

# CALL TO ACTION: Blueprint for our Region's Future

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A report facilitated  
by Senator Michael F. Nozzolio

Our region has a strong tradition of supporting innovation, education, entrepreneurship, freedom and culture. Pioneers in industry, social reform, politics and technology have proudly called Auburn and Cayuga County their home.

The 21st Century presents to us many more challenges than in years past. Gone are the "smokestack industries" and major employers upon which this area has relied. We now face a critically important choice: accept this state of decline, or like those before us, break away from the pack and push forward. In that spirit of innovation and at the suggestion of some concerned citizens, a Focus Group of twenty three community members have met since early November 2006 to design a blueprint for Auburn's future. The mission of the Focus Group was to select some very key issues confronting our region, identify the necessary action items needed for implementation and strongly encourage broad based community support.

During this process, the group assessed the strengths and weaknesses of our community and region, and brainstormed ideas to enhance economic development. The best concepts were further researched; then reports were drafted, revised and adopted.

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We welcome all comments  
and suggestions!

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The Focus Group recommendations represent a call to action for local and regional leaders in government, education, business and industry. The challenges also require all members of our community to work together in partnership to achieve the important objectives of making the City of Auburn, Cayuga County and the entire region a more attractive and viable place for future generations to call home.



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- The focus group's members are:**
- Anthony Bartolotta
  - Joe Bartolotta
  - Matteo Bartolotta
  - Dick Beauchine
  - Jack Bisgrove
  - Pat Carbonaro
  - Mike Casler
  - Laura Coburn
  - Guy Cosentino
  - David Dellostritto
  - Rick Emanuel
  - Peter Emerson
  - Dan Fessenden
  - Tim Fox
  - Dr. Phil Gover
  - Jesse Kline
  - Peter Maculiewicz
  - Harold Miller
  - Bob Pine
  - Fred Richardson
  - Ed Sayles
  - Dave Smith
  - Doug Wayne

## Areas of Focus:

- Cultural Development
- Infrastructure Technology
- Health Care
- Riverfront Development
- Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Watershed Protection
- Job Development



## Infrastructure Technology

### PRIORITIES:

- Recognize the important role of technology in economic and social development
- Make greater Auburn a Digital Community where technology is used to foster economic and social development
- Implementation of a municipal-wide broadband "wireless" network

### ASSETS:

- Strong "point of presence" exists at the current location of the Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce
- Expensive and labor intensive "wired" technology are already in place, including fiber optic cables surrounding downtown and extending to Tech Park
- Wi-Fi access points currently in operation throughout the community include Auburn Public Theater, Cayuga Community College, Fingerlakes Mall and Seymour Library

### OUTCOME:

- Streamlined interaction between important sectors such as health care, government, education and social services
- Improved public safety by facilitating communication of vital data to first responders
- Help in closing the "digital divide" between our communities advantaged and disadvantaged citizens
- Improved marketability for new business and population growth particularly the young professional and our budding tourism industry

### STRATEGY:

- Seek support and mentorship for the current research project underway as part of the Chamber's Leadership Cayuga Class of 2007
- Call open forums for municipal departments and social service organizations to determine a "wish list" of uses for wireless technology
- Investigate and remove any regulatory and/or franchise roadblocks that may exist
- Study municipalities that have or are in process of implementing wireless networks
- Identify and solicit private entities to serve as partners to launch the network



Focus Areas continued  
on inside panel.



## Owasco Riverfront Development

### ASSETS:

- Owasco River provides many recreational and economic opportunities

### POSSIBILITIES:

- Housing, dining and shopping that would thrive on the waterfront
- New hiking and biking paths

### CHALLENGE:

- Lack of forward movement on previous attempts to develop the waterfront.
- Need commitment from various levels of government and the community to move forward with initiatives

### STRATEGY:

- Address why past development efforts have failed to move forward
- Embark on concerted clean-up efforts
- Make park designations
- Encourage and stimulate private development along the riverfront corridor

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## Watershed Protection

### PRIORITY:

- Preservation and protection of our local watershed

### ASSETS:

- Owasco Lake provides drinking water for over 70,000 residents in Cayuga County
- Part of our community's beautiful natural environment, framed by Lake Ontario and the Finger Lakes

### CASE STUDY:

- Canandaigua Lake and Skaneateles Lake have a lake steward to monitor and enforce regulations that protect the lake from pollution

### STRATEGY:

- Ensure the protection of the water quality
- Establishment of an Owasco Lake steward
- Recognition by local municipalities of the collective responsibility to protect the watershed
- Securing local, state and federal funding to preserve and protect Owasco Lake

### OUTCOMES:

- Provides a recreational and social venue for the community
- Becomes a magnet for job development



### ASSETS:

- Concept in development for an Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Cayuga Community College
- Housed within the Institute will be three Centers focusing on related segments of the market

### THE CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL INITIATIVES WILL:

- Work to nurture budding business people
- Provide a clearinghouse for information, support services and expertise
- Complement existing agencies
- Provide the opportunity for entrepreneurs to transform their dreams into reality
- Provide business plan development to spark emerging enterprises
- Support neighborhood ventures to promote revitalization of economically challenged areas

## Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

### THE CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL STUDIES WILL PROVIDE:

- Traditional and innovative educational programs
- Courses and entrepreneurial opportunities
- Student incubator system to test and promote new ventures in the marketplace
- Opportunity for public school students to learn in a hands-on environment
- Internships and work-study opportunities

### THE CENTER FOR WORKFORCE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WILL:

- Develop trainings for existing and emerging organizations
- Introduce innovative programs, workshops and seminars to increase worker motivation and productivity
- Provide opportunities to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of organizations
- Serve as a testing site with the latest video and audio conferencing technology

### STRATEGY:

- All sectors of the community need to provide collaborative opportunities such as internships, service learning and work study programs



## Job Development

### PRIORITY:

- Retaining and recruiting jobs to our area
- Create a positive image to brand our region as a desirable location
- Return of talented people to our region

### CHALLENGES:

- Lack of coordination and synergy needed to achieve desired results, despite a number of economic development programs at state and local level
- Inefficient job attraction and retention efforts

### STRATEGY:

- Inter-governmental dialogue and collaboration between city, county, towns and villages
- Utilization of assets, expertise and input of private sector
- Creation of a job development action plan
- Creation of a positive image and brand
- Implementation of a central coordinating mechanism to facilitate economic development activities so as to speak with "one unified voice" when attracting potential employers



## Cultural Development is Critical to Revitalize Auburn and the Region

### CASE STUDY:

- The Shaw Festival with only 1,511 seats attracts an audience of over 325,000 and has 600 employees. (The potential seat count for all of Auburn's six venues is almost 2,000.)

### CHALLENGES:

- Some venues will require repairs and/or renovation, most notably the Schine Theater, which will require extensive work
- Housing needed for the festival's talent and personnel

### OUTCOMES:

- A Theater Festival provides a viable end use for a renovated Schine Theater, which could be used for large-scaled productions that are now only available in much larger cities
- Creates an overwhelmingly positive national image for our region
- Provides employment opportunities that would be a magnet for young professionals



### ASSETS:

- Auburn's population, infrastructure and potential market size are comparable to both Niagara-on-the-Lake and Stratford, ON (locations that host very successful large-scale theater festivals)
  - Existing venues eager to participate: Auburn Public Theater, Cayuga Community College, Cayuga Museum, Merry-Go-Round Playhouse, the Schine Theater and the Schweinfurth Memorial Art Center
  - Merry-Go-Round Playhouse staff is on board to help operate and manage the festival



## Health Care

### PRIORITIES:

- Close and reliable health care
- Focus on preventative care and wellness versus emergency services
- Keeping our health care dollars local

### CHALLENGES:

- Changes in the health care industry and community demographics
- Attracting and retaining health care professionals

### STRATEGY:

- Offer incentives to remain competitive in this demanding field
- Get community to take ownership and responsibility for the facilities
- Support fundraising efforts

### OUTCOMES:

- Proximity to quality health care helps in recruitment of new business
- Accessible, reliable health care for the community
- Availability of Physicians practicing in multiple specialties