

A vibrant photograph of a sunflower field. Several large, bright yellow sunflowers with dark brown centers are in full bloom, standing tall against a clear blue sky dotted with fluffy white clouds. The sunflowers are surrounded by lush green leaves and stems. The overall scene is bright and cheerful, symbolizing growth and positivity.

Blenheim New York

May 2012

**Long-Term Community
Recovery Plan**





BLENHEIM

Long-Term Community Recovery Plan • New York • May 2012





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Executive Summary





On August 28, 2011, Hurricane Irene, the first major hurricane of the season, inflicted extensive damage to much of the East Coast of the United States and Canada. By the time it reached the State of New York it had been downgraded to a tropical storm with sustained winds at 65 miles per hour. One of the communities that suffered severe damage from the storm is Blenheim, a small town in upstate New York, situated along State Route 30, at the northern edge of the Catskill Mountains and the southern edge of the Schoharie Valley. Blenheim was once a thriving community with a strong agricultural base and diverse Main Street businesses. Tropical Storm Irene devastated private and public property throughout Schoharie Valley, inundating Blenheim with record levels of flooding that surpassed all previous flood incidents. In response, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Long-Term Community Recovery (LTCR) program became directly involved with the recovery of the Town of Blenheim.

Blenheim has a rich cultural heritage strengthened by an awareness of the blended values of a small town. Community leaders recognized the potential for applying the Long-Term Community Recovery practices within their community in order to stimulate the revitalization of agriculture, local businesses, entrepreneurship, art, and tourism. Residents have been proactive during the recovery process and have taken complete stewardship of planning the long-term restoration of the Blenheim community.

Three subcommittees were formed early in the recovery planning process:

- Infrastructure and Hazard Mitigation
- Community Resources and Identity
- Economic Development

These subcommittees established a broad community vision and more specific recovery goals based on feedback from the first community-wide meeting. Subcommittee members used the vision and goals as a framework for generating a robust set of long-term community recovery projects, which encompassed a range of endeavors such as improving area telecommunications capabilities, supporting local businesses through a small business incubator, and restoring cultural resources like the iconic Blenheim Bridge and the School House Museum. Community leaders view the resulting projects in this plan as the beginning of a sustained, vigorous, and committed process leading to Blenheim's full recovery.





Community Background and History

The Town of Blenheim lies at the southern end of picturesque Schoharie Valley in Schoharie County. Schoharie Creek flows north along the eastern edge of the town as a wide stream with steep banks on either side. The hamlet of North Blenheim, which is in the town, is hugged by a large bend in Schoharie Creek. The Blenheim-Gilboa Reservoirs are just south of North Blenheim and are managed by the New York Power Authority.

The Blenheim area has a long and rich history. German and Dutch settlers arrived in the region in 1710, and the town formed in 1797. Agriculture and associated industries provided a strong economic base for the town until 1959. However, by the early 1990s, few farms remained. The population of the town also decreased steadily from a peak in 1840 of 2,725 residents to 330 residents in 2000. In 2010, the U.S. Census registered 377 residents, an increase of 47 over the last decade. A number of part-time residents and second-home owners add to Blenheim's population seasonally, raising it to an estimated 500 people.



"The Town of Blenheim derived its name from the Blenheim patent, granted in colonial times by the British king....

North Blenheim village, once known as Patchin Hollow, is situated on the west bank of the Schoharie Creek, at the mouth of the Westkill. It is divided into two parts by a steep hill that approaches so near the creek as to leave little room for more than a road. The first in was kept by H. Effner, and the first store by Tobias Cuyler, in 1803. The first tanner was built in 1825 by Jones & Lathrop.

In 1872, the village of North Blenheim contained two church buildings (Methodist, 1828 and Reformed Dutch, 1853), a post office, two schoolhouses, two hotels, two stores, two wagon shops, two blacksmith shops, a harness shop, a shoemaker shop, a tailor shop, a paint shop, a grist mill, two saw mills and about 50 dwellings. There was a fine water power, and a steam sash and blind factory nearby.

In 1899, it contained two churches (Methodist and Presbyterian), two hotels, two grocery stores, a hardware store, one creamery, one saw mill, a post office, five gas stations, one garage, and about 16 dwellings in the upper street proper and 25 dwellings in the lower street proper.

In 1991, the village contained two churches (Methodist and Presbyterian), a medical center, one hotel, a beauty salon, one garage, a snack bar, one grocery store, a post office, a wood carving shop, a trucking industry, a town hall and a fire company...." (excerpted from Blenheim History, 1710-1991, by Fanchon Dewell Cornell)





In 1990, an explosion in a propane gas pipeline, that runs through the north, destroyed or severely damaged half of the structures in the hamlet. That event is still remembered by many community members and colors their views about large-scale infrastructure projects in their community. Frequent flooding along Schoharie Creek and its feeder creeks has taken repeated tolls on Blenheim and surrounding farmland. Despite such recurrent flooding, the natural beauty, relative isolation, and strong cultural and family heritages have led many residents to remain and have attracted new or seasonal residents to the area. Building on these assets is key to full recovery of the community.

A year before the flooding event of 2011, a committee had formed to develop a comprehensive plan for Blenheim, both to guide its development and to make the town eligible for state development funding. A comprehensive plan survey was completed and results compiled by April, 2012. When a comprehensive plan is written and adopted, this recovery plan will be included as an addendum.

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

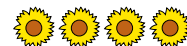
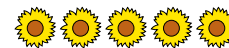
This recovery plan is a guide, a living document that can be amended by the community as projects and needs change. Evaluation and feedback are key components of a recovery planning process and is described further in the Next Steps and Implementation section of this plan. Projects that can be completed quickly, have significant public support, and have available funding or other resources for implementation are crucial for early success. Each project description

in this plan indicates its relative priority for the community, feasibility, and implementation timeframe. In this plan, the community priority is indicated by the number of sunflowers next to the title of the project, with five being the highest.

Community Interest projects on the other hand, are projects that have significant local support but either cannot be implemented in a time frame that will substantively affect recovery or, do not clearly promote any key disaster recovery goals. A Community Interest project may be extremely important to a community even though it does not have a significant recovery value.



HIGH PRIORITY



LOW PRIORITY







Disaster Background

On August 28, 2011, record flooding along Schoharie Creek caused the hamlet of North Blenheim to become landlocked and cut off from the surrounding areas. Residents were left without power and many were trapped in buildings or cars as the floodwaters rapidly rose. State Route 30, the primary road through town, was washed-out along the creek, making it impossible for vehicular traffic to get through.

Schoharie Creek rose nearly 20 feet over the several hours of the flooding. Though Blenheim has seen numerous floods over the years - in 1839, 1869, 1903, and 1996 - none would compare to the effects of Tropical Storm Irene.

In Schoharie County, more than two dozen roads and bridges were closed for over three days. Approximately 30 homes, as well as several local businesses in Blenheim were damaged by the flood. The Town Municipal Building, which houses the Town Hall, post office and firehouse, was severely damaged as was the United Methodist Church and the local garage.

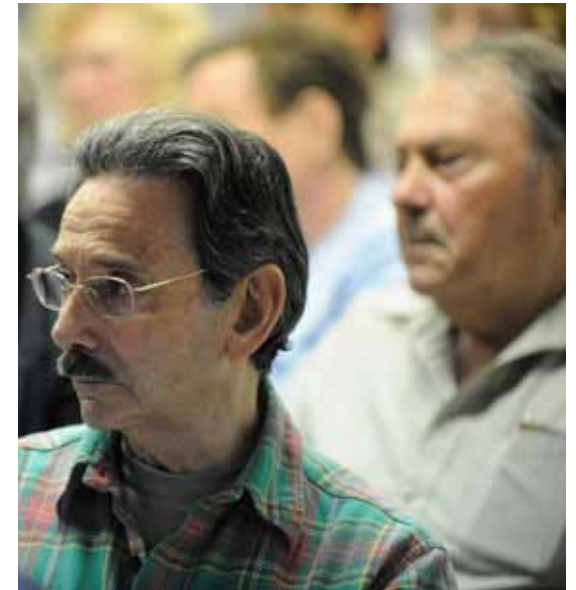


Surrounding farmlands suffered extensive damage which will cause negative economic impact to the area. Cultural resources such as the historic Schoolhouse Museum and buildings that represent the Greek Revival architectural style were also severely damaged.

One of the greatest losses to the community—both culturally and economically—was the historic Blenheim Covered Bridge. The bridge held the record for being the world's longest wooden single-span bridge and was an invaluable tourist attraction for the community. Built in 1855, its image appeared on the gateway entrance to the town as well as on the official town seal. The iconic landmark, was completely destroyed and swept away, piece by piece, with the flood waters.









Community Involvement

In October, 2011, the Blenheim Town Board decided to participate in the FEMA Long-Term Community Recovery (LTCR) program and asked resident Don Airey to organize a steering committee as the first step. The Blenheim Long-Term Community Recovery Committee first met on January 4, 2012, with the following individuals comprising the committee:

- Don Airey, Chair
- Ralph Arrandale
- Liz Arrandale
- Renee Grabowski
- Melissa Graham
- Bernie Levit
- Anne Mattice-Strauch
- Carole Olsen
- Robert Olsen
- Gail Shaffer
- Jill Zichichi
- William Zichichi
- Robert Mann, Jr., ex officio

Over the next few weeks, the LTCR Committee planned its first public meeting for January 26th, 2012, at the Blenheim Town Hall. Using presentation visuals and handouts, LTCR committee and team members facilitated three exercises for the public to gather their input about community needs, opportunities, and assets. The first exercise was for them to write one or two words that described what was most important to them in the rebuilding effort, which had been termed “Building a Better Blenheim.” Those words were then applied to a Wordle graphic software program to identify the strongest or most frequently used words. During the second exercise, residents wrote a postcard to the community as if it were written 10 years in the future to help spur their

imaginations and initiate the formation of a recovery vision. Some of the postcard statements are at the column to the right entitled, “Visions of the Future.” A third exercise involved having meeting participants respond to question prompts on display boards for the following recovery topic areas: Historic and Cultural Resources; Natural Resources; Hazard Mitigation, Response, and Recovery; Infrastructure; Housing; Economic Development; and Community Resources and Services. Committee members at each board facilitated the recording of responses on sticky notes. At the end of the meeting, the Wordle graphic was displayed.

Following the first public meeting, the LTCR Committee



VISIONS OF THE FUTURE

“Farmland has been restored, dead trees removed, and the country is green again. Wildlife is returning and hunting/fishing is good again.”

“Our beautiful valley is once more beautiful! The devastation has been cleaned up and the land is once again producing vegetables and grains as it once had. Once again it is the breadbasket for the Schoharie Valley.”

“On passing through town I see a vital community of small businesses and farms. The rural environment is preserved with a park where the community can gather and enjoy a sense of togetherness.”

“Our town is strong and happy once again. The new bridge and Schoolhouse Museum Park is great. What a super place to spend a day! ”

“Streams have been stabilized—not channeled. Forests are managed for sound wood harvest and diversity. Farms are operating on a sound economic base. Health care and transportation of a reasonable character are implemented. Some sound, affordable housing has been developed.”

“Blenheim looks so much better now that the recovery is completed. The new restaurant and grill along with the new grocery store provide for fun and opportunity to discuss with our neighbors.”

“Economic turn-around with local employment in a wide range of traditional (agriculture) and new (light industry/tech) areas. A strong central identity. Something that attracts people and retains them.”

“Things have improved radically. It’s amazing how much great hardship can bring a community together. Sure, things have not always stayed the same, and we have had to make some tough choices, but we have resolved as a community. People are still kin, and we still care about each other. Come visit us soon.”



reviewed the public input. From the postcard exercise, they developed the following recovery vision: To start envisioning recovery projects, the committee examined the top 10 needs, opportunities, and assets, which included the following:

1. Cell phone and Internet service; emergency communications
2. Funding for rebuilding homes and recovering land value, grant money to utilize resources
3. Rebuild Blenheim Bridge
4. Dam-related concerns, emergency response plans, guaranteed safe way out
5. Health/medical and senior services
6. Retain post office
7. Community gathering spaces
8. Small business support
9. Road repair and maintenance
10. Parks and trails, creek-side development, forest and state land

The LTCR Committee grouped responses and established the following subcommittees:

- Infrastructure and Hazard Mitigation
- Community Resources and Identity
- Economic Development

Each subcommittee recruited new members, bringing the total of involved residents to 15. These groups developed goals and conducted Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analyses concerning their respective sectors. From that point, the subcommittees narrowed recovery project ideas and then developed the recovery and community interest projects that are presented in this plan.

The LTCR Committee hosted an evening public meeting on April 5 and a community Open House on April 7. The latter event was designed to allow for part-time residents to engage in the process. At both events, the LTCR Committee presented the recovery and community interest projects and collected feedback from attendees about the relative importance they gave to each project.

All community input is valued highly by the LTCR Committee. Every idea captured during this process remains in play; no ideas have been abandoned. The projects listed in this plan are merely the starting point of long-term community recovery efforts.



Following the first public meeting, the LTCR Committee reviewed the public input. From the postcard exercise, they developed the following recovery vision:

Blenheim is a resilient community dedicated to preserving and protecting our numerous natural resources, local culture, and historical heritage while attracting sustainable small businesses, young families, seniors, and retirees. Blenheim's unique quality of rural lifestyle is strengthened by an awareness and promotion of the blended values presented by a revitalization of traditional and niche agriculture, small business, entrepreneurship, art, and tourism. In the face of enormous adversity, we are moving confidently towards a bright future. Blenheim is tiny, but sturdy.





Infrastructure and Hazard Mitigation

The flood waters from Tropical Storm Irene inundated the Blenheim Town Hall, the fire hall, the maintenance hall, and destroyed the public park. Several historic buildings were flooded, and the iconic covered bridge torn apart and swept away with the flood. The flood left the town in need of repair of its public facilities, and broader recovery needs of the community will require additional infrastructure to form the foundation for a sustainable growing community. The goals of the Infrastructure and Hazard Mitigation subcommittee are the following:

1. Improve Internet and telecommunications access.
2. Protect town assets from disaster events.
3. Improve town identity and image.
4. Expand and capitalize on opportunities to provide low cost energy to town residents.
5. Improve local government capacity.

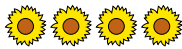
The community has established an active committee to coordinate and integrate projects, and to facilitate planning and development.

A primary infrastructure project is to secure cell phone service for the town. The community has also identified the need for a hydrology and engineering study of Schoharie Creek in order to fully understand the potential for future flood events.

Other projects include upgrading the Town of Blenheim public buildings and providing the necessary infrastructure to support the redevelopment of North Blenheim.

TOWN-WIDE CELL PHONE
SERVICE COVERAGE

PROJECT CHAMPION: BERNIE LEVIT



BACKGROUND

No cell phone service is available in Blenheim. As such, the full range of emergency notifications, including text messaging, is not available to Blenheim residents. The flooding event cut off all Blenheim residents from the rest of the county, as the evacuation routes had been washed away and the landline phone system went down. During the flood event and for three days after, the Town Supervisor communicated by satellite phone to emergency responders and sent messages via couriers up the hills to residents.

Two cell phone towers exist in Blenheim, but they have not been provided with antennas and transmitting equipment. The lack of cell phone service negatively impacts tourism and commercial development. Previous efforts to attract cell phone service providers have failed for reasons attributed to the small market in Blenheim.

DESCRIPTION

This project addresses the need for cell phone service expansion to the Town of Blenheim and the Schoharie Valley. It will begin with the development of an advocacy coalition, to be composed of local residents aided by political representatives, and will focus on building support for cell phone service expansion at local, regional, and state levels of governance. Members of the campaign will seek to form partnerships with national and regional cell

“CELL SERVICE - COMMUNICATION IS A
MUST, WE USE WORD OF MOUTH AND HAVE
NOTHING ELSE.”

phone service providers to collaborate on developing solutions to this lack of service. Private business owners, emergency responders, and the New York Power Authority (NYPA) office located in Blenheim are additional potential partners for this project.

Once the positions and plans of the cell phone service providers are understood, the coalition will seek grants or private or government subsidies for the activation costs of the cell phone towers, if no other solutions can be developed.

ACTION STEPS

- Organize residents and partners into a community wireless communications coalition (CWCC)
- Develop justification and market figures for cell phone service expansion
- Request resolution of support from town boards in Blenheim, Gilboa, Fulton, and Jefferson
- Elicit letters of support from other groups and organizations familiar with the issue, including Dam Concerned Citizens
- Engage congressional and state representatives
- Host meetings and forums with cell phone service providers and the public
- Solicit grants and/or subsidization of activation costs from private, nonprofit, and public sources

PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE

Annual operating cost of working group for supplies, travel, etc.	\$6,000
Estimated cost of equipment and construction placing antennae on the two existing communication towers	\$200,000
TOTAL	\$206,000

POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND PARTNERS

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development program
- New York Main Street Program
- U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration
- U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development

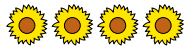
FEASIBILITY: MODERATE

Implementation Timeframe: 6-12 months



BROADBAND AND COMMUNITY- WIDE WIRELESS (COMMUNITY INTEREST PROJECT)

PROJECT CHAMPION: DON AIREY



BACKGROUND

High-speed Internet has become as essential to a community as other basic public utilities. Local residents and almost all businesses need to be connected to the Internet in order to function well in today's world. High-speed Internet is also critical to modern emergency services and public safety organizations that use social media and publish web updates during and after disasters. During the flood event in August of 2011, with no cell phone service and landline phones out of service, the Blenheim community was left with a single satellite phone for emergency communications. Further, the Internet has become an essential part of education and most people's daily lives and is an integral part of competing to attract small businesses to the area.

DESCRIPTION

The community seeks to fully understand currently available broadband providers in terms of available service areas, uplink and downlink speeds, capacity and costs. Once the current situation is understood and documented, the community will engage these providers in an attempt to obtain the best available service. The town will also consider developing community level Wi-Fi service.

ACTION STEPS

- Engage as an active member in county and regional groups concerned with telecommunications.
- Develop a thorough understanding of the technology or obtain technical assistance to evaluate the current conditions.
- Develop a strategy and a series of locally supported initiatives designed to improve the level of service.
- Research available incentive programs, grants, and opportunities to create public-private partnerships.

PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE

Consultant or lower cost experts (from government or higher education)	\$1,000-\$3,500
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POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND PARTNERS

- Schoharie County Planning and Economic Development Agency
- Schoharie County Chamber of Commerce
- New York State Broadband Program Office
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development Program

FEASIBILITY: HIGH

Implementation Timeframe: 6-18 months



HYDROLOGY AND ENGINEERING STUDY OF SCHOHARIE CREEK

PROJECT CHAMPION: BOB OLSEN



BACKGROUND:

The most recent hydrology studies completed on the sections of Schoharie Creek flowing through Blenheim are over 20 years old. Given the likelihood of future flooding of the vulnerable hamlet of North Blenheim and the unique flow of the creek—owing, in part, to water releases from the Blenheim-Gilboa dam upstream—additional current hydrology and engineering studies of Schoharie Creek and its tributary streams are warranted.

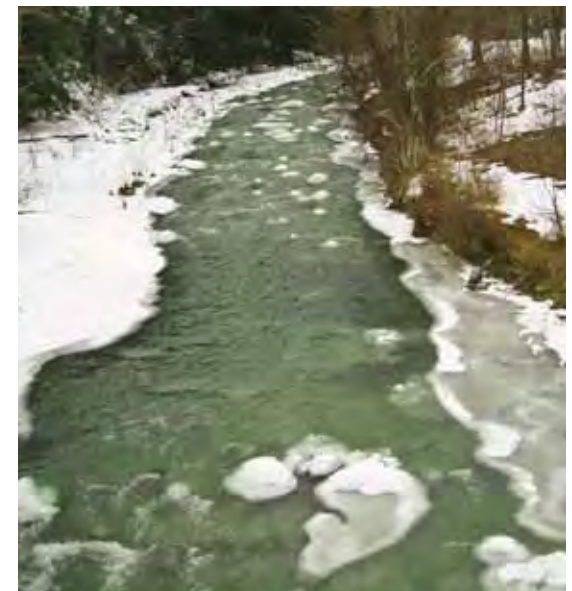
DESCRIPTION:

The Hydrology and Engineering Study will examine flood threats from Schoharie Creek to assist in developing mitigation efforts for residences and other properties within the floodplain. The study will assess flood, landslide, and drought risk and will assist in flood forecasting and flood warning for the Schoharie Creek and its tributaries. The study will help to determine the agricultural water balance of the Schoharie Creek region and is a prerequisite for restoration projects. In order to stay current with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) regulations, the study will include definitions for future-conditions hydrology, such as blanket erosion and stability. The study will also assess creek flows and potential flows under various anticipated climatic conditions in order to determine specific needs.

**“FOCUS ON STREAM CONSTRUCTION –
BECAUSE IT WILL HAPPEN AGAIN”**

ACTION STEPS:

- Generate detailed scope of services for professional firm to perform the study
- Pursue funding for study
- Issue RFP and bid on firms to perform study
- Contract with firm to perform study
- In conjunction with capable organization, establish plan to analyze results to develop mitigation strategies for residences and other property in the floodplain





PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:

Consultant Services

\$15,000 to \$22,000

POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND PARTNERS:

- Empire State Development Corporation (ESD)
- New York Department of State, Department of Environmental Conservation
- Schoharie County
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- FEMA

FEASIBILITY: HIGH

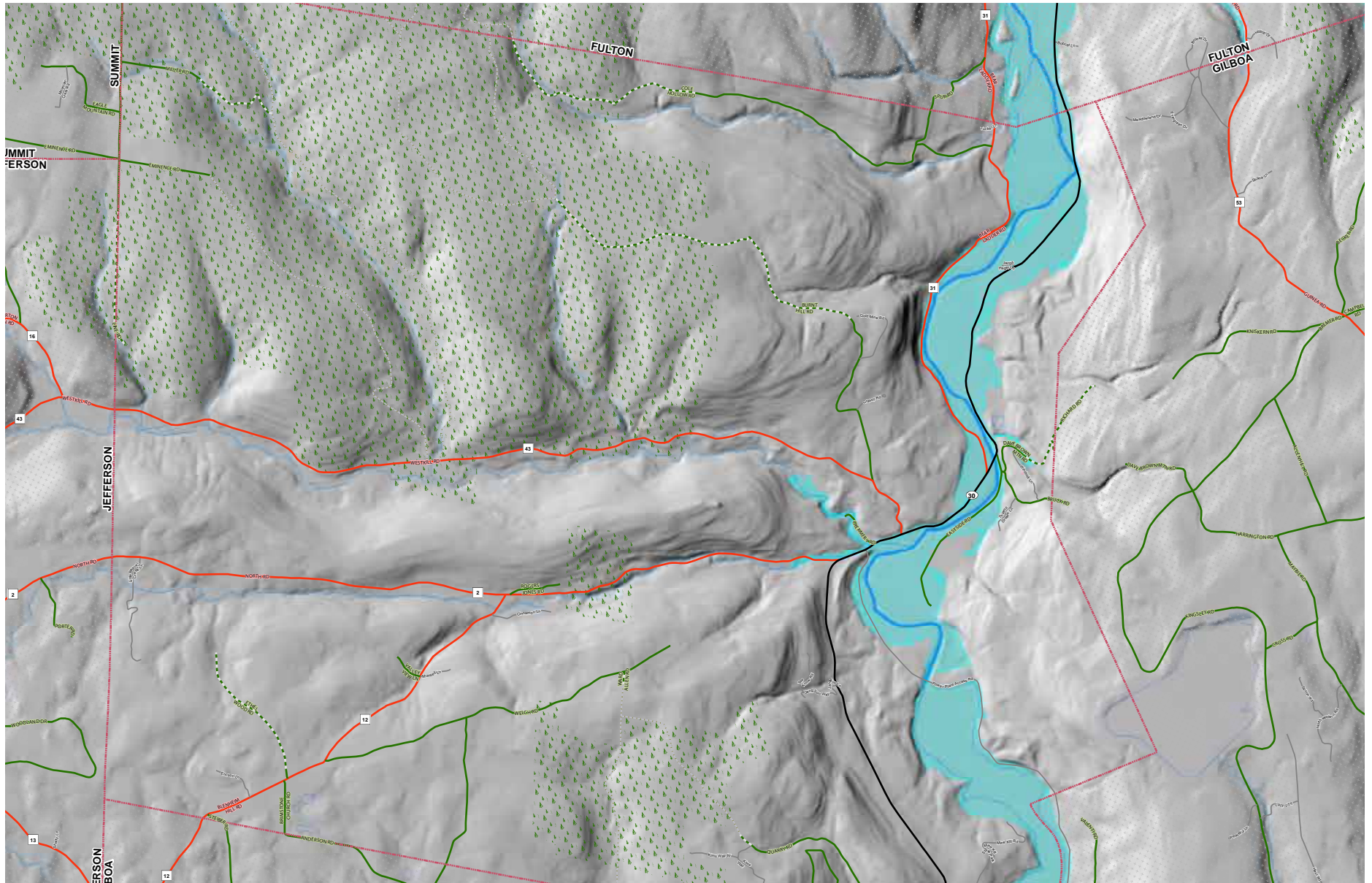
Implementation Timeframe: 1-3 months





PARCELS AND FLOOD ZONES OF NORTH BLENHEIM, LOOKING SOUTH





TOWN OF BLENHEIM, GEOGRAPHIC RELIEF, INCLUDING FLOOD ZONES

BLenheim PRIVATE PROPERTY RECOVERY ASSOCIATION

PROJECT CHAMPION: RALPH ARRANDALE



BACKGROUND:

The flooding caused by the 2011 tropical storms took many acres of cropland out of production and littered, eroded, and extensively deposited silt over thousands of acres of private property. Much property was damaged as well from erosion of stream banks. The estimated costs of contract services to restore several properties range from \$50,000 to \$100,000. The market value of several damaged properties declined by approximately 20 percent after the floods. Private property owners also suffered a capital loss of harvestable timber and cropland.

Returning the landscape to its natural beauty and addressing safety hazard issues is an essential part of community recovery. With a current lack of assistance for private property owners, a critical need exists for the organization and coordination of people and resources to address current conditions on private lands affected by the flooding. Blenheim has been known as a community where people help each other and organize efforts to deal with local problems. This project will build on that tradition.

DESCRIPTION:

This project seeks to establish a nonprofit Private Property Recovery Association (PPRA) to provide assistance to landowners in the restoration and repair of real property and equipment damaged by the flood. The PPRA will support good land stewardship practices, including wildlife management and the prevention of soil erosion, and will represent the interests of its members in matters impacting the community. A board of directors will manage a monetary fund by which eligible property owners may receive financial assistance to address property damages. Assistance will be available from donated funds in the form of grants or low-interest loans.

The primary and first mission of the PPRA will be to provide assistance to disaster-impacted private land. The organization will continue to provide education about land management issues and will work with other agencies to develop projects and programs of value to its member property owners. In the long term, the organization may consider programs to coordinate the sale of hunting rights, as well as the

development of private snowmobile, equestrian, and other commercial trail programs in order to provide a new source of revenue to the organization and its members.

ACTION STEPS:

- Create an official name for the PPRA
- Define mission, vision, and goals
- Seek technical assistance to establish a nonprofit organization
- Appoint a board of directors
- File Articles of Incorporation with the state's corporate filing office
- Set membership fees
- Identify and recruit local property owners with interest in joining the association
- Establish committees as necessary
- Make connections with relevant agencies and organizations
- Solicit donations and funding assistance



PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:

Legal expense to establish a nonprofit association

\$2,000



POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND PARTNERS:

- American Tree Farm System
- Catskill Landowners Association
- Natural Resources Conservation Service, Wildlife Habitat Incentive Programs (WHIP)
- New York Forest Owners Association
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)
- New York State DEC, Bureau of Private Land Services
- New York State DEC, Landowner Incentive Program
- Schoharie County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Schoharie County Chamber of Commerce
- Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency
- United States Department of Agriculture

FEASIBILITY: HIGH

Implementation Timeframe: 3 months





TOWN FACILITIES UPGRADE

PROJECT CHAMPION: DON AIREY



BACKGROUND

The Blenheim Town Highway and Maintenance Facility was inaccessible during the Tropical Storm Irene event because of flooding on local roads. Although the maintenance garage bays received a minimal amount of flooding, much of the town's highway equipment, including a bulldozer as well as supplies stored outside, were lost or severely damaged. The facility is substandard with insufficient storage capacity, minimal space for administrative functions, and a highly inefficient energy system. Because the garage has inadequate space for highway equipment, over \$500,000 worth of new equipment sits out in the open. Maintaining this equipment in various weather conditions requires extra time and attention; the equipment is also vulnerable to theft and vandalism. Also, the damaged facility is not a safe place for employees to work. A new facility in another location with expanded, secure storage will protect the town's investment and will enable faster and better response in emergency situations or other circumstances that affect local roads.

The town municipal facility, which houses the Town Hall, fire department, and the local post office, was also structurally damaged during the storm event. A refurbished and expanded facility will also be able to serve as an emergency operations center.

DESCRIPTION

This project promotes, first and foremost, the design and construction of a modern Town Highway and Maintenance Facility in a secure location. A new energy-efficient facility will offer expanded space for storage of highway equipment, administrative space large enough to accommodate meetings with local vendors, as always for office equipment; employee facilities, and an in-house repair and maintenance workspace. The second phase of this project will examine the possible expansion of the municipal facility, including determination of any needs relating to the fire department facility, such as expanded bays or additional storage space. Redesign of the Town Hall should take into account the need for additional space for administration functions (town supervisor, assessor, and code enforcement officer), for storage of historic archives and for public meetings.

ACTION STEPS

- Consider size, scale, and type of building criteria to guide in design of each structure
- Determine the detailed scope of each project and alternatives for project implementation, including gathering public comment as needed
- Locate and acquire a new site for the Town Highway and Maintenance Facility
- Obtain conceptual plan drawings
- Apply for funding and undertake financial planning for local match funds





POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND PARTNERS:

- Appalachian Regional Commission
- CITI Foundation
- Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region, Inc.
- Home Depot Foundation
- Local Initiatives Support Corporation
- Community Facilities Direct and Guaranteed Loan and Grant Programs U.S. Department of Agriculture
- Community Development Block Grants/States Program
- Community Development Block Grants/Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:

Cost for a new 6,500 square foot facility	\$500,000-\$750,000
Refurbishing current facility	\$35,000 - \$50,000

- Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation
- National Association for the Exchange of Industrial Resources
- Partnership for Sustainable Communities (USHUD, USDOT, USEPA)
- PMI Foundation
- Rural Community Development Initiative (USDA/RD)
- State Farm Companies

FEASIBILITY: HIGH

Implementation Timeframe: 12-18 months
(Town highway and maintenance facility)
3-6 months (Town municipal facility)



MAIN STREET SIDEWALKS, LIGHTING, AND LANDSCAPING

PROJECT CHAMPION: DON AIREY



BACKGROUND:

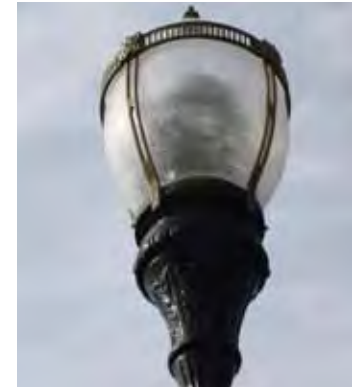
After the flooding caused by the 2011 tropical storms, Blenheim residents reviewed the status of the Town's infrastructure prior to the flood. The hamlet of Blenheim had sidewalks at one time; however, none exist now. The flood also ruined existing landscaping and left the hamlet with scoured and silted-over land.

DESCRIPTION:

This project is a key element in a recovery plan for the Town's future. The Main Street Sidewalks, Lighting, and Landscaping Project envisions the creation of a warm and welcoming Main Street that will support a healthy and vibrant downtown, boosting both the local economy and quality of life within the Blenheim community. It proposes the installation of sidewalks and street lighting to encourage a walkable and safe community with elements such as benches and public art to benefit the public. Landscaping features will help to establish the historic appeal of Main Street, help prevent erosion, and improve the existing condition of the streetscape. The project aims to provide an attractive environment for creating jobs, increasing and protecting property values, and increasing the community's vibrancy by creating more options for potential business and industry.

ACTION STEPS:

- Develop detailed scope of work for a Main Street Sidewalks, Lighting, and Landscaping plan
- Hire a professional consultant to develop conceptual streetscape design
- Bid and contract services for design implementation to include:
 - » Sidewalks
 - » Streetscape features
 - » Streetlights
 - » Sustainably energy features (LED, solar energy)
 - » Upgrade of landscape features
 - » Tree plantings
- Develop plan for obtaining and installing public art





PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:

Sidewalks	\$220,000
Street Lights	\$209,000
Landscaping	\$92,400
TOTAL	\$521,400

POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND PARTNERS:

- Environmental Protection Agency
- National Grid
- New York Main Street Program
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- New York State Department of Transportation
- New York State Electric and Gas
- Schoharie Soil and Water Conservation District
- State of New York State Highway Bridge Department
- The Home Depot Foundation

FEASIBILITY: HIGH

Implementation Timeframe: 6 months



FULL TIME TOWN ADMINISTRATOR
(COMMUNITY INTEREST PROJECT)

PROJECT CHAMPION: DON AIREY



BACKGROUND

Blenheim lacks the critical capacity to manage projects, administer grants, and partner with other agencies that could provide technical and financial assistance to the community. Recovery from the disaster will require local capacity to coordinate and support various projects and assistance programs that may be available to the community. As long-term community recovery projects are developed, the need for management and administrative skills will increase. The town’s resources are currently sufficient to employ personnel for the mandatory functions of a Town; however, during the disaster recovery period, the need for additional professional staff will increase.

DESCRIPTION

The project will examine fully the current need for a town administrator and will include developing the role, duties, and responsibilities of the position. The project will look at how other communities have used professional staff to manage long-term community recovery.

“Need full-time access to leadership and clerk.”

ACTION STEPS

- Develop a specific job description for the position of town administrator
- Determine the role of the administrator in terms of current and proposed recovery projects
- Outline a two-year work program and the expected percentage of time to be spent on each major function
- Seek outside funding to support the position for an initial two-year period

PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE	
Position development and recruitment	\$1,500
Position for a two-year period, including benefits	\$100,000
TOTAL	\$101,500

POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND PARTNERS

- Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency
- New York Secretary of State’s Long-Term Community Recovery Grant
- U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration
- U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development CDBG program

FEASIBILITY: HIGH

Timeframe: 3 months



LOW-COST ENERGY SOURCE DEVELOPMENT (COMMUNITY INTEREST PROJECT)

PROJECT CHAMPION: RALPH ARRANDALE



BACKGROUND

The cost of energy has become a concern of the community. Residents are interested in pursuing alternative energy options and energy conservation improvements to local facilities. The Town of Blenheim is the home of the New York Power Authority's (NYPA) Blenheim-Gilboa Pumped Storage Power Project, which is a very efficient producer of electricity. However, Blenheim residents pay the typical National Grid or NYSEG rates. Upgrading the rural electric infrastructure of the town is essential to the growth of agricultural and small business within the community. Given its relationship with the town, the New York Power Authority may be a significant partner for Blenheim in seeking an affordable energy supply for the community.

DESCRIPTION

This project will explore opportunities for Blenheim to harness lower-cost energy sources. It will seek energy-related capital upgrades to existing facilities, as well as lay the groundwork for potential future town facilities and businesses. The long-term goal is to establish a Blenheim Rural Utility Services cooperative to serve the community by delivering low-cost electricity to residences, town facilities, and future job-creating businesses that may be attracted to the area. The project will require working with the Blenheim Town Board to set up a nonprofit organization that will negotiate for inexpensive power supplied by the New

York Power Authority. This organization would likely contract with National Grid, which currently supplies most of Blenheim's electricity, to secure access to existing power infrastructure. Local models for this type of cooperative can be found in the Delaware County Electric Cooperative, based in Delhi, NY, and the Town of Richmondville's municipal power-provider, Richmondville Power & Light. The rural utility service will also investigate a variety of options for local power production, such as individual small hydroelectric power producers or solar power, and undertake educational energy-awareness efforts in the local community.

ACTION STEPS

- Form an energy-focused working group of concerned residents, energy conservation interest groups, and energy providers.
- Undertake a study of potential community energy models, costs, and options for service upgrades.
- Consider sustainable, energy-efficient building methods for Blenheim infrastructure, such as solar powered lighting.
- Develop a local educational program on energy efficiency and alternative sources of energy.

PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:

Operating cost of working group	\$1,000
Developing and maintaining local information and educational website	\$1,800
Develop a model of current energy needs	\$1,800
TOTAL	\$4,600

POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND PARTNERS:

- Cooperative Development Foundation
- Delaware County Electric Cooperative
- National Rural Electric Cooperative Association
- National Rural Utilities, New York Power Authority
- New York State Rural Electric Cooperative Association
- New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)
- Smart Communities Network
- U. S. Department of Agriculture
- U.S. Department of Energy
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Energy Efficient Commercial Buildings Tax Deduction

FEASIBILITY: MEDIUM

Implementation Timeframe: 24-36 months







Community Resources and Identity Recovery Projects

Blenheim residents greatly value their strong sense of community, local heritage, and the serenity and beauty of the surrounding area. In the wake of Tropical Storm Irene, immediate recovery efforts relied on, and strengthened, these community bonds. However, long-term efforts are required to address the loss and damage to local historic treasures and restore environmental integrity. Residents who lost their homes require assistance and resources to remain within the community.

Based on community input from the first Blenheim public meeting, the Community Resources and Identity subcommittee identified the following goals as crucial to achieving the town's post-disaster recovery vision:

1. Preserve Blenheim's heritage and culture, including reconstruction of the Old Blenheim Covered Bridge.
2. Preserve and enhance existing open space and create new recreational opportunities.
3. Retain and aid people whose homes, property, and livelihoods were affected by flooding.
4. Renew and enhance the sense of community by establishing a community gathering place.
5. Enhance local community services.
6. Create strong connections and improve relationships within the county to ensure town access to important resources.

A series of recovery projects emerged from these goals and speak to Blenheim residents' love of their community, history, and environment. One project investigates the reconstruction of the town icon, the Blenheim Covered Bridge, which was swept away during the storm. Another focuses on the restoration of the Blenheim Bridge School House Museum which houses all of Blenheim's historical artifacts and treasures. The Blenheim Parks and Recreation Plan project seeks to enhance the deep connection local residents feel to the surrounding open space, creek-side, mountains, farmlands, vistas, and recreational lands, many of which were damaged during the disaster.

Establishing a Housing and Resources Coordinator was identified as the most effective way to provide immediate assistance for local homeowners as they struggle to rebuild and rejoin the community. The Community Cultural Center project was driven by a desire for a gathering space that will allow for enhanced communication within the community and provide a hub for ongoing social interaction. The town post office, which provided the sole outlet for this type of interaction, is threatened with closure. Finally, the community wishes to implement a Community Services Needs Assessment project to restore critical services that are lacking in Blenheim, including health care, transportation, and senior services.

BLenheim BRIDGE RESTORATION CONCEPT

PROJECT CHAMPIONS: DON AIREY
GAIL SHAFFER
ANNE MATTICE-STRAUCH

“IT IS NOT SO MUCH THAT THE BRIDGE BELONGS TO US AS THAT WE BELONG TO THE BRIDGE – TO RECORD ITS HISTORY, TO CELEBRATE ITS MILESTONES, TO REST IN THE SERENITY OF ITS JUST BEING THERE.” - FANCHON DEWELL CORNELL, BLENHEIM RESIDENT



BACKGROUND:

The Blenheim Bridge, completed by the Blenheim Bridge Company in 1855, was listed in 1964 by the U.S. Department of the Interior, United States Parks Service, as a National Historic Landmark. The bridge was swept downstream by catastrophic flooding caused by Tropical Storm Irene on August 28, 2011. Known among covered bridge enthusiasts as the “Queen of Covered Bridges,” it was the world’s longest single-span, covered wooden bridge at 232 feet. The Blenheim Bridge was the only National Historic Landmark in all of Schoharie County. It was also recognized by the American Society of Civil Engineers as a major, innovative feat of engineering for its era. In addition to the bridge’s unique historic value, it was the centerpiece of Blenheim’s community identity. The covered bridge remains a symbol of the town, an emblem on the official town seal, and a recognized icon in the region. The loss of the bridge represents a cultural, spiritual, and economic loss for the town of Blenheim.

DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this project is to create a replica of the Blenheim Bridge. Doing so will entail raising funds for the cost of replacement materials and hiring a professional engineering firm or contractor with experience in authentic restoration of covered

bridges to design and build the replica. As part of this process, conceptual drawings will be used to seek public comment on the desirability of replacing the bridge, as well as location, design, and potential enhancements to the reconstructed bridge. The town will seek public and private funding sources.

The replacement bridge will incorporate vital components from the original bridge construction in order to qualify for historic designation. As reference, Blenheim has access to the detailed blueprints of the bridge structure, as well as the original tools and workbench of Nicholas Powers, the engineer who designed and built the bridge in 1855. Blenheim has also recovered substantial components of the original bridge, some of which might be incorporated into the replica. Other pieces may be exhibited in Blenheim’s School House Museum and/or in the proposed Community Cultural Center.

Construction of a new bridge offers the opportunity for an enhancement that will benefit the community, such as improved public access via a new location, a safe walkway from the west to east side of town, and a bike path. The reconstructed bridge will provide a unique location for hosting community events, such as a Bridge Art Walk, and will restore the primary draw for tourism in Blenheim.

ACTION STEPS:

- Resolve questions of bridge ownership with Schoharie County.
- Recover original components of the Blenheim Bridge from Schoharie Creek bed.
- Propose preliminary plans to the community-at-large for public comment.
- Coordinate fundraising for restoration efforts; select appropriate local nonprofit organization to accept donations, such as RARE or the Schoharie County Historical Association.
- Pursue revitalization of the Blenheim Bridge Historical Association.
- Establish detailed scope of work for reconstruction/design, including community enhancements, mitigation issues, and site planning considerations.
- Obtain bids on and hire a firm/contractor to propose conceptual designs for construction of a replica bridge. Recruit contractor(s) with experience in constructing historically authentic covered bridges.





PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:

Estimates provided to the town by an engineering firm

\$1.5 million-\$4 million



POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND PARTNERS:

- Architecture for Humanity
- Carle Kopecky, Executive Director of Old Stone Fort in Schoharie, NY
- Community Development Block Grants
- Contractors specializing in authentic covered bridge reconstruction
- Cracker Barrel Old Country Store Foundation
- Ford Motor Company Fund
- National Park Service, National Center for Preservation Technology and Training
- National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places
- National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges
- National Trust for Historic Preservation

- New York State Covered Bridge Society
- New York Historical Society
- New York State Historic Preservation Office
- Northeast Covered Bridge Society
- Preservation League of New York State
- Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- Schoharie County
- Schoharie County Department of Tourism
- Schoharie County Historical Society
- Tourism Cares

FEASIBILITY: MODERATE

Implementation Timeframe: Immediate (Search & Recovery) - 18 months



BRIDGE SCHOOL HOUSE MUSEUM RESTORATION

PROJECT CHAMPION: CAROLE OLSEN
ANNE MATTICE-STRAUCH



BACKGROUND:

The Bridge School House Museum (Lower Village or Bridge School House, No. 3) is a significant cultural resource for Blenheim residents. It functioned as a schoolhouse from the early 1800s until 1949, when it closed with the establishment of the Gilboa-Conesville centralized school district. It was one of ten one-room schoolhouses in Blenheim and is the only schoolhouse remaining on its original site in all of Schoharie County. In 1958, the schoolhouse was acquired by the town and turned into the Blenheim Firehouse/Town Hall. At that time, a shed was added to the building for storage of town equipment. When the firehouse was relocated, the School House Museum was created and has been used ever since, primarily for storage of town artifacts and public access on special occasions.

Floodwaters entered the Bridge School House Museum during Tropical Storm Irene in August, 2011, and damaged the 1958 addition. During the initial phase of Blenheim's disaster response, the town decided that the addition should be removed instead of being repaired because of the level of damage. The bottom half of the original schoolhouse wall was gutted up to 4 feet high as part of mold remediation efforts. Concerns remain that mold from the addition will affect the original schoolhouse, however, removal of the addition and repair of the School House is currently delayed until funding and mitigation issues are resolved.

DESCRIPTION:

This project focuses on restoring the Blenheim Bridge School House to its original historic state prior to 1958, which will require demolition of the 1958 addition. The intent of this project is to restore the schoolhouse as a community resource for local residents to access their own heritage and draw tourists to the school. Museum displays and other forms of historical interpretation will present the cultural history of Blenheim and will include farming tools, blacksmith tools, general store ledgers, and historic photos. Programs will be developed for the schoolhouse to allow further public access to this resource, including living history exhibits and use by local schools for periodic classes. The Bridge School House Museum also has potential to be integrated as an anchoring structure in the design for a proposed Bridge Park.

The community is also pursuing the revitalization of the Blenheim Bridge Historical Association as part of this project and as an ongoing way to support preservation and enhancement of the community's connection with its heritage. As conceived in this project, a revitalized historical association will bear responsibility for maintaining the archives and museum collection, pursuing further acquisitions, and soliciting donations to preserve local family legacies, raising funds, and planning and producing educational or other special programming for the museum.

"HELP PROTECT THE OLDER BUILDINGS OF THIS TOWNSHIP TO ENSURE THE LASTING HISTORY OF OUR LAND"

ACTION STEPS:

- Assess mold damage to the Bridge School House Museum and pursue appropriate steps for mitigation
- Assess the condition of museum artifacts
- Evaluate the current location of the schoolhouse within the 100 year floodplain; determine whether mitigation or relocation is necessary to protect it as a historical asset
- Demolish the addition
- Apply for historic designation for the schoolhouse
- Pursue revitalization of the Blenheim Bridge Historical Association
- Research and gather historic documentation to assist with restoration plan
- Develop a plan and design for restoration of the museum to pre-1958 state
- Repair damage to the schoolhouse
- Staff the museum as needed
- Develop programming for the restored Bridge School House Museum
- Plan a grand re-opening of the museum





POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND PARTNERS:

- American Association of Museums, Museum Assessment Program
- Carle Kopecky, Executive Director of Old Stone Fort in Schoharie, NY
- Caterpillar Foundation
- Community Development Block Grant
- Community Museum Project
- Country School Association of America
- Costume Society of America, Small Museum's Collection Care Grant
- Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors
- Emerson Charitable Trust
- Getty Foundation
- Gladys and Roland Harriman Foundation
- Institute of Museum and Library Services
- Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation
- National Endowment for the Humanities, America's Historical and Cultural Organizations
- National Endowment for the Humanities, Preservation Assistance Grants
- National Park Service, National Center for Preservation Technology and Training
- National Park Service, Save Our History Grant Program
- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- New York Historical Society
- New York Main Street Program
- New York State Historic Preservation Office
- New York State Rural Area Revitalization Program (RARP)

PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:

Demolition/disposal of addition	\$7,500- 10,000
Repairs to the Bridge School House	
Museum	\$15,000
Restoration and wet flood-proofing	\$25,000
Relocate electrical and mechanical above flood elevation	\$15,000
Commission historic architectural elements (period details)	\$10,000
Contingency fees at 10%	\$7,500
TOTAL	\$82,500

FEASIBILITY: HIGH

Implementation Timeframe: Immediate -1 year







(BLENHEIM HISTORY, 1710-1991; FANCHON DEWELL CORNELL)

"EDUCATION AND AMUSEMENTS WERE MUCH DIFFERENT THAN TODAY. ONE-ROOM SCHOOLS TOTALED 13 IN 1866, AT WHICH TIME THERE WERE 448 PUPILS ENROLLED. THE FIRST SCHOOLS WERE BUILT OF LOGS AND WERE VERY CRUDE. IN 1894, TEACHERS RECEIVED \$3 OR \$4 PER WEEK."

"CHILDREN WERE TOLD HOW THE TEACHER WOULD TEACH EACH GROUP IN THE SCHOOL HOUSE FOR ONLY TEN TO FIFTEEN MINUTES AT A TIME. SHE WOULD THEN MOVE TO ANOTHER GROUP OF CHILDREN IN ANOTHER GRADE AND TEACH THEM FOR TEN MINUTES. THIS IS HOW SHE WAS ABLE TO TEACH FROM ONE TO EIGHT GRADES AT A TIME IN THE ONE ROOM SCHOOL HOUSE.....THE LOWER GRADES LISTENED TO HER TEACHING THE UPPER GRADES AND IN THIS WAY LEARNED A GREAT DEAL."

AND/OR -

"ROBERT SCHAFER REMEMBERS THE STORY HIS FATHER TOLD HIM ABOUT ATTENDING A ONE ROOM SCHOOL HOUSE. THERE USED TO BE A ROW OF NAILS ALL ALONG THE SCHOOL HOUSE WALL FOR THE GIRLS TO HANG THEIR STIFFLY STARCHED SUN BONNETS ON. HIS DAD WET THEM ALL IN THE WATER PAIL AND HUNG THEM BACK UP. HIS FRIEND, WEST HAVERLY, TATTLED ON HIM AND THE TEACHER GAVE WEST A LICKING FOR BEING A TATTLE TALE!"

BLenheim PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

PROJECT CHAMPION: JAMES AITKEN, JILL ZICHICHI



BACKGROUND:

Blenheim’s scenic beauty, access to outdoor recreation, and location within a wealth of state forest lands are highly valued by the community. The flooding from Tropical Storm Irene damaged two primary parks and recreational sites in Blenheim. One newly constructed park was situated behind Town Hall, offering picnic tables, a pavilion, and community-wide access to the creek. The second, Bridge Park, the most active community open space area within the hamlet, lost its primary anchor, Blenheim Bridge, and the nearby Bridge School House Museum suffered extensive damage. The park site itself was a commonly used outdoor gathering space for Blenheim community events.

DESCRIPTION:

This project will entail the development of a parks and trails system in the Town of Blenheim to take advantage of and weave together the creekside, historic sites, and outdoor community gathering spaces. The primary goal is to create a series of connected trails and parks that will allow residents and visitors alike to enjoy and experience the scenic beauty of the area. The project will develop in phases, beginning with the restoration of local parks and culminating in a Blenheim Parks and Recreation Plan that maps out an integrated system of parks and trails. This plan will address a range of community ideas that

surfaced during the recovery visioning process. Ideas included developing a loop trail along and across Schoharie Creek, enhancing options for creek-side activities, and integrating connections to regional parks and trails, such as the Long Path and Mine Kill State Park. A historic, educational, and recreational Creek Walk will connect points of interest such as the restored Blenheim Bridge, the old Mill Site, the North Blenheim Historic District, a proposed Community Cultural Center, and Town Hall.

The community indicated strong interest in the creation of outdoor gathering spaces with the capability of staging community events, such as a Farmers and Artisans Market, community festivals, outdoor movies, or square dancing. An “agri-tourism trail” will present a unique opportunity that is rooted in Blenheim’s rich agricultural history, wherein partnerships formed with existing farms will allow pedestrians to walk along working farms at designated access points.

Preceding full development of a master plan, the project may be initiated in smaller phases involving volunteer or local resources to focus on design and construction of a few specific parks and trails. This phasing approach will allow the community to quickly regain valuable outdoor gathering spaces for community events and leisure activities, while acknowledging the ultimate need for a system-wide design.

“NATURAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT ALONG CREEK AND A GATHERING AREA TIED IN WITH TRAILS AND PICNIC SPOTS”

ACTION STEPS:

- Restore and expand Bridge Park
- Restore the park adjacent to Town Hall, considering mitigation options and enhancements
- Study opportunities for the creation of environmental education sites along the creek
- Seek historic documentation of districts, sites, and points of interest to enhance the trails system
- Develop a detailed scope of services for professional assistance with conceptual parks and trails design
- Hire the professional assistance of a landscape architect to develop a Blenheim Parks and Recreation Plan—i.e., a master plan Establish a plan for ensuring and funding ongoing maintenance and park management
- Employ master plan to pursue grants and funding to implement components of the parks and trails system





POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND PARTNERS:

- American Hiking Society
- American Trails
- Arbor Day Foundation
- Architecture for Humanity
- Caterpillar Foundation
- Cracker Barrel Old Country Store Foundation
- Emerson Charitable Trust
- Environmental Protection Agency: Smart Growth, Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities
- Environmental Protection Fund
- Fish America Foundation
- Global Green USA
- Graham Foundation
- Great Allegheny Passage
- Home Depot Foundation
- Local colleges and universities (conceptual design and/or build services)
- Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC)
- Local landscape architects/designers
- Local landowners
- Long Path North Hiking Club
- McWane Foundation
- National Park Service, Conservation Activities by Youth Service Organizations
- National Park Service, National Trails System
- National Park Service, Land and Water Conservation Fund
- National Wildlife Refuge System
- New York Department of Environmental Conservation
- New York Department of State, Office of Communities and Waterfronts
- New York Main Street Program
- New York-New Jersey Trail Conference
- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation
- Parks & Trails New York
- Rails to Trails Conservancy, Northeast Region

PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:

Annual committee operating expenses, including travel, supplies, and educational conferences	\$2,000
Cost to develop a Blenheim Parks and Recreation Plan as a community project with help from county staff or college students	\$8,000
Typical cost of hiring a parks planning consulting firm	\$20,000
Annual cost of parks maintenance	\$6,000
TOTAL	\$36,000

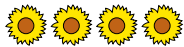
FEASIBILITY: HIGH (RESTORATION OF LOCAL PARKS)

Implementation Timeframe: 6-9 months



COMMUNITY CULTURAL CENTER

PROJECT CHAMPION: GAIL SHAFFER



BACKGROUND:

The Blenheim community lacks a central facility to serve as a meaningful gathering place for extended social interaction. Over the years, many venues for casual or formal social interaction in Blenheim, ranging from general store and restaurants to hotels and gas stations, have disappeared. The only place where such interaction now occurs is the Blenheim Post Office, which is threatened with closure. The town's municipal building that houses the post office was damaged by the flooding and may be relocated out of the floodplain. Blenheim would benefit from a new social center, separate from municipal facilities, in the historic center of town. The Blenheim community values its close connections with friends and families, and a cultural center will allow these connections to thrive, providing all residents with a local hub for information sharing and community-building.

“WE NEED A COMMUNITY CENTER FOR SOCIAL GATHERING, AS WELL AS USE IN CASE OF EMERGENCY”

DESCRIPTION:

This project seeks to establish a Community Cultural Center that is separate from the Town municipal facilities. One of the few remaining public historic structures in Blenheim is the former Presbyterian Church and its adjacent rectory. Because it is located at the center of the community and because of its unique architecture in the Greek Revival style and its history in Blenheim, this structure is considered ideal for adaptive re-use as a multi-purpose Community Cultural Center. Adapting the church or another historic structure in Blenheim will serve the dual purpose of restoring a historic structure and meeting a significant community desire. The Community Cultural Center will be a flexible space designed to meet a wide variety of community service needs.

ACTION STEPS:

- Inventory potential locations/sites and structures for a Community Cultural Center
- Determine the feasibility of acquiring the former Presbyterian Church and its rectory for re-use/adaptation
- Acquire existing structure or acquire site for building new center
- Develop a program of uses for the Community Center by identifying the range and priority of uses and related spatial requirements for a center
- Establish a plan for phasing in programs and procure program-specific funding to anchor and ensure sustainability of a cultural center
- Hire a firm/contractor to renovate and expand the church or other location as needed
- Procure materials for restoration and expansion
- Establish initial staffing needs for managing the center
- Consider and develop revenue-generating options for the center



POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND PARTNERS:

- Community Development Block Grant Program
- Cooperative Development Fund
- Home Depot, Inc.
- Kresge Foundation
- Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation
- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- New York Department of State: Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)
- New York Historical Society
- New York Main Street Program
- New York State Historic Preservation Office
- New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, Existing Facilities Program
- New York State Rural Area Revitalization Program (RARP)
- Preservation League of New York State
- Schoharie County Historical Society
- The PMI Foundation
- United States Department of Agriculture, Community Facilities Direct and Guaranteed Loan and Grant Programs
- United States National Park Service

FEASIBILITY: MODERATE

Implementation Timeline: 12-24 months



PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:

Building construction	\$500,000
Furniture/facilities equipment	\$150,000
Site improvements, parking lot and landscaping	\$200,000
Operation and maintenance cost	\$40,000
TOTAL:	\$890,000

COMMUNITY SERVICES NEEDS ASSESSMENT (COMMUNITY INTEREST PROJECT)

PROJECT CHAMPIONS: GAIL SHAFFER
ANNE MATTICE-STRAUCH



BACKGROUND:

As the smallest community in Schoharie County, Blenheim lacks critical services, particularly medical, senior, and basic transportation services. Following the flooding in August, 2011, the county eliminated the only bus serving the southern part of Schoharie County. Increasing numbers of senior citizens live in Blenheim, a medically underserved area, and have limited access to regional medical services. A satellite health clinic for primary care once was located in the former rectory of the Presbyterian Church, however, this clinic was terminated because of the cost of maintaining the facility. Public input from the Blenheim community meeting on January 26, 2012, indicated that the residents, desire to have expanded access to these kinds of critical services to have.

DESCRIPTION:

This project seeks to restore critical services to the community, whether by bringing them directly to the town or by facilitating residents' ability to easily access such services at a regional level. A comprehensive survey of local health care, emergency services, and senior and transportation needs will be conducted

to determine existing levels of demand, ability of the community to sustain services locally, and best ways to creatively and effectively meet a variety of needs. Depending on the responses to this survey, the potential exists for local job creation with opportunities for visiting medical staff or satellite clinics, development of local transportation services, and the establishment of a community services coordinator position. If established, a coordinator will be responsible for collaborating with the county to bolster the town's relationship with the county and to ensure that Blenheim's community service needs are well-represented at that level.

This community interest project has a potential connection to the recovery project for creating a Community Cultural Center, which could provide a location to house certain social or medical services provided locally and/or to provide office space for a community services coordinator. A community services coordinator will also be expected to maintain communication with the proposed housing and resources coordinator.

"COUNTY SUPPORT FOR SMALLER TOWNS"

ACTION STEPS:

- Identify existing local services, such as the local food pantry
- Develop and conduct a Community Services Needs Assessment that identifies the greatest needs and level of demand for medical, transportation, and senior needs among others
- Identify regional options and services that offer support for Blenheim residents
- Select a local representative and/or establish a community services coordinator position to link regional and county level services with Blenheim residents and to maintain awareness of and access to resources
- Establish a location for coordination of medical, transportation, and senior services, with the Community Cultural Center as one option





POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND PARTNERS:

- American Association of Retired People (AARP)
- Bassett Healthcare Network
- Community Development Block Grants
- Cracker Barrel Old Country Store Foundation
- Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Community Services
- Emerson Charitable Trust
- Healthcare Association of New York State
- New York State Department of State: Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)
- New York State Office of Community Renewal: Rural Area Revitalization Program (RARP)
- Price Chopper's Golub Foundation
- Rural Assistance Center
- Rural Health Education Network (RHENDOMS, includes Schoharie County)
- Rural Nurse Organization
- Schoharie County
- William S. Paley Foundation

FEASIBILITY: HIGH

Implementation Timeframe: 4 months

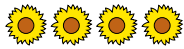


PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATES:

Development, production, and administration of needs survey	\$4,000
Part-time coordinator position: 20 hours per week	\$15,000 per year
TOTAL	\$19,000

HOUSING AND RESOURCES COORDINATOR

PROJECT CHAMPION: ANNE MATTICE-STRAUCH



BACKGROUND:

At the January 26, 2012, Blenheim LTCR public meeting, community members identified the highest need as ensuring housing aid to assist local homeowners to rebuild and rehabilitate damaged housing. They also identified funding gaps as one of the biggest issues for households, as well as the difficulty of accessing information about how to minimize these funding gaps and how to harness available resources. Approximately 30 homes in Blenheim suffered damage from flooding; ten or more households are known to be rebuilding and in need of support to access additional resources. Long-term housing issues also identified during this process included senior housing needs and a desire to expand general housing options within the community, such as increasing the supply of rental properties and number of building lots out of the floodplain.

DESCRIPTION:

This project seeks to establish a local, part-time Housing and Resources Coordinator position that will assist homeowners in finding the resources needed for their damaged residential properties. The coordinator will maintain a connection between Blenheim residents who are considering rehabilitating their homes and a wide variety of local, regional, and state resources. The coordinator will also identify and develop longer-term housing and resource needs within the community.

Among other responsibilities, the coordinator will maintain a database of Blenheim residents who wish to or who are currently rehabilitating their homes, the status of their rebuilding efforts, and the resources and volunteers that are needed. The coordinator will use this database to ensure a connection of Blenheim residents with regional and other resources. In addition, the Housing and Resources Coordinator will maintain connections/partnerships with contacts in regional organizations and manage an informational library related to housing funding, rehabilitation resources, and technical information regarding mitigation best practices to allow local residents to access such resources at will.

The Housing and Resources Coordinator may transform into a longer-term role to address specific needs related to expanding housing options in the area and to connect residents with ongoing housing needs, such as senior housing and rental options. The community also identified a need for housing options to attract new residents, planned development guidelines, and possibly acquiring building lots for the town out of the floodplain. In addition, the Housing and Resources Coordinator will maintain ongoing information related to the benefits and responsibilities of being on the registry within the North Blenheim Historic District.

“ECONOMIC HELP FOR FLOOD RECOVERY & RESTORATION - THE PEOPLE THAT WANT TO COME BACK SHOULD BE ABLE TO”

ACTION STEPS:

- Obtain most recent inventory of current homeowners' needs
- Identify interim way to manage inventory
- Create detailed short- and long-term job description
- Consider integrating this position part of the job of the economic development position described in the project titled Economic Development plan.
- Pursue funding





PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:

Housing and Resources Coordinator
position, part-time at

\$16.50/hr:
\$8,000 annually



POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

- AmeriCorps VISTA
- Community Development Block Grant Program
- Delaware Opportunities
- National Register of Historic Places
- New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal
- NYS Homes and Community Renewal, Division of Housing and Community Renewal: Access to Home Program
- NYS Homes and Community Renewal / Office of Community Renewal: Neighborhood Preservation Program
- New York Main Street Program
- Rural Area Revitalization Effort (R.A.R.E.)
- Schoharie Area Long Term Recovery (SALT)
- Schoharie County Habitat for Humanity
- Schoharie County Rural Preservation
- The Mark Project
- U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Home Investment Partnerships Program
- Western Catskills Community Revitalization Council, Inc.

FEASIBILITY: HIGH

Implementation Timeframe: 3-12 months







Economic Development Recovery Projects

In the wake of disaster, economic recovery takes time, patience, and creativity. After attending to concerns of health and safety, it's the responsibility of local elected officials, business leaders, economic developers and members of the community to decide how to rebuild their community.

The Town of Blenheim has experienced a gradual economic decline for the last several years. However, members of the community view the recovery as a turning point from which to organize a serious effort at restoring the community's economy onto a path for growth and prosperity. To that end, the community has developed a series of projects designed to support home-based businesses, agriculture, and light-industrial operations. The community also wants to create a strategy to attract new businesses, including the eventual development of a small business incubator project.

The expansion of the existing tourism and visitor-based economy is another important part of the recovery plan. The community recognizes that it has a wealth of natural, historic, and scenic assets that can be marketed to increase tourism.

Finally, the community's central vision is the restoration of the town center of North Blenheim as a commercial, recreational and cultural center. The town center or Main Street project effectively ties together the economic recovery efforts with the local historic district and creates a stronger identity for the community.

Creating a sustainable, growing economy by using available resources and by developing assets has become the mission of a highly committed group of local residents who have developed the following projects.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

PROJECT CHAMPION: JAMES AITKEN



BACKGROUND

The Town of Blenheim has experienced a slow decline in local economic activity through loss of local jobs and business establishments. The recent flooding event exacerbated economic hardships for the community because, in addition to homes that were significantly damaged or destroyed, the few remaining retail merchants in town suffered significant flood damage and have struggled to re-open.

The community is simultaneously faced with the need to recover from a 500-year flood event and the need to revitalize a declining rural economy. This disaster event has created unique opportunities to revitalize the town's economic base. No longer satisfied with returning to levels of business activity that existed before the storm, the community has begun to work together to develop programs that will restore and enhance the Blenheim economy and result in job creation and local services to improve the community's quality of life.

DESCRIPTION

This project will organize a group of community stakeholders to guide the creation of an Economic Development Plan. Creating an Economic Development Plan will have three primary components:

1. Develop a full assessment of the town's current economic condition, both locally and in the context of the surrounding county markets.
2. Commission an economic analysis of the community that will inform the following:
 - Plan for assisting and retaining local business affected by the flood
 - Plan for identifying new and existing economic opportunities and resources
 - A strategy for attracting new businesses
3. Create a local, part-time economic development administrator position to provide coordination and facilitation of economic planning and development.

An Economic Development Plan will provide a framework for a long-term effort to sustain and grow the local economy. The plan and a working committee will provide a continuing focus on business development and economic revitalization and will be supported by a part-time economic development administrator.

"WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE: FOOD, GAS STATION, BAR, CAFÉ, COUNTRY STORE, ANTIQUES STORES, BED & BREAKFAST WITH A RESTAURANT"

ACTION STEPS

- Develop a mission statement and goals and establish an economic development committee with members to be appointed by the Town Board
- Undertake, with available technical assistance, a detailed assessment of Blenheim's current economic situation
- Develop a proposal for the role and duties of a professional staff person
- Develop a request for proposals for a consulting organization to assist the community in creating an Economic Development Plan and strategy





PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE

Economic development committee expenses, travel , supplies, and conferences	\$1,500
Cost of consultant to facilitate plan development	\$40,000
Part time Economic development administrator salary	\$35,000
Annual cost of office space, equipment and supplies	\$5,000
TOTAL	\$81,500

POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND PARTNERS

- Schoharie County Chamber of Commerce
- Department of Housing and Urban Development CDBG
- New York Main Street Program
- US DOC Economic Development Administration
- USDA Rural Development
- Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency
- Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council

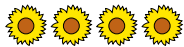
FEASIBILITY: HIGH

Implementation Timeframe: 6-8 months



BLenheim FARMERS AND ARTISANS MARKET (COMMUNITY INTEREST PROJECT)

PROJECT CHAMPION: LIZ ARRANDALE
CAROLEE RUSSELL



BACKGROUND:

Over the last several decades, Blenheim has undergone a slow decline specifically in loss of jobs and quality of life because of economic instability. Businesses closed over time, reducing the available job market and limiting opportunities for local tourism. The devastation caused by Tropical Storm Irene severely exacerbated the town's already precarious economic position. One aspect of the town's economic development strategy will be to promote local, homegrown events as a way to celebrate community and, over time, to attract regional visitors to Blenheim. A Farmers and Artisans Market will foster a climate in the community to support tourism and provide an outlet for increasing farm income of smaller producers and of local artisans. In addition, the Market will strengthen the local economy by establishing selling and spending opportunities within Blenheim.

DESCRIPTION:

This project envisions a local Farmers and Artisans Market to stimulate small business growth and to encourage the talents and abilities of local townspeople in taking advantage of the rich farmland in the Blenheim area. The short-term goal of this project is to offer one or two market events in the summer of 2012, in July or August, to take place

when the sweet corn ripens. In the long term, the Blenheim Farmers and Artisans Market is intended to become an ongoing seasonal event, taking place every weekend from June to November.

The Blenheim area is rich with artists and "green" cottage industries that will help to establish a diversified and profit-making artisans' market. A wide range of local, niche products will contribute to a unique and colorful market setting that includes artisanal cheeses, honey, maple syrup, organic meats, produce, dried flowers, potted plants, goats' milk soap, pottery, paintings, weavings, and furniture. In addition to hosting a wide range of local craft, artisan, and agricultural vendors, a Blenheim Farmers and Artisans Market will encourage a lively market atmosphere by including food vendors, entertainment such as local musicians and square dancers, and craft demonstrations by local artisans. Once the Blenheim Farmers and Artisans Market is fully established as an ongoing event, the organizing committee intends to investigate the concept of adapting the seasonal, outdoor Farmers and Artisans Market into a full-time grocery cooperative in an indoor venue to further serve community needs.

At community meetings, residents indicated their appreciation of the strong sense of community

in Blenheim. A Farmers and Artisans Market will provide an ongoing cultural and social event for the community, further strengthening community ties and traditions and generating energy around these kinds of events.

ACTION STEPS:

- Organize event planning body/association
- Establish dates for summer 2012
- Set summer 2012 location
- Identify regulations and permitting requirements
- Develop vendor applications and obtain commitments from vendors
- Seek technical assistance from local organizations, resources, and regional farmers' markets
- Promote summer 2012 Farmers and Artisans Market event
- Plan logistical aspects: parking, transportation options, electrical hookup, potable water, restrooms
- Develop a start-up budget and obtain funding for ongoing market
- Investigate the concept of adapting the market into a full-time grocery cooperative





PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE FOR START UP:

Part-time market manager (June-November)	\$15,000
Market assistant	\$4,000
Market promotion	\$3,600
Licensing and insurance	\$3,500
Equipment and supplies	\$1,000
Equipment storage	\$600
TOTAL	\$27,700

POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND PARTNERS:

- Cooperative Development Foundation
- Cornell University Cooperative Extension, Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
- Farmers Market Coalition
- Farmers Market Federation of New York
- Local/regional farmers market producers
- Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
- New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, Step by Step Guide for Establishing a Farmers Market Association

- New York State Department of Health, WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)
- New York State Office for the Aging, Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
- Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)
- UC Small Farm Center, Starting a New Farmers Market

FEASIBILITY: HIGH

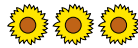
Timeframe: Immediate - 3 months





MAIN STREET BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAM

PROJECT CHAMPION: MELISSA GRAHAM



BACKGROUND

Virtually the entire hamlet of North Blenheim along Route 30 was flooded because of Tropical Storm Irene and many homes in the North Blenheim Historic District suffered extensive damage. This district boasts 25 structures, including homes, hotels, and a church, representative of the Greek Revival style of architecture. The storm also damaged businesses along Main Street which include an auto repair business, a church thrift store, Blenheim Pharmacal, Inc., and the municipal building. Recovery and maintenance of an attractive Main Street will help ensure that Blenheim residents continue to enjoy a high quality of life, give new small local businesses an appropriate environment in which to thrive, and position the town to draw on regional tourism.

DESCRIPTION

The project will establish a Main Street revitalization team to guide and manage the implementation of Main Street beautification efforts. First, the project aims to engage the community and local businesses in developing small projects that will make a fast, visible impact on the recovery of an attractive Main

“BEAUTIFY DOWNTOWN BLENHEIM TO ATTRACT BUSINESS”

Street. The team will work with different entities to develop a Main Street Beautification Program that presents a unified concept and design for the street. In doing so, it could mean hiring a landscape architect or planning firm or local university planning students to develop a conceptual design for Main Street. Once preliminary conceptual drawings are completed, the town will seek funding for Main Street improvements.

ACTION STEPS

- Establish a Main Street beautification team
- Coordinate volunteer-based events to undertake small revitalization projects to assist local home owners and businesses along Route 30
- Obtain a conceptual plan for Main Street improvements in conjunction with the Main Street Lighting, Sidewalks, and Landscape Project
- Seek and secure funding
- Promote a consistent Main Street character through banners, hanging baskets, and signage
- Identify or create an organization with the capacity to maintain the landscape elements of the common space





PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE

Landscaping plan	\$4,000
Landscaping materials	\$7,000
Street trees	\$8,000
Banners or flags	\$2,000
Walking paths	\$18,000
Planters and benches	\$4,000
TOTAL	\$45,000

POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND PARTNERS

- New York Main Street Program
- New York State Development, Urban and Commercial Development Program
- Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency
- Schoharie County Chamber of Commerce
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development Program
- U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration
- The American Institute of Architects Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT)Program
- University of Albany, SUNY, School of Urban and Regional Planning
- The National Garden Club
- Gilboa-Conesville Lions Club

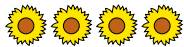
FEASIBILITY: HIGH

Implementation Timeframe: 1-4 months



SMALL BUSINESS INCUBATOR

PROJECT CHAMPION: RENEE GRABOWSKI



BACKGROUND

The Blenheim community once enjoyed a range of local services that included general stores, hotels, restaurants, taverns, gas stations, and hardware stores. Residents indicated at public meetings that they would like to see a modest increase in the number of thriving local businesses along a restored Main Street in the hamlet. The sense of community, the small-town atmosphere, and the town's stable and affordable tax levels are considered a positive attribute for supporting these types of businesses. Residents also indicated that there are a significant number of artisans living in the township that could contribute to and benefit from a strengthened local economic network. Securing assistance to encourage the revitalization of the languishing commercial center is vital to the recovery of the Blenheim community.

DESCRIPTION

This project seeks to establish a business incubator facility and related business support network within the Blenheim town center. The purpose of the incubator will be twofold: to help small businesses that have innovative ideas but lack resources to start operations on their own and to entice small start-up businesses into the community. Businesses located in the center will be able to share costs and readily

access available business assistance services through out Schoharie County and the State of New York. This kind of business start-up center or incubator will be designed to foster the re-establishment of the business district along Route 30.

Space in the incubator will be available to local market retail and service businesses, agricultural producers, Internet-based companies, and, if space allows, potentially small manufacturing or assembly businesses. It will also provide advice and technical assistance to all varieties of businesses, will develop a small business cooperative, and will encourage new business development through workshops, mentoring opportunities, and marketing campaigns. A range of support for businesses will be provided in the facility through a small business revolving loan fund, small business assistance programs, and services that are available from Cornell Cooperative Extension Program, the Cobleskill Small Businesses Development Center, SCORE, and the Empire State Development Division for Small Businesses. The facility will also cooperate and coordinate with other business incubators in the county and the Capital Region.

“ENCOURAGE SUPPORT FOR HOME-BASED, SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS”

ACTION STEPS

- Utilize market analysis from the Economic Development Plan to determine feasibility and niche markets
- Meet with SUNY-Cobleskill Small Business Development Center and SCORE program staff and other allied agencies that are able to provide small business assistance
- Develop a formal business plan for the operation of an incubator that both fits the emerging trends in business development and local job needs of the community
- On determination of the viability of a business plan, form a not-for-profit organization and begin the process of determining exact space needs and available locations
- Market the program through all available economic development programs and public media
- Identify potential locations for the incubator
- Secure funding and formal relationships with business service providers and potential tenants
- Initiate the program to build or acquire a facility and lease space to initial tenants





POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND PARTNERS

- Appalachian Regional Commission
- CITI Foundation
- Community Development Block Grants/ States Program (USDA)
- Community Development Block Grants/ Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program (HUD)
- Community Facilities Direct and Guaranteed Loan and Grant Programs (USDA/RD)
- Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region, Inc.
- Cooperative Development Foundation
- County Chamber of Commerce
- Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency
- Home Depot Foundation
- Intermediary Re-lending Program (USDA/RD)
- Local Initiatives Support Corporation
- Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation
- National Association for the Exchange of Industrial Resources
- NYS Empire State Development: Minority and Women-Owned Business Development and Lending Program
- NYS Empire State Development: Small Business Revolving Loan Fund
- NYS Empire State Development: Urban and Community Development Program
- Partnership for Sustainable Communities (USHUD, USDOT, USEPA)
- PMI Foundation
- Rural Community Development Initiative (USDA/RD)
- State Farm Companies
- USDA, Rural Development, Rural Business-Cooperative Service: Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program (RMAP)

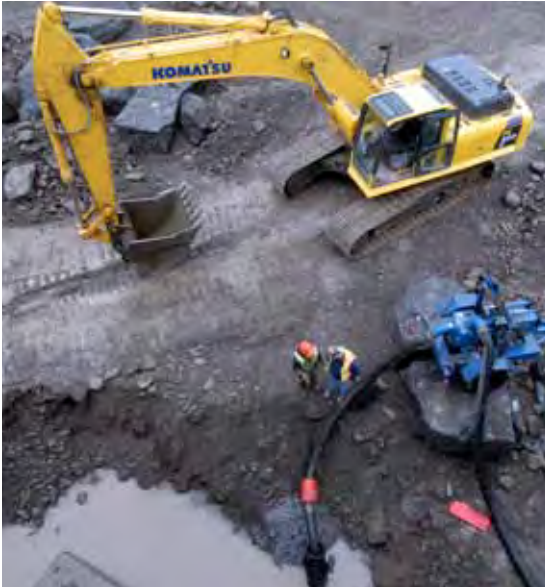
PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE

Land and building acquisition	\$500,000.00
Equipment and start up costs	\$225,000.00
Operating costs and building maintenance	\$100,000.00
TOTAL	\$825,000.00

FEASIBILITY: HIGH

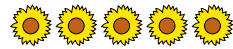
Implementation Timeframe: 12-24 months





TOWN CLEANUP

PROJECT CHAMPION: RENEE GRABOWSKI



BACKGROUND

Flooding associated with Tropical Storm Irene disrupted local agricultural operations and littered, eroded, and spread silt on thousands of acres of town land and private property. Much debris remains as an unsightly reminder of the disaster. The pastoral character and the natural beauty of the Blenheim area are prized by the community. Removing trash and debris from the valley will be a vital, highly visible sign of recovery progress and will be crucial in re-establishing the local environs and in boosting the visitor and tourism sector of the economy.

DESCRIPTION

Blenheim has traditionally been known as a place where people help each other and organize community efforts to deal with local problems. This project will build on this tradition by establishing a town cleanup campaign and will require a sustained effort for several months. Using volunteer labor, debris will be sorted and then transported to a licensed disposal facility. The remaining vegetation will be safely burned. The cleanup effort is viewed as the beginning of a long-term beautification program focused on the hamlet of North Blenheim and the land along Route 30. It is a low-cost, volunteer-based program designed to quickly remove remaining debris and to build community pride.

ACTION STEPS

- Obtain Town Board approval to sponsor volunteer clean-up days to remove debris from stream banks, assist homeowners with home and garden cleanup, and remove dead trees
- Coordinate efforts with relevant organizations and establish event schedule
- Initiate a fund-raising campaign
- Arrange cleanup logistics and safety practices.
- Find principal sponsors for program and determine insurance needs
- Advertise and promote the clean-up campaign.
- Establish a method to reward volunteers
- Publicize the community's resourcefulness, sense of pride, and restored natural scenic beauty





PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE:

Debris containers, hauling and landfill tipping fees	\$5,000
Cost of local advertising and promotional literature	\$300
Volunteer and event refreshments	\$250
T-shirts and celebration dinner	\$1,000
TOTAL	\$5,750

POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND PARTNERS

- Town of Blenheim
- Local and regional donations of funds and labor
- State and county work release programs
- Donations of refuse containers, transportation, and disposal
- Voluntary cost sharing from affected private property owners
- SALT Recovery

FEASIBILITY: HIGH

Implementation Timeframe: Immediate - 6 months



TOWN MARKETING AND TOURISM STRATEGY

PROJECT CHAMPION: MELISSA GRAHAM



BACKGROUND

The Town of Blenheim is located at the northern edge of the Catskill Mountains, in the Schoharie Valley, and is in an area of scenic state forest land, state parks, trails, campgrounds, waterfalls and nearby major reservoirs. Visitors and tourists are an important part of the local economy. The August, 2011, flooding event destroyed the Old Blenheim Covered Bridge, which was the major tourist attraction in the area. The bridge was the longest-surviving, single-span wooden covered bridge in the world. The recovery of a visitor and tourism economy requires a Town Marketing and Tourism Strategy.

DESCRIPTION

The community will develop a Town Marketing and Tourism Strategy ultimately with the help of a marketing/communications consultant. Creating a strategy will require a market analysis of tourism in the region and trends in tourism activities. An initial project

phase will be a local effort to formally identify natural, historic, and other resources that the town wishes to enhance and promote. Program coordinators or volunteers will investigate existing organizations and publications in order to take advantage of tourism marketing already in place.

The next phase will involve hiring consultants to examine existing branding in the region and the work of nearby and regional tourism councils and organizations. At the same time, the natural resources of the area will be evaluated, including trails, lakes, historic sites/structures, scenic vistas and structures. Based on that analysis, identification of targeted activities and attractions and the potential for festivals and events will be undertaken. A consultant will also help develop a communications and a branding strategy that express the specific values and amenities that the town wishes to promote as part of its image for attracting both new business and tourism.

ACTION STEPS

- Define the tourism assets of the town, including the points of interest along Schoharie Creek and historical, archaeological, ecological, and recreational resources
- Examine recreational activities that exist or could be developed in the community
- Identify agricultural tourism opportunities
- Develop ideas for a local icon that can be used by local businesses and residences to publicize and celebrate Blenheim
- Develop a plan for collaborative marketing with other existing visitor and tourism organizations.
- Develop a detailed scope of work to be conducted by a professional community marketing and branding expert
- Identify resources to fund the study, ongoing communications and advertising
- Obtain the assistance of professional community marketing and branding experts



PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE

Hiring a community marketing and branding consultant	\$12,000
Annual cost of conventional media marketing	\$3,500
One-time cost of new community signage	\$2,500
Annual cost of developing and maintaining a visitor website and social media	
Annual cost of becoming affiliated with other tourism and visitor organizations	\$3,000
TOTAL	\$23,500

POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND PARTNERS

- New York State Division of Tourism
- Schoharie County Chamber of Commerce
- US Department of Agriculture, Rural Development Program
- U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration
- New York Main Street Program
- Center for Sustainable Destinations at the National Geographic Society

FEASIBILITY: HIGH

Implementation Timeframe: 6-8 months







Next Steps and Implementation

The Blenheim Long-Term Community Recovery (LTCR) Committee and the community demonstrated, from the beginning, the strong drive and dedication needed for a long-term community recovery process to be successful. As the community moves forward, that strength and determination will be essential in seeing recovery projects through to implementation. As part of the process, the LTCR Committee engaged in a candid discussion regarding how to maintain significant momentum and energy around recovery projects developed during the recovery-planning process.

Following are recommended next steps to assist in achieving this goal:

BLENHEIM LTCR COMMITTEE

- Pursue status as advisory group to Town Board
- Continue to meet regularly to maintain momentum, implement projects, and monitor progress
- Re-visit committee structure and revise as needs evolve
- Develop regional partnerships in both public and private sectors
- Identify training opportunities for project champions, committee members, and others.
- Work with Endeavor, LA Group, and other consultants
- Schedule additional community meetings and report recovery progress to the public.
- Report progress to elected officials on a regular basis
- Conduct project and program evaluations.
- Recruit additional volunteers, particularly for grant writing and capacity-building roles.
- Celebrate success

PROJECT SUBCOMMITTEES

- Establish meeting schedule based on implementation stage of each project.
- Develop regional partnerships in both public and private sectors
- Identify training opportunities for project champions and members relevant to project development and implementation
- Recruit additional volunteers, particularly for grant writing and capacity-building roles
- Seek connections to other projects to strengthen grant proposals and project impact
- Celebrate success

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- Get involved in any way possible
- Attend meetings or offer input or insight via e-mail, phone, letter or social media
- Keep a steadfast and positive attitude
- Celebrate success

By following these recommendations and next steps, the chances for successful project development and implementation will be more likely. Community needs and priorities, however, will evolve over time and may affect the projects in this plan by requiring revision or adjustment.

Finally, recovery is a long process and obstacles may arise along the way; thus, the committee and stakeholders will need to remain optimistic through challenging circumstances. That kind of outlook will help to maintain energy and help to assure the public that recovery is occurring, despite any potential setbacks. In time, a full recovery can be realized as long as efforts remain visible to the community and its residents remain vested in the long-term community recovery process.

IDENTIFY CATALYST PROJECTS

Not all projects in the recovery plan lend themselves to immediate implementation. Initiation of any project and the length of time required for completion will be subject to multiple factors, such as legal constraints, site control, and availability of human and financial resources. It is important, therefore, that the community identify catalyst projects that are high-profile, that will attract investment, and are achievable within one to five years. These kinds of projects can pave the way for longer-term projects that will take five to fifteen years to complete. The Blenheim recovery committee will need to identify these projects and establish their priority within the overall recovery plan implementation strategy.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As with any endeavor, establishing clear roles and responsibilities is essential in achieving successful project outcomes. Certain individuals and organizations will play lead roles while others will take supporting or advisory roles. All should be clearly delineated in an organizational structure with responsibilities or tasks defined based on project requirements.







Guide and Tools

NEW YORK RESOURCE GUIDE — FEDERAL, STATE AND REGIONAL RESOURCES

The matrix of resources, entitled New York Community Recovery Resources (included as a companion DVD) that supports this document, identifies specific agencies and organizations the community can approach for potential funding or technical assistance resources to implement community recovery and revitalization projects. The Guide provides an overview of hundreds of federal, state, and regional funding sources, both public and private. In addition, each Project Development Guide (included on a separate companion CD) is paired with a project specific matrix of resources that are suggested starting points in researching potential funding sources.

All grant programs have specific eligibility requirements for applicants. Some grant programs fund only 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit organizations while others fund only governmental units such as towns or cities. Some grants are available to both types of applicants. Therefore, public-private partnerships are important to maximize funding, capacity building, and other opportunities.

Some grant programs restrict their funding to communities that meet certain eligibility criteria, such as falling within a certain geographic area or possessing certain demographic characteristics like high poverty or unemployment rates. Meeting the specified program criteria could result in special designations that would allow the community to participate in programs and apply for grant funding unavailable to communities that do not meet the program criteria. Some designations specifically target more urban areas for assistance, while others specifically target rural areas.

IMPORTANT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND FUNDING PARTNERS

Forming alliances and partnerships can increase grant-writing and project implementation success. Partnerships, especially public-private partnerships, can maximize funding, capacity building, and other opportunities. Alliances and partnerships can exist between two communities and/or communities and other organizations. For example, if two or more adjacent communities submit an application to fund a medical center, they will compete against each other. Conversely, if they submit an application together for one shared facility, they will have a stronger application, less competition, and may even receive more funds. Programs that fund economic development activities often favor a regional approach to overcome challenges. A community and its recovery committee or nonprofit organization may partner with other local, regional, and statewide organizations to build capacity or develop, fund, and implement recovery strategies and projects.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCILS

New York State's Regional Economic Development Councils (EDC) were created in 2011 to promote the local development and coordination of economic development initiatives. The councils represent the ten regions across the state, including the Capital region, Central New York, Finger Lakes, Hudson Valley, Long Island, Mohawk Valley, New York City, North Country, Southern Tier, and Western New York. Operating as public-private partnerships, the organizations are composed of representatives from the economic development sectors, including local

experts and stakeholders from business, academia, local government and non-governmental entities. Schoharie County is in the Mohawk Valley EDC.

The Councils serve two major purposes. Each council collaboratively develops long-term strategic plans to spur local and regional growth as well as identifying priority projects and vision implementation strategies. The Councils also facilitate the implementation of the New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) process, which provides a single access point to distribute multiple state funding resources that support economic development goals through a streamlined process. The Councils review and rank each application within their region submitted through the CFA process according to endorsement standards, particularly in consideration of projects' alignment with regional strategic plans, before final state agency review.

REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCILS

New York's Regional Planning Councils (RPC) are established under Articles 5-G and 12-B of the NYS General Municipal Law authorizing municipalities to create regional or metropolitan planning boards and joint-purpose municipal corporations. The planning councils coordinate comprehensive planning initiatives within regions to efficiently promote community and economic development. Councils conduct studies on regional needs assessments, establish intergovernmental coordination strategies, and develop planning initiatives relating to a range of issues that cross local jurisdictional borders, including, infrastructure, economic and environmental issues. The entities assist applicants applying for federal grants. Although Councils are no longer required

to review the regional impacts of federal funding proposals, currently some of these organizations present project priority lists ranked by their impacts on regional planning strategies to federal funding agencies.

Regional Planning Councils serve as the state's designated Economic Development Districts, which are local planning entities designated by the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration. Some Councils serve as local development districts for other federal agencies, including the Appalachian Regional Commission, which reviews locally-initiated projects for annual funding opportunities. Schoharie County is in the Southern Tier East RPC, which serves as the liaison to the Appalachian Regional Commission.

501(C)(3) CHARITABLE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

A 501(c)(3) refers to a charitable nonprofit organization that is incorporated in a state and designated by the Internal Revenue Service as a charitable entity. Nonprofits do not pay federal taxes on programs and services related to their charitable mission. Nonprofit missions can include aid to vulnerable populations; construction, erection and/or maintenance of historic buildings, monuments, or works; reducing the burdens of government; community development; youth programs; and other charitable purposes. Many grant programs offer funding only to 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofits. A community's recovery committee may decide to incorporate as a charitable nonprofit and partner with the local government to strengthen the recovery effort and opportunities. Depending on the recovery goals and future development

plans, the community may choose to structure its charitable nonprofit as a certain type of community service or development organization. These types of organizations are described below.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS

Community Development Corporations (CDCs) are community-established organizations that anchor local capital through residential and commercial development, ranging from affordable housing to shopping centers and businesses.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS

Local Development Corporations (LDCs) promote economic development for local governments by financing and managing development projects. As private, non-profit corporations, these organizations lack the statutory and constitutional provisions required in local government transactions, thereby expanding communities' financing tools to spur economic development. LDCs are authorized to finance a range of local government projects, including the development, management, and financing of industrial and manufacturing facilities. They can also award grants and loans, issue bonds, and assume debt to support economic development activity.

COMMUNITY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) earn designation through the federal HOME program and serve as a means to finance housing projects. A CHDO generally is defined as a nonprofit, community-based community service organization

that develops affordable housing in the low-income community it serves.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) earn designation from the U.S. Treasury Department. A CDFI is a private-sector financial institution that focuses on personal lending and business development efforts in local communities. They are primarily funding sources to support small business growth and development. CDFIs can be an important source to use of New Market Tax Credits to finance economic development efforts.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

Industrial Development Agencies (IDAs) are public-benefit corporations established by a special act of the State Legislature at the request of a sponsoring municipality. The purpose of the entities is to promote local economic development through the provision of incentives and tools for business attraction and expansion. IDAs have the authority to purchase, sell or lease property and provide tax exempt financing for projects. Each county has an IDA as well as several communities in the state.

CERTIFIED DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS

Certified Development Corporations earn their designation from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and offer any form of SBA loan assistance. Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) are partnerships primarily between the government and colleges to provide educational

services for small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs.

HOUSING RESOURCE CENTERS

Housing Resource Centers (HRCs) are central points for technical assistance and a resource for stimulating new housing construction as well as rehabilitation. HRCs help existing and potential homeowners to locate resources to repair, build, or purchase a home. A community or committee should explore all options to determine the best vehicle to develop its recovery strategies and projects. It may choose to structure as, or partner with, one of the community development organization types. Alternatively, the community or committee may elect to incorporate as a charitable nonprofit corporation but not structure it specifically as one of these organizations, based on what best meets the needs and goals of the community for the both its recovery and future development.

AGENCIES, UNIVERSITIES, AND ASSOCIATIONS

State agencies, universities, and associations provide a broad range of financial and other support to communities and organizations of interest to them. They are an excellent resource for capacity building support, technical assistance, studies and projections, and sometimes even funding.

This is by no means a comprehensive list but it does illustrate that numerous agencies and organizations can partner with communities to gain needed support during the recovery process.







Letters of Support



**Town of Blenheim
1748 State Route 30
PO Box 176
North Blenheim, New York 12131**

Supervisor Robert H. Mann, Jr.

Don Airey, Chairman
Long Term Community Recovery Steering Committee
PO Box 439
Richmondville, NY

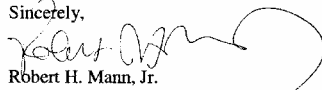
Dear Mr. Airey,

On behalf of the Town of Blenheim I would like to express our full support for the long term recovery effort. The damages inflicted on our small community during hurricane Irene were devastating and nearly unimaginable. Many buildings and homes were destroyed, highways were left impassible and our beloved icon and most famous historical landmark, the Blenheim covered bridge was reduced to pieces scattered over the fields and debris piles for miles downstream. As I recall the days immediately after Irene, I remember thinking to myself, how or will we ever recover from this.

Now, several months later I can confidently answer that question. Blenheim will recover, and we will do it by working together as one community and following a well-crafted long term recovery plan toward a common vision. The long term recovery steering committee has volunteered numerous hours to their task, they have involved the entire community in their planning, and they have created that vision.

As both a resident and active participant in the recovery effort I look forward to the challenge of turning that vision into a reality. I welcome a revitalized community with an engaged citizenry all working together to create new opportunities that will restore our sense of pride and offer hope for a bright future. It is not only my pleasure to offer support for such a worthy endeavor, but instead it is an honor and my privilege to do so.

Sincerely,


Robert H. Mann, Jr.
Town of Blenheim Supervisor



**518-827-6115
Town Clerk - Robin Alley**

Schoharie County Planning & Development Agency

276 Main Street, Suite 2 -
PO Box 396
Schoharie, NY 12157
(518) 295-8770 / Fax (518) 295-8788



Alicia A. Terry
Director

April 20, 2012

Blenheim LTCR Committee
Town of Blenheim
P. O. Box 176
North Blenheim, New York 12131

Re: Town of Blenheim, New York Long Term Community Recovery

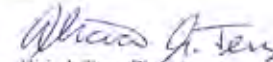
Dear Friends:

I write in support of the exceptional efforts made by the Blenheim, New York Long Term Community Recovery Committee's efforts to rebuild their community. It has almost been eight (8) months since Tropical Storms Irene and Lee battered the Schoharie Valley and devastated the Town of Blenheim, New York. Despite these catastrophic damages caused by Irene and Lee, the Blenheim community has come together and dedicated itself to revitalization and protecting the natural resources, in addition to preserving its historical heritage of their Town.

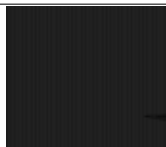
I have witnessed first hand the tireless hard work that continues to be implemented by the Long Term Community Recovery Committee. These dedicated individuals have cooperatively joined together to revitalize, re-energize, and rebuild the Town of Blenheim. These committed community members continue to volunteer to clean up the area, rebuild the historic Blenheim Covered Bridge, and revitalize their small town. As Schoharie County's Director of Planning and Development, I admire every effort made to keep each individual hamlet a vital and economically sound part of our wonderful County.

In closing, I believe as the Town of Blenheim begins this endeavor of implementing the goals and visions that were established in their Long Term Community Recovery Plan, they will reap huge benefits to the community in the upcoming years.

Sincerely,


Alicia A. Terry, Director
Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency





PETER D. LOPEZ
Assemblyman, 127th A.D.

Chenango, Columbia, Delaware,
Greene, Otsego, Schoharie and
Ulster Counties

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER
Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy Task Force

COMMITTEES
Agriculture
Environmental Conservation
Social Services
Transportation

MEMBER
Legislative Commission on
Toxic Substances and Hazardous Waste

April 17, 2012

Bob Mann, Supervisor
Town of Blenheim
2123 State Route 30
N. Blenheim, NY 12131

Dear Supervisor Mann,

This letter is provided to offer my wholehearted support for the long term recovery plan being developed for the Town of Blenheim.

As the first hamlet located downstream of the Gilboa Dam and New York Power Authority site, the people of Blenheim have endured much hardship as ground zero in the wake of Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. Your collective effort in the face of this tragedy continues to demonstrate your endurance and devotion to the community.

Through the work of many, including your office- and the many area volunteers- I commend the Blenheim Long Term Recovery efforts being taken to ensure a successful rebirth of our homes, farms, and businesses. I continue to offer my steadfast support of your efforts and those of the community as you work to ensure a prosperous future for Blenheim.

I look forward to our continued partnership. Best wishes for continued success.

Sincerely,

Peter D. Lopez
Assemblyman, 127th District

PL//wg

ALBANY OFFICE: Room 429, Legislative Office Building, Albany, New York 12248 * 518-455-5363, FAX 518-455-5856
DISTRICT OFFICES: 45 Five Mile Woods Road, Suite 3, Catskill, New York 12414 * 518-943-1371, FAX 518-943-0223
21 Liberty Street, Sidney, New York 13838 * 607-563-2919
113 Park Place, Suite 4, Schoharie, New York 12157 * 518-295-7250

430 CAPITOL
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247
(518) 495-3131

Q 41 S. MAIN STREET
ONEONTA, NEW YORK 13820
(607) 432-9324

E-MAIL
SEWARD@NYSenate.GOV

WEBSITE
SEWARD.NYSenate.GOV

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



JAMES L. SEWARD
SENATOR, 51ST DISTRICT
April 18, 2012

ASSISTANT MAJORITY LEADER ON
CONFERENCE OPERATIONS

CHAIRMAN
INSURANCE COMMITTEE

COMMITTEES

RULES
FINANCE
EDUCATION
HIGHER EDUCATION
AGRICULTURE
HEALTH
MENTAL HEALTH

Dear Friends:

I am writing to express my support for the long term community recovery planning for the Town of Blenheim. I appreciate the leadership of the steering committee and the involvement of local residents in crafting a long term plan for the town.

As you know, Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee devastated communities across the state. It is apparent that the town used this point of recovery to develop a strategy to, not only recover, but revitalize the economy and improve the quality of life in Blenheim. It is the leadership of municipalities like yours that will help New York State move forward and ensure a prosperous future.

The commitment, vision and numerous hours volunteered by the steering community must be commended. The Town of Blenheim has a bright future and I am excited to work with you in rebuilding and growing your vibrant community.

Thank you for the example of leadership that you have set and if I can be of any further assistance, please let me know.

With best wishes, I remain

Sincerely,

JAMES L. SEWARD
State Senator

6

PAUL TONKO
Congressman
Representative On
The House
Committee on
Agriculture, Forestry, and Conservation



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-3221

April 15, 2012

Blenheim LTRC Committee
Town of Blenheim
P.O. Box 176
North Blenheim, New York 12131

Dear Friends:

I write in support of the efforts made by the Blenheim, New York Long Term Recovery Steering Committee for their efforts as part of FEMA's Long Term Community Recovery Effort grant program. This grant will support Blenheim's efforts to recover and revitalize their community from the previous damages of Hurricane Irene.

As you know, large parts of New York was devastated by Hurricane Irene in August of 2011. Some of the worst damage was found in Schoharie County. The catastrophic impact of this tragic storm inflicted incredible damage on the Town of Blenheim. Despite the damages caused by Irene, the Blenheim community has come together and dedicated itself to revitalization and protecting natural resources, in addition to preserving its historical heritage. Blenheim consists of resilient small businesses, rural families, traditional and niche agriculture and a rich culture built on art, tourism and history. The Long Term Community Recovery grant would not only assist in rebuilding Blenheim, but also re-emerge the devastated community for years to come.

FEMA's disaster recovery program is a long term project which typically occurs in phases, with initial efforts dedicated to helping those affected meet immediate needs for housing, food and water, then focusing on the repairing of homes and small businesses. This assistance would prove itself to be irreplaceable to the residents and small businesses in the Town of Blenheim. Programming like this is vital to the rebuilding of the Town of Blenheim and the restoration of its unique culture and way of life.

Your consideration of this proposal – consistent with current laws, rules and agency policy – is appreciated.

Sincerely,

PAUL D. TONKO
Member of Congress

PDT/dte



R.A.R.E.

Rural Area Revitalization Effort, Inc.

125 Creamery Road
North Blenheim, NY 12131
Email: info@rareny.org

April 15, 2012

Dear Citizens and Leadership of the Town of Blenheim,

As the Executive Director of Rural Area Revitalization Effort, Inc. (R.A.R.E.), I would like to express my support and appreciation for the long term recovery efforts enacted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Long Term Recovery Committee of the Town of Blenheim.

On August, 28, 2011, the landscape of the Town of Blenheim, both physical and emotional, changed forever. The devastation which occurred as the result of Hurricane Irene will leave lasting scars on our community, especially in the loss of homes, neighbors who have relocated, and our beloved Blenheim Covered Bridge. However, rising from these seeming overwhelming circumstances, many everyday heroes have emerged to labor to rebuild, to assist those who are struggling, and to plan for the future. I applaud the efforts of the Long Term Recovery Committee, as well as many additional members of community, for being among those individuals dedicated to the future of the Town of Blenheim.

Throughout these months of meetings, much work has gone into creating a vision for the future of the Town of Blenheim. Without the efforts of this core group of citizens, as well as the outstanding support from FEMA, none of the community input, planning, and project development would have been possible. Instead of quelling under the tremendous obstacles faced by our community, these citizens pushed forward, seeing both the needs and potential of our small rural town, and explored numerous avenues for growth and improvement for our current citizens and for our future. I applaud their efforts and dedication to the long term recovery process, and look forward to seeing the future fruits of their labors.

Sincerely,

Keith Graham
Executive Director

"By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures."
Courtesy of Rural Area Revitalization Effort, Inc. (R.A.R.E.)





The United Methodist Church

1881 State Route 30, P.O. Box 137
North Blenheim, New York 12131
(518) 827-6677

E-Mail Address: blchurch@midtel.net
Web: www.nbwfumc.org
Sunday Worship at 10:30 A.M.

April 20, 2012

To: Committees of North Blenheim Long Term Recovery

Dear Committee members,

This is a letter of pastoral and congregational support for the long term recovery for the Town of North Blenheim. The parishioners of the North Blenheim United Methodist church express their support as well. Your community church has always strived to be an active participant in community goals and activities and also wants to be an active part in long term recovery efforts. We appreciate the opportunity to be included and to serve in these long term recovery efforts.

Recently, Rose Mace shared the following article about the covered bridge. The article is from The Cute Cousins Chronicle, a newsletter of the Serrie family cousins. "Great Aunt Thela Serrie is 93 years old, and remembers going over the Blenheim Bridge many times when she was a child. Her family, the Moore's, lived on a farm on the Guinea Road east of North Blenheim. Aunt Thelma would ride with her mother on trips to North Blenheim. When they got to the Blenheim Bridge, the horses pulling their wagon would balk. They were afraid to go inside the covered bridge. The roof over the bridge made it dark inside, and through openings you could see the creek waters below. No problem! Aunt Thelma's Mom would get down, go in front of the horses, take one by its bridle, and walk the team and wagon through the bridge." Those were the good old days. How we miss that bridge!

Please know that you have our prayers and support. Our thanks to everyone involved in the long term recovery work and accomplishing the goals being set.

With thanks and appreciation,

Pastor Neil and the Congregation of the North Blenheim Methodist Church

"See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you." Isaiah 42:9

The little white church meeting community and spiritual needs.

*Unless the Lord builds the house,
its builders labor in vain.
Psalm 127:1*



Gilboa-Conesville Central School

132 Wyckoff Road • Gilboa, New York 12076-9703
607-588-7541 • FAX 607-588-6820

Ruth Reeve, Superintendent

Kathryn Allen, Principal

Daniel Bousquette, Guidance Counselor

April 16, 2012

Dear Local Officials and Community Members of Blenheim:

It has been almost eight months since Hurricane Irene visited our area and flooded your town along with others in our school district. I am impressed with how quickly people in the Town of Blenheim banded together to make sure that everyone was accounted for and had places to stay. I had a lot of contact with the Town Clerk in the days following the flood.

It takes my breath away every time I drive through the town and see the destruction of homes and the drastic change with the Covered Bridge no longer there. I understand that the Federal Emergency Management System is helping the citizens of Blenheim with a long term recovery plan. I strongly endorse this work. In addition to the personal tragedies that residents have endured, the town itself is trying to accomplish certain goals. Any assistance that you can get I know will be greatly appreciated.

In addition to my concern about the individual families, I also have a concern about our school. It is no secret that enrollment in all upstate schools is declining. We need as many students as we can to keep our state aid strong. It is vital to the stability of our school that residents rebuild and keep our tax base strong.

I commend you on the progress you have made toward your recovery and your plans for the future of the community. I support your plan and look forward to the positive changes in the months ahead as you rebuild.

Please don't hesitate to call on me if I can help remove roadblocks or facilitate solutions.

Sincerely,

Ruth Reeve
Superintendent of Schools



JEFFERSON CENTRAL SCHOOL

1332 State Route 10 • Jefferson, New York 12093
(607) 652-7821 • Fax (607) 652-7806
www.jeffersoncs.org

April 18, 2012

Blenheim Long Term Recovery Steering Committee
Town of Blenheim
P.O. Box 176
North Blenheim, New York 12131

Dear Neighbors:

I'm happy to write on behalf of our district's administration, board of education, and school community and extend our grateful appreciation to you for your important recovery work. We're happy to support your efforts to secure funding to aid your future work. Our school district encompasses parts of four Schoharie County townships (including Blenheim) and we have students and staff (myself included) who are proud to call Blenheim their home.

This past summer's storms devastated the Blenheim community and washed away a local historical landmark that was a source of pride to so many in Blenheim and Schoharie County. Thankfully, you've assembled a dedicated team of community volunteers to thoughtfully plan Blenheim's recovery and revitalization.

The *Long Term Community Recovery* funds you're seeking will help to revitalize our community, protect our rich heritage, and position us as a first-choice community for those seeking a rural lifestyle in a beautiful, natural setting.

We're most appreciative of your work to date—and proud to extend our support to your grant application. Your tireless efforts to help rebuild our community are an inspiration to us all.

Sincerely,

Carl J. Mummenthey

copy: Board of Education

Carl J. Mummenthey Superintendent c.mummenthey@jeffersoncs.org	Jonathan M. Hillis K-12 Principal j.hillis@jeffersoncs.org	Cheryl Jory CSE Chair c.jory@jeffersoncs.org	Jennifer L. Roberts Guidance Director j.roberts@jeffersoncs.org	Tracy L. Fraleigh District Treasurer t.fraleigh@jeffersoncs.org
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SCHOHARIE COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

349 Mineral Springs Road, Cobleskill, NY 12043
Telephone 518-234-7604, Fax 518-234-4346

Ronald S. Filmer, Jr.
Chief Executive Officer

Thomas W. Greenlees
Chairman

April 16, 2012

Don Airey, Chairman
Long Term Community Recovery Steering Committee
PO Box 439
Richmondville, NY 12149

Dear Mr. Airey:

On behalf of the Schoharie County Industrial Development Agency, I would like to express our support for the Town of Blenheim's long term recovery efforts. The effects of Hurricane Irene were devastating and obviously caused a great deal of structural and infrastructure damage as well as a tremendous amount of emotional stress.

The people of Blenheim have volunteered many hours as part of the all important planning process which has and will continue to guide the work that will need to be implemented for Blenheim to rebuild. This effort is to be commended.

Moving forward, I am confident the Town of Blenheim will take this long term recovery plan's initiatives and goals and make them a reality. This to, will require a great deal of effort and stamina; as it will occur over time. I am confident based on the actions to date that this will be a success.

Once again, we appreciate and support the efforts of the Town and Long Term Recovery Steering Committee of Blenheim for the effort's put forward toward Blenheim's recovery. In addition, we look forward to working with you where possible and seeing the results of your efforts in the future.

Sincerely,

Ronald S. Filmer, Jr.
Chief Executive Officer





April 12, 2012

Dear Citizens of the Town of Blenheim:

The flooding of August, 2011 may have changed the landscape of your community, but it has also given the world an opportunity to see your strength and commitment to rebuild. When the waters receded and the devastation was revealed, it became clear that your community would face enormous challenges. Your community has forever changed, but with great destruction comes great opportunity.

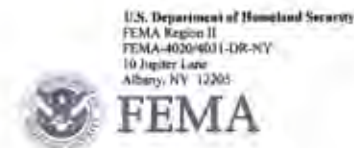
This long-term community recovery plan is just the beginning of that opportunity. It speaks to your vision that reflects the hopes, desires, creativity, and common sense of the individuals in your community. Some of the recovery projects can be achieved in a relatively short period of time, but many of them will take years to become a reality. Yet, with your hard work and dedication, Blenheim will become a more sustainable, safer, and resilient community.

Remember that you are not alone in this incredible undertaking. The partnerships forged in these past months with local stakeholders, the private sector, and state and federal agencies will become a key source of guidance and assistance as you progress.

I am pleased that FEMA has been able to support you in your efforts by providing a long-term community recovery team to assist you in the development of this plan. I commend you on the progress you have made thus far toward your recovery and your vision for the future of Blenheim. With great pleasure, I pledge my support for this plan. I look forward to seeing the progress and successes unfold.

Sincerely,

Michael F. Moriarty
Acting Regional Administrator



April 16, 2012

Dear Citizens of Blenheim:

Let me begin by saying how proud I am of the people of Blenheim for your incredible resilience and courage in the wake of the devastation caused by the September, 2011, flooding. It has been a great honor to be associated with the State of New York during this difficult time.

It has also been most gratifying to see the community work so closely with the county, state, and federal officials along with the help of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Long-Term Community Recovery team.

This rebuilding effort, while painful and difficult, has presented numerous opportunities to rebuild safer, stronger, and more sustainable. Many lives are still to be reconstructed and many questions are still to be answered. It won't be easy but the rewards will be great. This long-term recovery plan, which was developed from 100 percent community input, will serve as a guide as you begin the next phase in your recovery journey.

The partnerships you have developed over these past few months will become beneficial and invaluable as you work together to create your "new normal" community. I applaud your efforts and the progress you have made and look forward to witnessing the success of your work. It is with great pleasure that I pledge my support for this plan.

Sincerely,

Federal Coordinating Officer
Disaster Recovery Manager
FEMA-4020/4031-DR-NY

Acknowledgements

BLENHEIM LONG-TERM COMMUNITY RECOVERY STEERING COMMITTEE:
COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND IDENTITY SUBCOMMITTEE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
INFRASTRUCTURE AND HAZARD MITIGATION SUBCOMMITTEE

BLENHEIM TOWN BOARD

BLENHEIM TOWN SUPERVISOR

COMMUNITY PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL ASSOCIATES

NATIONAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE, NEW YORK STATE OFFICE

NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF STATE

RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE, CIVIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

RURAL AREA REVITALIZATION EFFORT (R.A.R.E.)

SCHOHARIE AREA LONG TERM RECOVERY (SALT)

SCHOHARIE COUNTY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

SCHOHARIE COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT OFFICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, SCHOHARIE COUNTY AND NEW YORK STATE OFFICES

U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION, NEW YORK STATE OFFICE



