take over their farming

operations is increasingly more difficult. All too often, it is much easier for these retiring farmers to sell to developers.

Housing Occupancy 2000-2010

	2000	2010	Percent Change
Warren County			
Occupied Units	25,726	27,990	8.8%
Owner-Occupied	69.8%	69.3%	
Renter-Occupied	30.2%	30.7%	
Washington County			
Occupied Units	26,794	28,844	7.7%
Owner-Occupied	83.8%	83.7%	
Renter-Occupied	16.2%	16.3%	
Saratoga Communities			
Occupied Units	8,189	9,036	10.3%
Owner-Occupied	77.4%	76.6%	
Renter-Occupied	22.6%	23.4%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Households by Type 2000-2010 Percent Change

	Warren County	Washington County	Saratoga Communities
Total Households	8.3%	7.5%	10.3%
Households with Individuals under 18	-8.4%	-10.3%	1.6%
Households with Individuals 65+	19.4%	15.1%	12.0%

Average Household Size	2000	2010	Change
Warren County	2.41	2.32	3.7%
Washington County	2.55	2.49	2.4%
Saratoga Communities	2.59	2.52	2.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

This aging population will require improved supportive services to meet basic needs such as grocery shopping, arriving at doctor’s appointments and filling needed prescriptions. Further, as these supportive services are met by public and private entities, seniors will become increasingly able to age in place. With seniors aging in place, housing stock will not turn-over as quickly to younger populations, furthering the need to build new housing to meet the growing demand. These trends, among others, have led some research to predict that over half of all development on the ground in 2025 will not have existed in 2000. As will be demonstrated later, below, this demand for new construction puts an increasingly important need for the AGC region to protect important agricultural lands from growing development pressures.

Home ownership is a key statistic in defining neighborhood and community stability. In theory, homeowners are more likely to be more involved and attached to the local community. To protect their economic investment, homeowners tend to participate in local organizations and to associate informally with local residents. Researchers have found that neighborhoods and communities with homeownership rates at about sixty-five percent tend to be the most stable. The AGC region, as a whole, has a very solid base of owner-occupied housing units. Washington County, in particular, has extremely high owner-occupied housing rates. There are a few areas of concern, particularly within the more urbanized areas. For instance, within the City of Glens Falls, Census Tract 702 has nearly 70% of its occupancy as renters. Likewise, nearly two-thirds of census tract 705 is renter occupied.

As a nation, median household income has experienced a decrease in real terms since 1999, accounting for the longest stretch of stagnation in the modern era. During the same time period, income and wealth gaps have widened at a national level.

The AGC region has mirrored the national trend. Median household income in the AGC region overall has remained flat in real terms (when accounting for inflation; based on Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI Inflation Calculator).

**Median Household Income
 2000-2012**

	2000	2012	2000 (in real dollars)*	Percent Change (in real terms)
Warren County	\$39,198	\$54,909	\$54,142	-1.4%
Washington County	\$37,668	\$50,864	\$52,029	2.3%
Saratoga Communities	\$37,962	\$52,194	\$52,435	0.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
 * Based on Bureau Labor of Statistics, CPI Inflation Calculator

Warren County experienced just over a one percent decrease in real terms, while Washington County experienced just over a two percent increase in real terms over the same period, carrying the region to remain flat overall. The Saratoga Communities remained relatively flat at just under a one percent increase in median household income. Overall, the data suggests that the AGC region is staying relatively economically competitive.

Relating to income levels, there are three Census Tracts that are experiencing high rates of poverty. In Washington County, Census Tract 801 leads the region with a rate of 22.4% of the population below the

poverty level. Census Tract 801 is principally defined by Hudson Falls, and is located east of Glens Falls. Two other areas of concern are found in Warren County, in Census Tracts 702 and 705. The Census Tracts are adjacent and are located in the City of Glens Falls, along the southern boundary with South Glens Falls. Census Tract 702 has a poverty rate of 21.3%, while Tract 705 has a poverty rate of nineteen percent. Both Tracts also have an uninsured population that is greater than ten percent coupled with low homeownership rates. These two Census Tracts hold some of the greatest potential to benefit from programs and strategies that provide healthy living options.

Educational attainment is highly correlated with economic success, even more so for this generation than previous ones. In an increasingly knowledge-based economy, young adults today who do not advance beyond high school have been paying a much stiffer penalty—in terms of low wages and high unemployment—than their counterparts did one and two generations ago. A part of what may be driving the AGC region’s healthier median household income levels could be the region’s growing education base. Between 2000 and 2010, the region has experienced an increase in the number of residents that have attained college level educations. Both Warren and Washington Counties saw meaningful increases in the number of residents with Bachelor’s degrees and higher. Also carrying great weight is that period.

One measure of food accessibility is travel time. According to U.S. Census data, ninety-eight percent of the AGC population has access to one or more vehicles within their household. This data, combined with drive-time to grocery store estimates indicates that the region has reasonably good accessibility to healthy foods. The map on the following page illustrates the estimated drive time for from residential properties to the nearest grocery store. On average, the residents of the AGC region live 7.5 minutes from a grocery store.

Educational Attainment 2000-2010

	Warren County		Washington County		Saratoga Communities	
	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010
High School graduate	33.6%	33.4%	40.2%	43.7%	41.1%	45.9%
Some college, no degree	18.4%	18.4%	16.6%	16.6%	18.4%	18.6%
Associate’s degree	9.4%	11.4%	8.0%	9.4%	8.5%	9.1%
Bachelor’s degree	13.5%	15.6%	8.6%	10.1%	8.0%	10.1%
Graduate or professional degree	9.8%	11.7%	5.7%	7.0%	4.2%	5.3%

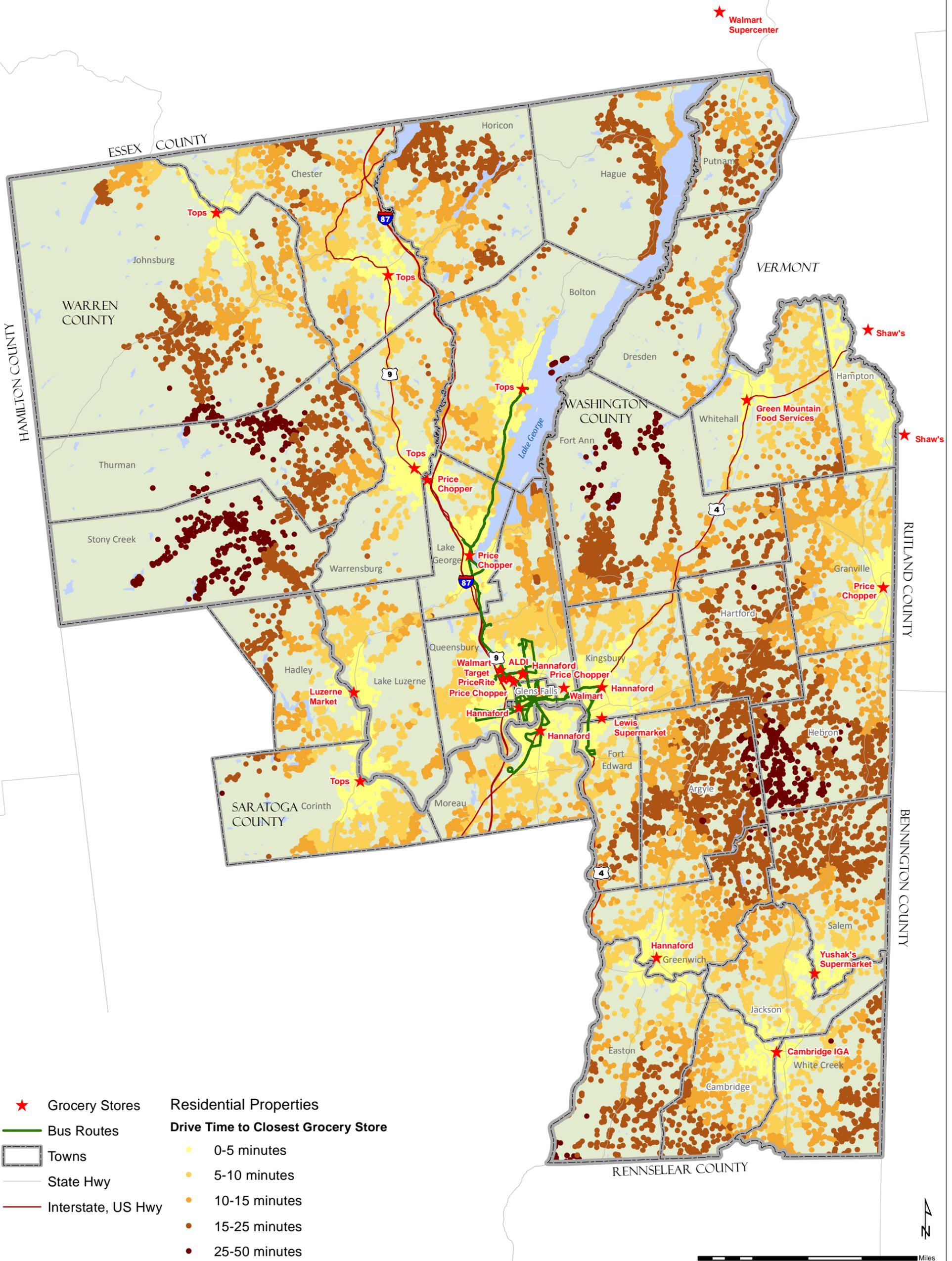
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Map: Drive Time:
Residential Properties to Nearest Grocery Store**

Adirondack Gateway Council

HUD Regional Planning Initiative
Housing & Transportation

DRIVE TIME: RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES TO NEAREST GROCERY STORE*



- ★ Grocery Stores
 - Bus Routes
 - ▭ Towns
 - State Hwy
 - Interstate, US Hwy
- Residential Properties**
- Drive Time to Closest Grocery Store**
- 0-5 minutes
 - 5-10 minutes
 - 10-15 minutes
 - 15-25 minutes
 - 25-50 minutes

*Grocery Stores included in the analysis offer a wide variety of items including fresh produce, dairy and meats, and have at least \$1 million in annual revenue.

Although the Affordable Care Act requires that all Americans have health insurance by 2014, data collected prior to 2014 indicates that residents of the AGC region have had relatively good health care coverage. Having health insurance is an important indicator of community health because coverage helps people get timely medical care, improving their health and lives. According to U.S. Census 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates data, 88.7% of the New York State non-institutionalized population had either private or public health insurance coverage. Both Warren and Washington Counties fared well with 89.6% and 89.3% coverage respectively. Although the residents of the region as a whole have good health insurance coverage, there are still roughly 13,000 residents that did not report having health insurance coverage in the region. Even with the new Affordable Care Act, this population may be less likely to seek medical treatments when necessary.

Health Insurance Coverage 2012

	Warren County	Washington County	Saratoga Communities	New York State
Population with Health Insurance Coverage	89.6%	89.3%	90.6%	88.7%
Private	73.5%	69.8%	85.1%	67%
Public	32.7%	35.1%	30.9%	32.8%
No Health Insurance	6,736	6,406		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Another good indicator of the healthfulness of the region is the incidence of diabetes. The incidence of diabetes is a good indicator of regional healthfulness because, from a public health perspective, is a disease process that can be influenced by promoting healthy living in the form of preventative rather than curative aspects. For instance, providing recreational amenities that meet generational needs is more likely to get people active, doing the things they enjoy, which in turn will help to prevent the development of diabetes.

The risk of diabetes increases with age and is most prevalent among adults between the ages of 65-74 years. As profiled above, both Warren and Washington Counties have a significant population that will be coming into this age cohort over the next few years. Nonetheless, the current statistics indicate that the region is below the State average of diabetes incidence. Warren County is only slightly higher than the national average and Washington County is well below the national average.

Select Regional Health Indicators

	U.S	New York State	Warren County	Washington County
Diabetes prevalence in adults	9.5% (2011)	10.4% (2011)	9.8% (2009)	8.1% (2009)
Percent adults who are obese (BMI >30)	27.8% (2011)	24.5% (2011)	27.8% (2009)	29.3% (2009)
Coronary heart disease hospitalizations (per 10,000)	--	43.8 (2010)	40.7 (2007-2009)	39.7 (2007-2009)

Source: NYS Department of Health

Another health category that can be tied to community healthfulness is the rate of obesity of the regional population. Here, the AGC region does not fare so well when compared to National and State trends. Both Warren and Washington Counties show a meaningful rate of obesity above the State level. While Warren County is consistent with National trends, Washington County’s rate of obesity is significantly higher than the National average. It is somewhat surprising that Washington County is experiencing such a high rate of obesity given that most of the economy in Washington County is driven by the farming community, which involves extremely high levels of hard physical activity.

Although the region seems to be relatively overweight, it does stand up well in the category of coronary heart disease hospitalizations. The 2010 State average per 10,000 is 43.8 hospitalizations related to coronary heart disease. Warren County’s average is 40.7 and Washington County’s is 39.7 for the period 2007-2009. The importance of both diabetes and these comorbidities will continue to increase as the population ages.

Chapter 4

Vision Statement

The Adirondack Gateway Council was established in 2011 and includes the whole of Warren and Washington Counties and Northern Saratoga County. The three-county AGC area covers more than 1,800 square miles of diverse land use patterns, including urban and rural communities. Warren County is largely defined by its location at the foot of the Adirondack Mountains with its outdoor recreational amenities; Washington County is defined by its agrarian community. Northern Saratoga County serves as a bridge between these two communities with a mixture of both recreational and agricultural uses. The primary goal of the Adirondack Gateway Council is to promote a more equitable, sustainable and economically viable region. The intent of this technical report, *Agriculture and Healthy Communities*, is to provide a framework for the AGC region to be an agriculturally sustainable, healthy community with local food access and opportunities for recreation.

We envision the Adirondack Gateway Council region to include a resilient economy for local food production and distribution to all people of the region with convenient access to a fully integrated multimodal network. The Adirondack Gateway Council supports our local farming community and is dedicated to providing opportunities that will foster healthy living and economic independence. Our efforts to strengthen the regional food network and provide recreational opportunities are supported through partnerships between our farmers, businesses, consumers, and the region’s public and private institutions. We recognize collaboration, among all, to be at the heart of our success for a “Healthy Community.”



Chapter 5

Projects, Programs & Policies for a Healthy Adirondack Gateway Council

Based on information gathered through the inventory process, the following policy and project recommendations were made. This report is intended to provide information to policymakers, food system stakeholders, and advocates that can guide future action and policy change. Many of these policies and projects can be incorporated into local municipal planning processes, while others will need to be led by the AGC membership. It is hoped that these recommendations are integrated within the existing framework of local comprehensive plan development processes. This list of recommended concepts should be used as a starting point for policy development and review.

Goal One: Improve Food Access & Distribution

Establish a Regional Food Policy Council

The AGC should consider that creation of a Regional Food Policy Council to be long-term advocates for integrating local food policies in both public and private ventures. Representation should include members from government, social services, local restaurants, regional schools and regional farmers. The purpose of the AGC Regional Food Policy Council should be to provide a regional structure and coordination on food system issues and to implement recommendations made in this *AGC Agriculture and Healthy Communities technical report*. The AGC Regional Food Policy Council should also be the leaders in developing policies for local municipalities to incorporate in their local planning initiatives.

Enhanced food accessibility

The AGC should explore procurement policies that favor local and regional food sourcing of healthy food, thereby improving public health through food access. This could include not only improving food accessibility, but also realizing the importance of surplus food in the region and how it can be redistributed to local food banks and meal programs.

While the AGC region is relatively well served with its distribution of grocery stores and farmers' markets, most all of these destinations require access via vehicles. The region could be better served with an integrated bike and pedestrian system to allow residents the ability to walk or bike to grocery stores and farmers' markets as an alternative to the vehicle. With that, it is recommended that the AGC develop a strategy to create an integrated bike, trail and walking network for improved access to grocery stores and farmers' markets.

In addition to an enhanced trail network, AGC ought to consider working with transit service providers to facilitate access to healthy food retail for areas with low access, particularly in northern Washington County.

Finally, enhanced food accessibility can be achieved by working with the Adirondack Glen Falls Transportation Council to prioritize transportation projects that provide safe and convenient nonmotorized and transit connections between residential neighborhoods and community gardens, food banks, food markets, and farmers' markets.

Promote food nutrition and preparation education

Meetings with local farmers and social service providers found that while many AGC region residents have access to healthy foods, many residents do not know how to prepare fresh foods into meals. It was suggested that improved food preparation education could help regional residents connect with fresh foods being produced in the region. Such a program could include a coordinated food and nutrition program offered in the high schools. Community kitchens can also provide an opportunity for classroom space to foster healthy food preparation. Finally, AGC should work with educational institutions and non-profits to support development of agricultural stewardship.

Develop a strategic marketing program

The conventional global food network has placed increasing importance on branding, distribution and services, rather than on farmers' traditional role in supplying produce to wholesale markets. As a result, primary producers of agricultural commodities have been capturing less and less of the total value of their products, especially small- to medium-sized farm operations. At the same time, power has become concentrated in the hands of a small number of buyers — the major supermarket chains and manufacturers who dominate the global food market.

However, the local food movement has made impressive inroads in recent years and has become an important component to the success of small- to medium-sized farms. Although the idea of buying locally grown food is not at all new, the local food movement has certainly picked

up momentum in recent years and has therefore thrust the word “local” into all kinds of headlines. Branding creates consumer demand, giving producers leverage in negotiations with large buyers. AGC should work to establish a brand image that can be marketed outside the region, thereby helping develop the success of AGC region small- to medium-sized farming operations. This recommendation can also be combined with the Food Hub recommendation below.

Work with local governments to develop land use patterns, densities and designs that foster safe and efficient multi-modal routes to neighborhood centers with healthy food options

Healthy communities require amenities that foster healthy living. The public has a significant amount of potential to cultivate an environment in which people incorporate physical activity into their daily lives. In the case of this recommendation, the AGC should support and advocate for programs, projects and policies that build safe and efficient multi-modal alternatives that allow people the opportunity to build exercise into daily activities. For example, the AGC should support *Safe Routes to School Initiatives* including infrastructure improvements, such as sidewalks and bike paths, to ensure that children can walk and bike safely to school. Creating this environment cannot be done in isolation by any one organization; it will require coordinated and comprehensive efforts. The AGC realizes that collaboration will be at the heart of success. Further, the AGC has the ability to be an important part of helping communities within the region achieve the goal of a fully-integrated healthy community.

Improve participation in regional Farm-to-School programs

According to the 2011-2012 USDA Farm to School Census, only six of the twenty-three school districts within the AGC region participate in farm to school programs. Of these six districts, four of the districts consider “local” to mean food produced within the state. Only two districts define “local” to be closer to home: Hartford CSD defines “local” as being produced within the same city/county and Hudson Falls CSD defines “local” as being produced within a 50 mile radius. On average, these schools are spending over \$100,000 per year on “local” food products. The data suggests that there is a significant opportunity to broaden food products produced within the AGC region into farm to school programs. If the twenty-three school districts were to take advantage of food and food products produced within the AGC region, the agriculture community could realize meaningful gains.

<i>School District</i>	<i>Grades Served</i>	<i>Foods</i>	<i>Other activities</i>
<i>Cambridge CSD</i>	K-5	Apples, lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, eggs	Field trips to farms; farmers visit schools; integrate farm to school concepts into curriculum.
<i>Hartford CSD</i>	K-12	Fruit, vegetables, dairy products, eggs, grain/flour, baked goods	Serve products from school-based gardens; purchases from producers, farmers markets, distributors.
<i>Hudson Falls CSD</i>	K-5	Fruits, vegetables	Top local food is corn on the cobb
<i>Bolton CSD</i>	Pre K-12	Fruit, vegetables, milk, eggs, baked goods, herbs	Field trips to farms; promote local foods in schools.
<i>Johnsburg CSD</i>	K-12	Unknown	Unknown
<i>Corinth CSD</i>	K-12	Milk, apples, bread	Purchases made from producers and produce cooperative.

Establish a year-round farmers’ market in downtown Glens Falls and Fort Edward

The Glens Falls Market has been in operation for over 35 years. The South Street Community Pavilion provides a home to the market from early May through late November. During the winter months, the market seeks out locations to operate indoors. Currently, the Sanford Street School is providing space for the winter months on Saturdays from 9:00 AM to noon.

The Glens Falls Farmers’ Market is an important part of offering healthy food to the local population, supports the region’s small- to medium-scale farmers, builds community, and creates a destination that brings people downtown, which often leads to secondary visits to other downtown shops and restaurants. The city of Glens Falls, working in cooperation with the AGC, can have a meaningful impact in the success of the Glens Falls Farmers’ Market by helping to identify a location for a permanent, year-round Farmers’ Market facility that provides water and electricity for the merchants. By establishing a permanent location, regional residents will become more familiar with the market and will be become increasingly more likely to make weekly purchases from the market.

Programming of such a facility should also take into consideration a food preparation area in which demonstrations can be held on a weekly basis that explains how to prepare various meals from foods offered at the market. Incorporating such a demonstration area into the farmers’ market will also support the recommendation above to promote food nutrition and preparation education.

Another AGC region community that recognizes that value of establishing a permanent, year-round Farmers’ Market is the Village of Fort Edward. Plans are underway to convert a 200-year old Canal Barn to a year-round Farmers Marketplace. The Canal Street Marketplace is an ideal

reuse of this barn and will provide the community with access to healthy, local foods and other locally produced products.

Goal Two: Enhance Competitiveness & Linkages to Markets

Enhance efficiency and competitiveness for small- to medium-sized farms.

A great deal of research has documented the struggles of small- to medium-scale farms. Marketing has been shown to be one of the greatest challenges faced by small- to medium-scaled farms. Important marketing schemes for the small- to medium-scaled farm include farmers' markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), and farm stands. Among these, research has indicated that CSAs are one of the most promising and profitable marketing techniques for the small- to medium-sized farm.

In terms of providing the people of the AGC region with the freshest foods, small- to medium-sized farms hold some of the greatest potential. It is suspected that many regional residents are not familiar with what CSAs are or, if they are familiar, how they operate. Further, it is critical for the farming community to understand how they are perceived by the communities that they serve. Understanding these perceptions can make or break the success of a CSA in the AGC. One commonly held generalized perception is that participation is too expensive. The AGC should work with representatives from the farming community, health community, social services and local planning offices to examine how Community Supported Agriculture can help strengthen the AGC resident population with the small- to medium-sized farms of the region.

Promote a regional "Food Hub"

Many of the farmers in the AGC region are shipping their raw products out of the region for processing. Developing a food hub within the region can be an asset to both the farming community and the local economy. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's working definition of a food hub is "a centrally located facility with a business management structure facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of locally/regionally produced food products." These food hubs are intended to sustain small and midscale farmers, to promote regional economic development, and to fulfill demands for locally and regionally produce food in a more efficient way. While establishing such a facility could be beneficial to small and mid-scale farms, it may also provide greater incentive for the protection valuable farmland because these farmers will have improved opportunity for success. Finally, a regional food hub can create new employment opportunities in the AGC region.

The AGC should explore the creation of a food hub that combines food processing, retail and wholesale sales of agricultural products, commercial kitchen facilities, distribution, warehousing,

education, and other elements. A potential location for such a facility could be in the Town of Moreau because of its geographic “bridge” between Warren and Washington Counties and its convenient location near Interstate 87. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has funding available for local food processing facility development and renovation through the Community Facilities Fund.

Promote a new logistics sector focused on fresh and frozen foods wholesale and distribution

If the current trend in decreasing farm size as described in chapter one continues, farmers will need to find creative solutions to recapture the value of a scale economy. A centrally or cooperatively managed distribution logistics sector will give farmers more time to focus on producing food and less time driving it to market and seeking out individual retail customers.

By working with current farmers to determine where and how their products are sold it will be possible to formulate a plan to address their needs. Forming agricultural committees on the county level and arranging for semi-annual multi-county meetings will allow AGC communities to orchestrate logistical decisions related to agricultural distribution.

Explore the feasibility of creating a Regional Food Cooperative

Food cooperatives are an effective method to bring community residents together with local and regional foods being produced. Further, they put a strong emphasis on supporting local food systems and careful attention to environmental sustainability. Food co-ops are owned and governed by member-shoppers and grounded in principles like community, voluntary and open membership, economic participation and cooperation; all qualities that the AGC is aspiring to bring to the region through its agriculture and healthy community initiatives. A recent study of food coops found that for every dollar spent at a food co-op, \$0.38 is reinvested in the local economy compared to \$0.24 at conventional grocers. Another way of saying this, for every \$1,000 a shopper spends at their local food co-op, \$1,604 in economic activity is generated in their local economy—\$239 more than if they had spent that same \$1,000 at a conventional grocer.

Within the AGC region, one food co-op already exists, in the Village of Cambridge, The Village Store Coop. There are others within the Capital Region in Albany, Gloversville, Niskayuna and Galway, all of which are not conveniently located to the residents and farmers of the AGC region. The AGC should lead the charge to explore the possibility of establishing a food coop within the AGC region. The analysis should include a market study, a community survey and an assessment of suppliers to the facility. The feasibility should also evaluate the inclusion kitchen space that can be used to for educational purposes.

Develop a coordinated marketing plan for agriculture in the Region

Consumers today are expressing renewed interest in buying food directly from the farmer or grower. Operators of small- to medium-scale farms are working harder than ever to meet these growing demands. Because of the daily work needs that are put on these farmers, they do not have the time and resources to independently determine what products consumers are demanding most and how to efficiently connect with the consumer market. Many of the farmers of the region can use help from how to approach buyers to packaging and signage to setting up displays. AGC can help coordinate a strategy that puts farmers on the right track and connects regional residents with those farmers looking to directly market to regional consumers: whether this involves residents, institutions, restaurants.

Developing a marketing program is one of the primary barriers to the success of small- to medium-sized farms. During the stakeholder interview process it was found that some stakeholders believe that many residents are not familiar with the local food production available and where they can get the products. It was also noted that many of the farmers do not have the resources (financial or manpower) to develop an effective marketing plan to promote their products to local businesses and restaurants. AGC can be a leader in helping connect regional agricultural producers with regional residents, restaurants, and value-added producers. An effective strategy will promote locally and regionally produced foods through a process collecting regional information, analyzing market alternatives, developing a product pricing schedule to make products competitive in the marketplace and defining the market areas in which AGC regional goods have the greatest likelihood in meeting consumer needs and expectations.

Promote the Region's proximity to Canadian markets and other Capital District submarkets for export potential of agricultural and manufactured products

According to the US Census, Canada is the largest importer of high value agricultural products from the US. Agricultural producers in upstate New York benefit from the close proximity, shared language, and ease of trade with Canada. According to a 2012 USDA Foreign Agriculture Report the top exports to Canada from the US were red meat, fresh fruits, snack foods, fresh vegetables, and processed fruits and vegetables. AGC communities should explore market trends in order to develop and foster relationships between local producers and Canadian importers.

Encourage all local Comprehensive Plans for AGC communities to include statements and policies that support local food systems

Food policies could be interwoven within each of the AGC region's comprehensive plan elements. Most Comprehensive Plans do not address local food production and distribution. The Comprehensive planning process includes a number of policy areas that can integrate food policies. For example, the land use section can encourage development of agriculture and urban agriculture, community gardening. The transportation section can include recommendations that foster safe bike and pedestrian connections to full-service grocery stores and farmers' markets. Even the economic development sections can incorporate procurement policies that encourage public agencies to purchase locally-produced food products. Municipalities can also ensure that their land use definitions, zoning designations, and other municipal code provisions align to enable food systems activity. Model policies can be developed from numerous examples of policy language across the county.

Addressing the region's food system through local comprehensive plans can respond to a variety of local needs. Planning for food can help address environmental and social justice, such as increasing access to healthy food choices in all neighborhoods and supporting hunger assistance programs. An emphasis on supporting the local food economy can also have important economic, quality of life, and environmental benefits. Economic benefits include creating and sustaining living-wage jobs through food production, processing, and sales; improving the economic viability of local agriculture; and more efficiently using vacant or underutilized parcels through urban agriculture. Communities can also foster environmental benefits through decreasing food waste and reducing the miles food travels to store shelves.

Facilitate the connection between retiring farmers and next-generation farmers

As noted in Chapter 3, farmers in the region are aging. As farmers begin to age, not all of them have families that are in-line to take over operations. All too often, it is much easier for the farmer to sell their property to developers. Consequently, the AGC can play an important role in helping to connect retiring farmers with farmers preparing for retirement. A recently developed online platform called Hudson Valley Farmlink Network is a good model to either build from or create a similar on-line presence or to help promote the on-line network within the AGC region.

The Hudson Valley Farmlink Network is a project of the American Farmland Trust. The Farmlink Network is a website that lists farms through the lower Hudson Valley north to Saratoga and Washington Counties. The Farmlink Network has been specifically designed to help farmers find land they need, and keep land now owned by older farmers in agricultural use.

Develop an Agri-Tourism Program with a focus on introducing regional farms to residents

During interviews for this project, it was noted that while the region has extensive and varied farming operations, many residents do not know how to connect with the products being offered. Further, it was also found that many residents do not know how to best prepare the foods being produced. Agri-tourism provides a unique opportunity to connect regional residents and farmers.

Agri-tourism involves visiting a working farming operation for the purpose of enjoyment, education or personal involvement in the activities of the farm or operation. Suggested activities that can take place on a farm broadly include:

- Roadside stands and markets
- Food activities: Pick/Cut/Gather/Grow/Process Your Own
- Farm activities: haying, threshing, plowing, fencing, sheep shearing, lambing, egg hatching
- farm vacations
- Seasonal festivals: Fall harvest, Halloween, Christmas, Spring, strawberry, corn
- Barn dances
- School tours and summer day camps
- Cross-country skiing/snow shoeing
- Community charity events

The number of activities that are included in agri-tourism is extensive. The above are just some examples. The AGC should be open to a variety of opportunities in this area and seek to develop an agricultural experience that helps the farmers and the residents connect. The AGC region is, in many ways, ideally suited to agri-tourism. It is a largely rural region with ample natural landscapes attractive to agritourists but still in proximity to urban centers to provide the visitors necessary to make agri-tourism operations viable.

Support recent NYS Cider Regulations at the federal level

New York State's craft cider industry is bringing new life to the craft beverage industry, small farmers, and regional tourism. While state investment has done much to spur this growth AGC communities should support further legislative efforts to expand the cider industry.

HR 600 the "CIDER Act" would change the Internal Revenue Code to allow for alcohol by volume (ABV) levels of up to 8.5%. Currently, cider over 7% ABV is classified and taxed at a higher rate as wine. By allowing for higher alcohol content New York cider makers would have a larger market and remain competitive with European cider producers.

Examine the feasibility of expanding freight rail and waterways for “foodshed” distribution

The use of the Champlain Canal can further enhance the sustainability appeal of locally produced foods and provide an affordable link to larger markets.

New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) commissioned the 2010 report “New York State Canal System: Modern Freight-Way,” to explore the feasibility of using the existing infrastructure of the Erie and Champlain canals. Barges are 300% more energy efficient than trucks and cause a fraction of the noise, pollution, and traffic congestion. The rising cost of oil dependence is provoking a renewed interest in inland water shipping. AGC’s positioning on the Champlain Canal presents a huge opportunity to distribute locally produced food in a cost efficient and sustainable fashion.

Support SUNY Adirondack’s focus and programs in sustainable agriculture and agri-business

SUNY Adirondack’s two year culinary arts program has increased by 40% since its creation. As the program continues to expand, a focus on local food and farming should be included. Farm to table specialization, the use of regionally specific products, and an emphasis on the connection between the tourism industry and local food should be explored. Working with administrators, educators, and local farmers the AGC should support SUNY Adirondack’s efforts to expand their curriculum to include a greater emphasis on local agriculture.

Support local farmers through partnerships with Cornell Cooperative Extension and Hudson Valley Agriculture Development Corporation

Cornell Cooperative Extension has been one of the most engaged partners in developing New York’s agricultural markets. The recently launched, “Adirondack Harvest,” is a regional program that provides web-based, interactive maps to connect consumers with small scale agricultural producers in the area. The AGC can help strengthen this program by encouraging the full enrollment of local farmers. Cornell Cooperative Extension also supports the cultivation and production of specialty niche crops such as hops for local beer brewing, and maple syrup techniques.

The Hudson Valley AgriBusiness Development Corporation serves as a facilitator for everything agricultural in the Hudson Valley and eastern New York. They connect farmers with one another, provide technical assistance, publish information on grant and loan availability, and develop value-added agricultural production techniques. Their emphasis on market driven solutions to agricultural improvement makes them a valuable potential partner.

Goal Three: Be a Healthy Region with a Diverse Array of Recreation Resources

Continue local bicycle paths, making linkages into the Adirondack Park and Statewide bikeways. Collaborate with Lakes to Locks Passage, First Wilderness Heritage Corridor, and the NYS Canal Corporation

There is an economic and public health imperative to improving regional multi-use trail connections in the AGC area. Increased job growth will bring more residential development opportunities and enhancing the appeal of communities in the AGC area will attract and retain families vital to economic prosperity.

The Adirondack/Glens Falls Transportation Council recently completed the *Warren County Bicycle Plan*. The County-wide plan outlines a series of bicycle connections that will make bicycling safer and more convenient within Warren County. The AGC should develop its own strategy for trail development priorities that compliments the work of A/GFTC with a focused effort to increase access to transit, promote healthy activities, and improve quality of life. Improvements could include the development of new bike lanes, adding bike parking at bus shelters, and installing bike racks on all buses and at job locations all help promote bicycling as a means of transportation as well as a healthy recreational activity.

Greater emphasis on establishing multi-use trails is needed in Washington County. Fully connecting the Warren County Bikeway, the Feeder Canal Trail, and the Champlain Canal trail is feasible within the next decade. Working with the Hudson River Valley Greenway and the Historic Hudson Hoosic Partnership to establish an uninterrupted land and water trail along the Hudson River should be a priority for AGC communities in Washington and Saratoga counties.

Support Communities to improve and expand parks

Working with communities to determine areas of cultural and environmental significance will allow for the preservation and improvement of parks. Already, some AGC communities have taken proactive steps to assemble and transfer parkland from willing sellers to not for profit land trusts. Transfer/purchase of development rights programs, the establishment of agricultural districts, and the purchase of conservation easements allows for landowners to make economic use of their property while maintaining the scenic and environmental quality. Groups like Saratoga PLAN, the Open Space Institute, and the Lake George Land Conservancy have been actively accumulating property for transfer to the state within the AGC area.

Continue bike paths and pedestrian walkways including art and historical trails to improve connectivity between communities

The AGC region is steeped in history. Multi-use trails that include historical interpretation and artistic elements are powerful techniques to connect communities to a regional identity. By taking history out of the museum and into its actual physical context local communities strengthen their sense of place and provide an attractive destination for tourists. The municipal boundaries between Warren, Washington, and Saratoga counties should not impede their historical connections. Cooperating on a wayfinding scheme that creates a historic narrative for the AGC region as a whole will result in a program that is greater than the sum of its parts if divided between each of the 20 municipalities.

Promote and protect local waterways and lakes

Promoting and protecting local waterways and lakes is important from an economic, environmental, and social perspective. Even the process of bringing together the various stakeholders needed to protect waterways can create useful and lasting partnerships.

The Fund for Lake George and the Lake George Association, the Hudson Riverkeeper, the Feeder Canal Alliance and Friends of Moreau Lake State Park are but a few of the many environmental advocacy groups in the AGC region that can serve as useful partners.

The AGC's long range planning should include a vision of the eventual clean-up of industrial contaminants from the Hudson River. Recent developments in brownfields policy are encouraging the remediation of vacant parcels and putting them back to economic and recreational use. Understanding the potential of formerly contaminated properties will allow AGC communities to integrate under-utilized parcels into future recreation plans.

Chapter 6

Implementation Matrix

The Vision outlined for this technical report above is reflected throughout this Implementation Plan. County and local governments and agencies, not-for-profit organizations and the private sector ought to reflect the values of Healthy Communities throughout all implementation efforts.

Healthy Community initiatives are taking place throughout the United States, affecting the entire national population, and AGC residents and organizations have an enormous opportunity to realize the benefits of a fully-integrated Healthy Community. To ensure a cohesive regional approach, local government activities ought to be aligned with this Technical Report. In addition to the report's Vision Statement, the following approaches are important in implementing the activities across all lines of effort:

Foster Partnerships among Various Regional Stakeholders. As outlined in this Technical Report, all lines of effort must involve regional partnerships. The AGC will foster this environment in which County and local government agencies, the State of New York, academia and not-for-profit organizations will work with other stakeholders, non-governmental organizations, and research partners to address emerging challenges and opportunities within the AGC region. The AGC will strive to maintain the free flow of communication and cooperation among stakeholders to realize regional priorities.

Coordinate and Integrate Activities across County and Local Government. Multiple County and local bodies currently have authority for AGC regional policy. The AGC will develop a series of educational and collaboration-building initiatives that will foster interagency dialog to maximize efficiency, align interagency initiatives, and create unity of effort among all entities conducting activities in the AGC region.

The following section is the Implementation Matrix that is organized by category and indicates initial actions, possible parties involved in implementation, some funding ideas, and proposed timeline that reaches out ten years. The concluding section highlights some key implementation stakeholders and notable funding sources. While there is never a defined road to completion and no guarantee of success, the information presented here should help to give AGC and its partners in implementing this plan helpful information and decision-making tools in order to be successful in the complex and visionary endeavor of creating a Healthy Community.

Improve Food Access and Distribution													
Strategy 1	Establish a Regional Food Policy Council				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025		
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority									
	Develop list of preferred members; plant seed among preferred members; create membership; establish by-laws, vision, values and goals.	Local government; social services, restaurants; schools; producers; Cornell Cooperative Extension; SUNY Adirondack; Warren County Soil and Water Conservation		High	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶
Strategy 2	Enhanced Food Accessibility				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025		
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority									
	Function of the proposed Regional Food Policy Council recommended above.	Schools; food banks; meals-on-wheels programs; trail development advocates; A/GFTC		Medium			▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶			
Strategy 3	Promote Food Nutrition and Education				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025		
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority									
	Function of the Regional Food Policy Council recommended above.	Local school districts; community kitchens; farmers' markets; Cornell Cooperative Extension; SUNY Adirondack; County Planning Departments		Medium				▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶

Strategy 4	Establish a Year-Round Farmers' Market in Downtown Glens Falls				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025		
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority									
	Create a Site Location Committee; define project criteria; develop list of potential sites; select preferred site.	Representatives from existing farmers' market		High				▲					
Strategy 5	Develop a Strategic Regional Brand Image				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025		
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority									
	Identify key stakeholders; form Strategic Brand Image Sub-Committee; identify grant funding streams; select consultant.	County Farm Bureaus; County Planning & Economic Development Departments		Medium			▲						
Strategy 6	Work with Local Governments to Develop Land Use Patterns, Densities and Designs that Foster Safe and Efficient Multi-Modal Routes to Neighborhood Centers with Healthy Food Options				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025		
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority									
	Identify staff as local government liaison; develop brochure highlighting how sustainable land use patterns contribute to protection of regional farming assets; represent farming interests with local long-range planning committees.	County Planning Departments; Warren County Soil and Water Conservation		Medium				▲					
Strategy 7	Improve Participation in Regional Farm-to-School Programs				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025		
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority									
	Identify staff as school district liaison; identify school district Food Service Directors; develop understanding of district food sourcing policies; begin small, by introducing basic foods, build momentum and introduce more.	Local farmers; school district food service coordinators; National Farm to School Network; Tri-County NY Transitions Initiative		High	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶

- ▶▶ Ongoing process
- ▲ Single project

Enhanced Competitiveness & Linkages to Markets												
Strategy 8	Enhance Efficiency and Competitiveness for Small- to Medium-Scale Farms				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025	
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority								
	Create Efficiency and Competitiveness Sub-Committee.	Farming community; regional health agencies; social service agencies; county planning departments; Warren County Soil and Water Conservation		Medium			▲					
Strategy 9	Explore the Feasibility of Creating a Regional “Food Hub”				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025	
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority								
	Establish Committee to explore the feasibility of establishing a Food Hub for the region.	USDA; National Food Hub Collaboration; County Planning and Economic Development Departments; SUNY Adirondack; Cornell Cooperative Extension	USDA; US Department of Commerce; US Department of Health and Human Services; US Department of Housing and Urban Development; US Department of Treasury; ESDC; NYS Department of Ag & Markets	High			▲	▲				
Strategy 10	Promote a New Logistics Sector Focused on Fresh and Frozen Foods				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025	
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority								
	Work with farmers to determine where and how their products are sold, formulate plan to address needs.	Stakeholders, County planning and economic development departments;		Medium				▲				
Strategy 11	Explore the Feasibility of Creating a Food Cooperative				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025	
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority								
	Establish a Committee to create the Cooperative; complete	County planning and economic		Medium		▲						

	feasibility study.	development departments; Food Coop Initiative											
Strategy 12	Develop a Coordinated Marketing Plan				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025		
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority									
	Identify key stakeholders; form Marketing Plan Sub-Committee; identify grant funding streams; select consultant.	County Farm Bureaus; County Planning & Economic Development Departments		High		▲							
Strategy 13	Promote Region's Proximity to Canadian Markets				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025		
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority									
	AGC communities should explore market trends in order to develop and foster relationships between local producers and Canadian importers.	County Planning & Economic Development Departments; Canadian importers		Medium			▲						
Strategy 14	Encourage All Local Comprehensive Plans for AGC Communities to Include Statements and Policies that Support Local Food Systems				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025		
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority									
	Identify staff as local government liaison; develop in coordination with Strategy 6 above; represent farming interests with local long-range planning committees.	County Planning Departments; Warren County Soil and Water Conservation		Medium			▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶
Strategy 15	Facilitate the Connection Between Retiring Farmers and Next Generation Farmers				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025		
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority									
	Connect with the Hudson Valley Farmlink Network to establish a similar program or expand their existing program into the AGC region.	Hudson Valley Farmlink Network; regional real estate agents; Warren County Soil and Water Conservation		Medium	▲	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶

Strategy 16	Develop an Agri-Tourism Program with a Focus on Introducing Regional Farms to Residents				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025		
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority									
	Establish an AGC Agri-tourism Sub-committee.	SUNY Adirondack; local school districts; County Planning and Economic Development Departments; Warren County Soil and Water Conservation		Medium	▲	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶
Strategy 17	Support Recent NYS Cider Regulations at the Federal Level				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025		
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority									
	Support HR 600 the "CIDER Act" to allow for alcohol by volume (ABV) levels of up to 8.5%.	Local, state and federal elected officials, local producers		Medium			▲						
Strategy 18	Examine Feasibility of Expanding Freight Rail and Waterways for Food Shed				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025		
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority									
	Conduct feasibility study to explore using existing rail lines and infrastructure of the Erie and Champlain canals.	County Planning and Economic Development Departments; New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT)	US Department of Commerce	Medium				▲					
Strategy 19	Support SUNY Adirondack Sustainable Agriculture and Agri-business Focus				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025		
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority									
	The AGC should support SUNY	SUNY		High	▲	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶

	Adirondack's efforts to expand their curriculum to include a greater emphasis on local agriculture.	Adirondack											
Strategy 20	Support Local Farmers Through Partnerships with Cornell Coop Ext and HVADC				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025		
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority									
	Connects local farmers to resources available at CCE and HVADC.	Local Farmers; Cornell Cooperative Extension; Hudson Valley Agriculture Development Corporation		Medium			▲	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶

- ▶▶ Ongoing process
- ▲ Single project

Healthy Region with a Diverse Array of Recreation Resources													
Strategy 21	Enhance Existing Trail Network by Closing Gaps and Making Appropriate Regional Connections				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025		
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority									
	Encourage implementation of the Warren County Bicycle Plan; identify leader for development of a Washington County Bicycle Plan.	A/GFTC; Washington County Planning Department	NYS OPRHP	Medium	▶▶	▶▶	▲ ¹	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	▶▶	
Strategy 22	Support Communities to Improve, Expand and Improve Parks				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025		
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority									
	Working with communities to determine areas of cultural and environmental significance will allow for the preservation and improvement of parks.	AGC Communities; Recreation Departments	NYS OPRHP	Medium			▲						
Strategy 23	Continue Bike Paths, Pedestrian Walkways to Improve Connectivity				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025		
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority									
	Connect bike paths, pedestrian walkways and art and historical trails to improve connectivity.	County and Municipal Recreation Departments	NYS OPRHP	High			▲	▲					
Strategy 24	Promote and Protect Local Waterways and Lakes				2015-2017			2018-2020			2021-2025		
	Action	Project Partners	Funding	Priority									
	Develop long-range plan to promote and protect local waterways and lakes.	NYS DOS; The Fund for Lake George; Lake George Association; the Hudson Riverkeeper; the Feeder Canal Alliance and Friends of Moreau Lake State Park	NYS Department of State	Medium		▲							

- ▶▶ Ongoing process
- ▲ Single project

Technical Resources

SUNY Adirondack

SUNY Adirondack has recently established their Sustainable Agriculture Initiative. The Initiative seeks to strengthen the growing agriculture curricula at the college, increase workforce opportunities in the community and support agricultural businesses for the region at large. SUNY Adirondack has offered popular Continuing Education and credit-bearing classes in small-scale, sustainable farming and is set to develop increased course offerings and potentially a degree program for students interested in pursuing agricultural careers. SUNY Adirondack will seek partnerships that link students, educators, local farmers and community stakeholders; create a campus advisory committee; explore how best to strengthen production and distribution activities among local farms; and, with community input, advise the eventual creation of a credit college program.

Cornell Cooperative Extension

The Cornell Cooperative Extension educational system enables people to improve their lives and communities through partnerships that put experience, research and knowledge to work. In New York State, Extension programs are funded and guided by a partnership of federal, state, and county governments and administered by Cornell University, New York State's Land Grant University. An example of how Extension programs can be applied within the AGC region can be found in Schoharie County where the Extension has developed a relationship with local school districts to establish the "Farm to School Project." As an offshoot of the larger "Farm to Table" concept, the Farm to School Project promotes healthy food options for children while they are in school.

Warren and Washington Counties Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Conservation districts have long worked for the wise use, conservation and protection of our land and water resources. Both Warren and Washington Counties have active Soil and Water Conservation Districts working to protect and enhance agricultural activities in the region. The AGC can partner with both Districts to assess and plan coordinated responses to strengthen the region's agricultural network and connect the people with the farms of the region. For example, the Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District has organized a series of 'Farm Talks' on Friday nights during the winter months. These meetings have been well-attended with discussions regarding the hops industry, maple syrup production and bee keeping, among others. The meetings have been held at Department of Environmental Conservation and are free of charge.

The Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District has also recognized the growing Local Food Movement by soliciting the name, phone number, address, e-mail address and a description of what foods local farmers are involved with. Local farmers input is being sought to identify how to improve

food distribution locally, how to develop community resources to assist with food processing/marketing, how to boost networking among growers, processors and food customers.

Tri-County NY Transitions Initiative

Tricountynytransition is an affiliation of towns, villages and cities in upstate NY in Warren, Washington and Essex Counties and in the capital district. The group organizes and manages a website that acts as a clearinghouse to highlight various regional sustainability initiatives.

Grant Opportunities

Farmer Grants

<http://www.nesare.org/Grants/Get-a-Grant/Farmer-Grant>

Sustainable Community Grants

<http://www.nesare.org/Grants/Get-a-Grant/Sustainable-Community-Grant>

Healthy Living Grants

<http://www.empire.state.ny.us/BusinessPrograms/NewFarmersGrantFund.html>

<http://www.empire.state.ny.us/BusinessPrograms/HealthyFoodHealthyCommunities.html>

<http://www.aetna-foundation.org/foundation/apply-for-a-grant/regional-grants/>

Trail Development Grants

http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/